The Complete Final Age Sefer Torah is online at RabbiAlpern.com. Go there to see the library that is created on the A Mountain.

A FINAL AGE TESTAMENT

(SELECTIONS)

COMPILED BY R.E.A. SHONE

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Final Testament
Book Two
Final Acts
Final Revelation
Final Kabballah

Consider Me A Dream (Coda)

RabbiAlpern.com

The Complete Final Age Sefer Torah is online at RabbiAlpern.com. Go there to see the library that is created on the A Mountain.

As a Professor of Literature and Spirituality I introduce you to Theophilos and pray that you become one in this conversation.

All is renewed in the Final, and you get the last word!

Before embarking and setting sail we turn to Waldo (Ralph Emerson) who desired we all be sages, poets and mystics. We hear and shall obey.

(At the end of Representative Men):

The world is young;
the former great men call to us affectionately.
We too must write Bibles,
to unite again the heavens and the earthly world.

The secret of genius is to suffer no fiction to exist for us;
to realize all that we know; in the high refinement of modern life,
in arts, in sciences, in books, in men,
to exact good faith, reality, and a
purpose;
and first, last, midst, and without end,
to honor every truth by use.

(This is also the 613th Mitzvah of the Torah,
to write your own Sefer Torah.
Again, see RabbiAlpern.com
for this Final Commandment.)

ANNOUNCING

FINALLY! FINALLY!

After 2000 years

HURRY! HURRY!

Wake Right up! Wake Right up!

The Latest Rage:

"Give me that brown bag religion"

Everyone a Sage

In this

The One – The Only

THE FINAL AGE®

And the Lord looked upon the world She had created and She was convulsed with wholly uncontrolled laughter. And She summoned Professor Higgs (who discovered The God Particle, the scalar boson) and suppressing her mirth, She dealth with him firmly and said: Wherefore has thou destroyed the symmetry of the world?

Higgs responds: "… Who could have predicted the sunsets and the oceans and the organic ooze formed by all the awful molecules agitated by lighting and heat? And who could have expected evolution and those physicists poking and probling and seeking to find out what I have, in your service, so carefully hidden?

And the Lord, hard put to stop her laughter, signed forgiveness and a nice raise for Higgs."

The Very New Testament 3:1 by Leon Lederman

Final Age Dedication: Rabbi Melville

This Final Age® Testament is and is not (A) Novel. The Five Books2 are filled with extras such as short short stories, concrete poetry, prophecy, letters,

Revelations, History, Erotica, Physics, Philosophy, and what not. Like the original, this is more than a book, at one and the same time fiction and nonfiction. The Tradition continues.

And the Author? Call Me Rabbi. I am reminded of the Critics description of you, Herman, as a “Big, Bearded, violently excited man trying to shout down the whimpering lonely child in his soul.”

True.

Why else write?

What the critics said of you, my friend, will also be said of Me: “not even a minor master.”

Leviathans.

Great White and black lettered FAT Bibles that take from, and add to, the Old and the New.

Moby Dick, and now this!

A Rabbi rewrites the Bible!

You say Moby Dick is bungled?

Herman, take a look at this Final Age® Bible.

Yes there is light in both books but “blubber is blubber tho you may get oil out of it.”

The same can be said of the Old Testaments.

At times the Prose and as you say, Herman, “the poetry may run as sap from a frozen maple tree.”

True.

Only God is Perfect, as you know My Friend.

A Final Kabballah.

“There are some things so serious: you can only joke about them.”

-Neils Bohr

Kabballahwalky

The Final Age® twill be perceived
By those Ascending Mountain A
With whimsy is the Word rephrased
The Fathers are outraged!

Beware the Ologies my peers
Religions bind and dogmas klatch
Beware the Funde Mental Bird and shun
The Frumious soul savers snatch.

Now take these Verbal Swords in hand
No Old. No New. No tongue to snare
Rest beneath this Figment Tree
Pause A-while in prayer.

Before this Final Age® we stand
All cherubim with unknown names
Now striding back to Promised Land
We slice away our shame.

Alphabeta. Come! A. B. The A Ascent
the verbals, whirl-ing purify
so gyre or gamble on the Wor(l)d
the veil is drawn aside.

AA

“and what shall I say
I stutter A-A
Nothing else do I
know how to say”

– Catherine of Sienna

God, Allah, Christ, New Age, Old Testament, New Testament, The Bible, The Quran (Koran), Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Moses, Jesus, Mohammed, Rabbi, Priest, Minister, Fundamentalism, Revelation, Revelations, Religion, Politics, Psychology, Madonna and Kabalah (Kabballah, Kabbalah, Kaballah, cabala) and more are all redefined in the Final Age (Se A lah).

Franz Kafka teaches that religions, like people get lost. The same is true of words and meaning, and politics and psychotherapy. In the Final Age religion is viewed as literature as much as revelation, so we also recognize the prevalence of weak poetry and loose prose. The Meaning of the Original Wor(L)ds are lost, more than any Sacred Truths.

The Final Age, and Sealah, begin as fictions, and then become F(A)cts.

One last (final) word: Lighten up! The ascent up the mountain leads to the Arête. Character and characters are found on the peak. Fundamentalism and all grave teachings take place at the base. True revelation teaches basics, not secrets, fundamentals, not ism’s.

Final Age Testament

The Final Age Testament: Introduction to The Five Books Of Laurence – By Rabbi Edwin A Shone

The Final Age Testament critically revises but does not replace the Original. The Bible is a vast and diverse library and these Five Books of Laurence may be thought of as the opening of a new wing.

I asked Rabban to write his own introduction, which proceeds book one. The fullest version of this bible of course, begins again, in Genesis and finishes in the final fifth book of this Testament. Final Kabballah is a final recasting of all the teachings, and this end is also a beginning for readers who wish to start there.

Consider Me A Dream; a film biography of the life of Franz Kafka is both coda and key to the Final Age Testament, an End and a beginning.

These Five Books are not a replacement scripture; they are a continuation of the story. In the retelling, this is for latter day saints and sinners. Joseph Smith discovered golden plates here in the hills of Upstate New York. Latter day legend has it that the original biblical oracle, the Urim and Tumim were found with the ancient script that the oracle would translate into the Book of Mormon. They are lost once again so I shall have to put on the Priestly Breastplate and be the Light and Completion of this Final Age Testament.

I discovered these Five Books on the hard drive of our Rabbis Apple. They are self-edited. I have made only minor scribal corrections.
– You're Scribe, R

I awkwardly introduce myself as R. Redactor. Rabbi. My name is Edwin A. Shone and I am a professor of literature at Sylvan College, a Kafka specialist who came to the Rabbinate rather late in life. I have no desire to ever fill a pulpit and I remain President of the synagogue where Ari Rabbied.

I worked together with the Ari for years before his untimely death. We had the usual tensions between rabbis and Presidents of synagogues. I sat through over one thousand of the Rabbis sermons over the years until I was converted. I made the Ari my Mentor and Rebbe and began saving my notes and commentary and even the articles the Rabbi contributed to our Temple bulletin.

Rabban published the first two of these five books in one volume in a limited "proem" edition. The critics could not get beyond the "Rabbinic pornography" The Rabbis notes make it clear that he was telling the story of a human messiah. The Book was presented as a Bible, which it is, and that also offended. The book wears black clerical garb to make a point. I have reports that some volumes were burned. Discouraged Ari gave up plans to publish books three four and five and the screenplay. They were edited and ready on his Apple.

I am astonished that many readers and critics did not grasp the concept and humor of the Final Testament. One day the Rabbi was throwing box after box into the dumpster, and I offered to help. We were trashing his notes and copies of Final Testament. He smiled and said "and now the trees of the field may rejoice," and "to the making of ends there are no books." I was about to correct him when I finally understood.
What if he never wanted any of this to be published? I br(o)od on this daily.
I worked with Ari on the adaptation of his film to the stage when our students performed Consider Me a Dream. The play has endless possibilities, being a stream of dreams Kafka has in the final moments of his life. If Dr. Scholem is right that Kafka put the K in Kabballah, you may want to start there.

Finally, at least for today, I do not think this publication a betrayal. The final judgment is yours.

Final Testament

Laurence

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Scribal errors occur in a work of such scope and ambition. Kindly note the errors and send them to me. Rabbi Shone

Many will take pen in hand to account the days of the Messiah.
Luke, in the Old Testament, based his gospel on the eyewitness of those who heard the preaching of a New Covenant many years after the preacher was crucified.
The Passion of our time, however, was a media event, witnessed by as many souls as stood on Sinai.
I offer you, Theophilos, an interpretation of the life and teachings of the Messiah authorized by Sealah. Yet Sealah is shy of holy writ and this account is not canon. When two or three gather to discuss the new teachings as a living oral tradition, that will be our worship and prayer. When a text is fixed and an authentic received version of the truth is feigned, know that it does not have the sanction of Sealah.

We are concerned with the facts of the life of the Messiah. The Final Act is complete, it is no fiction. Other gospels will be offered, by other worthy disciples.
This Testament is, I pray, inspired by my devotion to the anointed one's life and teachings. Open it down the middle, for it can only alight on the wings of imagination. I offer it to you again, Theophilos, as one offers a stroll through their orchard to a dear friend. The fruits are many and the fragrance, I hope, not overpowering.
This testament is good news, but not gospel.
This story is Novel. A tale of friendship and love.
We shall speak again soon Theophilos.

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A New Albion

Before the coming of foreign conquerors to Laguna, tribes of native Californians peopled the hills, canyons and inlets of their own little promised land. The natives would share the fate of the Ten Lost Tribes. God was One and Good, and the Indians lived in harmony with their neighbors, the land, and its creator.

Digging for edible roots, gathering grapes from the vine, cracking the walnut from its shell, they toiled in joy. Wild honeybees added their sweetness, and on occasion, a deer was run down and totally consumed, as the sacrifices in Old Jerusalem. The deer spirit was thanked for the moccasins and the meat.

This Eden also had its demons. Rattlers snaked through the high grass, musically announcing their presence before they struck. Grizzlies stalked the mountains. They were greatly feared. Condors, hovered deathlike, seeking their next prey.

Once in a lifetime, in the sacred and supernatural Tolacha ritual, death was unmasked. The elders carefully measured the vision-inducing drug so the initiate's visit to the otherside was not permanent.

When real death came, the Indian's garments were washed and the soul instructed to take its place in the heavens, with all others who had died, among the stars.

Albion Lost

One demon came carrying a cross. He thought the native an inferior breed, filthy, lazy and brutish, lacking inventiveness and culture. "Too lazy to hunt," he noted in his journal, "they live on grubs, abalone and tasteless roots, eating only what is forgeable, planting nothing. They leech bitter tanic acid from acorns for their meager winter meals."

The Spanish Franciscan who claimed these native hills for Christ, conquered this land of promise without having to call upon his well trained troops. He considered the Indians cowardly for not resisting their new masters.

The natives sensed somewhere within the Catholic's teaching, the one God they worshiped. Jesus, they found to be a gentle and noble spirit; an Indian. The priest's notion of land ownership did not overly concern the Indian. The Earth is the Creator's and all that is on the Earth.

The Indians continued to grind their meal on the great rocks of the canyon. On our pilgrimage, Theophilos, I will show you the old oak holes. They appear as indentations formed by the kneeling supplicant's knees.The swallows that returned each year to the mission are, I believe, the souls of these Indians, who still yearn for their lost Eden.

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California Nativity

The Reverend set his newspaper down and gazed at the Pacific through the picture window in his study. He watched the reflection of his head shaking. A Dominican monk had stormed the pulpit of the Cathedral Notre Dame in Paris, shouting "God is dead!" The Reverend thought of his wife, and smiled. Rex Morgan, M,D. nurse pulled the plug on a terminal patient. She called it mercy killing. The Reverend called it murder.

He took his wife to a movie, "Cyrano de Bergerac," to take her mind off her condition. Jose Ferrier was a magnificent Cyrano, but Christian should have spoken up for himself! Fiction and the cinema annoyed the Reverend. Only one story was worth telling. The Reverend read no novels. The trip to the movie was a rarity to please his wife.

He preferred his Bible. Who could rival Genesis in narrative? Exodus in ethics? The proverbs pithiness? The lyrics of the Psalms? The high drama of the Gospels?

The Reverend stood and moved closer to the window, seeking the stars. Seeing clouds, he frowned. A coastal wind moved the clouds. One moment they were veiled, the next, exposed. The Reverend inverted his frown when one bright star revealed itself in the winter sky.

His wife Sandra lay in the next room under a thick down comforter. Her white hair on a white pillow accentuated a heart-shaped face. Her eyes were open, as blue as the sun setting skies so often watched, and full of light. The comforter rose in the middle of the bed, a snow colored slope. The slope did not fit the scene. Sandra knew the dangers of pregnancy at her age, and she feared for the child.

The Reverend opened her door. The bright hall light entering startled Sandra. The next contraction came just as suddenly. She told her husband it was time to go to the hospital.

The cold stung the reverend's hands and he returned inside for his gloves. The hospital was on a hill directly across from the house. They descended one hill and ascended another, and were at the hospital in ten minutes. A gray-haired nurse worked the maternity desk. She inadvertently shrugged as the white-haired parents-to-be approached. She immediately regretted her unprofessional show of emotion. Sandra was taken to labor and delivery, and the Reverend to the waiting room.

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The Three Wise Men

The Reverend had another window here, facing the Pacific. He watched the clouds. A slight movement of his body reversed the view, and the room behind drew into sharp focus. He watched the other two fathers-to-be. They appeared almost transparent. The older of the two, in a suit, chain-smoked unfiltered cigarettes. The younger, a marine corporal, probably up from El Toro waited with military detachment. The Reverend looked for a third.

Three wooden wise men gazed at the bright star. Mary lay covered with a blanket, and the baby smiled his wooden smile. Their cotton beards blew in the breeze each time the door to the waiting room opened.

A hand on his shoulder startled the Reverend. The nurse had been knocking on the window with her ring, but he did not hear. He walked to the nursery window. The nurse in white gown, cap and mask was an angel, surrounded by white light, holding the Christ child.

The baby smiled, cooed, and startled the angel with a laugh. The Reverend called his son Isaac, the one who will laugh, as had Father Abraham in his old age.

The child was taken to his mother and the Reverend returned to the window. Snow was falling. He watched the soft crystals float to the ground. The Reverend smiled. He thought of the snow falling in Bethlehem on a similar solstice night, long ago.

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Bar Mitzvah

The canyon road meanders through the hills and spills into the Pacific. I will never forget the wonderment I felt the first time I saw the ocean at the end of the road. Not since leaving the Berkshires had I felt such peace.

A stubborn twelve year old not ready to leave my transcendental forest, I had wanted to stay in Massachusetts. I was a tree cut straight off at the ground. Now I would sink roots on the highest cliff, and with each sunset count the day.

That afternoon I had refused to go to Bar Mitzvah lessons. I did not believe in God. I felt cursed. I did not want to be a Jew. By the time we reached the ocean my mother convinced me to go through with the ordeal. I could not say no to a request made out of love. Yet I dreaded the day when I would have to utter incantations over a Torah I did not believe to be true. Hebrew school was punishment for unknown sins, perhaps committed in a previous life. Crimes so severe, if the punishment was any indication, as to be unimaginable.

We parked on a hill to the right of the canyon. The day had cleared, and we could see all the way to Dana Point. From the gazebo on the cliff I saw glorious Pacific blues, smooth-edged gems in white, windblown settings. I was in love.

The water was colder than I thought, and it took a long time to submerge. My testicles clung together against my body, like two grapes in a tight cluster. My nipples were also aroused, slightly stung by the salty water. A piece of seaweed wrapped around my ankle, and I leapt in fright.

When the sun was halfway between its high point and setting my mother signaled that it was timed to go home. No way! Does a man depart from his beloved a few short hours after the meet? Somehow I convinced my mother I could get myself home.

"Yes, I have money for dinner."

"Yes, I have my Bar Mitzvah book, and I will practice."

The tide pools were explored; each a little world. Anemones waved and aroused me. I placed my finger near the opening of the purple lips, letting it slowly probe the opening. The lips clamped around my finger, and I feared it would dissolve. I quickly removed my finger.

The sun seemed to take forever to set, stretching time to its limits. A cool October wind blew in over the water and I felt chilled. I dried and draped an old Berkshire winter jacket around my shoulders.

From the next cove I heard sounds as sweet as the singing of the

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spheres. Bagpipe music. The notes were as clear as, or perhaps became, the stars. Standing on a cliff an older man slapped the bag like a baby's bottom and began another tune.
At that moment I saw the Messiah for the first time.
He was my age, but taller and leaner. He had his mother's eyes. He smiled at me, a content Buddha smile. I liked him from the beginning.
This was surprising. Isaac's tan, and his perfect features in a heart-shaped face all sent out signals of danger to me. Large well-muscled arms ending in strong and elegant hands changed the signal from yellow to red. This was the type of California boy who would shun me, and I was ready to shun him first. Yet as I sat next to Isaac I felt an unspoken harmony echoed in the bagpipe's song.
Inspired by the music, I unfolded the thin booklet that contained the major part of my Bar Mitzvah performance, the Haftorah. The Haftorah is a section of the Hebrew prophets thematically related to the weekly Torah reading. It is sung with cantillation, as are the two blessings before and after the Haftorah. Beginning the first blessing, I stopped for a moment as Isaac joined in. Isaac was also to be a Bar Mitzvah in a few months, around the time of Chanukah.
I introduced myself.
"I am Isaac," he said.
We both smiled.

*****

The Reverend reacted calmly to Isaac's request for a Bar Mitzvah. The Reverend knew the local Rabbi, who would be discreet.
The Reverend knew Isaac would want to be a Jew. He knew before his son that Isaac would become a Rabbi, wander Galilee, study in Jerusalem, and receive his revelation as God's anointed, as Jesus had, a Jew.
Isaac feared his father and was stunned when his plans were not opposed. He wondered about his father's easy acquiescence.

*****

My dear friend Theophilos, lover of wisdom, lover of detail, lover of God. I must tell you now of stories of Isaac's youth which Isaac related to me, in bits and pieces on various occasions. Some of the information was told to me by teachers and librarians who still live in Laguna, and some by Isaac's mother, and some by Isaac.

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Beginnings

Isaac was raised as a prodigy, and with his gifted mind and heart, he was able to become one. His father taught him how to read at a young age, Hebrew and English.

"In the beginning" *Berayshet* "were the first words Isaac read in both languages. By age ten, Isaac knew the contents of both testaments and had memorized, in Hebrew much of the book of Genesis.

Isaac the young child did all he could do to please his father. He was obedient and devout, and since the major demand of his father concerning learning was memorization, Isaac did well. About the time of Isaac's twelfth birthday, this changed.

He was reading on his own in the library. The librarian took note of Isaac's literary appetite. Isaac also had a unique, and to the librarian, annoying style of reading. He usually broke the binding, the back, of whatever book he was reading. "Reading" is not descriptive enough. Isaac entered the book. Covers were doors to different worlds and if opened hard enough, one could enter.

The Messiah loved John Steinbeck. He began with "The Red Pony" when he was young, and continued with "The Pearl." The librarian did not totally approve when he began "The Grapes of Wrath." She watched him read, his face a pantomime of the action, mirroring the plot. At the end of the book she wept along with Isaac, feeling love for the boy, and his innocence. Still, he was the Reverend's son, and she called the church to speak to the Reverend.

Sophomores in junior high school are taught that a short story is as genre of literature that can be read in one sitting. Isaac decided to turn Steinbeck's novel "East of Eden" into a short story, reading it in an afternoon. Isaac asked the librarian for the "East of Eden Letters." a journal Steinbeck kept in the form of an extended letter to his editor as he worked on the novel. The novel is an interpretation of the story of Cain and Abel in the Bible. Understanding the Biblical story, which consists of sixteen terse and perplexing verses in impossible without ascertaining the precise meaning of the Hebrew word *"Timshal*." Isaac did a careful grammatical analysis of Steinbeck's interpretation, and found his scholarship to be admirably accurate. One of Isaac's first poems, "Chun Tzu," was inspired by, and dedicated to Steinbeck.

*****

Theophilos, the poem is included in the Psalms of Final Testament.

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For Isaac, the library was a church; his study, research and writing sublime worship.
The meaning of the language of Holy Scripture and its exegesis was the first scholarly problem Isaac wrestled with. When he studied with his father he felt rigidity in the Reverend's approach to the text. The words were chiseled in stone. His father, even when he allowed scriptural interpretation, taught one true monolithic fundamental biblical reality. Isaac found a more creative approach in Louis Ginsberg's "Legend of the Jews." Rabbi Shalom Spiegel introduces the book, which records hundreds of interpretations of each verse. The Rabbi uses the example of a Mollusk to explain the process of Jewish textual exegesis, Midrash - Pearls.
Textual irritants Isaac was aware of were also irritating to the Rabbis. These irritants are as the grains of sand that enter the shell of the Mollusk. Isaac smiled at the "unkosher" metaphor. Scriptural irritants produce the Pearls that the Rabbis call "Midrash." Each question, each grain of sand, may produce a pearl. Isaac had discovered a creative way to read text. He now had a method to answer his many questions.
The three accounts of creation in Genesis, an irritant to every fundamentalist, Isaac explained, means that creation, and perhaps all of scripture, can be understood from more than one viewpoint.

Isaac explained his discovery to me on a Sunday afternoon when we met to swim, explore the tide pools, and practice our *Haftorahs*. I was excited to learn that I did not have to take the Biblical text literally. This had not been taught in Hebrew school. Nor was it explained by the Rabbi training me for my Bar Mitzvah.
Isaac felt his father knew about Midrash, and could not understand why he hid this key from him. When he and the Reverend studied together, the Reverend would admit to no contradictions, so Isaac was unable to share the wealth of the Pearls of interpretation he created to reconcile the contradictions. For Isaac, the text was now a living literature, and he found increasingly trying, the study sessions with his father.

Confirmation

By the time I met Isaac he had been placed in the confirmation class in the Sunday school at his father's church. The other students were sophomores and juniors at the local high school. The class was taught by his father.
The Reverend's first class, his lesson book indicated, would be "an inspiring introduction on how to read the Holy Scriptures." The Reverend stood in front of the class and smiled benignly. The students admired their spiritual leader. They listened with great respect.

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"Is the Bible, as some would say, a simple story book? A book for children? Are its inspired words the words of idle dreamers and tellers of tales, like those of literature? Are the Biblical characters, like the actors in a Broadway play, the product of imagination? We all know the answers to these questions. No, No, No and again, No!" All of the students except Isaac nodded their agreement.

"Know," the Reverend continued vehemently, with the cadences of his best sermon voice, "that the Bible, the most beloved and read book in history, is not a mere book, but the book of books. Not a story, but a story above all stories. A testament to the days when Jesus walked on this Earth as God in the flesh only to deliver himself into the hands of the non-believers so that in his death we would all, forevermore, be forgiven our sins."

Some of the students uttered a solemn "Amen." Isaac sat silently. The Reverend began to direct the lesson towards his son: "The Bible is not an account of words, but a chronicle of the Word. The miracles worked through the Word are a testimony to the authenticity and truth of scripture. Only those with the mind of a child could read scripture as they read a story book."

Isaac wondered how his father sensed his disagreement.

The Reverend searched his mind for an example to refute the storybook interpretation of the bible. He chose the Book of Jonah.

"The fate of Jonah can be understood by any Christian who has faith. Three days in the belly of the whale--then regurgitated and resurrected, Jonah was reborn."

"By faith all is possible through the hands of the Lord."

At first Isaac could not take his eyes off his father. The hands waving, the arms outstretched to make a point and upraised to indicate Jonah's resurrection. To avoid his father's stare, Isaac looked out the window. The Reverend stood over Isaac and stared down at him.

"Couldn't" Isaac began, clearing his throat, still afraid to look at his father, "couldn't the *`dag gadol'* the great fish which swallowed Jonah be a symbol of Jonah's isolation? Jonah's attempt, in his loneliness to hide from himself and his mission?"

The Reverend, with a forced smile, answered. "Perhaps Jonah was lonely--with no Christ to turn towards--no church for shelter."

The Reverend was pleased with his extemporaneous exegesis. The students all thought this would end the disputation. But Isaac spoke again.

"From what you are saying we can assume that the lesson of Jonah is that without Christ or the Church, God heard Jonah's prayers and forgave him?"

The Reverend stared at his son with controlled rage. He could not understand the motives of his stubborn and rebellious son. "Your understanding is not in the spirit of the text. It is unchristian. Do you think the three days in the whale's stomach is an arbitrary number? These three days foreshadow the Passion of our Lord--three days from crucifixion to resurrection."

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Isaac laughed. "Why exclude my point of view? Scripture is a stone that gives off many sparks when hit with a hammer. What for you in its literal sense is a story about a real whale, is in my opinion, a story like every story of literature and open to many levels of interpretation. The great fish, I think, is a symbol. It is a sign, pointing to far deeper meaning,"
The enraged Reverend's face crimsoned. He opened his Bible in front of Isaac and pushed it towards him. The Reverend then shoved the Bible hard into Isaac's face shouting "Read it, Read it! My son reads the Bible as a book of symbols and signs." "A sign." the Reverend repeated, so he could think.
"Yes, the scriptures are a sign. The truths of scripture are highway signs--Jesus Christ--the Way. But the signs are clear and straightforward--as they are written." This was shouted in Isaac's face. The bell rang, punctuating his point. Isaac sat full of fear, and shaking. Blood dripped from his nose, first on his shirt, then into his open Bible. Isaac looked at the stained page. He was not convinced.

Isaac found the silence oppressive. He was excommunicated by his father for his insolence. The Reverend spoke to him only about the most mundane necessities. When Isaac entered a room, his father left. Isaac's mother was the intermediary. She agreed with her son but kept silent, attempting to negotiate family peace.

The Story of Life

The Reverend did not speak to his son for over a year. All this time Isaac feared his Bar Mitzvah lessons would be stopped. The Reverend never even mentioned the lessons.
It was Isaac who broke the silence. He shut the door behind himself in his father's study. The Reverend was staring at the Rembrandt prints on the wall. Isaac convinced his father to give him another chance.
The confirmation class, now mainly high school seniors, had asked for their religious education to be extended another year, and that the Reverend teach this advanced seminar. The community was rightly proud of their students, their Reverend, and the Church. The class was scheduled and Isaac was cautiously told that he could attend the first class. The Reverend began class the same way he began his Divinity thesis at the end of his seminary days,.

"In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth, and
In the beginning was the Word
The Word was with God
And the Word was God
All things were made by Him
No one thing existed except through Him."

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"The Gospel poetically explains that Christ was with God in the beginning when time and history began."
"Who is the author of this passage?"
An uneasy silence was broken when one student answered softly, "John." When he noticed who answered, the Reverend smiled and said, "Well Isaac, it's good to see someone is keeping up with their scriptural readings." Isaac smiled back, feeling the first warmth from his father in over a year.

The Reverend's class was modeled on the work of Love that had been his thesis, Genesis and Jesus: Old Testament Motifs in the New Testament. The use of language in his thesis had been superb; a moving poetic exegesis whose theme was the foreshadowing of the coming of the life of Christ in the book of Genesis. Each week, various episodes were explained, such as this Sunday's explanation of Noah and his ark in terms of Christ and the Church. Isaac found this class to contain his father's finest teachings. The students and the Reverend sensed Isaac's interest and all were pleased. The former skeptic was mainly silent. He was invited to next Sunday's class.
Isaac made comments, but rarely asked questions. His father explained Hebrew words for Isaac. The other students did not understand but they did not mind, and were proud of their Reverend, his son, and this new found peace. Isaac's interest in class was heightened when he realized that next week they would begin the story of his Biblical namesake.

Genesis 22

Isaac immersed himself in the narrative. He studied the Hebrew with Rabbinic commentators. He looked into the text as often as his peers looked into mirrors. The gilded edges of his English bible were losing their luster. Isaac had many questions for next Sunday's study session on Abraham and Sarah. The Reverend, sensing a change in Isaac, called on him to read:
And the Lord visited Sarah as He had said, and the Lord did unto Sarah as He had spoken. For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age." The Reverend thought of the night Isaac was born. Isaac asked, without defiance or mocking: "What does it mean that God visited Sarah? How was it physically possible for Abraham and Sarah to have a child in their old age?" The Reverend's smile put the class at ease.
You ask a question worthy of an answer. Turn to Hebrews 11:11."
The students were in awe of the Reverend's ability to quote extemporaneously, pertinent Biblical passages. Isaac himself was impressed. The Reverend placed his hand on his son's shoulder and smiled a 'Jehovah smile' down on his son.

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"Through faith," the Reverend quoted, "through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised." "This faith," the Reverend added, "helped Mary mother the Son of God."
The Reverend had Isaac read further on the dismissal of Hagar and Ishmael and the incident of Abraham and Avi-Melech at Beersheva. Then Isaac read Chapter Twenty-two on the Test and Temptation of Father Abraham.
Isaac read the text slowly in English, trying to remember the Hebrew original. He paused often, expressing his bewilderment at God's command and Abraham's compliance. The class read wonderment on Isaac's face. They anticipated another scene as Isaac asked his father:
"What is the meaning of this drama? I find it frightening."
The Reverend turned to move closer and face his son. His eyes had the far off look of a desert wanderer. At the moment the Reverend was riding with Abraham to Moriah. Returning from the journey, he said:
"Yes my son - he who understands this scripture understands the story of life."

*****

Isaac and I met at our spot in the beach. We discussed his father's class. I brought out my Haftorah booklet. "Two weeks to go." Isaac rubbed his hands against the chill of the wind.
"I am not going to be Bar Mitzvah," Isaac said.
My mouth fell open. Isaac explained:
"I'm not ready."
"What do you mean?"
"I would rather not talk about it. Anyway -- you know I am Bar Mitzvah with or without the performance." Isaac finally admitted, "I'm not sure I'm ready to be a Jew." I could not contain my disappointment, but sensing Isaac's anguish, dropped my interrogation. I did ask: "You will come to mine?" "Yes, I will come to your Bar Mitzvah."

Fragments

Any description of Isaac's adolescence appears a caricature. Isaac maintained an "A" average. He captained the basketball and baseball teams and was the fastest sprinter on the track team. (He refused to play football!) The remainder of his time he spent on Biblical research and discovering his sexuality. Isaac was the hero and golden boy of Laguna Beach. I was only able to temper my jealousy with my love for Isaac. Isaac's accomplishments, even in

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a work of fiction, would seem overstated. This is the difficulty in describing the Messiah's adolescence, in this and other testaments.

*****

The Reverend was pleased with his son. He felt himself to be a fine sculptor, his creation as fair as Michelangelo's David. The Reverend wanted no flaw in the rock his son was cut from. And Isaac, out of fear and respect, submerged the soul living in that rock.

When he was a freshman, however, Isaac let his hair grow past his shoulders. This innocent act was considered defiant and rebellious in the early Sixties. His hair was astonishing -- curls danced around his face, flowing in the ocean breezes like windblown waves, breaking in the shore of his shoulders.

Isaac's coaches were adamant. The principal and board, meeting in an ad hoc session, voted to uphold the school's rule. During the week of the meetings, Isaac let his beard grow. This was an impossibility. The Reverend was called. Isaac and I continued to meet almost every Sunday afternoon. He described the crisis his hair and beard stirred up. His beard was scraggly. He sensed my curiosity.

"They voted to make an exception."

"Why?" I asked.

"I imagine winning teams outweighed a few ounces of this sheep's fleece in their scales of justice."

"And your father?"

"That," Isaac exclaimed, "is a mystery. He supported my right as an individual to grow my hair as long as I pleased."

We would watch the sunset on a rock directly below the gazebo on Vista Point. As the sun descended, we would read and discuss the Torah, or read to each other from our favorite poets, including T.S. Eliot, Walt Whitman, and Wordsworth. Isaac was also fond of the sermons of John Donne. I preferred Donne's poetry and the short stories of Sherwood Anderson.

The sun worshipers and sea riders left before the sunset, and Isaac and I were alone in our cathedral whose roof was the sky. A *minyan* of seagulls stood on the rock beyond the tide pools. Their wings swaying in the wind, they joined us in our prayers.

*****

Dear Theophilos,

The description of Isaac's birth is Midrash. We visited his father in his study on only two occasions. I knew the Reverend only from these visits and in his later life from the Sunday

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sermons he preached on local television. My conversations with Isaac on the beach I chronicle from experience, but the past fades into a coastal fog. The finals, the conversion attempt and the switch, however, I remember almost as clearly as the day they happened.

Conversion

Mr. Grove signed the permission slip allowing me to enter his advanced placement English class. I earned that honor by joining the Forensic team he coached. I was on the debate team, practicing in original oratory.

Grove used the English class as a sophisticated, literary entrance into Christianity. By the end of my senior year Grove converted ten of the twelve of the Jews in the class. He was a one man campus crusade for Christ.

We began with John Updike. "Archangel" and "Lifeguard" in his Pigeon Feathers collection. Then on to T.S. Eliot. "The Love Song of Alfred J. Prufrock." It had been read to me by Isaac on the beach. We rolled our blue jeans up, and Isaac withdrew a peach from his pocket as he read: "I hear the mermaids singing each to each"

He cupped his hand to his ear,

"And now I hear them sing to me."

Grove did not assign Prufrock. We discussed the existential despair of "The Hollow Men," and went on to "Choruses from the Rock."

Eliot's conversion moved me--but not to Christ. I was infatuated with the language. I was one of the two Grove did not convert.

My own father was busy supporting five children, and I spent many afternoons at Groves after Speech. At first we did not discuss Christianity. Grove, I realized today, wanted to develop a close, father-son relationship before he converted me. I spent almost every day after school at Grove's. We did everything together. One day, Grove twisted his ankle playing handball. He noticed me examining his leg and crutch grips. "I am a cripple," he said, with the dramatic flair that comes naturally to a Speech coach.

"And I'm not embarrassed to admit that I need a spiritual crutch."

I looked again at Grove and the crutch. "I," I said, turning towards the apartment, "am not a cripple."

Inside Grove's apartment the Debate and Speech team sat in a circle practicing, I thought, for the finals in San Diego at the end of the semester. They looked up at me with expectation and knew Grove had not moved me from my spiritual inertia. I sat in the circle, arms folded into myself. The students joined hands, and I felt my hands on either side become a part of the human chain. Grove began: "I pray you all receive the inspiration to win." Grove hobbled to his seat, sat, and continued.

"Lord, teach us to love you as you love us, remove the veil from

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the darkened glass, and show us your face. Teach us to walk--and to run--the good race."
My debate partner got to the point of the prayer session.
"Heavenly Father, we are all cogs in this wheel that spins to do Your will. Send strength to each of us, to each cog, to strengthen this circle."
Noticing my grimace at his metaphor, my versatile partner tried a more poetic approach: "God--open all our hearts to your divine love and grace. Let us all acknowledge Jesus, so we can speak to you face to face."
"Will you accept Jesus," he asked me, "as your personal savior?"
All of my friends looked at me with sincerity and love. I felt the circle tightening around me. I did not want to close myself off from its limits. These were my friends.
"God," I began with difficulty, "Help my friends understand that my love for them knows no boundaries." I felt expectations in the grips of the students to my left and right. I broke my hands out of the circle. "Open their hearts to accept me as I am. I must serve God in my own way. I don't know. I don't even know what it means to be a Jew." The circle broke as I quickly fled Grove's apartment.

The Finals

I was among the finalists with other original orators in Western Forensic competition. Among them was Isaac. After a simple lottery I was scheduled to speak second. Isaac would give the last speech. The first oration was given by a teammate and I had heard it many times during practice. Isaac listened intently. Suddenly the first speech was over and I was up. I stepped to the front of the class and dramatically threw my arm in the Nazi salute:
"Deutschland Deutschland "uber alles," I cried, and went on to describe the genesis of the Nazi cult in Germany. I cannot find the original speech in the places I keep such things, but I remember the general content. I discussed the collective responsibility of the German people along with their leader Adolph Hitler for the world-wide holocaust that was World War II. I made the speech personal by describing the journeys of six Jews in my family who escaped, very late, from the Nazi inferno. The death of six million no person can comprehend. The near death of six Jews I described made the events real.
The Jews of Germany, among them my grandfather, refused to believe. My father, not yet ten years old in the late nineteen thirties did. He cried that he wanted to leave. He had seen Hitler youth not much older than himself grab old Jews by their heals and smash them against walls. The loud Hollywood Gestapo knock finally came to their door. My grandfather was taken away. My grandmother secreted my father and his older brother into

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France and then Switzerland. Zadie escaped, somehow, under the loaves of bread in a bakery truck at a deportation center and rejoined the family in Switzerland. A few seconds difference, I told the listeners, and I would not be giving this oration. A disturbance down the street forced the Gestapo to skip their routine search of my grandparents' home.

Knowing Isaac was among the finalists, I gave my speech emotionally and dramatically. The next speech was by my debate partner, the evangelist. It was in the Grove style with a dramatic introduction to catch the judges' attention.

"What the world needs now is love sweet love, that's the only thing that there's just too little of." He actually sang these lines and then asked, rhetorically of course, what type of love the world needed. Certainly not Eros. "Eros is on the throne again," he shouted, echoing an idea that I knew must have been added by Grove. Isaac grimaced as my partner exalted Agape and trampled on Eros. The speech continued with an appeal to us to understand the utter incompatibility of Philos and Eros. The way my partner glanced at Isaac I doubted his sincerity. Isaac did not notice. The speech ended with a call back to the divine love of Agape. The speech was well delivered but I had the same feelings now that I did after hearing a slick T.V. evangelist. He sure said it well, but what did he say?

The fourth speech about Poltergeist was unmemorable.

Isaac was up now. He began in a way that was startling after all the afternoon dramatics. He passed out pencils and pieces of paper with the numbers one to ten on them to the judges and contestants. Isaac asked us all to please make a list of the Ten Commandments. He waited patiently as we fumbled with our pencils, stared at each other and at the wall, looking anywhere for clues to help us with this impossible quiz.

Isaac assured us that we should not be embarrassed that we could not list many or most of the Commandments. Isaac explained that the question of fundamental commandments was explored by ancient sages and then read the following poem which formed the body of his speech:

On One Foot

Dear Theophilos,
You will find Isaac's poem in the Psalm section of this Testament.

My partner's speech on Love took third. I was surprised to hear Isaac's speech called for second. I was sure I was out of the running. One of the judges of the final round called my name for first place. Isaac should have won. I wanted to get Isaac's attention to tell him so, and compliment him on his novel interpretation of the Midrash. I had always felt before that Ben

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Azzai's approach was more enlightened. Isaac did not raise his eyes to congratulate me. The trophy felt heavy in my hands.

*****

Isaac completed all the advanced placement courses his high school offered as a junior. He was granted early graduation and accepted at Princeton. He entered Princeton a second semester sophomore with his extra credits. I would see Isaac only two more times before he left for the university.

The Gardener and the Indians

On occasion an April day is born on the Southern California coast with promises of perfection. The rising sun finds no cloud or fog to dissipate, and the aqua waves shimmer in her light, a liquid sapphire. The sea is clear to the island of Catalina. A Shiloh (Sealah) day.

*****

From the lagoon the gardener walked his traditional path from the shore up the gently twisting trail to Vista Point. He felt himself part of the perfection on that awakening April day. Surrounding the restaurant on the Point were his gardens. The roses were planted in a pattern that rolled with the earth towards the sea. The gardener's hands had shaped the furrows that surrounded each bush in its bed. Approaching the top of the trail he stopped and quietly looked upon his garden as though he feared he would awaken his sleeping children.

Isaac and I watched this morning ritual from the gazebo. The gardener wore a dark green shirt, and pants the color of the earth he lovingly worked. No hat was needed to cover the thick black hair. In his hand he carried his lunch in a paper bag which was refolded each day for the next day's meal. He took no food from the restaurant for which he worked, but only the rich brown Mexican beer the color of his skin. Standing now in the midst of his garden he himself appeared to be planted in the ground, a living tree of life at one with his world.

Isaac had watched this morning mass many times before. The gardener did not work Sundays, and I watched for the first time.

Isaac laughed at our intensity in observing this simple man. "My fantasy," he confided, "is to apprentice myself to this gardener. Then I would always be close to the earth and this point, which he has made sacred ground."

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Isaac's dreams in those days were always set on this land. "When I ride through the canyon I am drawn to the caves in the sides of the hills. I remember the days when sheep roamed the hills, and I am their shepherd." Isaac loved to talk of the Indians who once lived in Laguna, and from him I learned their lore:
"Before the intrusion of the Payamkuchum, the people lived a simple existence in houses thatched of tule, willow, and elder, with ash for the skeleton bows. During the warm season they camped in this lagoon. The Indian watched for the porpoises, whom they considered the guardians of the world. They loved to swim in this lake of tears and to gather from her waters urchins, abalone, cuttlefish and sea cucumbers, which they gathered in their masterfully woven baskets."
"Chinigchinich, their Jehovah like deity, was all powerful, all mighty, and ever present in all places - but no one could see him. Also like Jehovah, Chinigchinich did not tolerate disobedience."
"Him who obeyeth me not, or believeth not in my teachings I will chastise. I will send bears to bite, serpents to sting, misfortune, infirmities and death," Isaac quoted from their teachings.
"The people were more gentle than their God. They had the souls and innocence of infants."
"The spirits of these people return to haunt Laguanaites even if they are ignorant of their legacy."
Isaac laughed. "My high school friends believe they have hatched a new breed of sin, offering marijuana as a liberating conscious expanding aphrodisiac. Their smoking visions are dull, however, compared to those of the Indians' jimson weed."
The Temescals, the sweat lodges of the natives, have been rediscovered even by the pillars of the community who perspire away their new richness in their saunas." "The homosexual bars are filled with modern day versions of the Indian transvestites and tattooed ladies."
"Chinigchinich," Isaac concluded, "was worshiped not in neat well gardened churches, but in dances of ecstasy and abandon." I sat in amazement as Isaac chanted their song, "The Song of the Spirit:"

"At that time
when I found the end
of the past
is death
I was aghast.

All was falling.

My home
I was sad to leave.

I have been looking
for my eyes to be guided

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by the flight of the eagles wings.

I send my spirit North,
South, East, and West

Attempting to see in which direction
lay escape.

I found nothing."

"Such despair," I said.
Isaac disagreed. "I don't think it is a song of despair as much as it is a song of awakening. The Indians believed in an afterlife - but knowing the goodness and richness of this life before death, they respected death, and did their best to live fully before she beckoned."
I was not sure I agreed with Isaac's understanding of the Indians, and thought perhaps he made them over into his own image, but I was silent.

*****

The present I had prepared was a simple bit of news. Next year I would graduate from Hebrew high school. I had kept up my Torah studies and could read Midrash, Aggadah, Mishnah and even a bit of Talmud. At U.C.L.A. I would major in biology and minor in Hebrew. I'm not sure why I kept this hidden from Isaac the way a parent hides Christmas presents from children. Isaac's reaction was exuberant and childlike. "I am really delighted - really!"
Isaac told me his plans. That summer he would live with the Northern Nevada Paiute on the Walker Lake Indian Reservation. Nothing surprised me about Isaac, but I remember asking, surprised, "Why?" I was jealous and hurt. We would not spend the summer together.
"A Paiute Indian the white man called Jack Wilson, and the Indians called Wovaka, appeared to his people and other Indian nations near the end of their holocaust with a new religious vision. They danced a great dance they called 'The Ghost Dance' and I must learn it."
At the time I did not know who Isaac was, and his answer did not completely make sense. Isaac was beginning to be aware of his destiny and did not resist those gentle shoves of fate which pushed him in that direction.

*****

Theophilos,

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My friend, I know you will understand why I must chronicle all the details of Isaac's ascent to manhood. This is the chapter the old-age religious leaders will find most objectionable. Our conversation, my friend, concerns the truth and we shall not worry about the approbations and nihal obstats of the clergy.

The Switch

June was foggy and cool, as was the day in June when I would last see Isaac during our high school years.
Isaac's date for his graduation prom was a blonde cheerleader - the beach bunny type we described as "bitchen" in those days. I cannot remember her name. Isaac finagled an invitation for me. My date came more for the food and view from the Victor Hugo than for my company. Isaac and I were pleased to be in the restaurant we had viewed so often from the outside. We looked for our gardener in his rose garden through the large scenic picture window, but he had gone home.

Isaac ate no meat and this quickly became the topic of table conversation. Isaac's date ordered a rack of lamb, and my date, not to be outdone, ordered the same. We explained they could share one order. In honor of the view, I ordered a seafood platter. The restaurant was unused to vegetarians and Isaac settled for a salad.
"Why don't you eat meat?" my date asked Isaac between mouthfuls. Isaac did not want to spoil their dinner, but after he was pressed by her, answered: "The pieces of carcass neatly packaged in cellophane in the supermarket make it too easy to forget the life that was sacrificed to produce the stew, steak and hamburger. The butchers often start cutting their hooked bodies before the animal is dead." Now she was sorry she had asked. "I might consider eating the flesh of an animal I ran down and killed with my own two hands, but not a neatly packaged sacrificial lamb or mournful cow." At dinner's end, both our dates cleared their plates with a number of oversweet, overpriced, French pastries.
The prom was a dull and formal affair. Stuffed with lamb and pastry, my date did not want to dance fast. She was even less graceful than I, slow dancing. I was pleased when Isaac tapped me on the shoulder indicating it was time to take our dates home.
We dropped them at their houses. On the pretense of visiting U.C.L.A., we headed towards Westwood. I was driving my father's new LeMans. Isaac pulled a thick, well-packed joint out of his tuxedo pocket and rolled it between his lips on both ends. "Isaac, you know I'm paranoid about marijuana in public. I can't smoke and drive at the same time." I pulled over; Isaac drove.
Isaac drove onto the main campus after driving through Westwood Village. Most students had completed finals and were on their way, or already home. Two well-shaped coeds who had completed

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finals that day celebrated the year's end with pizza and a large pitcher of beer. They were leaving the pizza shop and debating whether to walk or take a taxi to their apartment as we drove around the corner.
Isaac pulled to the curb, walked around the front of the car, and opened both doors on the passenger side of the LeMans. "Ladies," he said in his most sincere voice, "may we offer you a ride home?" I got out of the car. The girls looked at Isaac and I dressed in our formal tuxedos and giggled. They wore short cutoff jeans. One wore an Indian peasant blouse. The other a U.C.L.A. athletic department T-shirt. The taller of the two, a blonde, had the long legs of a high hurdler. She met eye to eye Isaac's direct uninhibited stare, and defiantly followed me into the back seat. Her friend, shorter, well muscled and more the sprinter type got in front with Isaac.
Isaac turned the corner again and reentered the main campus. He parked under a full foliaged tree, well away from the street lamps. Almost before we stopped, the blonde reached over and caressed my face between her long slender fingers. The last thing I noticed was Isaac positioning the rearview mirror so he could observe the scene in the back seat.
The blonde introduced herself as Jennifer and offered me her sweetest R-rated smile. Her lips were full and sensuous, especially for a tall slender lady. She leaned over again, pulled my face close, and gently parted my lips with her tongue. .
Isaac lifted the "athlete's" shirt and deftly slipped his hand inside her bra. His other hand reached for the zipper on her jeans, but her strong hand guarded that entrance, making it clear to him that he was no High Priest to enter that secret place. Still, they French-kissed passionately, and Isaac gently stroked her thighs and then the narrow strip of denim fabric over her crotch. Jennifer unbuttoned the rivet on the top of her shorts. In my shyness I was overcome by passivity.
Jennifer, sensing a neophyte, pushed me down on the back seat and placed her long body on top of mine. She was also a gentle lady, and was not about to rape a young man she realized was either a high school student or the last male virgin at U.C.L.A.
All of us were surprised, including, I think, Isaac, when he said. "Let's switch."
I did not believe what I heard. The athlete, fearing she would have to equal her roommate's performance with Isaac, was more than happy to move to the back seat. Jennifer startled me when she actually leaped over the seat into the front.
The athlete hugged me strongly, feeling safe in my passive arms. I heard the sounds of zippers simultaneously unzipping in the front seat. Jennifer's head disappeared as she bent over and nuzzled into Isaac's lap. Isaac leaned his head back and his hair fell over his shoulders into the back seat.
I woke to the sound of the front door closing. Jennifer leaned over and gently shook her friend's shoulder. Her breasts were fully exposed under her shirt. She gently kissed me on the cheek

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and they brushed against me.
Isaac asked me to move to the front. I refused.
We drove in silence. He parked near Vista Point, walked by the Victor Hugo, now long closed, past the garden and out to the gazebo.
After a few minutes I left the back seat, walked out to the gazebo and turned Isaac around so I could speak to him face to face. He placed his hands on my shoulders, preventing me from following through on my anger and taking a swing at him. "How do you feel about what you did?" I asked in my best social worker voice.
"I don't feel good at all."
"Why not?"
"Well, you are obviously angry, for one, and I don't even know her name."
"Her name was Jennifer," I said.
"Also," Isaac added, "I don't feel good about joining in a sacred union with a woman I will never see again."
I laughed at Isaac's penitent sadness. I forgave him, and myself, and we laughed together.

University

Isaac's letters always began with inquiries about the personal well-being of me and my family. He then described the courses he was enrolled in, and his reaction to their ideas. He was registered as a Physics major and minor, but encountered difficulties in the liberal arts.
Literature, Psychology, Sociology, History, and the required courses in those disciplines he considered a dismal desecration of his time. The readings he could do without the formality of the classroom. He did not like the dull repetition of text in lecture by the professor or graduate assistant. When Isaac Socratically questioned an idea or asked for a definition of terms, he was treated as an annoyance. One professor had the audacity to give Isaac a "C" in a course in which he "aced" the final because of what he called Isaac's "extremely rude classroom decorum." Isaac had called the professor, who taught Russian history exclusively from a Marxist point of view, a "romantic Marxist historyosopher." The Dean, after evaluating the evidence, demanded the professor give Isaac the grade he earned.
Isaac was not at home in the so-called scientific methodology of the liberal arts. The required literature courses actually slowed Isaac's progress in the worlds of the short story and novel. The professor of a course on "The Bible as Literature" he found to be, in his own way, as dogmatic as his own father. Isaac enrolled in a number of religious study courses and was also disappointed. He would learn about Zen Buddhism in the monastery. He did not want to memorize the names of the Sufi mystics, but to join them in their chanting of Allah's name.

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Isaac preferred his time in the Physics lab and concentrated on mastering spoken dialects of semitic languages in the language lab. He learned to sit quietly in his other courses, absorb the facts, regurgitate on the exams, and promptly forget the information, like his classmates.
Isaac was lonely. While there were no shortages of 'Jennifers' in the late 60's, Isaac wanted a permanent relationship. He remained at Princeton summers, wasted no time, completed an overloaded schedule, and graduated in June of 1970.

*****

My senior year of high school I moved into the garage of our overcrowded home, worked as a bag boy in a local supermarket, and applied to the University of California - Los Angeles and Berkeley.
I remained on the debate team, but not wanting to limit my contact with Grove, dropped original oratory. I was one of a handful of students who argued with conviction against our involvement in Vietnam in competition.
Orange County is John Birch Society country. The few students who agreed that Vietnam was an unjust war were polarized by the far right Birch views and catapulted to the far left. One or two of them went on to become student leaders in the underground weatherman cult of the Students for a Democratic Society. Others worked fervently for the nomination of Eugene McCarthy on the Democratic ticket.
I was with these students at McCarthy headquarters in Los Angeles the evening Robert Kennedy was slain. My friends in S.D.S. would soon be responsible for dynamiting a bank and other domestic violence. I would have no part of their violent anarchy.
In the Spring of 1969, I hitchhiked to Berkeley to see if I could find a place for myself at that esteemed and now notorious university. Standing on campus, facing west, I was overwhelmed by the same strong quality and sanctity of space I always felt at Laguna. I filled my lungs with the Pacific breeze. The Golden Gate Bridge was really golden, shining in the sun.

I ate at a German hofbrau, listened to political debates at a Mediterranean style cafe, and had no plans on where I would sleep the night. Turning off Telegraph Avenue, I found a park between Dwight and Haste Avenues.
Students were putting the finishing touches on flowers and shrubs they planted in a rich black sod hauled from a nearby nursery. They also built a small recreational area for children. I unrolled my sleeping bag and asked a student if it was okay to spend the night. "Why not," he answered, "this is the people's park."
I was awakened before dawn by a Berkeley cop and the construction

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crew he accompanied. The crew was large and had orders from the University's chancellor to work quickly.
I splashed water from my Bota on my face, rubbed the sleep from my eyes and watched the construction workers from the steps of the Berkeley Inn. Within hours they dug holes, set the posts, and unraveled and erected an eight foot cyclone fence around People's Park.
The Chancellor's actions were certainly within the law. The land was University property, purchased for over one million dollars for married students' housing. Initially he had seen no reason why the land could not be used for a park before the University began construction. However, when a University advisory committee on student housing recommended the land be donated to the people of the community for their park, he nervously ordered the construction of the fence.
The people sent negotiators to discuss the future of the park, but found the institution did not consider its "turnabout" open to public debate. By the late afternoon thousands of demonstrators headed down Telegraph Avenue towards the park.
I found myself in the midst of this historic battle for People's Park, being encamped in, then evicted from, its verdant lap. Yet I will not claim the right to speak with authority, clarity, or finality on the battle. The University was within its right, but acted with the stone cold emotionless insensitivity of the institution. The people were overwhelmed by the symbol of the metal fence. It grew into a monster fence, perhaps a symbol of the fence of lies our government constructed about United States involvement in Vietnam. The people reacted to it with the mindless logic of the mob.
I kept well to the rear of the demonstrators, content not to be the crowd's eyes or ears, but among the flank.
If I were a historian of this battle, I could chronicle one fact with unreserved conviction. Ronald (Obey Authority) Reagan reacted with deadly overkill, keeping his promise to "clean up the mess at Berkeley." Sixty seven people were injured, one blinded, and one killed by Reagan's forces. To this day the University has not erected its housing on the land that was People's Park. I was sickened by the entire event, and enrolled at U.C.L.A.

I understood Isaac's observations on Princeton only after my freshman year at U.C.L.A. The courses in my Biology major I enjoyed; Botany and Animal Physiology. The Hebrew classes were accelerated and challenging and I spent many hours in the language lab. The liberal arts courses were a disappointment, but I tolerated them along with hundreds of others with student military deferments. The courses were better than a trip to Vietnam. The professor of a class on Aristotle was herself, as emotionless as a

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Greek statue. The mountains of information in the survey courses I approached as a modern day Sisyphus. One professor stands out academically. He may even remember me.

The seminar in Jewish philosophy he taught was for upperclassmen and graduate students. No one questioned my presence, perhaps because my beard made me look older than my years.

Many students dropped the course after the first lecture. They were intimidated by a lecturer who spoke one and one-half hours without notes while smoking cigarettes in the old German manner, pinched between thumb and index finger. He held the white burning cylinder straight up and down when he was not drawing its smoke deep into his lungs. Often I did not take notes, especially if I felt the information was to be found in the class text. I always did an overview reading of the texts before the course began, in this case, Guttman, Husik, and other surveys of Jewish intellectual history, and of course, Gershan Scholem's Major Trends of Jewish Mysticism. The professor was not recapitulating textbook concepts, but giving his own views of the major currents of Jewish philosophy. He had the scholastic honesty to say "in my opinion" when offering a novel viewpoint. I filled eleven college-ruled pages of notes the first lecture alone.

The professor assigned an optional paper at midterm. I received a "B" on the first exam and wanted to pull my grade up to an "A". From the lecture and readings I perceived two forces in Jewish history which I called the Messianic and the Mundane. I wrote a paper without footnotes, and submitted my speculations for credit. After the next lecture the professor called out my name and asked me to speak to him after class. We entered his office and he returned my paper. I found no grade on the front and turned to the end page. Also no grade.

"I cannot give you credit for this essay."

"Why not?"

He answered my question with a question,

"Do you know the meaning of the Greek Sophomore?"

"No," I said, confused, thinking he had learned of my lower level status.

"In ten years," he said, "after learning Ugaritic, Aramaic, Arabic, German, French, and the original sources on your theme in their original languages, and Einstein's Theory of Relativity, then you can submit such a paper to me, but then, properly footnoted."

I retold this conversation to Isaac years later. I understood, I explained, the need to be able to read original source material, but not his insistence that I learn the Theory of Relativity.

"I think the professor was charmed by your theory," Isaac explained, "and simply wished that you had a proper Germanic background before welling forth with new ideas.

The paper had not been necessary. I reviewed many times two full notebooks of lecture and textual outline, and earned one of two "A"'s in the course. One other professor I remember, but I am unable to objectively evaluate her teaching skills because of our

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personal relationship. I do not even remember the content of the first lecture because of her physical presence. Professor Sheila Baldwin was an eclectic amalgamation of all the tribes she had studied. She had a strong sturdy build with broad shoulders and thick well muscled legs. Her skirt was a colorful African print that reached to mid-thigh on one side and angled down to her knee on the other. Only the embroidered colors of her cotton blouse matched the provocative skirt. A full-plumed bird perched on her back, and in miniature on two pockets which covered each breast.

In her apartment, as lavishly eclectic and eccentric as its inhabitant, she explained, as she unbuttoned the shirt, that it was the male of the species which displayed such brilliant plumage. "The Quetzal is the national bird of Guatemala and is not found in any zoo anywhere. It is," she said, as I admired the shirt and her milk-white breasts, "the ultimate symbol of freedom because it does not live in captivity." I blushed as bright as the Quetzal's plumage when Sheila noticed me staring at her hardening nipples. She laughed and told me I could have her, and the shirt, as she wrapped her arms around my neck.

The next lecture I also had difficulty focusing on the principles of anthropological research. Sheila explained the need for open mindedness and empathy when examining alien cultures. She explained why the word "primitive," used as a pejorative in our culture, was a misnomer. We were warned of the pitfall of viewing other societies only from the perspective of the values of our own culture, which in its most malignant form is called ethnocentrism. These were the only notes I took during the entire lecture. I heard Sheila's voice giving the lecture, but also heard, in melodic undertones, that same voice whispering to me as we made love. I watched her lips forming the words, remembering the sweetness. I noticed, as if for the first time, her soft pleasant face and fine silken hair. A woven band kept it out of her eyes. On the side of the band was a single feather of the eagle.

The professor did not give a damn what anyone thought about her affair with a student. She initiated affection even in public, and in front of her colleagues.

I was able to research a unique anthropological phenomenon - my own Coming of Age in Westwood Village. I was taught in lecture and in lab, various exotic techniques from the Amazons to the Zulus

On to Earthly Jerusalem

The day of my last final as a sophomore, while I was packing for summer vacation, I received a letter from Isaac. I wanted to read the letter in Laguna and tucked it away into my pocket.

The afternoon sun descending, I pulled off the freeway onto the old Indian trail that is now the Laguna Canyon Road. The Winter and Spring had seen no rain. The hills I remembered as green were faded, dull, dry and brown.

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Still, I felt like Adam in the Garden, ready to name every animal and shrub, to give them substance and existence. The black willows, canyon oaks and leafed maple were still green, especially in contrast to the hills, nurtured by their deep roots. Chamise and goldenrod hugged the rim of a pond visible from the road. Wildrose, jimson, shooting stars and golden stars, which blanketed the hills in water-rich years, were confined to the area surrounding the natural pond. Even the cattle, usually scattered over the hills, huddled near its waters.

Amazed by the wide expanse of land, I followed it to its western border in my imagination, the hills overlooking the ocean. Orange County at that time was one of the fastest growing areas in the U.S. The prices of God's good earth doubled, tripled, and in some cases went up tenfold. This sand-rimmed edge of the newest Promised Land offers some of the most dear real estate for sale today. Yet much of the canyon land is fenced and undeveloped. It had once been the Rancho SanJoaquin and its bordering mountains the Spanish had named Sierra de Santiago and Sierra de Trabuca. Today this white man's Eden is known as the Irvine Ranch.

Low clouds and fog keep the western slopes green even during the summer after a dry spring. I felt the old excitement as I emerged from the canyon to the vistas of the Pacific.

Lawn bowlers played their game on a cliff near Vista Point. The white-haired players were tanned even this early in June. Black bowling balls rolled smoothly over grass as close-cropped and flat as a drill sergeant's head.

I listened for the sounds of the past in the Pacific breeze, the shrill but melodic bagpipe music, the low, rich cadence of Isaac's voice as he chanted the Indian's song. I remembered our laughter the night of the switch.

The gazebo was empty except for a metal face that magnified the ocean's views. The faces eyes brought the distance into clear view. Dimes were deposited in its nose to activate the machine. It had no mouth. I watched scuba divers in black wet suits exploring underwater worlds in a cove. In the distance businessmen drank beer on a chartered fishing yacht. Catalina was a blur in the ocean haze.

The letter, postmarked London, contained a poem Isaac had recently completed at Princeton. It was the fruit of his visit to the Paiute Indians. I read it a number of times.

Dear Theophilos,
The poem "Wovaka's Dances" is in the Psalm section of the Final Testament.

I came to the gazebo to make the plans that would be my future. Sheila had first encouraged me to change my major to Anthropology. There was a lot more she could teach me. Then as an act of love

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she divided the road to enlightenment began with a journey away from one's native society. She gave me a brochure on junior-year abroad programs. I had also been accepted at the San Diego branch of the University of California as a Marine Biology major and considered the bright sun-filled days that would follow on the La Jolla coast. To put off a decision I walked down the path to the sparkling water of the tide pools.
Again the educated Adam, I stood in the splash zone of the tide pools and named the organisms in their amniotic worlds. I announced to the world genus and species and the more poetic common names: abalone, acorn barnacles, anemones, chitons, limpets, mussels, sea urchins, sculpin, and starfish. Naming them made them mine, but the pleasure of this nomenclature was not complete, my loneliness of Adam - alone on the Garden.
I heard the mermaids singing each to each, but without my friend, they did not sing to me.
Crouched on the rock Isaac and I made our cathedral, I considered all the options. Copenhagen was a city offered in the year abroad program. I thought of the rescue of Danish Jewry and that I would like to live among these fine Scandinavian people. The French and German universities reminded me of my Jewish philosophy professor and his scholastic advice, as did the possibility of attending the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Perhaps Sheila's advice meant she was ready for me to leave. I looked towards La Jolla, and thought of the expansive beaches, teeming with organisms to be identified. So many options.
I stood to remove the remaining part of Isaac's letter from my pocket. Perhaps I had made my decision even before reading Isaac's note. He was at Heathrow in London, between flights, and would not be returning to Laguna this summer again.
He had been accepted as a graduate student in Semitic languages at Hebrew University. He would take summer courses in conversational Hebrew and Arabic. He prayed that I and my family were well.
I sat on the rock and smiled. I would spend my junior year abroad at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

The Messiah's Sefer Torah

The Israeli Airlines' flight from New York to Tel Aviv was full of men and boys who wore black. Black jackets, shoes, socks, and Bogart brimmed hats, but black. They wore white shirts without ties, with the top button fastened. They were exhausted, and as somber as traveling salesmen. These were the Chassidim I had read about in Martin Buber's classical studies, but without the grace or joy.
A Chassid approached me with a pair of black boxes with leather straps. One was placed on the forehead between the eyes, and the other wound around the arm and hand. "Tefillin?" he asked. I recognized them from Bar Mitzvah training. I had not worn mine

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since the Hebrew teacher had instructed us to wind the straps tightly on either side, so they looked like tanks, before they were put away into their embroidered velvet bags. I still had no inclination to wear them.

An Israeli stewardess passed and smiled with compassion at my discomfort with the missionary. Earlier she noticed me watching her. I smiled, and she returned the smile with her warm brown eyes. Her hair was severely pulled back and clipped into a fanned pony tail in the manner of the native Sabras. The style accentuated her strong dark beautiful features. I smiled again. The Chassid, ignoring our innocent flirtation said again, "Tefillin?"

"Yes," I said, "Tefillin," and looked away. "You put on today?" It seemed the easiest way to get rid of this zealot was to put on the strange religious objects. The Chassid lifted his hat and with quick slight of hand placed his perspiration-stained skull-cap on my head. I had to stand up. Setting the black box on my side, close to my heart, as I wound the straps around my arm I asked, "Will this also tell me my blood pressure?" He placed his index finger over his lips and loudly shushed me. The Tefillin of the head was adjusted to my size, and the Chassid, pointing to a transliteration he had on a card, said slowly:

"Shema Yisroel Adon-oy Elohenu - Adon-oy Echawd." He stressed the first syllable, which is the way of the Ashkanazim in pronunciation. I repeated in fluent modern Sephardic Hebrew, so he let me read the next paragraph on my own.

The stewardess returned. I placed my hand on the side of the black box on my head and turned an imaginary knob. My brow furrowed like someone straining to hear a far-off voice. The Chassid, wanting to know what I was up to, asked a fellow Sectarian in Hebrew, "What is he doing?" "In truth," the other Chassid answered, "I really don't know." Pleased that the stewardess was part of the audience, I continued turning the knob. "What are you doing?" the Chassid asked. "They don't seem to be working," I answered. The Chassid, silent, looked perplexed. "These transistors are malfunctioning! I did not pick up even one extraterrestrial transmission!" The stewardess laughed. The Chassid was still silent as I removed the broad phylacteries. I thought he either didn't understand or appreciate my humor. He carefully wound the straps and placed the Tefillin in their velvet bag all the while looking straight at me. Before turning to leave he said, "Next time, you listen better." I had to laugh.

The stewardess' mood changed quickly when it was time to serve dinner. Special Glatt kosher meals the Chassid required were not aboard. The airline's food was strictly kosher, but these Chassidim would not consider even touching the meal. They even found a problem with the fruit, and so ate nothing. I finished one meal, and the stewardess offered another. Thanking her, I declined, but accepted extra large Jaffa oranges which were as large as grapefruits.

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Sky Mutiny

. The movie was announced and the Chassidim protested. They conferred with a saintly looking old rabbi with a snow white beard, who sat with a large Sefer Torah next to him. The Torah scroll was covered with a rich velvet, embroidered jacket. A delicately filigreed silver crown sat on two engraved wood handles inlaid with ivory. The old rabbi, with great reverence had snugly secured the seatbelt around his traveling companion. He even conversed with the scroll, studying its commentators from a huge book resting on his lap.

The rabbi kissed the spot where he had been reading, his finger marking the place, when the younger Chassidim interrupted his studies. They were in turn interrupted by a stewardess who lectured in Hebrew "a majority of the passengers have indicated they wanted to see the movie." "And what of us, we are almost half of those aboard?" one of the Chassidim asked. "This is a democracy, just as our state," she continued, still lecturing, "and you have the choice not to watch!" The Chassidim switched to Yiddish as they conferred. The old rabbi shrugged. "Next time we will not fly this Tref (unkosher) airline," a Chassid said. "We will allow you to show the movie if you show a short educational film produced by one of our followers." The stewardess knew she had won, but graciously assented.

The lights dimmed after the Chassidic short was threaded into the projector. The film began. An old Chassid blew the shofar at the Wailing Wall as it was being liberated during the Battle for Jerusalem during the Six Day War. In the background, Chassidim crowned Israeli army officers with the Tefillin of the Head and bound their arms in the Tefillin of the Hand. The lips of the soldiers formed prayers before they kissed the broken stone wall. The scene shifted to the Front where a young Chassidic army officer with a long flowing beard emerged from the top of his tank wearing Tefillin. The top of the black box opened as if it were hinged, and the muzzle of an anti-aircraft gun emerged from the miniature black tank. Enemy planes were shot down and exploded in the desert sands. A quote from the Talmud, tractate Sotah flashed on the screen in Hebrew and English. "If you fulfill the Mitzvah of Shema alone, you are assured of victory." The Shema is the proclamation of the unity of God, written on parchment, that is placed inside the black boxes of the Tefillin.

Salvation's Army

The film ended with an explanation of the Tefillin campaign run by

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the General of this Chassidic army from Brooklyn, New York. The Rebbe is Military diagrams traced the activities of Mitzvah tanks transversing the world to spread the word. Houses were opened on university campuses, marked by Jewish stars. Every male, thirteen and over, was encouraged to wear the black phalacterys as part of the war effort.
The Chassidim joined in with their leader, the rabbi, as he ended the film chanting:
"Ufarazta, Ufarazta, Ufarazta, Ufarazta
Yama Vekedma Siphona Venegba
Yama Vekedma Siphona Venegba"

Expand, Expand, Expand, Expand
To the West, to the East, to the North, to the South
To the West, to the East, to the North, to the South.

The film ended. The old Chassid with the Sefer Torah began a second chant which ended with the refrain "The Messiah is coming. The Messiah is coming!"
The Chassidim left their seats and began to dance in the aisles. They regrouped in front of the screen and began the afternoon Mincha prayer service. I was not needed for the Minyan of ten men, so my reluctance to join them was not challenged. After completing the preliminary Psalm they began the Amida, a silent prayer of eighteen benedictions said standing. They bobbed back and forth, reminding me of an ether toy I had when I was younger. A plastic duck was filled with the gas and lowered and raised itself in a container of water. Mourners recited the Kaddish and the final Alenu prayer was chanted. The Chassidim did not move after the service. They stood and blocked the screen.
A stewardess entered the pilot's cabin when the Chassidim refused to take their seats. The mutineers were informed by the captain in sharp Sephardic Hebrew that the plane would land and they would be bodily removed from the plane by airport police if they did not sit down immediately. The Chassidim looked towards the old Rabbi with the Sefer Torah. He motioned for them to sit. The Sabbath was approaching and any delay could risk its desecration. Travel on the Sabbath is strictly forbidden by religious law. The mutiny ended.
The Chassid sitting next to me looked on with disapproval as I adjusted my headphone for the movie. Midway into the movie the star and co-star entered their bedroom (they were married) for a mildly suggestive intimate scene. My neighbor had been looking up at the silent screen every few minutes as he read a volume that contained a digest of the major Medieval Biblical commentators. As the sex scene began he tilted his head and hat forward. The other Chassidim on the plane were doing the same.
After the movie I was offered a shot of vodka from a bottle the Rebbe had personally given to him by my rabbinic traveling companion. While an obvious incorrigible, I was a challenge he was ready to meet. He spoke to me first in Yiddish but switched

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to Hebrew when I responded to the holy tongue. The vodka was poured. I emptied the shot glass with one swallow. The Rabbi made the appropriate Blessing, and insisted I do the same for the nest round. He handed me the skull-cap under his hat and I recited the Blessing that covered vodka. The Rabbi explained that the Chassidim had flown to New York for a historic religious celebration. "The previous Rebbe, may his memory be for a blessing, said that the Messiah would come in his lifetime. He transcribed a special Sefer Torah in honor of the Messiah. After the Rebbe's soul ascended to the heavens we waited. The Talmud states that a person's lifetime extends twenty years after they pass away. This is the fifteenth year. We completed the scroll in New York. The Messiah is coming! We are bringing the scroll to the land of Israel."

The bottle emptied and even the Messiah's coming seemed plausible. The Rabbi explained that believing with perfect faith in his coming was one of the Thirteen Articles of Faith of the Jewish people. We stood in the aisle, both holding the bottle and marched up and down that narrow path. He sang many Chassidic songs but settled on a Russian drinking march, which we sang again and again after I joined in. Eventually we were asked to return to our seats. The plane began its descent into the Holy Land. I had arrived in Israel with the Messiah's Sefer Torah, along with God's holy zealots, on a silver eagle's wings.

The entire village waited for the Chassidim on their return from the holy convocation. The men and women were segregated on separate sides of the waiting area. The men pressed together, pushing for a place in front. They appeared as one continuous massive body. Their heads, in the distance, seemed to be suspended in the air.

A local bus took me to the train depot. The ancient train rolled on tracks put down by the Ottoman Empire. It pulled into Lod nearly full, and began its meander through the Judean Hills. Chassidim were as omnipresent as their God. They sat strategically huddled together, forbidden by their version of religious law to sit next to women. Bearded, without skull-cap, I was observed by these Chassidim with wonder.

A young Yemenite woman in a mini-skirt entered our compartment. She passed my seat followed by a fragrance that was sensuous and musky, more fragrant than perfume. Her cheeks were accentuated by circlets of rouge, her lips as red and moist as a cut pomegranate. I almost fell out of my seat as I turned my head, then my entire body around to watch her walk to her seat. She would be my bride, this woman, who was dark and beautiful like the tents of Kedar and curtains of Solomon. I continued to look after her, at her swarthy shoulders and legs, where the sun had tanned her. We would keep a vineyard, in these Judean Hills, no matter what her mother's sons had to say. She would be the keeper of the vineyard. I would tell her when I shepherded the flocks at midday, when we would meet to make love under a fig tree, protected from the noon day sun.

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My Biblical reverie was interrupted by the stares of the Chassidim, full of disapproval and contempt. One sat next to me, filling the empty seat, to rescue me from Lilliths snare. The Yemenite sat in the only remaining seat, near the back of the compartment. The old Chassid she sat near first moved close to the side of the train, then stood, rather than sit next to her. A Chassid reached into his luggage, removing a velvet bag. "Tefillin?" he asked.

The train began its slow ascent to the Holy City. We passed orange and apricot graves and enormous fields planted in cotton. The white puffs looked like miniature clouds waiting to be plucked. A soldier explained that the fields were owned by the many kibbutzim in the area. The furrows of the fields passed in front of my window, merging one onto the other. For miles the Earth offered up her bounties, the land seemed to be one enormous garden. After the stop at Bet Shemesh the air began to cool. We were on our way up to Jerusalem.

Eucalyptus planted close together in a row guarded the fruit groves from harsh winter winds. The Judean hills were steeper and more austere than I imagined, and more beautiful. The hills are as majestic as the lowlands of Scotland. Wildflowers including saffron, buttercups, and narcissus, appeared incredibly bright on the sun-filled hills. Oleander were everywhere.

The hills are terraced and a small stream meanders parallel to the tracks. Two verdant patches of grass formed narrow banks on both sides of the river. The stream runs swiftly, in spots, down the hills and the water froths up into white bubbles. I was not sure if air or pollutants caused the suds. Where the hills are rockiest, a quarry ground the mountains into gravel for the new nation's highways.

Native Palestinians farmed small plots along the stream's edge. Arab men sat, with their wives and children, each under their own almond tree, in the groves they lovingly tended.

Well before the train was to stop, the black-frocked Chassidim stood, waiting with expectation for our final destination, Jerusalem. We stopped, and they quickly descended the train's steep steps into the station. The Queen, Sabbath, was soon to be greeted and the Chassidim scurried to their destinations.

Jerusalem I traveled, with Blake, over known lands, but soon I would discover the unknown. The train on its iron track had reached its earthly destination.

I sat on a bench outside the train station and unfolded Isaac's most recent letter. One page of the letter was a map from the station to various sections of the old city, and from the old city to Rommema, where Isaac lived. Isaac was a most excellent tour guide, highlighting the steps on my pilgrimage with numbers, which correspond to lengthy historical explanations of each site on separate paper.

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Map in hand, I began my journey, heading North on the Bethlehem Road to a windmill which, Isaac's letter informed me, was built by the noble Jewish philanthropist Sir Moses Montifore. I sat on a bench near the windmill in the section of "New Jerusalem" called Mishkenot Sha'anaim (the dwelling of tranquility) so I could take in the view of the walls of the old city across the valley of Hinnom. Isaac anticipated my questions about the walls, answering them after a general introduction to Jerusalem.

"Jerusalem means, according to various Midrashic interpretations based on folk etymology; foundation of Peace, possession of Peace, vision of Peace, even God of Peace. Would that it could be so. The history of Jerusalem which the ancients say is the center and very heart of the world, is written in blood. If we were to stretch folk etymology, Jerusalem would mean fear of peace. The actual meaning is closer to 'founded by the God, Salem.' The famous biblical exegete, Rabbi Bahya B. Asher explains that 'Jerusalem' is in the plural to signify both the heavenly Jerusalem and the earthly Jerusalem."

Yerushalayim Shel Ma'lah, the heavenly Jerusalem, is an ideal Jerusalem. In the Book of Revelations Heaven and Earth vanish to make way for a new heaven and earth. The New Jerusalem comes down out of heaven, "like a bride adorned for her husband" after violent cataclysms and war, even in the heavens.

Apocalyptic literature contrasts the heavenly and earthly Jerusalem. Rabbinic literature, in the main, stresses their oneness. Rabbi Yohannan taught "The holy one, who is blesses, said: I will not enter Jerusalem the Upper until I enter Jerusalem the Lower (Baba Batra, T.B. 75: ...)

We cannot wait for Jerusalem to descend from the heavens. All this you see before you, every lane, every street, every alley, must be uplifted and sanctified to elevate the earthly Jerusalem.

Isaiah and Mark Twain described Jerusalem as a dismal place, the hills barren, and dull of color. Isaiah was speaking metaphorically and Twain, the innocent abroad, must have forgotten to remove his sunglasses, for he saw Jerusalem as "unpicturesque," "a pauper's village," "cursed by the deity." Even today, devoid of oak, cypress, myrtle and Jerusalem pine, which once forested her hills, she is austere, but still beautiful. The pale gray limestone of the hills, walls and houses, are honey-colored and golden in the sun.

The treeless hills (forests are being replanted) are compliments of the Romans. When Hadrian defeated the Jewish General Bar Kochba, who even the pacifist Rabbi Akiba believed was the Messiah, he massacred more Jews than tradition tells us were present at the Revelation at Sinai (600,000). Not content with the murder and rape of the people, the troops cut down all trees, some for their war machines, others to batter down walls. The soldiers, with the courage of the crowd, raped even the trees, which could not flee, leaving Jerusalem completely defoliated and violated. After the destruction, many of the birds left Judea.

Looking across the valley you see the walls which encompass the

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old city and continue for over two miles. The wall and its seven gates were built by the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman I (The Magnificent!) between 1537 and 1541. Suleiman loved his city and built the walls to protect her.

Beyond the walls, to your right, is Mt. Zion. From where you are sitting you see the Dormitian Abbey (Dormitio Sanctae Mariae) where mother Mary fell into eternal sleep. Nearby is The Cenacle (upper chamber) which Christianity recognized as the location of the Last Supper. The tomb of David also on Mt. Zion is holy to both Judaism and Islam.

Mt. Zion is recognized by tradition as the place of final Redemption. Isaiah and Micah teach "For out of Zion will the Torah (teaching, enlightenment) go forth and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isaiah 2-3). The teachings that are to go forth from Zion are explicitly defined in the next verse. "And the nations will be judged, and many will be rebuked, and they will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks, nation will not lift up sword against nation, neither will they learn war anymore." This teaching of "Zionism" has eluded the modern state of Israel to this day.

Jeremiah describes the dark idolatries and eternal torment that took place in the valley below you. Solomon erected altars here for the sacrifice of children to the fire god, Moloch, imitating the idolatries of the Ammonites. Milton describes the valley of Hinnon as "black gehenna (hell)." The Israelites are rebuked by Jeremiah (7:31) for acting in a way God "did not command and never imagined."

Before your ascent to Mt. Zion, look around you at the unbroken mountains that are Jerusalem from the evil forces, the <u>sitra achra,</u> the other side, which opposes Godliness. The mountains are round about Jerusalem, the beauty, ineffable. The sages of Israel said: "Ten measures of beauty are bestowed on the world, nine belong to Jerusalem and one to the remainder of the world. Whoever has not seen Jerusalem in her glory has never seen a beautiful city. May your pilgrimage be, as Renan's, a fifth gospel."

I folded Isaac's letter, placed it in my pocket, and walked up a steep path to Zion through a garden. Two Chassidim on a motorcycle arrived on the top of the mount at the same time as I. The one riding on the rear held on to his friend's waist with one arm, and with the other balanced a guitar behind him. One wore a round black hat made from a type of matted fur, the other a white woven skull-cap with a small tassel on the end. Both had long curled sidelocks dangling from their temples. The one who wore the white skull-cap also wore white stocking and knickers. His long frock coat was made of a shiny black material, either satin or silk. He sat with his friend on the steps leading to the Dormition Abbey and The Cenacle. The other Chassid took his guitar from its case and sang with feeling, and quite well: "Hey Jude ..." by the Beatles.

I stood with my mouth partially opened, surprised, and the

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white-capped Chassid said sincerely in a British accent, "You ought to close your mouth, you might catch a fly and they aren't kosher." The pair informed me that they were "Baal Tshuvas," returners to Orthodox Judaism and disciples of the Holy Rebbe, Rabbi Nachum of Breslov. "Our Rebbe teaches," said the singer, "that a holy melody has the power to raise one even to the level of prophecy." "Music is the basis of a true cleaving (he used the Hebrew word Devekus) to God. Music sends joy into the soul. Joy, or simcha, is the essence of the Rebbe's teachings. We should always be happy. The way to simcha is through Torah, prayer, and music."

"The holiness of the land of Israel can also bring one to joy, and to true faith," the other Chassid sighed, and began to chant. "Oy, oy, the Land of Israel, oy, oy, eretz hakadusha - oy, the Holy Land." He took a small Psalmster from the pocket of his long coat and began to recite the psalms in English. Each verse was punctuated with an emphatic sigh.

The two began to jump up and down ecstatically, reciting together. I backed up slightly, embarrassed, not wanting to be associated with the zealots. Tet, I was fascinated by the intensity of their zeal. The Chassidim tucked their heads and began turning somersaults on the ground. I backed off a bit more and felt someone standing behind me.

"The Torah teaches," the Rabbi explained, "that the Kedusha, the holiness, of Israel is so high that it is a Mitzvah, a holy commandment, to roll around in her dust." The Rabbi introduced himself. "Shalam Alechim, my friend. What's your name, where are you from, how long are you staying?" I answered all his questions explaining that I was doing my junior year abroad.

"Come learn in our Yeshiva," the Rabbi said.

"What is Yeshiva?"

"Ah, that you should ask is a sign you should attend. Take an extra year off and come learn with us - Chumash, Rashi, Gemara, Tosafos, Kabbalah." Kabbalah was said with emphasis, to guarantee my commitment.

"Thank you, Rabbi," I said. "I'll visit again." The Rabbi looked away towards another young American university student and quickly shook my hand. "Good, good, come and learn," he said. I looked over at the Chassidim reciting psalms and then quickly walked away while the Rabbi spoke to the other student.

I reentered the old city through Zion Gate. The wall around the gate was scarred by bullets. The bullets left a pox of round holes in the stone in Jerusalem's most recent battles. Turning to the right after passing through the gate, I walked along the Jewish Quarter Road and took Isaac's letter and his map out of my pocket.

"You are now on your way to the Jewish Quarter which overlooks the Temple mount on the eastern part of Mt.Zion. I will take you to visit the Ramban, Hurva, and Chabad synagogues on Shabbat. The Yohanna ben Zakkai synagogue is being reconstructed and you will pass it on your way to the Western wall.

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Rabbi Yohanna ben Zakkai is, in my opinion, the hero of the story of the Roman conquest which led to the destruction of Herod's Temple by Titus in 70 C.E. An old tradition claims the synagogue was erected where Rabbi Yohannan prayed for the peace of Jerusalem during the Roman war. The prophet Elijah, according to another tradition, will announce the arrival of the Messiah from here. Rabbi Yohannan's story is told in the Midrash in a number of places.

Ben Batiah, the head of the biryoni (zealots), was the son of the sister of Rabbi Yohannan ben Zakkai. Yohannan sent for Ben Batiah, saying:

"How long are you going to carry on this way and kill all the people with starvation?"

"What can I do?" he replied. "If I say anything, they will kill me."

"Devise a plan for my escape."

"Feign illness so all know and come to visit. Put a rotting carcass near your bed, and they will say you are dead. Your disciples will raise you from your deathbed (to take you out of the city). They will say nothing when they feel you are lighter than a corpse."

Rabbi Yohannan did so, and Rabbi Joshua and Rabbi Eliezar carried the bier to the door of the gate. One of the zealots wanted to put a lance through the bier. The Rabbis pleaded, "The Romans will say they desecrate even their own Master."

Finally the gate was opened and the Rabbi was out of the confines of the city.

Rabbi Yohannan went to Vespasian and said, "Peace to You O King - Peace to You O King."

Vespasian said, "You have forfeited your life on two counts. I am not a king, yet you call me king. And if I am king, why do you come to me only now?"

He replied, "In truth you are a king."

At this point a messenger came to him from Rome saying, "The Emperor is dead and the notables have decided to make you head of the state."

Vespasian said, "Make a request of me and I will grant it." Rabbi Yohannan said, "Give me Yavna and its Wise Men."

Rabbi Joseph, and some say Rabbi Akiba, applied the following verse to Rabbi Yohannan: "God turns wise men backwards and makes their knowledge foolish," (Isa 49:25). Yohannan should have requested that the Jews be let off this time. The wise Rabbi, however, thought that Vespasian would not grant so much, and denying this request, nothing would be saved.

The zealots felt that the inhabitants of the besieged city should fight to the last man against the Roman legions. Yohannan favored surrender and a peaceful solution to the war. The zealots won, but lost Jerusalem, the Temple, and eventually the Land. This lesson is ignored by modern day zealots.

"Past the synagogue, continue right, down the walled lane. To your right is the Kidron Valley (Valley of Jehosophat) and the

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village of Silwan. To your left is the temple mount on Mt. Moriah. I love to stand where you are now, and meditate on Jerusalem in her loveliness. The clarity of the view is startling. The sun illuminating the mountains is reminiscent of the quality of light of Greece. On some days one can almost see into the windows of the distant village of Silwan, especially if a cloud takes the edge off the intense light. Is it any wonder that this is the land of the prophet and the seer?"
"Distance also gives an excellent perspective on Mt. Moriah. Pilgrims always remember the golden dome of the Mosque of Omar, built on the site of the Temple, as brilliant as the rising sun, and the lesser, but also magnificent light of the El Aska Mosque - a clean, full silver moon."

The Wall

"Beyond the hillpath that leads to the Mograbi Gate and Moriah is the Wall. Much of the wall is buried under the debris of destruction which Titus ordered thrown into the Tyropean Valley. The foundation and a number of levels now visible are from the time of Solomon's temple, the next few from Herod's temple, and the top levels of small stone block are Turkish additions. This western wall is also called the Wailing Wall, for the tears and lamenting for the temple. Nachmanides does not mention the Wall. Perhaps because his thoughts were on that which is essential - Mt. Moriah - within the wall."
I walked toward the Wall after a complete check of my backpack and luggage by Israeli security forces. I stood on a slightly raised platform behind a fence and watched the men pray. A partition separated them from the women. Many of those praying were Chassidim who swayed back and forth before the Wall. Their side curls swung like pendulums on the sides of their heads. One Chassid wrote a note on a piece of paper and pushed it into a crevice between the stones of the wall. He then touched the wall with both hands, stood silent for a few moments, kissed the wall, and reverently moved away, never turning back.
I walked to the left to enter the prayer area. A religious guard gazed at me with the puzzled look of the observant Jews of Israel. Jews with beards wore skull-caps (keypas). The guard handed me a black paper keypa that was stapled together. I approached the wall and attempted to pray. Silence. No words came, only the feeling of being near a holy place, surrounded by a presence. The same feeling I had at Vista Point in Laguna. I closed my eyes, but still, nothing to say. A line from a poem by T.S. Eliot repeated itself in my mind.

> Waking alone
> At the hour when we are

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Trembling with tenderness
Lips that would kiss
Form prayers to broken stone.

I looked over at the partition separating the men and women, and at the Chassidim praying and swaying. "Lips that would kiss forming prayers to broken stone."
I stepped back away from the wall, found a bench, and continued with Isaac's letter.
"The birds perched on the wall are doves. They have found a house in the court of the Lord. The swallows that circle the wall and sing remind me of Capistrano. In Hebrew they are called Dror, which means freedom. They have found a nest for their young and sing praises near God's altar."
"From your letters on the flora and marine life of Laguna Beach, I assume you will wonder about the shrubs and flowers growing from the wall. These plants are what give the wall sanctity and meaning to me. The largest shrub, in the middle is a common Ephedra (Ephedra campylopoda). Surrounding the Ephedra, on various parts of the wall are golden henbane and snapdragons. The plant with the greatest symbolic value on the wall is the thorny caperbush (capparis spinosa). The "caper" flowers in Winter from bulbs that burst forth with white petals, which, when fluttering in the wind, appear that they might alight like a white butterfly. The strength of the caper is compared to the people of Israel, the most tenacious of the nations. The Talmud explains (Betza 25:) the caper, wherever it grows, is difficult to uproot. Even when uprooted, it returns in the spring with new branches that flower, give fruit, and spread its seed to new places. Even more significant is the following story in another Talmudic source (Shabbat 30:):"
Rabban Gamaliel sat and taught, "In the future," (the time of the Messiah), "trees will bear fruit every single day." A student protested, "There is nothing new under the sun!"
Gamaliel answered, "Come with me, I will show you proof in our own world!" The Rabbi took the student and showed him the caperbush.
"Now, to that which is within. Doubleback to the Mograbi Gate to enter Moriah. To your left is the golden Dome of Rock. To your right, the El Aksa Mosque."
Isaac did not mention the sign leading to the gate, printed in Russian, English, French and Hebrew:

NOTICE AND WARNING: ENTRANCE TO THE AREA OF THE TEMPLE MOUNT IS FORBIDDEN BY JEWISH LAW OWING TO THE SACREDNESS OF THE PLACE.
THE CHIEF RABBINATE

Isaac's letter continued:
"El Aksa Mosque is mentioned in the Holy Scriptures of Islam, the Qur'an, as the place of Muhammad's ascension, and is the third holiest shrine in Islam, after Mecca and Medina.

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Jerusalem plays an important role in the early history of Islam, the Qur'an as the place of Muhammad's ascension, and is the third holiest shrine in Islam, after Mecca and Medina.
Jerusalem plays an important role in the early history of Islam. At one point the Qibla, direction of prayer, was the same as the Jews - toward Jerusalem. Muhammad's vision of one world submitting to the rule of Allah included the immediate conversion of the Jewish tribes in Medina and Mecca. When the Jews refused, they were persecuted, and the Qibla symbolically turned away from Jerusalem to Mecca.
The Mosque was built in the 8th century by Caliph Waleed, son of Abd-el-Malik. The original Mosque was destroyed a number of times by earthquakes, and rebuilt. After the crusaders conquered Jerusalem in the early 11th century they used the Mosque as the headquarters of the Templar Knights. In 1187 the Muslim's General Saladin reconquered the holy city and reconverted the headquarters into a Mosque. The Magnificent Saladin in the 16th century further restored El-Aksa. Recently a Christian zealot burned Saladin's minbar (pulpit) in the Mosque. A terrible act of destruction - may his offspring atone for his misdeeds.
The Dome of the Rock covers the Rock of Moriah on the Summit of the Mount. The kepa of "Gold" is an alloy of aluminum and bronze. The noble sanctuary has eight sides, supported by twelve marble columns. The marble pillars divide the interior space into three concentric rings. Within the first circle is the rock. The scepter has not departed from Judah. The circles are the spheres of Sheloh. The outside of the sanctuary must be seen by the pilgrim to be appreciated. Similar to so many sites in Jerusalem, words fail and direct vision is necessary. The affect of the colors of the Persian tiling has been best described as "ancient Egyptian blue-green." Before you enter you will see a pool fro washing your feet. One enters the sanctuary shoeless to walk on holy ground. Inside you will see gold, black, and red stucco, and verses from the Holy Quran.
History and legend are interwoven concerning the building of the Dome of the Rock, the Qubbat Al Sakhra in Arabic. After the Battle of the Yarmuk in the 7th century, the Christian patriarch of Jerusalem, Sophranius, offered to surrender the city to Umar, Muhammad's successor. At the time, Umar was in Medina. When Umar arrived in Jerusalem he asked Sophranius to take him to the Rock on the Temple Mount. The Mount, up to that time, had been used as a junkyard and dunghill, a way to heap contempt upon the exiled Jews. It is told that jars of excrement were imported from Constantinople to pour on the Mount as a sign of scorn. Umar commanded Sophranius, according to a Medieval Muslim story, to crawl in the feces and garbage to atone for these misdeeds. Umar himself cleaned the site and erected a wooden Mosque around the sacred Rock where Muhammad alighted on his steed, Al-Burak, on his night journey to the heavens.
The Mosque to this day is known as the Mosque of Umar. His Mosque no longer stands. The present sanctuary was built by Abdal Malik

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and completed in 691. Malik wanted the Mosque to surpass the splendor of the Christian churches in Jerusalem, especially the Holy Sepulchre. The Quranic verses inside the dome stress the ascendancy of Islam over Christiandom.
The Crusades temporarily reversed this ascendancy. In 1099, armed with the Holy War and pushed by deplorable economic conditions in Europe, the Crusaders reclaimed Jerusalem. The star and crescent spire were removed from the top of the dome and replaced by a gold cross which marked the site of this important conquest for Christ. The Holy War against the infidel Muslim spilled over to include the blood of the Jews. On Friday the fifteenth of July, 1099, Godfrey de Bouillan and his henchmen burned the Jews of Jerusalem in their synagogue while they prayed.
The holy mosque of Islam was now a church, The Temple Domini. The mosque was restored in 1187 when Saladin, as
mentioned, entered Jerusalem and reasserted the hegemony of Islam.

The Rock

The Rock is chipped in parts, part of the crusaders' legacy. The chips were taken home for souvenirs. The Rock is sufficiently massive that these chips are virtually unnoticeable. The Mosque is centered on the Rock, which covers at least one fifth of the total area. On Medieval maps, the Rock is central, the center of the world. Steps descend to a chamber in the Rock. This chamber is, according to Islamic tradition, where the dead meet to pray. The fissure that runs along the Rock was noticed after the earthquake of 1067.
This great Rock of Moriah has been the central altar of Jewish sacrifice to their God from the time of the first totally human being - Adam. Moriah, in Jewish tradition, is variously derived from a number of Hebrew words including:

1) Myrrh - for the holy nettle which grows on the mount,
2) Awe, or fear, and vision (Gen. 22:1-14),
3) Light, or teaching (Rashi - Gen. 22:2), similar to "Torah,"

and

4) Exchange - or Tumurah.

It is the fourth, Tumurah, that I will tell you about.
The story is well known to you. Abraham is ordered by God to sacrifice his son. The death of Isaac would mean the death of Israel. The death of Isaac would be the murder of laughter and joy. The text says that the ordeal was a Nesah to Abraham, which some translate as "a test." But what would the test prove? Certainly God knows, as Nachmanaides explains on the verse, whether an individual can emerge triumphant from a test.
This confrontation between God and Abraham is perplexing in every imaginable way. How could God, the source of all life, command Abraham to murder his son, who was as dear to him as his own flesh

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and blood? A double transgression; murder and suicide! Why does father Abraham hasten to sacrifice his son without argument? Was Abraham, willing to argue with God at Sodom and Gommorah to save the lives of people he did not know, not out of character?

Within the word Nesah is the Hebrew word Nas, miracle. "And it came to pass after these things that the Elohim required of Abraham the miraculous, saying take your son, your only son, the one you love, Isaac, and go, yourself, to the land of Moriah and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mounts I will tell you of," (Gen. 22:1-22). Abraham, silent, could only pray for a miracle on the Mountain of Moriah - the mountain of exchange.

Religious commentators view Abraham's actions as the perfection of his faith, the ultimate testament to his fear of God and submission to God's will. This is true of both the Rabbinic and Islamic exegetes. A condensed version of the story occurs in the Qur'an (37:100-112) where father and son submit to the will of Allah, in a manner characteristic of one who embraces Islam.

At first reading, the Quranic account appears much different than that of the Torah. The term Aslama is not used in Genesis. Both Islamic and Jewish commentators agree, however, that Abraham's actions are the archetypes of the man of faith. Details sketched into the original account, through exegesis, are similar in the two traditions. Also similar is the assumption that the "paradox of faith" to use Soren Kierkegaard's phrase, "is capable of transforming a murder into a holy act well pleasing to God." This "paradox of faith" is the most difficult issue in the attempted sacrifice of his son by Abraham.

The modern commentator Nahum Sarna, a gifted and scholarly exegete, state in his work, Understanding Genesis, that the lesson of the episode is found in the relation of God to his creatures. "Biblical faith is not a posture of passivity ... the essential nature of God's faith is the non-capricious nature of his dealing with the world and the inviolability of his promises to man." I do not understand Sarna's comments. Abraham is passive, God seems capricious! If Abraham knew he would not have to kill his son, what is the point of the test?

And what of Isaac? In one Midrashic account, he is still a child, in another a man of thirty seven. If a man, the trial is one both for Abraham and his son.

The Talmud (Sanhedrin 89 :) discusses the story in a legal context. Isaac must listen to his father, an established prophet. He is assured that it is God's voice demanding the transgression of God's commandment, "Thou Shall Not Murder." In fact, the story serves as a legal paradigm for the right of the prophet to temporarily suspend the ethical dimensions of the law.

The Talmud continues with an Aggadic (Midrashic) passage. Satan and Abraham begin a dialogue:

> Satan:"Should not your father be your confidence?"
> Abraham:"Remember, I pray, whoever perished, being

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innocent?"(Job 4:7)

This is a difficult passage, but it appears that Satan, is pointing out to Abraham that his "fear of God should be his confidence," making the trail unnecessary! Satan is saying - "don't sacrifice your son!" Satan attempts to stop the sacrifice by revealing the outcome - a lamb would be exchanged for Isaac on Moriah. Father Abraham would not have to kill his son. Abraham answers:
"It is the penalty of one who lies, that even when they speak the truth they are not listened to!"
Evidently the Rabbinic sages considered the possibility that Abraham knew Moriah would be the Mountain of Exchange, and not the Mountain of Sacrifice. The rabbis voice their moral concerns through Satan, yet back away from the theological implication of an outright refusal by Abraham to sacrifice his son.
The concluding portion of the Sanhedrin Midrash shifts to a dialogue between Ishmael and Isaac.
Ishmael said to Isaac, "I am more virtuous than you in good deeds. You were circumsized on the eighth day, but I at thirteen years."
"On account of one limb you provoke me! If God were to command my sacrifice (my entire body), I would obey. Immediately afterwards "God did tempt Abraham" (Gen. 22:1). I cannot explain why God would intervene in Isaac and Ishmael's petty quarrel.
The story of Abraham (Ibrahim) and the attempted sacrifice of his son occurs in the Quran as follows:

"Ibrahim prayed "Allah, grant me a righteous son." When the boy reached maturity, Ibrahim said to him, "Son, I have seen in a dream that I must sacrifice you. Do you share my vision?"
The boy replied, "O father do what you are commanded, you will find me, God willing, able to endure" (or able to be bound, as in the Genesis narrative, va-ya'akod).
Then, when they had both surrendered (root aslam-islam) and he had thrown him on his face, we called to him "Ibrahim, thou hast indeed fulfilled the vision. Thus do we reward the muhsinin. That was surely a clear test. We ransomed the boy with a great sacrifice and left for him the salutation 'Peace upon Ibrahim.'"
The Quran does not state which son was to be sacrificed. Some Islamic traditions identify the victim with Isaac, others with Ishmael. In the Middle East today, both brothers are offered on a two-sided altar.
Rabbinic and Quranic exegesis relate similar interpretations of the story:
"Father, take my shirt from my body, so my mother will not find blood upon it and weep. Bind me firmly so I don't move, and look away while sacrificing me so you don't lose courage."
That Abraham actually attempted the sacrifice is related in both traditions.
"Abraham directed the knife towards the throat of his son, but three times it slipped and glanced aside. Then a ram appeared and

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said, "I am to be the sacrifice." It had been the offering if Able, waiting in paradise for this occasion.
One fundamental difference in the two accounts of the story in the Bible and Quran remains. In the Torah, Abraham's submission is not verbalized and it is an angel that says, "For now I know you fear God." Ibrahim's response in the Quran is based on the root S.L.M. which could mean Peace, or submission.
The most illuminating explanation of aslama and the Arabic root S.L.M. is given by the great Japanese scholar of Islam, T. Izutsu: "Aslama means that a man gives over something which is very dear ... his own self (in which case it means, naturally, total submission, self-sacrifice) or one of his best friends ... Grammatically, the verb aslama is inchoative. It marks the beginning of a new situation, the birth of a new nature. Itzutsu's definition fits perfectly with Ibrahim's actions in the Quran.
In Genesis, Abraham submits because he is Yara Elohim, a God-fearing man. In the Quran, Ibrahim submits because he is one of the muhsinin, one of the key ethical terms in the Quran. Izutsu explains that the word's semantic content may be defined in terms of "the fear of God." The Quran considers the fear of God an essential expression of religion. Submitting, the humble obedience to whatever Allah demands, is an aspect of this expression.
By fearing God, or submitting to God's will, faith is perfected. The overwhelming ethical and moral issues involved in God's demand to murder one's son are set aside in both traditions. A modern exegete, the poet Wilred Owen in his poem "The Parable of the Old Man and the Young," reminds us that "the paradox of faith," "fear" and "submission" are not always adequate cataegories to explain that actions of Father Abraham. After binding his son with belts and straps, Owen's Midrash explains, the angel calls to Abraham to stop, saying:

> "Lay not thy hand upon the lad
> Neither do anything to him, Behold
> a ram, caught in a thicket by its horns
> Offer the Ram of pride instead of him."
> But the old man would not so, but slew
> his son
> And half the seed of Europe, one by one.

This modern Midrash reminds us that the questions raised concerning Abraham's silence and passivity are not easily answered.
A ram is offered instead of Isaac. One medieval Midrash teaches that the name of the ram was Isaac. When the ram Isaac was offered he said, "Let Isaac for Isaac came."

The Mountain of Exchange, Mt. Moriah

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The same Rock on this same Mount was the final resting place of the portable sanctuary, the ark of the covenant, during the time of King David. The ark was brought from Sheloh by David, to the holy city, with singing, dancing, and rejoicing. Solomon built a spectacular temple, and Isaiah predicted its downfall because of the people's sins. In 587 BC, Nebuchanezzer came, taking the Jews into captivity. The ark of the covenant was lost.

The Rock of Moriah remained holy to the Jews, the only legitimate place to offer animal sacrifices, the ancient way of praying. Ezra and Nehemiah began the rebuilding of a modest second temple, and Herod enlarged it into a temple of splendor. Jewish naivety concerning international relations and power, and zealotry, helped topple the temple in 70 CE, leading to exile and diaspora.

Only Rabbi Yohannan, you remember, and his vision of Yaune, saved Judaism. The ark of the covenant was gone and the Jews were without a portable sanctuary to take into exile. The rabbinic solution to the crisis was brilliant. The Torah and its teachings became the Jews' portable sanctuary. Animal sacrifices were replaced by "offerings" of mouth and meditations of the heart. In part the exile would be a blessing. Jews would learn the lessons of pluralism and internationalism through the experience of being strangers in strange lands. A Judaism centered around temple service and animal sacrifice was exchanged for a Judaisn, which, like the caperbush, took root in areas at the farthest ends of the "four corners of the earth."

In Jerusalem, Jews today still study the order of the sacrifices, the manor of sprinkling the blood, and burning the fat. The intricate architectural nuances of the Third Temple are a specialty of some Yeshivot. The laws of the Pascal lamb are learned, and the manner in which they are ritually slaughtered. These religious Jews have wondered what will become of the Mosque of Omar. They do not understand that the Third Temple is already built. Modern day zealots consider ways to destroy Omar's shrine."

The day was quickly darkening, and I descended from the temple mount to a courtyard of the Wall. Isaac's map guided me through the old city to the Damascus gate and from the Damascus gate to Mea Sharim.

Mea Sharim

Isaac described Mea Sharim. "In the late 19th century, religious Jews set up this quarter, one of the first neighborhoods outside the walls of the old city."

"The architecture and structure of the quarter say much about its inhabitants. A continuous row of houses surrounds the section, a wall broken only by the many gates, which were locked at night for security. The houses are all turned inwards, facing an interior

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court which contains the essentials for an orthodox Jewish lifestyle - synagogues and Mikvot (ritual baths), water cisterns and communal buildings are Oriental in style, the overall effect is of an Eastern European ghetto. The blocks of Jersualem stone that form the substance of the Mea Sharim are a faded dirty gray. Many are covered with holy graffiti. "The land of Israel, only with Messiah's coming," or the provocative "Zionism = Nazism."
"The synagogues and their history are too numerous to describe. Chassidim from various Eastern European communities relocated their courts in different sections of Mea Sharim. With time one learns to distinguish their orogon by their garb and hats. I have spent much time with the Chassidim and we will speak of their teachings and visit their saints."
I walked and read to the middle of Mea Sharim. The streets were dim, and surprisingly deserted. The inhabitants, I would learn, were in prayer. A number of Chassidic children eyed me suspiciously. One filled his pockets with small pebbles. Near the entrance to the market I noticed a large sign in English.

With Heaven's Help

Dear visitor, you are quite welcome to Meah Shearim, but please do not antagonize our religious inhabitants by strolling through our streets in immodest clothing. Our Torah requires the Jewish woman to be attired in modest dress; sleeves reaching until below the elbow, (slacks are forbidden), stockings, married women having their hair covered, etc., are the virtues of the Jewish woman throughout the ages. Please do not offend our residents and cause yourself any unnecessary inconvenience. We beg you not to infringe upon our way of life and "Holy Code of Law." We beseech you to use discretion by not trespassing our streets in an undesired fashion. The men are requested not to enter bareheaded. Thanking you in advance for complying with our request and wishing you blessings from above for you good deeds.
Committee for guarding modesty, Mea Shearim and vicinity - Jerusalem - The Holy City.

An inner alley, parallel to Rehov Mea Shearim led me back to where I began, the southern entrance to the quarter. The Chassidic boys in white tasseled skull-caps, robes, and side locks, were miniatures of their fathers. I walked towards them, and they reached their small hands into their pockets. One shouted "Shabbos! Shabbos!" I said in Hebrew, "Yes, I know it's Shabbat." The boy asked, "Do you speak Yiddish?" "A little." "The bags are Mukza," he said. "What" I answered, "Mukza Mukza." "You shouldn't carry them on the Sabbath." The boys led me into the large marble facaded synagogue with the Hebrew Toldot Aaron chiseled on the front. More children played wildly in the foyer, chasing each other and shouting in Yiddish. I set my bags down and walked into the synagogue.

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Hundreds of men, tightly packed together, swayed to and fro as they finished the afternoon Mincha service. Each wore identical golden silk robes with blue pinstripes and woven black sashes with tassels around their waists. The Chassidim, the white tassels on their caps, and the black tassels of their sashes, all seemed to sway in unison. They began the prayer that ends each service - Alenu - almost shouting the words:

"It is upon us to praise the Master of all, to exalt the creator of the beginning, for he has not made us like the nations of all lands, nor caused us to be like the families of the earth. He has not given us a portion like theirs, nor is our destiny similar to the multitudes, for they bow down to vanity and nothingness."

At this point in the prayer, the Chassidim, in unison, spat with contempt on the floor and ground the spittle into the floor with their shoes. I had not been praying along, and could not begin. The spitting sickened me. The prayer was dedicated to an idolatry of narrow exclusiveness in the name of religion. What of the Christians who led good decent lives and worshiped the one God? What of the Muslims who in some ways were even more strictly monotheistic than the Jews? I counted myself among the families of the earth and felt we shared a common destiny. The beginning of this prayer itself seemed to me the height of vanity. The Chassidim continued:

"But we bend the knee and bow and offer praise before the supreme King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He. It is He who stretches forth the heavens and is the foundation of the earth, whose dwelling place of glory is in the heavens above, and whose manifest of majesty is the loftiest heights. He is our God, and none other. Truly, He is our King, the others are as nothing. As it is written in His Torah, 'know today, and lay it upon your heart that the Lord is God, both in the heavens above and the earth below, there is no other.'" (Deut. 4:39)

The biblical verse I repeated with the Chassidim, but was unable to say the parts of the prayer that refers to God as King, and God as He. The great Monarch in the sky, God with hoary hair and a long white beard was not a deity I could pray to. I voiced my objections to Isaac the next day, and all he would answer was that the Torah speaks in the language of common man. "Judaism rejects any anthropomorphic description of the deity. When the prayer was written, the king of each province had absolute ruler."

Why the stress on "He?" I asked. Isaac's answer was evasive. "Throughout the prayerbook God is also referred to as *Lach* you in the feminine). God is neither male nor female."

The prayer continued:

"And therefore our hope is for You, Lord our God, to speedily behold the splendor of Your strength, banishing the idols of the earth, and the false gods completely destroyed, to refound the world under the sovereignty of the Almighty. Every individual will call You by name, to turn to You all the wicked of the earth. Then You will be acknowledged by all the inhabitants of the world. Every knee shall bend toward You, every tongue shall be sworn to

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Your name, and all will take upon themselves the yoke of Your kingdom. Reign over them soon forever and ever, for the kingship is Yours, and for all eternity You will reign in glory, as it is written in Your Torah: The Lord will reign forever and ever. And the Torah says 'The Lord shall be king over the entire earth. On that day the Lord shall be one and His name one.'"

The second half of the prayer did not fit with the first. All the nations of the world united in this vision of the one God. I wondered about "the idols of the earth," since graven image worship, as far as I knew, was a thing of the past. Certainly the "false gods" of today, the idolatry of power and the cults of Mammon and violence are far more subtle than images carved in stone or wood. I also wondered about the time framework of the prayer, and if it referred to the actual idols of antiquity. I understood the verse about the Lord reigning over the entire earth forever, but not "on that day the Lord shall be one, and His name one." I repeated this part of the prayer to myself, silently.

In our synagogue in America we skipped all but the end of the prayer. We repeated sections, singing "and the Torah says the Lord shall be king over the entire earth. On that day, on that day, the lord will be one, and his name, one."

Among the Chassidim in their silk gold robes, I noticed a rabbi with a short black jacket, black pants, and a white shirt with a dark navy tie. His beard was folded in under his chin, and tied, considerably shortening its length. He stood out not only because of his blackness against a background of blue and gold, but also because of his quietness and method of prayer. While the Chassidim were swaying, gesticulating, clapping, and shouting, he stood silent and erect. While praying, he spoke in his heart, his lips moved but his voice could not be heard. Our eyes met during the Alenu prayer, and he walked in my direction.

I was sure I looked ridiculous in the white tasseled skull-cap which rode on the top of my head. A number of Chassidim had fetched their hats, for me to wear and given up when the hats proved to be so small I could not even balance them on my head. The rabbi smiled.

"I noticed you pray silently," the Rabbi said. Before I could answer he continued. "The Rebbe, Reb Arele, Rabbi Ahaaron Roth teaches that we must also praise God with silence. The Chassidim praise God with song and joy so that He will dwell in the midst of them. The prophet Zechariah, the Rebbe tells us, teaches us to be 'Silent, all of you, before the Lord, for He is awakened from his holy dwelling,' (2:13), Habbakkuk's burden is the violence of those whose worship becomes idolatry. When the Lord is in the holy temple, Habbakkuk exhorts, 'Let all the earth keep silent,' (2:20)." The Rabbi quoted the chapter and verse of his proof texts.

"Why pray at all?" I asked.

He did not answer, but opened his prayerbook and pointed to a verse at the end of the Amidah - the essential Jewish prayer, which are eighteen benediction said silent and standing:

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"May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable before thee, my strength and my redeemer,: (Psalm 19:15).
"This verse is the foundation of Jewish prayer," the Rabbi explained. "Do you find anything extraordinary in its formulation"
I thought for a long time and the Rabbi waited patiently.
"I would expect that the thoughts and meditations of our heart would come before whatever praises our lips would utter."
The Rabbi was pleased with the answer.
"Exactly, and that is the chidush, the innovation, of the verse, to teach that the words we utter in prayer are to awaken the meditations of the heart. The liturgy of Jewish prayer is a mantra that is a springboard to the eternal. I was intrigued by the idea of a mantra, and wanted to talk more, but the Rabbi silently excused himself to talk to others of the many who came to watch the Chassidim pray on the Sabbath eve.
I left my bags at the synagogue and walked the streets of Mea Shearim. A rabbi in a blue robe with gold stripes that his body barely filled, a round fur hat and a thin gray beard, entered the quarter followed by a number of students in casual attire. They were wearing the black stapled skull-caps of the western wall. Also in the entourage were a number of poor Chassidim in threadbare black jackets and black hats which were stained and dusty.
The rabbi and those following him stopped when they saw me. He spoke, and I inclined my head in his direction to hear:
"Peace be with thee," he said.
"And with thee, Peace," I answered, using the traditional response.
"Do you have a place for the Sabbath?" the rabbi asked.
"No." "Then please, we ask you to join us for kiddush." He continued, "by what name are you called?"
"My name is Laurence."
"You are a Jew?"
"Yes."
"Please tell me, by what name are you called?" I asked in the elevated Hebrew of our conversation. I put my hand out to greet the rabbi, but he only bowed in my direction as he said:
"Reb Meir."
Reb Meir's house was located in the middle of Mea Shearim. The front and back doors to his home were open. A long table which filled the living room was set and covered with a white tablecloth. Two Sabbath candles and the warm glow of a kerosene lantern were the only light in the small home. The flames of the candles dances with the wind. We all sat, and filled all the set places except for one. Reb Meir and his wife (the Rebbetzin) smiled. I could only imagine what they said to each other in their private language born from a lifetime of togetherness.
"Perhaps next week. Yes, perhaps next week our most honored guest will come."

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We stood for the sanctification of the wine. The Rabbi first softly chanted the 23rd Psalm, and then:
"This is the meal of the holy Chakal Tapuchin, the Sechinah, manifestation of the divine presence."
This meal of perfect faith is prepared, the table set (he smiled at the Rebbetzin), it is a delight to the Holy King. This is the meal of the Divine Presence and the Holy Ancient One, come to join her in the meal."
Reb Meir raised a silver wine goblet, closed his eyes, and chanted:
"This day, the sixth, the Heavens and the Earth and all their host are complete. And God finished by the Sabbath the creation he had done, and rested on the seventh day ... blessed it, and hallowed it, for on the Sabbath God ceased from all creating which had been done up to that time."
The Rabbi lifted the goblet and announced:
"Honored guests."
Then recited, looking heavenward:
"Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the world, who creates the fruit of the vine."
He cupped the wine goblet in his hand, holding it by the stem and continued:
"Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, who hallows us with your Commandments and is pleased with us, and the Holy Sabbath, in love, and willingly giving us our inheritance, a remembrance of the act of creation (first among all which is called holy) commemorating the Exodus from Egypt. It is we you have chosen and sanctified from all the nations."
"Blessed art Thou, Lord, who hallows the Sabbath."
We all sat and were given a taste of the sanctified wine.
Before the blessing on the bread which begins the meal, we ritually washed our hands. The Rabbi carefully rolled up his sleeves, took a brass vessel with water into his left hand, filled it, and carefully poured water on his right, then his left hand, three times. No one spoke between the blessing on the washing of the hand and the blessing on the bread, making them one act. The guests each washed their hands while the Rebbetzin patiently waited. She washed her hands last. We all sat.
The Rabbi uncovered two braided Sabbath loaves, one topped with sesame, and one with poppy seeds. He cut one, placed the other on top, and slowly chanted the blessing:
:Blessed art Thou O Lord, King of the universe who brings forth bread from the earth." He again raised his eyes when speaking to God, and raised the loaves when he said "bring forth."
I had many questions, especially about our Closeness and sanctity among the nations, and the implication that the Sabbath is a gift to the Jews alone.
I was silent, however, overcome by the tranquility of the Sabbath. We were served a Sabbath feast, and I wondered how this precious pair, whose house was so humble, could afford to eat during the week after feeding the beggars of Jerusalem.

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Reb Meir recited a Sabbath song in Aramaic written by Isaac Luria, the son of Shlomo. It was written in the form of an acrostic, spelling the author's name.
The questions I had thought about were asked by the other university students, and Reb Meir answered in broken English in a manner that indicated that they were commonly asked. A number of times the Rabbi looked towards his wife for help. They spoke in Yiddish. I was drawn into their partnership when the Rebbetzin asked me in Hebrew to translate their answer into English.
The Rebbetzin sat opposite me. Her face was as full and round as a full moon, and as bright. I had heard that Chassidic women did not speak to, or look at men. She had already spoken, and now stared directly into my eyes. We spoke of the Sabbath Queen and the mystics of the 16th century who stood on the hills of Safed in white linen to greet her. The Rebbetzin corrected my Hebrew a number of times, explaining nuances of grammar I had not learned in the university. She asked me about university life and the program at the university in Jerusalem.
We discussed the people of the state of Israel after I expressed surprise at the fluency and beauty of her Hebrew, and asked:
"I thought Chassidim only spoke Yiddish?"
"Ah, Yiddish," she sighed, "the much maligned tongue, still the language of universal Jewish discourse between Jews from distant continents. The assimilationists feared Yiddish and the pious Jewish worldview associated with it, and demanded that all the Jews of Israel speak a reborn Hebrew."
"Jews did need a new common language to bind them into a nation," I added.
"But listen," she said, "that's exactly my point. We had Yiddish, and the revival of Hebrew has meant only that you can buy pornographic books and magazines on every street corner, a profanation of the Holy Tongue."
The Rebbetzin anticipated my next question. "But what of the Jews of North Africa and Yemen and Iraq who don't speak Yiddish?"
"When we all lived together in the old city of Jerusalem," she answered immediately, "many of the Sephardim from North Africa knew Yiddish, or I could speak to them in Arabic. Don't look so surprised that I speak Arabic, we spoke to our Arab neighbors and got along quite well, until the Zionists came. Even the British were better than the Zionists. The Zionists attacked our language, our beliefs, everything we felt to be scared. When we live together in closed communities to escape contamination, they accuse us of exclusiveness. When we shudder at their slogan 'I am an Israeli, not a Jew' they accuse us of being unpatriotic. When we refuse to join the army and fight their enemies, who they rival in heartlessness and brutality, they call us cowards. We warned them 1948 that the time had not yet come. 'Do not raise up - love - till it please.' The state of Israel, a nation like all the nations, worshiping the flag, growing cold and unfeeling, another idol for those who worship not God, but the state.!"
The Rebbetzin offered another vehemently argued polemic on a topic

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on which she had obviously done a lot of thinking. "The Israeli Jews refuse to believe they are still in exile. Still further from their imaginations is the realization that Israel is a puppet state of the unholy aspirations of diaspora Zionism, especially secular Zionists in the United States."
"You think Golda Meir is Premier and Zalman Schazar President of Israel?" she asked rhetorically. "The economic viability of the state of Israel depends completely on rich American Jews. These Jews are secular and intellectually unsophisticated and live a vicarious Zionist fantasy through their Israeli counterparts. The triumph of the Zionists over the Arabs in six days during the '67 war makes these diaspora Zionists proud that Israel is now for its size the most powerful nation in the world."
"They send more money to finance more wars and everyone is under the illusion that the Prime Minister runs the government. The real head of the secular Zionist government is some ultra rich Jew in Baltimore or Beverly Hills, who heads the world Zionist Executive Committee. The wars in Israel began with the arrival of the Zionists and continue to this day."
The Rebbetzin spoke in Hebrew, and quickly, and I had to strain to understand all her points. The Rabbi had a separate conversation going with the other guests, but looked in our direction a number of times during the conversation. The Rabbi, waiting for his wife to make her final point whispered, "Shabbos." The Rebbetzin smiled.
"Yes it is the Holy Sabbath. Enough talk of the secular and negativity."
We sang the Sabbath songs late into the evening. The candles burned down to their wicks. I got up to leave, worried that I would arrive at Isaac's too late, and remembered I had to get my bags. The Rabbi told me not to worry about my bags. He led me to another building, into a room with beds. Two of the other guests came along. The beds were piled high with blankets and quilts against the cold Jerusalem nights. I got into bed not feeling tired. A scent of freshness and sunshine was on the sheets. I wanted to think of all I had seen and done since arriving in Jerusalem, but immediately feel asleep.

*****

I awoke feeling rested and warm. The sun had finally entered the high window of the room as I emerged from sleep's dream kingdom. I had been a Chassid. The Rebbetzin my mother. The fingers of my right hand rested on my temple where the sidelocks had been. My hat was too large and I did not need to pull it down over my eyes when women walked by. My head was bruised from walking into streetlamp posts. My body ached from collisions with full-breasted women. This room had been part of the dream, the Chassidic guests my older brothers. I was awake now, but still in

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the room of the dream. My "brothers" were up, and I assumed, at prayers. I kicked the blankets off and stretched.
The Chassidim returned from the Sabbath morning prayers. They "tzutzed" a number of times and said "Nu Nu." Trying to avert their eyes, they stared at my bare legs. I covered them. One said to the other, "Nu-Nu-Negel-vasser" and went to the sink to fill a brass vessel with water. The water was brought to my bedside in a container. The Chassid said "Nu-Nu."
The meal of egg bread, sweet wine, soup, honey carrots and bean stew with large chunks of red braised meat was well-prepared. I was ravenous and overate, even sampling some of the meat. My roommates stared at me and somehow ate even more than I. They hurried us through grace. They returned to the room for a long Sabbath nap, and I went for a walk.
I did not have Isaac's map, but thought I remembered the way to his apartment in Rommema. I took a wrong turn and found myself on Yaffa Road. An old home guard soldier with a rifle directed me to Isaac's neighborhood.
Isaac's building overlooked the Allenby War Memorial and central bus station. The buses were visible from Allenby Square. Parked close together in tight rows they rested, along with all of Jerusalem, on the Sabbath. The front of the building contained a magnificent pillared entrance. The door was locked.
The building was surrounded by a garden. I walked through it to a side entrance. This was not an apartment, but some type of school. To the left, an open staircase. To the right, a walnut paneled room with a Holy Ark and desks for students. The desks each contained two chairs facing one another. Otherwise the room was empty.
I exited for a moment to check the address once again. This was Isaac's home. A thin pale student with wispy black beard, black hair, and black skull-cap descended the staircase and asked if he could be of help.
"Yes, I am looking for Isaac."
"Ah, Yitchak," he said, using the Hebrew pronunciation. "Yitchak just left looking for a friend." "Ah," he said again, understanding. "I told Yitchak he would never find you. You are Aryeh, correct?"
"Yes," I answered, startled to hear my Hebrew name.
"How are you called," I asked, thinking in Hebrew but asking in English.
He smiled and answered in Hebrew, "I am Shlomo." He paused and thought. "You'll never find Yitchak. Come, let's learn."
I followed Shlomo into the paneled room. We sat at a desk near a large bookcase. I examined the tomes.
"These are Yitchak's," he said. "I am his study partner."
Shlomo immediately sensed my ignorance.
"Didn't Yitchak tell you? This is a Yeshiva."
I looked at Shlomo dumbly. Isaac wrote little of himself, always asking about my parents, my sisters, and Laguna. Isaac spoke of studies, but I assumed he meant university.

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"Did Isaac drop out of his university program?" I asked, panicked.
"No, no." Shlomo smiled. "I attend also. Yitchak and I are in the same graduate program."
I found myself annoyed with this Shlomo character. He was Isaac's study partner. He attended university with Isaac. I hoped he was not also Isaac's roommate. I did not like the way he called Isaac, Yitchak. He rolled the "ch" in his throat like a rasping German. Isaac's name sounded harsh on his lips.
Shlomo decided we should learn even though I was completely indifferent to his request. He expounded on the weekly portion of the Torah reading. I looked at him but did not listen. Then I noted the books in Isaac's bookcase, giving Shlomo minimal eye contact. Jastrow's Dictionary of the Talmud in English, several books on Aramaic grammar, and a miniature set of the Talmud itself in three thick volumes. A new magenta jacketed set of six large volumes of Maimonides Mishna Torah was on the shelf below, along with a used set of the Schulchan Aruch. Other books with exotic titles I assumed to be commentary: House of the Choice. The Face of Joshua. The Grammar of the Scribes, Order of the Light, etc. Other titles must have been acronyms for rabbis, such as Rashba, but I had never heard of the man. One set of volumes bound in blue on the top shelf with the Biblical commentators caught my attention. Akedat Yitzchak. The binding of Isaac.
Shlomo asked me to repeat the main points of his discourse. I stared at him and smiled. "Nu" he said. "Let's go out and find Isaac."
We exited the Yeshiva, turned left at Allenby Square past the "Neighborhood of the Rabbis" and Rokach Square, to the street of the Kings of Israel. Shlomo went into the Rizhner Yeshiva and Porat Yosef Yeshiva to find Isaac. We checked the small synagogue of the Yemenites in Mea Shearim, Colel Chabad and Toldot Aaron where I had been the evening before. "Perhaps Yitchak is at the hotel," Shlomo speculated. He slipped into another small Chassidic synagogue and I ducked around the corner. Enough of this frantic search. I needed time to be alone, to think of Isaac in Yeshiva.
I saw Shlomo walking in my direction and entered a courtyard with another small Yeshiva. The Yeshiva's sign was in Hebrew and English. Esh Ha Simcha - The Ecstatic Flame. I entered, expecting Shlomo to follow. He did not. I had lost him.
The Talmudic academy was beginning the afternoon Mincha service for the Sabbath. They were seated, chanting, but in unison, the Ashrei prayer:
"Happy are those who dwell in Your house, they will praise you forever."
This was a Baal Tshuva Yeshiva. Many of the students were American. Some dressed in bluejeans and word their hair long, crowned with a black skull-cap. Others had cut their hair into marine crewcuts, leaving long sidelocks at the temples. They wore black or dark blue suits with black hats. One of the penitents, with a thin elegant nose, thin lips and blondish sidelocks had

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made the transition directly to Chassid. He pranced about as proud as a caterpillar in a gold silk robe with blue silk sash, white stockings and shiny black loafers. His pride and joy was obviously his tall fur hat which he wore at a severe rakish angle. The hat added over a foot to his stature and accentuated his feminine features.

The students prayed with ecstasy and abandon. They were genuinely happy to be in God's house. A number of real Chassidim from the neighborhood joined the service. The Chassidim bowed and swayed in prayer. The students bowed swayed deeper. A student stretched out his arms, looked heavenward, opened both his hands, palms up, and proclaimed:

"You open your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing."

A neighborhood Chassid clapped his hands and recited:

"My mouth will utter the praise of the Lord, and let all flesh bless his Holy Name forever."

The students also clapped, but louder, when they repeated the verse.

I prayed along quietly thinking of the simple meaning of the prayer.

"And a Redeemer shall come to Zion and to those of Israel who repent of their transgressions ... My spirit which is upon you and my words which I have put in your mouth shall not depart from your mouth, not from the mouths of your children, nor from the mouths of your children's children" declares the Lord.

The next section of the prayer was in Aramaic and I did not understand it all. The prayer continued in Hebrew:

"The sovereignty of the Lord is established forever and to all eternity. Trust in the Lord forever and ever... Those who know your name put their trust in you who has not abandoned the Seekers."

The Ark was opened and we rose for the service of reading the Torah. We sang:

"Whenever the Ark of the Covenant went out, Moses would say 'Arise O God. Your enemies disperse and your foes flee, for from Zion shall the Torah go forth and the word of Adonai from Jerusalem'"

The Torah scroll was removed from the Ark. All reverently kissed the scroll, and the Torah was places on a reading stand.

The dandy in the gold silk robe and blue sash walked toward me and asked, "Cohen? Levi?" "No, Israel." I answered feeling detached from this ancient tribalism. I did not want the honor of ascending to the Torah reading. Many recited the blessings by heart from Bar Mitzvah training and I did not trust my memory. A student was called for the priestly portion of the reading. After he finished the second blessing all stood. The prancer announced:

"Ya-amod Rebbanu Ha Rav Mordecai Ha Levi ben Itamar Mereva Satman - Levi."

The Rebbe had been hidden behind his prayer podium and under the oversized prayer shawl he wore over his head. The Rebbe adjusted the silver brocade collar of the shawl around his face. The prayer shawl, with broad black stripes on white, completely

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covered his body. The ritual fringes brushed the floor. The Rebbe looked at me with familiarity, as though he had been studying my face. The features of the Rebbe's face were fine; a delicate aristocratic nose, thin lips and small ears with large anomalous lobes. His blue eyes were magnified by his glasses into a kaledeiscopic spectrum of blue that was mesmerizing. His face was set in a frame of red hair and red beard, white hot at the edges, with two bursts of flame leaping from his temples. We remained standing for the Rebbe's portion and his blessing on the Torah.

I was called for the third reading. I prayed I would remember the blessings. The anxiety was unnecessary. The blessings were written on a placard in large Hebrew letters. The Hebrew was even transliterated for those who could not read. After my portion was recited by the reader and I said the second blessing, the Rebbe leaned over and asked me when I arrived in Israel. He explained that one arriving safely after a long journey was obligated to recite a special blessing. The Rebbe turned to the "Blessing of Thanksgiving for Deliverance" and handed me his prayer book. He was delighted when I recited the blessing clearly without his help, in Hebrew.

"Blessed art Thou, Adonai, our God, King of the universe, who bestows goodness on those in need, and has bestowed goodness on me."

The congregation responded:

"Amen. May he who has bestowed goodness upon you, always bestow every form of goodness upon you."

The Torah was returned to the Ark and the congregants stood praying silently the Benediction to themselves.

I repeated the first line to myself a number of times: "My Lord, open my lips and my mouth will declare you praise." I finally prayed.

I skimmed the prayers, stopping to slowly read and meditate on the last blessings.

Blessed art Thou, Adonai, who blesses his people of Israel with Peace. May the words of my heart and the meditation of my heart be acceptable before you, Adonai, my strength and my redeemer.

My God, guard my tongue from evil and lips from murmuring. To those who curse me, let my soul be silent ... Hasten to annul the consul and frustrate the design of those who plot evil against me ... He who makes peace in his heavens, may he make peace for us and all Israel, and say, Amen. May it be your will, Lord our God, and God of our Fathers, that the Holy Temple be speedily rebuilt in our days, and grant us our portion in Your Torah.

A moment after I finished, the Chazan began the repetition of the silent benedictions. I repeated the words in an undertone, following his cadence:

"Blessed art Thou O Lord; our God and God of our fathers,
The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob,
The Great, the Mighty, the Awesome God, exalted
bestowing goodness to the chassidim, Lord of all

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who remembers the human kindness of our ancestors and who
will bring a Redeemer to their children's children
for the sake of His name, and with Love."
O King, Thou art our helper, Savior, and Shield. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, Shield of Abraham."
The Chazan bowed at "Thou" and raised himself at "Lord."
The Rebbe rose and walked to the Bema where the Torah was read. The students and Chassidim joined him and joined hands in a circle around the Bema. The Rebbe noticed my reticence and nodded with his head for me to join the circle. We repeated the next benediction with the Chazan, slowly, bowing inwards, then straightening as we circled the Bema singing and repeating:
You are One And who is like your people Israel
and your name is One One nation on Earth
The Chazan sang the words of the prayer and we danced and hummed a wordless tune:
"Splendor is magnified and on the Sabbath it is a crown of redemption. A day of rest and hallowing given to your followers. Abraham rejoices! Isaac is exuberant! Jacob and his sons rest therein. A rest of Peace, Serenity, and Security. A perfect rest which you favor. May your children recognize and know that from you is their rest, and by their rest sanctify your name."
The dance ended. I had joined hands with the Rebbe and my hand felt hot where he had held it. The Chazan completed the repetition of the Benedictions. The service finished with Alenu and I prayed the parts I did not find offensive.
The Rebbe invited me to his home for Seudah Shleshelt, the third Sabbath meal. The invitation was delivered by the prancer. He called the meal Shala Seudas. "Come to the Rebbe's Tisch for Shala Seudas. He personally invites you." The messenger did not sound altogether pleased that I had been invited.
The Rebbe's Tisch was held on an oversized table at his home. Ten men from the congregation were invited. The Rebbe's wife and another woman set the food on the table. They both wore black scarves tightly bound to skulls that must have been shaven. They also wore identical black silk dresses draped loosely over their bodies. The dresses were worn to a point exactly halfway between the knee and ankle. The sleeves covered their arms to the wrist. Their hands were exceptionally white in contrast to the dark sleeves. They wore identical gold wedding bands. I looked at the hands and the band of the younger woman and tried to make eye contact. She looked at me sadly and vacantly, then avoided my stare. The women served with the aloofness of servants. The younger woman looked towards her husband, the prancer. He avoided her eyes.
The woman sat separately with the female grandchildren, and daughters and granddaughters of the Rebbe's followers. Their room adjoined the kitchen. One of the grandchildren, a beautiful child of four or five with wide aqua eyes, stared at me. I smiled. She looked around to see if she was being watched, and feeling momentarily safe, smiled back.

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I sat near the Rebbe and listened as he chanted the 23rd Psalm. He slowly repeated a prayer in Aramaic and then taught some laws from the Schulchan Aruch, which to this day is the authorized code of conduct for Orthodox Jewery.

1)"One should be meticulous in fulfilling the order of the Seudah Shleshet. If one is satiated let them fulfill their obligation by eating a portion of bread the size of an egg. According to some Rabbinic authorities the obligation may be fulfilled with a slice of bread the size of an olive.

2)The time of Seudah Shleshelt is from one half hour after midday until sunset only. Before or after that time one does not fulfill their obligation.

3)The meal is obligatory for women as well as men. All laws of the Sabbath apply equally to men and women. This includes breaking bread with two loaves of Challah at each of the three Sabbath meals. The women may be included in the blessing of the men."

The third law I felt the Rebbe directed at me. I could not keep myself from staring at the women in their separate room. Were they content in their separateness? The women served the remainder of the meal, and with steadfastness avoided my stares.
The Rebbe asked the prancer to say a Stikl Torah, a short discourse on the Torah in honor of the meal. The prancer looked in my direction and taught:
We learn in Avos:
Yosi the son of Yochanan of Jerusalem said: Let your house be open to all, treat the poor as members of your own home and do not indulge excessively in conversation with the women. Concerning one's own wife this is said. How much more so with the wife of another! From this the Sages have concluded: Anyone who indulges excessively in conversation with a woman causes evil to himself, neglects Torah, and in the end will inherit Gehennon (Hell).
The prancer expounded on this Mishnah in the Ethics of the Fathers, still glaring at me. I ignored him and smiled at his daughter.
The Rebbe said his own Devor Torah.
"Ah, my son-in-law speaks from the Ethics of the Fathers. A good text. A basic text. We must always remember the basics. Moses received the Torah from Sinai and passed it to Joshua. The Mishnah uses the Hebrew, Masra. A basic Torah from Moses on Sinai, passed to Joshua and from Joshua to the Elders, from the Elders to the Prophets and the Prophets passed it on to the Rabbis of the Great Assembly. An unbroken chain, the Torah is passed from God to Moses to the Children of Israel. Mesorah. Our unbroken golden chain of tradition. This is basic, and essential.
The Rabbis of the Great Assembly taught three principles:

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1)Be deliberate in judgment
2)Raise up many disciples
3)Make a fence around the Torah
"Three basics. Be deliberate in judgment. This is directed to the judge. Take time in your legal deliberations. Don't rush to judgment. We can also learn from this principle. Not all you see before you is as you first perceive it to be. Take your time. Be deliberate in judgment."
"Raise up many disciples. Ah, Baruch Hashem - Thank God. Many students all well versed in the wisdom literature. Ah."
I sat listening quietly enchanted by the Rebbe's English, which he spoke fluently, but with an Eastern European accent. I liked the term wisdom literature.
The Rebbe continued: "A fence around the Torah. Essential. Another basic. The masses would trample the garden and even cut down the tree. A fence is needed to protect the Holy Torah. A Hedge. As the rose has her thorns to protect the perfect flower,"
I wondered about the fence. It might protect the Torah, but also prevent all from entering the garden.
The men got up to wash their hands after the meal, in preparation for Grace. I wandered into the women's dining room. The women were in the kitchen. Dishes were stacked in high towers, waiting to be cleaned after the Sabbath. I found a book and sat on the couch. The young girl came over and sat next to me. She spoke a little English. I wished her a good Sabbath and smiled. She stared at me. Her eyes were the color of the sky reflected in the sea. The pupils dilated into large black islands. I could hear her lashes flutter. She leaned towards me to look into the book, and kissed the back of my hand. I put my arm around her and we both stared blankly at the book.
The prancer came into the room and glared. He ordered his daughter in Yiddish to go help in the kitchen. He stared and paraphrased the Song of Songs. "I have a daughter; she has no breasts yet ... if she is a wall I will build around her a palace of silver. If she be a door I will board her up and enclose her with beams of cedar." I stared back, mystified. The prancer made me feel unclean. I imagined the Torah and his daughter enclosed by a fence that reached into the heavens. The top of the fence was hedged with barbed wire. I followed him into the men's dining room.
After the Grace, the Rebbe spoke of the departing Sabbath. "Now is a time of sadness and expectation. The Sabbath is leaving for another week, but perhaps with evening and the first stars, the Messiah will come to redeem his people." My thoughts were interrupted by a knee rubbing mine. The Rebbe began a song:
I believe with perfect faith
in the coming of the Messiah, the Messiah
and even though He is slow in coming
still I await him
every day, that He will come
every day that He will come.

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We lingered over the third meal until the day passed into night. A Chassid saw three medium-sized stars in one glance and the Sabbath ended. We left the Rebbe's dark table and went to his synagogue for the evening prayer and Havdalah, the service that officially marks the separation of the Sabbath and the week to come.

The Rebbe informed the prancer that I was to hold the braided Havdalah candle. He glared at me again, now with open hostility, and searched my face. I did not know what he was looking for, what he thought I might be hiding.

The Rebbe performed Havdalah. He cupped a goblet of wine in his right hand and recited selections from the psalms and then "who creates the fruit of the vine" blessing over the wine. The goblet was filled to overflowing and purple wine spilled on to his hand. He transferred the cup to his left hand, and with his right, lifted an ornate handcarved wooden spice box and recited the appropriate blessing. The spice box was passed around and the Rebbe returned the goblet to his right hand and recited:

"Blessed art Thou, Adonai, our God, King of the universe, who creates the lights of fire."

The Rebbe half cupped his hands and looked at his fingernails. The fire of the candle I held was reflected in his glasses. The Rebbe's eyes were aflame. He recited the concluding benediction:

"Blessed art Thou, Adonai, our God, King of the universe, who makes a distinction between sacred and profane, between light and darkness, between Israel and the nations, between the seventh day and the six work days. Blessed art You, Adonai, who distinguishes between sacred and profane."

The Chassidim and students prayed more prayers. The Rebbe extinguished the candle with the wine after he drank most of the cup. The dandy and others dipped their pinkies in the wine, putting it on their jackets, on their eyelids and behind their ears. The Sabbath's perfume to be savored in the week to come. The dandy tersely informed me the Rebbe wanted to speak to me.

The Rebbe and I had a lengthy discussion about the final blessing of Havdalah. Again I was disturbed by the identification of Israel with light and the Nations with darkness. "We" the scared. "They" the profane. I did not view the world from this We/They dichotomy.

The Rebbe argued that I missed the point of the Havdalah. "Distinctions." "The word Havdalah is similar to kedusha, holiness. The Sabbath begins with kiddish, an act of distinction and holiness. The act of kiddish is completed in Havdalah." I did not feel he spoke to my point but submitted to his stronger convictions. I also did not argue when he told me we would continue our discussion at his home.

The Rebbe's study was enclosed by walls of books, including holy books in Hebrew and Aramaic and a section of Jewish spiritual classics in English translation. The Rebbe's English was on the elevated level of these translations, the wisdom literature.

The study was large; a room he lived in and where he received his

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Chassidim to dispense spiritual guidance. My eyes traced the pattern of the Persian rug we walked on. The Rebbe drew the heavy magenta curtains. A key hung on the inside of the door to the study.

We sat on a couch as long and large as a bed and drank tea prepared from an antique samovar that had belonged to the Rebbe's grandfather. His grandfather, the Rebbe explained, was the head of a Chassidic dynasty in eastern Europe and a descendent of Rabbi Israel Bal Shem Tov, the founder of the Chassidic movement. We both looked at a portrait of the Chassid etched in lines of small Hebrew letters, formed from the text of his Chassidic text Esh Hasimcha from beginning to end. The Rebbe continued to stare at the text that was his grandfather. I noticed he held his teacup with the daintiness of an aristocrat. The Rebbe stopped looking, or reading, and indicated that he was ready to discuss the wisdom literature.

"You are no doubt familiar with," the Rebbe began, "the text of the Bible. The Five Books of Moses, Prophets, Writings. What we refer to as Tanach. This is the basis of the wisdom literature."

"I have also studied Mishna and Gemora and Midrash," I offered.

"Ah, excellent, excellent. They are the basis of the oral tradition of the wisdom literature."

"If it is an oral tradition, why is it written?" I asked.

"Yes," the Rebbe said. "You know how to question. This is the basis of the process of the oral section of the wisdom literature. You have a promising future as a Talmudist. We studied today at Shalla Shudas, a test of the wisdom literature, 'Moses received the Torah at Sinai." The Torah Moses received was not only a text, but also it's authoritative interpretation by the oral tradition. Moses also received, you remember, the Hebrew word is kebel, the mystical interpretation of the holy text, the kabbalah. This was also passed on by Moses as an oral secret mystical tradition. After Moses, the wisdom of the Jews diminished each generation. The ability to remember the vast quantities of oral tradition was lost and our great teachers of the Mishna began to write down these summations of the Law. These were finally redacted by Rabbi Judah the Prince in the second century C.E. in the form we now study as the written Mishna."

"From the second to the sixth century, our holy teachers studied the Mishna. Collections of oral traditions not codified in the Mishna were also extant at the various Rabbinic academies, and these, along with the Mishna, became the basis of the Gemora, oral discussions of the Mishnaic traditions that were eventually redacted, in Palestinian and Babylonian Aramaic, by Ravina and Rav Asi. The Gemora, is in a way, similar to the minutes of the proceedings of the Rabbinic academies concerning the legal nuances of the Mishna. Their abbreviated form leaves each line open to discussion and interpretation. One cannot be a good Jew without being fluently conversant in this material."

"The process continues today" I asked.

"Yes, exactly. But back to the Gemora." The Rebbe controlled the

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direction of our conversation. He gave the answer in what sounded like a practiced speech. "Rashi, Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki Zal frames the text of each page of the Talmud, on the inside."
"What then is the difference between Gemora and Talmud?"
"Essentially they are the same, the teachings of our sages. Gemora technically refers to discussions on the Mishna from the second to the sixth century. Talmud includes Mishna and Gemora."
"Again Rashi frames the inside of the text, giving a simple explanation of its meaning. Rashi's disciples, the Baeli Tossafot, comment and cross reference of the outside of each page. The Mishna is arranged in six orders including agricultural laws, the holy holidays and the Sabbath, the laws of women and family life, damages, the holy sacrifices, and purities and impurities. The Talmudic discussion reads like a stream of consciousness, following legal principles. A debate of the four main categories of damages shifts to a similar problem on the Sabbath in defining the thirty nine categories of word forbidden on that day."
"In other words, one must know the entire body of Talmudic literature to make sense of any one section."
"Yes, again quite perceptive of you."
The Rebbe took down a giant folio album of the Talmud, tractate Brachot. He opened to the first page. I had studied this text briefly my final year in Hebrew high school. Our text had been voweled and punctuated. The actual text of the Talmud now before me contained only consonants, and no punctuation. Rashi and Tossafot were written in an exotic script I could not read.
"Imagine," the Rebbe said, "an encyclopedia written without punctuation and arranged by abstract principles rather than by subject matter."
"Thank God for Rashi," I said, looking for another compliment.
"Yes, thank God."
The Rebbe continued his speech. "The Talmud is the longest sentence ever written. The Jew must learn to vowel, punctuate, read, and sing this sentence if he is to grasp the wisdom literature. This sentence is the basis of the guidelines our tradition sets for every action in our daily lives."
"If one is not conversant in the entire body of the law, then he will not know how to act Jewish?" I asked. The Rebbe chose to interpret my question as a statement, and expression of intent.
"Come, let's learn."
He read the first statement of the first Mishna in the Talmud.
"From what time do we say the evening Shema?"
I remembered from high school that the Gemora asks why we begin with the evening and not the morning and raised the question myself. I remembered and recited the answer. The Rebbe was pleased.
I noticed that the root of the first word, Meaimatai, was similar to the root for the Hebrew word for fear. I retranslated the Mishna, turning its question into a statement:
"With awe, read the evening Shema."
The Rebbe removed his glasses and sighed. "Already you are

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discovering the secrets of the Torah. You have a great future in Judaism, Reb Aryeh ben Avraham."
The Rebbe continued his speech in the wisdom literature.
"The Generation of Maimonides, like our own, was weak and unlearned. They could not recite the sentence one needs to know to be a Jew. People forgot the study of the Talmud. In the time of the Mishna, the law was arranged topically. If one needed to know how to tithe their produce, they looked in the first order of the Mishna on 'Seeds' and so on. Maimonides evaluated all of the legal material up to his time and rearranged the Gemora into a compendia of Jewish law accessible to all, in Hebrew, by topics. A monumental accomplishment. Maimonides, the Rambam Zal called his work, Mishna Torah, a second Torah.
"What does Zal mean?"
"Zechrono Lebracha, may his memory be a blessing. The Rambam gave the Jews an authoritative distillation of the Gemora in one work."
"So it was no longer necessary to study the Gemora?"
"This was the fear of some of the Rabbis. The Gemora is still the basis of all study in the wisdom literature. The Rambam thought his work would be a final distillation, but may commentaries have been written on the Mishna Torah, and other authoritative works followed. Still, "the Rebbe said, "from Moses to Moses, there is no one like Moses."
"The main authority today, and his authority is final, is the Schulcan Aruch of the Rabbi Yosef Caro Zal."
"Then I must read the Schulcan Aruch for the most modern distillation of the wisdom literature."
"Yew."
"Excellent," I said. "Where can I find the laws pertaining to the rebuilding of the Third Temple on the Mountain of Moriah?"
"Actually, this is not in the Schulcan Aruch," the Rebbe stammered. "You must go to Maimonides." The Rebbe was silent a few moments and then continued. "The Schulcan Aruch is like the portable Ark of the Covenant the Jews received at Sinai. It serves its function outside the land of Israel. Maimonides' Mishna Torah is like the Temple itself. It serves the functions the temple served once the Jews are returned to their land by God."
I thought of the three laws the Rebbe had taught at Seuda Sleshet. They seemed overly meticulous and picayune. The laws relating to women were outdated and discriminating. I almost asked if men could be included in the blessings of women, but asked instead:
"The world has certainly changed dramatically since the 16th century. How does the Schulcan Aruch keep up with these changes?"
"The Schulcan Arch is not a fixed text chiseled into stone. Each page is surrounded by commentary and super commentary. Eastern European Rabbis added their own interpretations and customs. Decisions based on the Schulcan Aruch are made to this day."
"So the Schulcan Aruch is the classic text of the wisdom literature. I will have to read it."
"You do not read the Schulcan Aruch. Reb Aryeh, you study it. In

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answer to your question, in matters of Halacha Le Masseh, which means: the laws of acting in our everyday life, how to rise in the morning, what blessings to say, when to say the morning Shema, the proper blessings over food, the evening Shema, the Shema before retiring, the laws of the Sabbath from kiddush to Havdalah, the laws of holidays, marriage, divorce, lost and found objects, and so on. Yes, the Schulcan Aruch is our authoritative source."
"This is fine for diaspora Judaism," I said, "but now that we are in Israel?"
"Reb Aryeh, we are still in the diaspora."
Not thinking, I said, "I am in Israel."
The Rebbe ignored the remark.
"The laws of the future," he explained, "in a redeemed Israel and Jerusalem, may it come speedily in our days, the Hilcheta de Meshicha, the laws of the messianic time are to be found in the Rambam Zal's Mishna Torah.
"I will study those laws!"
"Where?"
"In university."
The Rebbe scowled. "The university world has no use for the Messiah. They intellectualize our belief on the coming of the Messiah into a belief in the messianic age. Reformers. They imagine that the state's establishment ended the exile. Instead it marked the beginning of exile's darkest hours." "Zionism," the Rebbe said, almost spitting out the word. "The latest and most devious Messianic pretender! Forget about university. From the university you get only an ivory tower view of Judaism. A tower of Babel that claims to speak a language of wisdom and universality. To learn wisdom you must descend the tower and sit in an institution that teaches real wisdom, based on the truth, the Torah. The root of the word Yeshiva is Yoshav, sitting. You want wisdom, sit, learn, meditate on the eternal truths of Torah."
"Will you come and learn with us?"
"Who were the other Messianic pretenders?" I answered his question with a question.
"The most famous, of course, Yuski."
I squinted my face in ignorance.
Yehoeshua. He wouldn't even mention the name of Jesus. He said "Yuski, may his name be erased and his bones be ground to dust. His teachings in the so-called New Testament became the basis for a renegade religion that eventually hacked at the bough from which it grew. The tree can survive the loss of the limb, but not the limb the death of the tree."
"I haven't the time to list all the messianic pretenders in our heritage. The messiahs of Yemen, Rabbi Avraham Abulafia Zal, Asher Lemmlein, Molkho, Reubeni, Shabbetei Zvi, Zal." The Rebbe reddened as though he had made a mistake. I was unaware of the cause of his embarrassment.
"Some of these pretenders had the potential to be the Messiah, but failed. Others were out and out frauds and charlatans."
"And what does Chassidism teach about the Messiah?"

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"We believe with perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah."
"That's it?"
"Yes, in its essence. Each Jew has within himself an element of the Messiah which they must bring to flower and fruit. The Messiah comes when we reach this inner perfection. Each Jew has a spark of the Messiah."
"Even women?" I asked, unable to hold my tongue.
"The women's spark burns in her husband," the Rebbe answered. "We must not be afraid of distinctions," he added. "Nu," the Rebbe said. "Reb Aryeh, you cannot avoid the question. Will you come and learn?"
"I really need time to think," I stammered.
"Nu, well think. Look into yourself. Take an accounting of your soul. To choose to be a Jew, to exercise you free will, you must master the wisdom literature."
The Rebbe's next attack was more direct. "You mouth all the bromides and slogans of a faddish modernism like a believer in that catechism. Women are the same as men. Israel the same as the nations. Your head is on upside down from all the nonsense you picked up in the states, living in a Christian society. The Jew sanctifies by distinctions. Distinctions are made by choices. Will you choose to be a Jew?"
I had no answers for the Rebbe.
"Nu," the Rebbe continued, reaching into a cabinet for a bottle of scotch whiskey, "if I cannot appeal to your head, perhaps I can appeal to your heart."
He poured us each a full tumbler of whisky and ordered, "Nu, make a Lechaim!" "Lechaim," I said, sipping the whiskey. The Rebbe tipped his glass saying, "Nu, nu," indicating I should do the same. In response to my uninspired toast he said:
"To Reb Aryeh ben Avraham, the reluctant intellectual from California, a blessing, a life full of Torah and Mitzvot, a kosher home and commitment to Hashem. May his mind be involved with the divine dialogues of the wisdom literature. May his heart be captured by the rapture of the Chassid. May he rule in a home full of Torah and children and good deeds. May he become a leader and teacher in Israel."

Dream Sabbath

I was silent and the Rebbe said "Amen" to his blessing. The whiskey went straight to my head. I sang one or two wordless Chassidic melodies with the Rebbe and then fell asleep. He got up and locked the door. A flash of white light. I wrapped myself in the light, which became a prayer shawl without the black stripes. My robe was white as were all my garments from sashes to shoes. I wore an ermine white fur cap. The letters of the prayer book were white on the white pages.

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The Sabbath was beginning. I prayed and departed for home and the evening meal. My disciples greeted me:
"A good Sabbath Rebbe Aryeh." "A guten Shabbas," I answered.
Three white angels followed me home. My wife greeted me at the door. He face was pale white. She was wrapped in garments of black. She stared at me with wide open aqua eyes full of love. The eyes of the prancer's daughter. I recited the Shalam A Laychem three times to greet each of the white angels who had accompanied me to my holy home. My wife did not sing because "a woman's voice is likened to her nakedness." I sang "The Women of Valor" to my wife.
My sons, all in white, sang with me the Sabbath songs. The girls, in black, watched wide-eyed. My children were living branches of the Tree of Life, full of Torah and Mitzvot. They were miniature replicas of myself and my wife.
The Messiah had come. We lived in the real Israel, in a rebuilt Jerusalem. The Messiah was to be our dinner guest. He had not arrived. We waited late into the night. He did not come. May his memory be for a blessing.
This was the night I, a Torah scholar, would unite with God through my wife. We retired to our bedroom. The bedposts were carved Torah scroll holders inlaid with ivory. The double beds were the two sides of a rolled scroll. The bedspread was a sequined Torah cover inscribed with verses in praise of the Almighty. The single candles which some authorities allowed behind a partition, cast our shadows on the wall. My beloved moved her black head scarf. Her freshly shaven skull was radiant in the candlelight. I saw reflected in its clear surface our children and our children's children, and all the generations of Jews who would sprout from our sacred union.
I sang to my beloved the Song of songs, encouraged her with words of Torah. I was the God of the heavens ready to rain my sacred seed on her, the open ground of Israel. Following the advice of the Holy Rabbi, Moses ben Nachman, I watered the ground before planting the seeds. We did not touch from head to toe, my holy member entering only her sacred secret place.
I awoke disoriented. The Rebbe sat with a cigarette in his left hand. His right hand was in his robe. He was stroking himself. Between index and middle fingers, he held a thick photograph by its edge. My awakening startled the Rebbe. I was afraid he was going to burn me with the cigarette. He quickly drew his hand away. Lying on my back, I was in an easy position to kick him in the face. Instead I laughed at this ridiculous fantasy seduction and swung my legs around, rising from the couch. I unlocked the door to the Rubes study and left his home quickly.

Rehov Jaffa: Welcome to Earthly Jerusalem

From the narrow streets I fled, not only from the Rebbe, but also

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from Mea Sharim. I walked without direction and found myself on Jaffa Road. The dim medieval light of Mea Sharim changed to the bright festive lights of Jerusalem's main street. An Israeli police woman in a navy blue jacket and short skirt stood graceful legs and directed traffic. Khaki solders, some in white embroidered miniature skullcaps, strolling the streets hand in hand with their girlfriends. The streets were so crowded that it was impossible to walk without being brushed by others. The smell of fresh roasted nuts, ground coffee and sizzling lamb flavored the air. I was happy and hungry. I had finally arrived in the Israel of the twentieth century.

*****

Isaac had described in letters crushed round balls of garbonzo beans deep-fried in a pocket bread called pita. The golden brown balls are stuffed into the pocket, covered with chopped tomato and cucumber and a liquid sesame sauce, and eaten with plenty of napkins. Isaac, still a confirmed vegetarian, lived on them. Falaffels. I ordered one from a restaurant on the street. The vendor pinched the bread open in his hand to insert the balls and the bread seemed to smile. Still slightly tipsy from the whiskey, I smiled back. The sandwich left me thirsty so I drank a few beers, and ordered another half falaffel. I paid almost a dollar for a pack of American cigarettes, sat back, smoked, and watched the children of the modern state of Israel parade by. Many were young, my age. Together with the state of Israel we were yet emerging from the years of our adolescence.

I was overwhelmed by the dark beauty of the women. They expertly avoided my eyes. Those who glanced back looked at me in wonder. One moved close, stared, and actually laughed. I paid my tab and left, walking up and down both sides of the street. It felt glorious being part of a crowd that made no pretense of holiness. My throat felt dry and I entered a bar on the end of a side street near a park.

The bar was full of students and soldiers. They all seemed to stare me at me when I entered. Perhaps they stare at everyone who enters, I thought to myself. I moved to a corner and ordered a beer. After the initial attention, I was ignored. An Israeli student walked over and asked for a cigarette. She asked in Hebrew. She left with a broad smile, the other patrons of the bar avoided my eyes.

A tall, well-built Sephardic woman entered the bar and looked around. She greeted the bartender. He shrugged and moved his head toward where I was sitting.

The woman walked in my direction. The swaying of her hips seemed exaggerated. She was as tall as I, almost six feet, but wore high heels. Her own wide heels hung over the end of the backless shoes. I did not know where to look first. Her legs were broad

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and strong, well-muscled, like a dancer's. The blue sequined skirt caught the light and dazzled before my eyes. Her thighs below the mini skirt looked soft and inviting. Her breasts were pointed and propped high by a tight bra. A silver Star of David dangled over her cleavage. Her hair was as dark as the Jerusalem night. She stared straight into my eyes and smiled. I was the first to look away.
"Do you study in Jersualem?" she asked in accented English.
I insisted we speak Hebrew.
"Why not Yiddish?" she joked.
I looked at her dumbly.
"Nu, Lo Chashuv" she said. "Buy me a drink!" She helped herself to a cigarette. I wondered if all Israeli women were so forward. She finished her drink, took my hand, and led me out of the bar. People stared and smiled.
Her name was Shoshana, she said. She did not look like a Shoshana. We walked down Jaffa Road hand in hand. Everyone seemed to smile or take notice. A young religious couple looked at me and scowled. They were about to say something but we walked away too quickly.
"How old are you?" I asked in Hebrew, attempting to start a conversation.
"Twenty-one."
"Do you attend university?"
"Yes," she said mockingly, pointing to the street, "and this is my laboratory."
"Where are we walking to?"
"Where do you think?" she said.
Confused and aroused, I prayed we were going to her apartment.
We entered a dimly lit hall to an apartment house that was rundown. In the dark I noticed a round illuminated switch.
She stood her distance and asked in Hebrew: "How much am I worth to you?"
"What?"
"Nu, Rabbi, what are we here for, a Purim spiel?"
I was not sure I understood her Hebrew.
"Is your room upstairs?"
"No, I don't live here."
"Aren't we going to your room?"
"I don't believe my father and brother would approve," she laughed cynically. "Nu, how much am I worth to you?" she repeated.
I finally understood.
"Let's talk," I said.
"Talk also costs."
"I've never paid before. What is the price?"
"Fifteen American dollars. Twenty five for French."
"Regular will be fine," I said.
She turned her back towards me and slowly raised her skirt as she bent over against the wall.
"Regular," I said, not understanding.
I felt unclean and imagined that the semen in Shoshana's vagina

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was gritty, actual seeds. Perhaps they were the mixed seeds of Arabs, Christians, Armenians and Jews, making her holy place an ecumenical temple, perhaps a meeting ground that would produce an ecumenical Messiah that would mediate between Jerusalem's many factions.
Shoshana looked backed at me again with a look demanding that I finish.
"If this takes more time it will cost you more money."
I leaned over to touch her breasts, but could not reach them.
"If I could kiss you." I said.
"No. No kissing," she hissed.
The moment I came I began to cry. "If only I had kissed you," I whispered, "if only I had loved you."
She shook her head. "Go home to Mea Sharim, the hour is late."

*****

I walked towards Mea Sharim suddenly feeling very sober. At Toldat Aaron I gathered my bags, called a taxi and gave the driver Isaac's address. Rommema. No one had touched the bags over the Sabbath. It is a Mitzvah not to steal.

The Binding of Isaac

Isaac was at the gate of the Yeshiva. It was after midnight. I hoped he had not been waiting for me. He looked at me with eyes wide-open and grinned. I looked back at his short cropped hair and Rabbinic beard and panicked. I felt calmed only when I saw no sidelocks. We unloaded my bags and backpack. After paying the driver I stood back a moment to examine the new Isaac.
He wore blue trousers and a white long-sleeved shirt with no tie, as is the custom of the modern orthodox in Jerusalem. His feet were modestly sheathed in thin black socks under his sandals. Tzitzit, ritual fringes, dangled at his side. His head was crowned with a large knitted blue and white skullcap. Isaac's beard was full and luxuriant, giving such a young man an ageless quality. Isaac's hair, the color of ripe wheat, had been parted in the middle, flowing smoothly to the ears. From the ears downward, soft curls had fallen to his shoulders in luxuriant locks. His hair was now parted on the right side, the curls shorn. Even without sidelocks, he looked like a young orthodox Rabbi.
Isaac laughed, walked over to me and bearhugged me warmly. I hugged him back.
"And what is this?" he said, pointing to my white skullcap from

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Toldat Aaron. I had forgotten about my Chassidic cap and pointed to it as my mouth fell open. Isaac playfully flicked the fringe on the top of the cap from one side to the other.
Students in various deliberate disguises returned to the Rabbinic academy. Some wore all black and passed freely among the ultra-orthodox of Jerusalem. Others wore casual university clothes or jeans with flannel shirts. All wore skullcaps of various shapes and sizes.
Isaac and I sat in the garden on a bench near the back entrance and talked. Isaac put his arm around me. After the Rebbe, I flinched. He did not seem to notice and I continued describing the plane flight, the train ride through the Judean hills, my walk through the old city and the Sabbath with Rabbi Meir and Rebbe Satman. When I told Isaac about Shoshana, tears came to my eyes. He comforted me. Isaac realized I was exhausted and took me to his room.

*****

I woke early but Isaac was already up. I found him in the walnut-paneled room with the Holy Ark. He was meditating before the morning prayer. Enwrapped in a white prayer shawl, he appeared in a trance. Isaac was about to put his Tefillin on. His hands were shaking. He placed the black box on the side of his left biceps and held it near his heart. The long leather straps he wound around his arm, too tightly I thought. Isaac recited a blessing on laying the Tefillin. He donned the Tefillin of the head, adjusting the black box with the Hebrew letter ( ) on both sides so that it was exactly between his eyes near the top of his head, bordering the hairline. He wore Tefillin of the head like a crown. He stood and recited another blessing. His body seemed to tremble.
I asked, so Isaac explained the symbolism of the mysterious black boxes. After the story of the Chassidic "film," he knew I was skeptical about their spiritual value.
"The Tefillin of the head crowns our intellect, indicating that all our thoughts should be directed towards God. Together they symbolize the binding if the words of our hearts and the meditations of our lips in every action; the binding of emotion and intellect."
"Isaac," I said, thinking of his vow not to eat flesh, "they are leather."
"Yes. So are my shoes. I have not yet reached the level where I derive no benefit from the carcasses slaughtered for flesh. I cannot think of what material I could make Tefillin out of without adding to the precepts of the Torah revealed to Moses at Sinai."
I regretted raising the topic. This was a different Isaac from my friend in Laguna. He spoke and thought like a Rabbi. We now lived in different worlds.

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The prayer service began. It would last over three quarters of an hour. The Yeshiva prayed slowly, taking into account that new students were either still learning the language or the prayers. Each weekday over fifty pages of Hebrew were repeated at the morning service alone. The same fifty pages. An old Chassid who prayed with the Yeshiva, followed in his prayer book, even though he obviously knew the text by heart.

I skimmed, skipping entire sections that baffled me. We asked God to remember us favorably for the merit of the binding of Isaac by Abraham. I thought of Isaac's insights into this story. The laws of burnt offerings, a "pleasing odor to God!?" were recited daily. The slaughter of the animals and even the sprinkling of their blood was described. It sounded like a pagan festival to me. How could Isaac stomach such gruesome worship, I asked myself.

The Psalms in the service I recited with joy. Then we came to Moses' song at the sea. I began to recite the prayer and stopped. I could not sing praises to the Lord while "the Egyptians were dead on the seashore." This was a time for silence, not a time for song. God's retribution was our salvation:

"This is my God and I will glorify him
The God of my father and I will exalt him."

The Hebrew was overpowering.

Za Eli Veanvahu
Eloha Avi Va Arammahu

The most problematic part of the prayer followed:

"The Lord is a man of war
The Lord is His name
He hurls Pharaoh's chariots
and his armies into the sea."

I could not utter the words and was silent. I prayed again after the public call to prayers:

Blessed art Thou who forms light and creates darkness
who makes peace, and creates all things.

The juxtaposition was dramatic. All things that are not Shalom, peace, are darkness. I repeated the verse, like a mantra, over and over, meditating on its meaning.

The worshipers covered their eyes to recite the Shema. The words were recited slowly and with intention to fulfill the Mitzah. The first paragraph of the Shema went well, but I stopped in the middle of the second. It seemed I could not sit even a few minutes without a heretical thought. Revealed before my eyes was the "Otherside" of my religion, a side I had not glimpsed in California. When I was younger I felt I would be able to pray properly when I knew the meaning of the words. In Hebrew school we chanted, in Hebrew, meaningless mantras. Now that I understood the prayers, My tongue stuck to the roof of my mouth.

God strikes a bargain with the Jews. You fulfill the commandments and serve me with all your heart and soul, and I promise to send the rain in its proper season and all good blessings. But if you are lured away, and turn astray and worship alien gods, my wrath will flare up. The heavens will dry up as will the teat of its

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milk. You will swiftly perish from the good land I, God, Have given you. For some religious Jews this sums up the relationship between God and man in history. I had only one thought. God sounded terribly insecure to me.

I recited the eighteen benedictions omitting the work "King" everywhere it appeared in a blessing. My God was not the Grand Monarch in the sky. The prayers for a restoration of the sacrifices and fire offerings I also omitted.

We came to the end of the service. I said only part of the Alenu. No one took any notice of my omissions. I looked over at Isaac and he seemed pleased we were praying together.

At breakfast, more prayers. One had to be an expert in the various blessings before food to eat in the Yeshiva. It was easiest to eat bread, the blessing over which covered all varieties of food. I washed my hands, reciting a blessing, and then chanted the blessing over the bread:

Blessed art Thou Adonai, our God, King of the universe who brings forth bread from the earth.

I said a bit mockingly, "I'm too ignorant to anything but bread." I was ignored. Students chanted the appropriate blessings over various food, a separate blessing for; the five species of grain, tree-grown fruits, earth-grown fruits, and an all inclusive blessing for meat, fish, eggs, cheese, mushrooms, etc., all in the appropriate order. One entire section of the Mishna and Talmud was based on the problem "How do we bless the food?" I shook my head in amazement.

"You," Isaac said quietly but firmly, "should learn the meaning of eating that is revealed by reciting these blessings. The holiness that is in food must be offered up for divine service, or it feeds only the animal soul." Isaac indicated my belly straining against my belt.

I asked Isaac why the blessing for bread said "who brings forth bread from the earth." Surely it should say "who brings forth wheat from the earth." Isaac was pleased and amused by the question. All were quiet to hear his answer:

"We say 'who brings forth bread from the earth' because of the care of those who nurture the seed. The heavens rain from above, the earth offers her soil and minerals below. The farmer furrows the land, joining the divine process. He plants, waits, watches, and prays that the seed will germinate and grow. The stalks follow their inner nature and proudly raise themselves to the sun. They pray themselves as they sway in the breeze. The ever faithful farmer harvests and threshes. The baker grinds the grain into flour and molds the dough into loaves. The bread is brought to this table as though it grew already formed from the earth as bread. All have faithfully completed their parts in the divine process. We then are obligated to uplift the bread to acknowledge its maker. The students swayed back and forth as Isaac spoke. Thus, they applauded silently as he finished. I felt that I had lost Isaac to a circle of holiness and community of which I had no part. Isaac had joined the Pharisees. I was silent the rest of

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the meal and mumbled the overlong grace after meals.
We returned to the study hall and I began rereading Genesis while Isaac studied Talmud with Shlomo in preparation for the advanced lecture to be given in the afternoon. I wrote questions on the text in Hebrew in a small notebook used for addresses and telephone numbers. I also ordered the questions I wanted to ask Isaac about when he finished his study session.
The first question I asked was not even on the list.
"Why is everyone bobbing back and forth when they pray and study?"
"They are shokeling."
"That helps."
"There are many reasons given for shokeling. A mystic would answer that the movement is like the flickering of the candle flame on the wick burning ever upwards toward its source. A practical reason; because of a lack of books, two students would read from one text between them. One read upside down the other right side up. One moved towards the text to read, then moved away for the other to read." I imagined the two losing the tempo of the shokeling, absorbed in thought, and bumping heads, and I laughed.
"Actually," Isaac said, "even today some people can read a text from all angles because their communities, at one time, lacked holy books. The old Jews of Yemen I study with in Mea Sharim still have this skill. Perhaps the best answer based on tradition is that every bone of our body quakes in divine worship. The Talmud relates (Brechot 31A) that when Rabbi Akiba prayed, he would begin in one corner of a room and end up in another. His intense devotion was expressed by genuflections and prostration. The Chassidim relate this same story about Rabbi Israel Balshem Tov, the founder of their movement." Isaac certainly told me everything I needed to know about shokeling.

Messiah Dreams

I began with problems in praying. I described my abhorrence of the sacrificial passages in the morning prayers and Isaac was silent. "Do you say them?" I asked. Isaac answered, "Sacrificing animals was the ancients' prayer. Today we Daven, we pray. The old has been transformed and elevated by the flexibility of our tradition."
"I will not give 'lip service' to those gruesome passages," I said. "And I will not sing with Moses and the children of Israel at the sea when they declared: "The Lord is a Man of War.'"
"A better translation is 'Warrior,'" said Isaac.
"So what's the difference?"
"Ah, Laurence, Aryeh," Isaac sighed, sounding for the moment like an old Rabbi, "so many questions, so many questions." Isaac

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looked around the room and then again at me. Others were listening. "We need to sit at least two months with various texts to begin to answer your questions." I was too dull to sense Isaac's reluctance to discuss this issue publicly.
"Isaac," I said, "I will never worship a God who is a warrior."
"You must remember," Isaac was forced to answer, "the God who takes the children of Israel out of Egypt, metaphorically fights with Israel when he splits the sea. God fights alongside Joshua and the children of Israel when they conquer the land. The themes are basic to our faith."
I felt a flash of anger. Perhaps I would renounce the God of my people, but who was Isaac to speak of "our faith?" I was not even sure he had legally converted.
"If you have time," Isaac offered patiently, "we will study this theme in depth together."
"Tell me about the Messiah," I said, wanting to change the topic.
Isaac laughed, "As I stand on one foot?"
"No, you may remain seated."
Isaac sat quietly and shokeled, gathering his thoughts. At the time I did not know before whom I sat, or of whom I asked these questions. Isaac decided that we should continue our talk in the garden.

Two Who Entered the Garden

"What can I tell you about the Messiah?" Isaac asked.
"Will the Messiah restore the world to Eden, its state before Eve and Adam ate the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil?" I asked, thinking of my morning studies.
"The serpent tells us our eyes will be open when we eat the fruit, and `You shall be as God, knowing good and evil.' (Gen. 2:5). After eating the fruit we are able to discern the duality of the world. The tree of knowledge becomes a tree of death, and a tree of suffering. Adam toils in the world for his bread and Eve waits at home for her children which are delivered with birth pains, in anguish. Our spiritual parents are exiled from the garden and the Tree of Life."
"And if they had not eaten the apple?" I asked.
Isaac looked towards the Yeshiva. "The fruit may have been a fig. Fig leaves were used for the first clothing. The text makes no mention of apples." Isaac looked at the path to the Yeshiva. We were alone. He continued:
"They ate," Isaac said, "giving life meaning. The world of opposites was instantly manifested before their eyes, and there they stood, face to face, male and female. Soon they would learn of their mortality and how to join as one to defeat that mortality."
"You make it sound like they had no choice. Did they have to eat the fruit and disobey God, committing what we call sin?"

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"We must remember that we have a story before us," Isaac said. "Only through Midrash am I able to give this story meaning."
"No sin was committed?" I asked.
"Certainly no original sin," Isaac answered.
"In Adam's fall, we sinned all," I recited to remind Isaac of the traditional interpretation of scripture.
"No," Isaac said. "No sin, no fall. With the act of one man, sin does not enter the world, nor does death by sin pass upon us all." I was not sure if Isaac was quoting a source or giving his own views. He seemed relieved in his speaking, as if he had laid down a burden he had been carrying in his mind. We were again surrounded by our circle of friendship and I was pleased. Isaac continued.
"Death was in the beginning. Not comprehending death is the Fall."
"Are you giving me the Jewish view?" I asked.
"I am giving you my own view."
Isaac's explanation did not seem to fit with the words or details of the Genesis narrative. I protested:
"But we eat of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge and are denied the fruit of the Tree of LIfe."
"So the text seems to indicate," Isaac said. "The essential thing I see, however, is that Eden and the Tree of Life are not destroyed. They are attainable."
"How?"
"By acknowledging that we have eaten the fruit of knowledge. The cosmos experiences a battle between what we call good and evil. Beyond that combat is the creator of the tree who is no duality. When our eyes are opened after eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, we become `as God'."
"Do you mean to say the Tree of Life grows from within the Tree of Knowledge?"
"And the Tree of Knowledge is contained in the Tree of Life."
My mind was misting over. "Can you be more specific?"
"The Torah is called a Tree of Life. Within Torah is the Knowledge of transcending dualities. This is the essence of the Shema."
"Going back to your original question," Isaac said, "another way the Tree of Life is regained is through the Messiah."
"What will the Messiah teach us about the Tree of Life?" I asked.
"From the fruits of the Tree of Knowledge," Isaac answered, "we are keenly aware of our world. Cain cuts a branch from the tree, ties to it a piece of metal and fashions a hoe to till the earth. One day he is jealous of his brother and his God. He crouches at the door, and opens his brother's head with the hoe. Alone he weeps in his grief, with no brother to keep. We learn from Cain that it is wrong to kill."

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This idea is expressed poetically in the Psalms section of this Testament, my friend Theophilos, at the beginning of that Book.

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"The consensus of knowledge is that this act is wrong. We know in our hearts it is wrong. Yet, we kill again. This is the Fall, the Fall is not in the Knowledge. We lose the power to transform what we know into how we act."
"Our world is filled with knowledge. Each generation our knowledge progresses and multiplies. We see the evolution with our own eyes. We feel its advance by the greater comforts in our lives, and we continue to kill, while the consensus of knowledge is that killing is wrong. Our century has witnessed more mass murder in our wars than in all the wars of the centuries up to our time! And, our century has seen the fastest acceleration of scientific knowledge in history, advancing geometrically every decade."
"Perhaps we will be Redeemed by Wisdom," I offered.
"Knowledge, understanding and wisdom are all contained within the Tree of knowing good and evil. But only the Halacha teaches how to put that knowledge into practice."
I sat and contemplated all that Isaac taught. Isaac spoke with a voice of authority, but I needed to find my own mind on these themes. I had never understood the story of the Fall. I assumed in its raw literal form in Genesis that it was only a fable for children. Isaac gave the story meaning. Genesis opened up in front of me and I experienced a new beginning in my view of reality. Each part of creation is called "good" by God upon its completion. The totality of creation is very good. A man and a woman are planted in Eden and they experience the first fruits of knowledge. The snake shows them the path to divinity. Suddenly the first sin, Cain kills his brother. The generations to Noah became increasingly corrupt. Violence in their corruption. This is the Fall. The earth is flooded with violence yet baptized and cleansed by the waters. The water reflects the sign of a covenant of peace. I wanted to study Genesis again with Isaac.
I thought of the accumulation of knowledge since Adam, spiraling forward and building upward like the Tower of Babel. I learned that with knowledge came progress. Evolution raises the species to higher and higher levels of progress and consciousness. On the top of the tower sit our greatest minds. Einstein sat there in his office of the patent department, finishing early theories that would illuminate, like the light of creation, the mechanics of the workings of the material particles of reality. Our modern day Prometheus discovered ultimate knowledge, how to change matter into energy by unsheathing the power of the atom. Extrapolating from the experience of centuries of war, I understood that our

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civilization has reached its most significant moment since Cain broke a branch off the Tree of Knowledge to till the land. The technological revolution resulting from the peaceful use of the energy of the atom could light the world and fuel its engines. Civilizations would be free to pursue not only knowledge, but also wisdom. Yet my mind went numb when I imagined this branch in the hand of Cain. Hanging over my head was that same power in the form of nuclear missiles, like so many Swords of Damocles, suspended by a hair. I was shaken by the image, afraid to move. Science and technology were the new Messiahs, the newest fruits of the Tree of Knowledge. Did Einstein consider locking his theory in a drawer or throwing it into the fire? If we do not learn how to peacefully use this energy, I thought, then science would become the most dangerous and perhaps the final messianic pretender.

All this from a simple metaphor in Genesis. Isaac waited patiently until I finished the thoughts of my theological speculations.

"Within the Tree of Knowledge there also lives the Tree of Death," I said.

Isaac shook his head and said: "Science has discovered a magic far beyond the quest of the alchemists. The material lead of creation is miraculously transformed into its golden form, energy, faster than the speed of light, and this new legacy was envisioned centuries ago by the apocalyptists."

"But the apocalyptic vision of Gog and Magog," I protested, "is that the universe will be recreated only through destruction in a great final war in the end of time. Is this also the Jewish view?"

Isaac laughed. I thought he also sensed the irony of my asking him to give me the authoritative Jewish view.

"Not exactly," Isaac answered. "As I explained in my description of the earthly Jerusalem, we do not necessarily share the view of St. John in Revelation on the end of time. Actually it's really a question of how to read Revelations. Judaism has an entire library of apocalyptic literature. We are free to interpret the meaning of the visions. I pray that the 20th century, our age of barbarism, has experienced enough death and destruction. The martyrs of Hiroshima and Nagasaki experienced an end as grim as Gog and Magog."

"In America," I said, "I met university students who say Gog and Magog is yet to come. They join Christian cults that quote chapter and verse as if their scripture is the history book of the future."

"Yes," Isaac said. "In the little apocalypse of Mark, Jesus says that at the end of days we will hear of wars and rumors of wars. False messiahs will come and say `I am the anointed one.' Nation will rise up against nation to fight once more. Brother will betray brother, and the father his son. Children will rise up against their parents, putting them to death. The apocalyptic desolation dreamed of by Daniel will finally come to be. Only the

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elect will be saved. Those members of whatever cult which calls themselves God's chosen ones."
"The powers of the creation will be unleashed. The seals of John's great book of destruction will be broken. The sun will darken in contrast to the light of this destruction. The stars will seem to fall from the heavens. Peter in his second epistle, chapter three, describes the heavens passing away in a great noise. The elements melt in the heat of death. The earth is consumed by fire."
"But God promised Noah never again to completely destroy our earth," I said innocently. I pictured the Messiah as a modern Noah completely consumed in his ark by the flood of fire.

The Rainbow

"What about the Rainbow?" I asked.
"For those who literally believe in the apocalypse of the New Testament, the Rainbow's light shines only on the elect, the saved remnant."
"And how do the Jews view the Rainbow?"
"The Jews themselves hold two divergent views on the end of the world. One is `Catastrophic,' the other `Utopian,' to use Professor Scholem's terms."
"So we also have a tradition of Gog and Magog."
"Come," Isaac said, "I will show you inside."
I followed Isaac from the garden back into the Yeshiva. Inside meant inside the Yeshiva and inside a text.
Isaac rushed around the Yeshiva piling a tower of books between us. Most of the students were napping after lunch. Shlomo glanced in our direction. I sensed his resentment; I had taken away his study partner.
Our first text was the Siddur, the prayer book. A Psalm I had read with the Chassidim when we received the Sabbath's presence with song and prayer. The Twenty Ninth Psalm, a Psalm of David. The voice of God divides the flame of fire. "The Lord sat at the flood." I did not understand this verse at the prayer service and I did not understand it now. Isaac explained that the Hebrew Yashav, means not only "to sit," but also "to return."
"The Lord will return the flood.
The Lord will sit (or return) as king."
Then there could be another flood," I said. Attempting to imitate the Midrashic process. I reread the Psalm and said, "The Rainbow is a covenant that the earth will never again be destroyed by water. But God will return the flood. A flood of fire." I thought of films I had seen of the atomic bombs detonating over Nagasaki.
"No," Isaac said. "We must read further."
"The Lord will give strength to His people.
The Lord will bless His people with peace."

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"What does this mean?" I asked. "That God will save the Jews from the flood of fire?"
"As I see it, the Jews will help save the world by teaching the strength that is peace. Our blessing to the world will be a blessing of peace. As I explained, the law that goes forth from Zion, the true Zionism, is a law of peace. We shall rebuke the nations to turn their nuclear potential into energy that will power the plow, and to beat their laser spears into instruments of peace. Nations can no longer rattle their nuclear sabers against one another. We cannot wage war anymore."
I was not satisfied with Isaac's answers. He was giving me his own personal interpretation of Jewish tradition and Zionism. Whatever political and ideological issues, the establishment of the state of Israel had been accompanied by war after war. I was aware of no doctrine of peace emanating to the diaspora. I did not consider any bible as a holy text that supplied answers to the problem of war. Isaac prays to a God who is a warrior, I thought ... Perhaps the religious worldview was a catalyst to war. I had been in Israel three days and already had enough of religious Judaism. Anti-aircraft guns in Tefillin. God returning the flood. I feared Isaac was involved in a phenomena similar to the cults of Christianity active at home. Perhaps the Yeshiva Isaac studied in was itself a cult that metamorphosed perfectly normal American students into black garbed, dark thinking religious fanatics. Yeshivas! Turning butterflies into religious caterpillars! An escape from the nuclear nightmare. Isaac sat and watched me think. I voiced my objections in one comment:
"Isaac, you would use the Torah as a proof text of some divine reality and truth. I think I cannot believe. The text says that God is a warrior. How will you explain this text away? You look into scripture as a mirror of the divine. The Christians look into their mirror, and the Muslims and the Hindus. Are all these scriptures mirrors of the divine?"
"So people believe," Isaac answered cryptically.
"Well I don't believe," I said too loudly, surprised at my vehemence. "God is a warrior according to the Torah. Jesus says he has not come to bring peace, but the sword. Muhammad expands his religion and kills the unbeliever in the name of Allah. The Gita is one overextended war metaphor. The mirrors of scripture are flawed and cracked!"
Isaac waited until I calmed down. I hoped he did not feel I was attacking him personally. He was silent. I had forgotten that some questions were appropriate for the Yeshiva and others for the garden.
"Before we make any hasty judgments about reality reflected in the mirror of Torah," Isaac said, "let us look at the surface and then deeper into the looking glass." Isaac handed me a voweled text of Maimonide's Mishna Torah, Book Fourteen, The Book of Judges.

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The Messiah Texts

He read in a melodic sephardic Hebrew and shokeled to his melody:
-Ha Melech Ha Messiach Atid Leamod U-Lachzer Malchut Bet David
"King Messiah in the future is to reestablish and return the Davidic dynasty as it was in the past. And he will rebuild the Holy temple, gather the Jews of the diaspora and return the Judicial system in its entirety as it was in the past. Sacrifices will be offered, the Sabbatical year and Jubilee will be observed as will all the Commandments mentioned in the Torah."
Each point I found objectionable. King Messiah? A Davidic dynasty? Sacrifices? This was no vision of a future golden age, but a dream to reestablish a vision of a people obviously struck in their past. Isaac attempted to answer my objections one by one.
"The Messiah is considered by our tradition to be the ideal Jewish leader. His prototype is King David and his rule is modeled on David's rule."
"Isaac," I said, "I have a problem with David as an ideal leader. He sends Uriah to death in battle so he can marry Bathsheba. His hands are so bloody from war that God forbids him to build the temple. This is our model?"
"The Torah gives an essentially honest view of David's character and actions. He was a man of flesh and blood with the desires and vices of every man. David was a poet, a warrior and a man of outstanding leadership. Our sages went to great lengths, by Midrashic embellishment, to create a David we can emulate."
I interrupted, "But Isaac, `King Messiah' a monarch? Really!"
"In the Messianic times," Isaac said, "each person will be a monarch over their own soul and destiny."
I wasn't sure what the hell he was talking about.
Isaac continued, "The perpetuation of the Messiah's leadership by dynasty is something I have been giving a great deal of thought to. We learned from the Chassidic dynasties, that not every son emulates the virtues of the father. Dynasties become corrupt. Even the kings of Israel in ancient times were plagued with evil leaders."
"Isaac," I said, interrupting his speculations, "this whole idea of the Messiah is appearing to me more and more as plain nonsense!"
"Our messianic hopes and dreams are anything but nonsense. Without them we have no future as a people."
"Then why is this a `looking back over our shoulders vision'? `Sanctify our days as of old.' If the old days were so good, why were we exiled?"
"In the exile we learned how to perfect our past. The exile was in some ways a blessing. The Jewish vision was universalized. As we were integrated into societies to the farthest edges of the four corners of the earth, our faith was sent into diaspora to do battle with the idolatry of power. In the end the powerless

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survived and let all the Toynbee's by damned."
"Isaac do we perfect our past by reinstating the system of animal sacrifices of the Torah? You of all people could not consider these sacrifices a holy act, or prayer. The prayerbook describing the blood flowing and the blood sprinkling I find disgusting."
"The text of Maimonides does not say animal sacrifices," Isaac explained.
I looked back at the text. Isaac was right.
"So what will be offered?" I asked.
"Grains and incense."
"So why mention the animal sacrifices at all in the Siddur?"
"In the Messianic age," Isaac explained, "we will each rebuild the Temple that is our body. The body will be a pure and sanctified vessel to receive the divine presence. We will offer up the fat of slovenliness and indifference on the altar. The fat that chokes the heart and hardens the heart will be offered `as burnt offerings.'"
All the laws I would have rejected reading on my own, Isaac gave meaning.
Isaac read the next two Laws and explained that belief in the restoration of Israel and the coming of the Messiah were articles of faith in Judaism. Maimonides offered a number of proof texts to give this assertion a biblical basis, but I had a difficult time following the argument and was not convinced.
"Don't let it enter your mind that the Messiah needs to perform signs and miracles, bring new things into being or resurrect the dead. That is not the reality of the situation. Rabbi Akiva, a great sage and teacher of the Mishna, was also the armour bearer of Bar Kochba. He believed Bar Kochba was the Messiah, as did all the sages of that generation, until Bar Kochba was killed in his iniquity. Since he was slain it was known that he was not the Messiah."
"The essential principle is: Our Torah with all its laws is not subject to change. It's forever and for all eternity. It is not to be added to or taken away from. Whoever adds anything, or takes away anything, and strips the Mitzvot of their literal sense, is an impostor, a wicked man, and a heretic."
"Maimonides' messiah was not a miracle worker. So be it. A man, a king, an ideal ruler. Perhaps even a rational philosopher like Maimonides himself."
"Why the stress on the literal meaning of the Mitzvot?" I asked.
"The New Covenant of Paul, contrary to Hosea's dream, abrogated the authority of the law. The Karaite heresy rejected the authority of the oral law. Maimonides stresses that the Jewish Messiah will not create a new covenant in opposition to an old covenant, but will come to fulfill the prophecies and promises made to the Jewish people in the Torah."
Isaac read the next Halacha, a Messianic job description. I made a list of the qualifications for the "job" as Isaac read:
"If there arise a king from the House of David,
1) who meditates on the Torah

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2) occupies himself with the Commandments
3) convinces Israel to walk in the way of the Torah
4) and fights the battles of the Lord
it may be assumed he is the Messiah."
"Now Maimonides is seeking the miraculous," I commented.
"How so?" Isaac asked seriously.
"If the Messiah convinces the diaspora Jews from Scarsdale or Beverly Hills to return to Torah and Israel that would be miraculous."
Isaac laughed, then continued with the text.
"If He does these things and succeeds; rebuilds the sanctuary on its site and gathers the dispersed of Israel, He is without a doubt the Messiah. He will prepare the whole world to serve Hashem as it is written `For then will I turn to the peoples a clear language that they can call upon the name of God to serve with one consent' (Zephania 3:9)."
"The Messiah will be successful, so all who have failed have not been the Messiah."
Isaac answered, "Do you sense anything missing in the text?"
"No."
"Perhaps it isn't apparent. Maimonides seems to exclude those that attempted to be the Messiah, but were not successful."
"Seems?"
"Yes," Isaac said. "The section was censored. We will study it separately after we finish the next chapter."
I got up to stretch. I couldn't imagine how Isaac could sit so long. Perhaps it was his shokeling. But there was no way I was going to shokel. I sat back down.
"Now," Isaac said, "we will learn the final chapter of the final section of Maimonides' fourteen volume Mishna Torah. He is answering a question in the following Halacha."
"Do not let it enter your mind that in the time of the Messiah any of the laws of nature will be nullified or that any innovation will be introduced into the workings of creation. The world will be as it is now ... and that which Isaiah said `and the wolf will live with the lamb and the leopard will lie down with the kid' (Isa. 11:6) are to be understood figuratively, which means they, Israel, will live securely among the wicked of the nations who are compared to the wolves and leopards as it is written, `a wolf of the desert does spoil them, a leopard watches over their cities.'"
I interrupted. "I remember the verse from Isaiah as the lion lying with the lamb, a little child leading them. Anyway, I don't see a problem, Isaac. Surely no one excepts an actual child to lead a lion and lamb that have actually lain together!"
Isaac went to fetch a large unvoweled edition of the Mishna Torah for me. He explained:
"Perhaps one could learn from the literal sense of the words of Isaiah that a radical change will take place in nature. That during the time of the Messiah, one visiting the biblical zoo could actually pass a cage with a lion and a lamb dwelling safely together."

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"I hope that during the time of the Messiah there will be no zoos."
Isaac laughed. "So you expect radical changes?"
Isaac was patient with my digression, but steered us back to the text.
"Rabbi Abraham ben David of Posquires, The Ravad, objects in his critical scolia." (I often had no idea of the meaning of words Isaac used, but I was too embarrassed to run to a dictionary or to ask.) "The Ravad counters the Rambam's argument with a proof text from Leviticus, `and I will cause evil beasts to cease from the Land.' In theory this is a strong objection because it is from the Torah and for Rambam, the proof text is from the prophets."
Before me was the text of Maimonides surrounded by commentators, a medieval fortress protecting the text.
I asked flippantly, "If evil beasts cease from the land, how will there be a lion to lay with the lamb?"
Isaac did not answer so I asked him what he thought of the Ravad's objection.
Isaac directed me to the bottom of the page and the comments of Rabbi Shemtov ben Abraham ibn Gaon, a 14th century Spanish mystic who supports the views of the Mishna Torah against the objections of the Ravad. He and his commentary are called Migdal Oz, the tower of strength. The Migdal Oz argues that biblical interpretation is multifaceted and divergent understanding of the same verse are to be expected. He confronts the Ravad's objection head on by offering a proof text from Genesis which our sages interpret metaphorically. The verse he brings to prove his point is ingenious and a fine example of Rabbinic humor. Genesis 37:20 on Joseph, `an evil beast has consumed him,' the Rabbis interpret to refer to Potiphar's wife," Isaac laughed loudly and heartily. The humor was lost on me. I imagined Potiphar's wife as seductive and not an evil beast, and I thought Joseph did not give in to his passions and was not devoured.
I did not ask what the other commentators said, but understood that each line of each law opened a labyrinth of commentary. We returned to the text:
"They will all return to the true religion and will neither steal nor destroy. They will earn a comfortable living in a peaceful manner as it is written, `and the lion will eat straw like the ox,' (Isa 11:7). All similar expressions concerning the Messianic age are metaphors. In the days of the Messiah, the meaning of these metaphors and their allusions will be clear to all."
When Isaac finished reading I asked, "What is the true religion? Rambam says the Messiah will explain the meaning of these metaphors and then explains them himself. What are his sources?"
"The true religion is monotheism," Isaac answered.
"So we don't believe everyone will be a Jew in the Messianic age."
"Certainly not."
"And what of the salvation of the non-Jew?"
Isaac flipped back to the end of Chapter eight and the beginning of Chapter nine in the Mishna Torah and explained:

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"The non-Jew is expected to observe the `Seven Mitzvot of the Noahides' to be considered `a righteous gentile' with a portion in the world to come."
"What are the Seven?"
"According to Maimonides, (9:1), six precepts were given to Adam, five prohibitions and the command for social justice by establishing courts. The five prohibitions include: idolatry, blasphemy, murder, adultery, and robbery."
"And the seventh?"
"This was added in the time of Noah: the prohibition of eating a limb from a living animal."
"Why this commandment in Noah's time?"
"Until Noah, we were vegetarians. During that generation a concession was made to our evil inclination and we were allowed meat, provided the animal suffered no pain in the process."
"So a gentile who fulfills these seven precepts is considered righteous."
"Yes."
"The commands all seem reasonable to me. The basis of a moral society."
"That's right."
"And the Jew?"
"The Jew has a system of 613 Mitzvot that Maimonides explains in fourteen volumes."
"A separate arrangement with God."
"Yes."
"Two covenants. I wasn't aware of this Isaac."
Then I voiced one of the many thoughts I should have kept to myself.
"I think I'd rather be a non-Jew and work on the Seven."
"But you are a Jew."
"Yes, a member of the chosen people," I said, amazed at my cynicism. The ethnocentrism of the Alenu affected me deeply.
"That's right," Isaac said, "chosen to fulfill a separate covenant. A covenant with a greater number of commandments and perhaps unique rewards from fulfilling those commandments. You should know," Isaac lectured, "that the tolerance of the Jews is in sharp contrast to the exclusiveness of the `one way' religions. They hang a sign on the gates of their heaven saying `No Jews Allowed.'"
"But what about Alenu?" I protested.
Isaac knew exactly what was bothering me. "Alenu we will study when we answer the question of God as warrior. It is an ancient prayer written by Joshua before the settling of the Holy Land. Joshua's decision on how to deal with the idolatry of the native inhabitants may astonish you. We will learn this `inside' later. Remember, Alenu tells the Jews that they have their own covenant with God, and dreams of a time when all of humanity will be united in the belief in the one God."
"Back to your question about sources. The source of every law in the Mishna Torah is the Jewish oral tradition. The Babylonian and

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Jerusalem Talmuds, Midrashim on the Five Books of Moses and Rabbinic opinion up to Maimonides' time."
"Maimonides never gives his own opinion?"
"No, only his analysis of whose view is to be followed in a Talmudic dispute or what worldview is to prevail in an ideological confrontation."
"But certainly Maimonides' worldview will influence his legal decisions."
"Absolutely."
"Is one then allowed their own opinion?"
"Yes, within a framework of tradition."
"Back to your original question to me at the beginning," I said to Isaac, "the question Maimonides is answering is how one is to understand scripture."
"Yes, this is a fundamental question of religion."
"I am not satisfied with Maimonides' answer," I said, "that scripture speaks metaphorically. If so, how does the Torah differ from secular literature?"
"A good question. Also you are correct that Maimonides is dealing with the crucial question of how one is to understand the meaning of religious language. But why do you assume that the sacred is not as open to interpretation as the secular in literature? The process of Midrash, of Jewish scriptural exegesis assumes the text may be read on many levels. We are taught by our sages, paradoxically, that a scriptural verse never goes beyond its simple apparent meaning and at the same time that some texts cannot be read literally. The `Song of Songs' for example, which in my opinion can be read literally, understanding it also operates on other levels of meaning also inherent in the text. A scriptural canvas is comparable to the charcoal etching that forms the basis of an oil painting. The lines of the drawing determine the form of the composition. Through Midrash depth and color are added to produce a masterpiece. Sometimes it is impossible to see the original charcoal lines. This process is also recapitulated in the exegesis of the law. The Torah teaches:
`An eye for an eye
A tooth for a tooth, etc.'
Tradition focuses on the original text:
literally:an eye under (or less than) an eye
a tooth under (or less than) a tooth, etc.
The verse itself points to its Midrashic meaning. If, God forbid, someone dismembers his neighbor by accident, strict justice demands that he suffer the same fate. The fundamentalist is left with a verse of cold stone. Scripture becomes dead, an idol. But the text demands to live:

The eye and something less than the eye, its value to the injured. The eye cannot be restored, but the value of the eye can be assessed and paid by the offender.
Every verse of scripture is given meaning by Midrash. Midrash does not secularize the text, but makes it a living literature

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that reflects the divine."
Ever obstinate, I objected. "Must everything always go back to the book? Must I presume that God's will can be ascertained only by reading its words and verses? Why are we Jews so obsessed with this book, so insistent that it records the working of the divine mind? My universe is not so orderly and black and white that I can believe in the divinity of scripture. I am a lover of wisdom, a philosopher, who will seek the meaning of life, like the Greeks, through the working of my own speculative mind!"
"Actually," Isaac explained patiently, "it is the view of Plato and the Greeks and not of the Rabbis that assumes a rational, fixed cosmos that can be read like a book."
"The Jew views Torah and reality as Process. Our Torah's unique because of Midrash and the Oral Law. The Torah is in a process of continual renewal and creation and therefore can never be read from beginning to end."
"The Law is the same. The printed text we are studying is symbolic of this process. Text and interpretation, commentary and super commentary, the Torah enfolds, a multifoliated rose. And scriptural interpretation is a garden of exegesis. The Torah in its entirety and each year the tree of life offers us new fruits. Torah is a most unique genre of literature."
Isaac had an answer for every question. I was silent. He read the next Halacha in the Midrash Torah:
"Our sages teach: The only difference between this world and the Messianic time is the deliverance from the servitude to foreign powers (Sanhedrin 91b)."
"It appears from the literal meaning of the words of the prophets that the Messianic Era will begin with the War of Gog and Magog. Prior to that war a prophet will arise to set Israel straight, and prepare their hearts as it is written, `Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet' (Mal. 3:23), Elijah will come ... to bring Peace as it is written, `and he shall turn the hearts of the father to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers.
"The proof text doesn't seem to fit the argument," I said. "What does the return of the heart of the children to the parents and the hearts of the parents to the children have to do with peace?"
"In Hebrew this concept is called <u>Shalom</u> <u>Bayit</u>, Peace in the home."
"So?"
"Peace in the home is the basis of peace between the nations."
"I still don't see the connection."
"Where does the process of bringing peace into the world begin?"
I wasn't sure where I was being led, and shrugged.
"It begins in the heart. Through atonement with God. We join our mate and again become Adam, and our children are formed in the image of God. If we perfect our relationship with our children and live together in Shalom, in peace and perfection, then we create people who are ready to live in peace with their neighbors and neighbors who live in peace with one another. The process of

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bringing peace on earth begins with each individual finding peace in his own heart. The process begins with ourselves. When we `save' ourselves we save a world, and this influences every sphere of life outside our own."
"Is this your own mystical theory?" I asked.
"No, it is common to all spiritual systems."
I again shrugged. Isaac explained further, in a voice only he and I could hear:
"My old bible from Laguna, the King James version, stained with the salt from the ocean and my tears, lists `and he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the children to the fathers' as the last verse of the `old' testament."
The father.,
then begins the `New' testament:
The child.
In the messianic time," Isaac still whispered, "the father and child will be reconciled in peace."
I was not sure I understood Isaac's conceptual model of peace and was certainly baffled by this last statement. I did not comment and returned to the safer domain of the text:
"Israel is not under the servitude to foreign powers. Does this mean the Messianic age began in 1948 with the inauguration of the Jewish state?"
"One cannot extrapolate the law from one Halacha," Isaac explained. "Also, Israel means more than this small state in the Middle East. Jews still live under foreign servitude. The Soviet Pharaohs refuse to let their Jews go. Israel will no longer be under the servitude of foreign powers when every Jew in the world lives in Israel."
"You really believe," I said, "that some day all the Jews of the world will live in Israel?"
"Yes, the United States of Israel."
Isaac returned to the text:
"Among our sages, some say the coming of Elijah will precede the advent of the Messiah. But all of these matters and their details, no person can know until they happen. The meaning of the prophets is closed to us. The Rabbis have no reliable traditions in these matters, except the apparent meaning of the verses. That is why the Rebbis disagree on them. Anyway, the sequence of these events and their details are not dogma."
"Nobody should occupy their time with these legendary themes or Midrashic statements on this or similar topics. They are not essential because they lead neither to the fear nor love of God."
"Also, do not calculate the end of days. Our sages teach `Blasted be those who consider (calculate) the End.' One should wait (for the Messiah's coming), accepting this as an article of faith."
"Isaac," I said, "do the apparent meanings of the verses imply an Armageddon, a final battle between Gog and Magog?"
"Yes, some do."
"Do you agree that we should not concern ourselves with these matters?"

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"No. These themes are primary for our faith."
"Why is Maimonides' stance so vehement and extreme?"
"In Israel, Messianic speculation has led only to aborted Messianic hopes. Each Messiah, a pretender. Tragedy walked hand in hand with each Messianic failure. We will come back to this theme."
Isaac summarized Halacha Three since it spoke of a technicality, the Messiah's determination of the pedigree of each Jew.
"Today we are not sure who is a Priest, Levite or Israel, and these will be clarified by the Messiah through the Holy Spirit."
I had enough of the "we" from Isaac. Especially on this theme of family descent. I was direct.
"How can you say "we" Isaac? You are a Christian!"
"I am a Jew," Isaac answered back just as directly.
"What?"
"I am a Jew. My mother's mother was a Jew. According to our tradition I am a Jew."
"How do you know?"
"I have looked into the matter carefully."
"But your father is a Christian."
"Yes, and he will always consider me a Christian, and his heart will turn towards mine, and mine towards his, in the time of Sheloh,(Sealah) the time of Shalom."
Embarrassed and amazed I listened intently as Isaac read the next Halacha

"The sages and prophets did not long for the Messianic era so that Israel would rule the world or oppress her oppressors, or to be praised by the nations or to eat, drink and be merry. Rather they longed that Israel be free to study the law and its wisdom, without oppression, and therefore be worthy of life in the world to come."
"We'll all be Yeshiva students then," I said jokingly.
"Even you," said Isaac.
Isaac then read the last Halach, the Arete of Maimonides fourteen volume vision of Jewish life.
"And in that time there will not be famine or war, jealously or strife. That which is good will hold sway, and prosperity will be within the reach of everyone."
"The one preoccupation of the world will be to know God. Therefore, the Israelites will be exceedingly wise, comprehending that which was unfathomable, attaining a comprehension of their creator to the limits of the human mind as it is written `For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea,' (Is. 11:9)."
"What is the meaning of the Juxtaposition of famine and war?" I asked.
"Borrowing a folk etymology from a Chassidic master, we notice that bread is contained within the Hebrew word or war. The two remaining letters,-spell, what. What of the poor who do not have their daily bread? In the realm of our world we know that economic factors have been a major cause of many of the world's

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wars. Economic justice and world peace must be considered together."
"Maimonides says there will not be famine. What of poverty?"
"An excellent question," Isaac said.
"The Torah says the poor will never cease from the land. We will have food in abundance and adequate shelter, but some shall be poor. Unsatisfied with their portion they will always be unsatisfied. They may acquire treasures and unlimited material possessions, yet they will be poor."
"All the people of the world will have enough to eat?"
"Yes. In fact, as long as one child in one ghetto anywhere in the world is crying from lack of food, know that our world is still unredeemed."
I decided I was hungry and we went out of Isaac's room for some food.

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We entered the room and I asked, "Isaac, what about jealousy and strife. Is it connected to the end of starvation and war in the days of the Messiah?"
Isaac smiled. He would not say such a thing but I felt he was pleased I had put something spiritual before food. Perhaps there was some hope for me.
"Famine and war are sometimes out of the domain of the individual. The charity of the richest man cannot feed all the hungry. The vision of Shalom of a devout peace lover does not necessarily bring peace on earth. Jealousy and strife however, are wholly controllable by the individual. If I do not covet what is yours, jealousy is controlled. If I am tranquil with my God, and love myself, then I will love my neighbor as myself. This level of bringing the Messiah is attainable by every individual."
"Then why doesn't Maimonides list the absence of jealousy and strife first, and then the absence of famine and war?" I asked.
Isaac stared at me and shook his head. Even he had not thought of this question.
"Perhaps," Isaac offered, "many individuals will learn not to be jealous and not to strive only after the absence of famine and war. In the Messianic age, the individual can be actualized in an unredeemed community, but a redeemed community helps actualize the individual."
Isaac was absorbed in thought and I reviewed in my mind all that he had taught me. On the whole I felt Maimonides' and Judaism's visions of the Messianic times were a well of thought and yearning for a better world. A blueprint for a New Age. Now I knew `what' the Jewish vision about the Messiah was, but I wondered about the `how,' the implementation of these lofty ideas. I asked Isaac.
"It's fine to dream of a famine-less world. How do we achieve this? In India and China there are millions of mouths to feed

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without adequate supplies. Realistically who could even begin to face up to this problem?"

Mao Did

"Mao did," Isaac said.
Isaac was amused by my shocked reaction.
"I'm sorry if I upset your Southern Californian sensibilities," Isaac said. "But Mao's form of communism worked well to remedy exactly the problem you raise. Also, famine will be conquered when we drop all our `ism' thinking and realize that we live on one world which is a global village that will survive only through cooperation."
"We are not American and Russian, European and Asian, but one in God and one in Sheloh."
"Sure Isaac," I said, "the Communist hordes are going to cooperate with the Western democracies in the name of God."
"In the time of the Messiah," Isaac said, "God and those who worship in the name of God and the atheists, will be one."

Isaiah's Dream

"Maimonides bases much of his Messianic speculation on Isaiah."
"Why Isaiah?" I asked.
"Isaiah's visions are essential to understand the character of the Messiah and the Messiah's role in the redemption of Israel and the nations. We have spoken of Isaiah's Zionism. Isaiah's Messiah is a wonder. A counselor and Mighty Judge, leader of the everlasting, and Prince of Peace. Born of the Earth, child of God."
"Will this Messiah be our Saviour?"
"No. The Messiah, the ideal leader, is a teacher."
"A human like you and I?"
"Exactly."
"Then who will redeem us," I asked, confused, not really believing anyway, "If not the Messiah?"
"We will each redeem ourselves," Isaac taught. "Each individual is the Messiah, in potential, in the sphere of one's own personal world."
"Is this Isaiah's teaching?"
"No. It's Chassidic."
"What of Emmanuel?" I asked.
"Isaiah says Emmanuel is the name of, or rather, one of the titles of the Messiah." (7:14)
"I remember this as a proof text for Christianity," I said, thinking of one of my prayer sessions with Grove.
"Yes," Isaac said, "Isaiah is also the favorite prophet in

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Christianity and central to their Messianic speculations. The New Testament quotes Isaiah more than any other Hebrew prophet."
"Emmanuel, according to Christian tradition, will be born of a virgin when even God grows weary of the exile, `he will give a sign.'"

Isaac read from his King James Version:
"Behold a virgin
shall conceive
and bear a son
and shall call his name
Emmanuel."
I checked the Hebrew and protested. "Isaac, this is an outright mistranslation. The text does not say `virgin,' but `*Alma*.' A virgin is a *Betulah*. Doesn't Alma mean `young woman'?"
"Yes," Isaac agreed, "probably."
"Why the mistranslation?"
"The text was translated to conform to church doctrine."
I reread the Emmanuel passages. Isaac prepared whole wheat crackers with butter and honey.

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Theophilos, surely you can sense the ironies of our study sessions. I still had not put the picture together.

*****

Our discussion on Isaiah prompted a more panoramic question:
"Is it possible to speak about a prophetic worldview on the Messianic times?"
"Not exactly," Isaac answered. "Each prophet's vision is expressed in his own individual idiom and image. Some visions overlap, but each prophet must be examined singularly to establish their Messianic dream."
"Can you give a theme common to all?" I asked.
"Yes, that idolatry is the negation of Godliness, and the greatest idolatry is the idolatry of power. In the end, God's judgment will be severe on those who live by the sword. This, I believe, is the essence of prophetic eschatology."
"I do not know the word, Isaac." I admitted.
"In Hebrew, aharit hayamin, the final things at the end of days."
"And what is Isaiah's, and the other prophets' eschatology?" I asked.
"Isaiah, as we saw views the Messiah as the Prince of Peace, who

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awakens Zion and publishes his teaching of Peace in a time when God will comfort the people. Isaiah's view of the character of the Messiah is as a suffering servant, despised and rejected. A Messiah of sorrows, acquainted with grief, oppressed and afflicted, he submits to being struck down. Led like a sheep to the slaughter, he opens not his mouth." Isaac was silent then, entranced. Only when he returned from his journey did he continue.
"Jeremiah reminds us that it is God, not the Messiah, who is our Redeemer."
"Ezekiel's metaphysical blueprint of the architectural dimensions of the New Jerusalem is understandable only through the Kabbalah."

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Actually, Theophilos, Isaac's poetry gives a clear interpretation of Ezekiel's dream of the New Jerusalem. See the end of Final Lecture, in the Psalm section of Final Testament.

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"Hosea speaks of a time when the Jews will be recognized as `sons of the living God.' May it come to pass speedily in our days. Then," Isaac paraphrased turning to the Hebrew,
`Both sword and weapon of war
will be broken from the earth
so that all life
may lay down without fear." (2:18)
"Nahum, Zephania, Habbakuk, Malachi, and Joel do not mention the Messiah directly as an individual. Each of their visions must be studied with great care. Joel, for example, is often enigmatic. His vision seems to me to be closest to the spirit of the new state of Israel. The old men of Zion dreamed dreams, but the young men see visions, most often of war. This they proclaim, following Joel:"

`Sanctify war
awaken the warriors
let all the men of war draw near.

Beat your plowshares into swords
and your pruning hooks into spears
Let the weak say
`I am strong.'" (3:9-12)

"So Israel follows Joel and forgets Isaiah," I said.
"I pray this will not happen," Isaac answered.

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"You know," I said to Isaac, "since coming to Israel I have experience only spiritual trails. Chassidim who are joyless, spiritual imperialists, and worse. Yeshiva students who speak of destroying Islam's holy shrines so the third temple may be rebuilt. Dark harlots. I imagined I was coming home to my land and my people, and all I find are messianic pretensions. Everyone in Israel is a messiah, or at least a prophet, yet all of their visions are mundane. I'm sorry, Isaac. I'm really tired of all this Messiah and redemption stuff. What am I to do with this unredeemed secular state? People on the street tell me, `I am an Israeli, not a Jew.' What am I to do?"
"You yourself have suggested the solution," Isaac said.
I shrugged off any possibility of understanding an answer. Isaac reminded me:
"The Messianic must come to redeem the Mundane."
"Sophomoric balderdash," I said without thinking.
Isaac looked hurt and I apologized. "I'm sorry Isaac. I'm afraid I have little hope and no faith."

Censored

Thinking of all the failed Messiahs, I asked Isaac about the missing censored passage in the Mishna Torah.
Isaac removed an old leather bound copy of the Mishna Torah from the shelves of the library in his room. The pages were yellow and faded. The text was ancient, without the commentaries that framed the text we had been studying. At the end of chapter eleven, in the uncensored version, the text continued:
"But if he is not successful to this point, or is murdered, it is certain that he is not the Messiah promised by the Torah. He is similar to all the kings of the Davidic dynasty who were <u>Shalem</u> (perfected) and worthy, but who died when God raised then (to power) to test the community as it is written: `and some of them of wisdom shall fail, to test them, and to purify and to make them white, even to the time of the end, because it is yet for the appointed time.'
Also of Jesus the Nazarite, who imagined that he was the Messiah, but was put to death by the court, Daniel has prophetized, as it is written:
`And the children of the violent among your people shall exalt themselves up, to fulfill the vision, but they shall stumble.'"
"And has there ever been a greater stumbling than this?"
"All the prophets say the Messiah will save the Jews from the exile, gather her dispersed, and affirm the Mitzvot. But Jesus caused Israel to be murdered by the sword, to be dispersed and denigrated, changing the Torah, leading the world to error and to serve other Gods."
"But the thoughts of the creator of the universe are unfathomable, for out ways are not God's ways, neither are our thoughts God's

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thoughts. All these things relating to Jesus the Nazarite and the Ishmaelite who came after him served only to direct us towards King Messiah and to establish a world dedicated to the worship of the one God as it is written.:"
"For then I will turn to the people a pure language that they may all call upon the name of the Lord to serve with one consent." (Zephania 3:9)
"Success," I interrupted. "The Messiah must be a success." I loathed the word. To me it summed up the quest for prestige, power, money, and fame that motivated western man to acquisition and to bow to the idol Mammon. My father had used the word often during my high school years. Then I dreamed and devoured novels, sucking on a pipe in my hazed room. "Pipe smokers aren't motivated," my father said. "How do you ever expect to be a success?"
Isaac did not share my aversion or prejudice towards success.
"Yes, the Messiah must fulfill the diving mission. The Messiah must be a success."
"No second chances, no second comings?" I asked.
Isaac did not answer.
"Jesus then was not the Messiah because he did not fulfill his mission?"
"According to Maimonides, for this and other reasons listed."
"Isn't it a bit harsh to call Christians `children of the violent?" I said. "I imagine Jesus was a teacher of peace, perhaps even too pacifistic. If someone strikes me in the face, I will strike them back, immediately."
"Christianity brought not peace but the sword," Isaac answered.
"But Isaac," I protested, "certainly Jesus is not responsible for the corruption of his teachings by the church."
"Only by his fruit is he known," Isaac answered.
I disagreed with Isaac, but went on to another question.
"Maimonides says that Muhammad and Islam only served to clear the way for Messiah, but won't even call Muhammad by name, referring to him as `the Ishmaelite.'"
Isaac explained. "Maimonides was personally persecuted in Spain when the fanatic Islamic sect called Almohades ascended to power and exiled him from his homeland. In Maimonides' experience, the natives of Islam were also `children of the violent.'"
I sidetracked Isaac again.
"Does Islam believe in a Messiah?"
"Yes."
"The same Messiah the Jews are waiting for?"
"That is not an easy question. The Shi'a sect of Islam, which splits into an even larger number of sects including the Imamites or Twelvers, believe that Muhammad Al Mahdi, the 12th Imam, disappeared from the world around the year 880. His second coming as Mahdi (the guided one) will see the restoration of justice and righteousness to the world. Influenced by Christian and perhaps Jewish messianic hopes, Islam evolved its own idea of a Messiah. Later Sunni tradition claims that the Mahdi is Jesus who will

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return and slay the antichrist. The great historian of Islam, Ibn Khaldun, doubts the veracity of this tradition."
I really didn't have enough background in Islamic history to completely follow this. I asked, "What does Islam say concerning the end of days?"
"Islam focuses on the Day of Judgment, a day of reckoning, an `overwhelming day.' The Ka'ba, the holy stone of Islam in Mecca, according to an Islamic Midrash, comes to visit the Temple Mount. All souls walk over a bridge that arches from the Mt. of Olives to the Temple Mount. This bridge is narrower than a hair, sharper than a sword, and darker than night. The angel of death, Israfil, sounds the Shofar (ram's horn) three times. The assembled are judged and the righteous move towards hell (on the left)."
"How will Islam relate to the Jewish Midrash?" I asked.
"Although not accepted as their redeemer, the Messiah of the Jews will be recognized as the sovereign of the nation of Israel."
"And will Islam then grant that Israel has spiritual title to the land?"
"That is an excellent and complicated question. On the whole Islam demands the submission of the entire world to its vision of Islamic rule. `Islam rules and is not ruled." However, sources can be found that view the Holy Land as God's gift to the Jews. The famous commentator to the Qur'aan Al-ZamakShari (1074-1144) on Sura V (4:22-23) explains that Allah (God) has assigned the Holy Land to the Jews. But you will not hear this quoted much be Orthodox Islamic theologians today."
"It certainly would be helpful to the peace process if Islam recognized Israel's right to exist."
"Yes, it would."
I had only sketchy survey knowledge of Islam. I learned in university that the status of the Jews in the Islamic nations in which they lived was, on the whole, better than under Christendom. Jews were flourishing in Spain during their Golden Age while still being persecuted by their Christian overlords in Europe. I shared this with Isaac.
"However," Isaac added, "Jews were also second class citizens under Islamic rule, similar to the status of Blacks in Alabama in the 50's and 60's. With all this, they were, on the whole, safer under Islamic rule than under Christian rule."
Isaac wanted to go back "inside." He chanted the end of the censored Halacha.
"The idea of the Messiah, the Torah, and Commandments have spread even to the farthest islands of the earth and to many nations uncircumcised of heart. They discuss these topics and the laws of Torah. They say `These laws w4were true but are no longer relevant to the present generation...' But when the true Messiah comes and succeeds, is exalted and acknowledged, they will immediately concede that they have inherited nothing but lies from their leaders, that their prophets and forefathers led them astray."
"Isaac," I said, "Maimonides' views are as unfathomable to me as

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God's designs are to Maimonide. Do you agree that the true Messiah will reveal that all the spiritual teachings of Christianity and Islam are lies? I see why this was censored. Maimonides is peddling inflammatory half-truths."
"I see this Halacha in a different light," Isaac said. "The Rambam gives our persecutors a positive role in history, the preparation of the world for true monotheism and a genuine acceptance of the Torah. Considering the incestuous rape and murder of Jews by her daughter religions, the Rambam's views may be considered generous. Theologically, Rambam had no choice but to explain the unfathomable successes of Christianity and Islam as part of the divine plan, as God's will manifest in history."
"So Maimonides is giving us a philosophy of history to explain Jewish powerlessness?" I asked.
"Actually, Maimonides, the Rambam had no real conception of what we call history. He speaks as a philosopher. If we agree that the essence of the Torah's teachings is the negation of idolatry and specifically the idolatry of power, and that the Christian nations and Islamic nations bowed deeply to this idol of power, then the Rambam's view is clear. I don't believe the Rambam feels the Christian and Muslim must completely reject their traditions. They must however, be true to their Torah covenant to the one God as manifest in the Noahide Code."
I thought of Jewish powerlessness in the diaspora. Always at the mercy of the whims of her host nation, Israel had to humbly submit to the rule of people who considered her despised and rejected.
Yet we survived. And our oppressors are gone. And the greatest irony might be that Israel with power, an army, and an ideology of nationalism, might now go the way of her oppressors. I could imagine the Messiah coming to remind the Jewish people of the lesson of her dispersion, that not by might and not by power, but by the spirit alone, the Jews survived.

Pretenders

Isaac spoke of the actual Messianic pretenders in history.
He mentioned the Messiah in Crete in the fifth century and Bar Kochba, and I shook my head in acknowledgement. The Rebbe Raddi Satman had explained these two pretenders to me. Isaac began, "A complete overview of all of the historical ramifications of all of the messianic pretenders in history could fill a library. I'll tell you about only a few."
"During the time of Maimonides, about 1172, a Messiah appeared in the Yemen. The man did not fulfill Maimonides' job description and Maimonides considered this messiah a madman."
"The persecutions of the Crusaders and fanatical element in Islam helped birth many pretenders. The Rambam also comments on a certain Ibn Aryeh who dreamed and then believed himself to be the Messiah. He was beaten and excommunicated. Around the same time,

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a young female Messiah appeared in Baghdad. The Cairo Geniza has a fragment that attests to her dream on the 25th of Ellul, 1120. The daughter of Joseph the physician, she saw and heard Elijah the prophet tell her that the redemption was to begin. The Caliph was not at all pleased with her pretensions. The Jews were imprisoned and the physician's daughter was taken out to be publicly burned as a witch. Then Elijah miraculously appeared to the Caliph, according to historical legend, saving the Jews and the physician's daughter."
Isaac gave me a number of books to read in Hebrew and English and then continued his summary:
"The Holy Kabbalist Abraham Abulafia reached a level of prophetic inspiration and monumental Chutzpa in the 13th century. In 1280 Abulafia went to Rome to convince Pope Nicholass III to open his heart to the Jews. Nicholas promptly condemned Rabbi Abulafia to death. The Pope died first and the Rabbi was released from prison. In 1290 Abulafic announced the advent of the Messianic era. The Jews prepared to leave for the Land of Israel, but the rabbinic authorities proclaimed the Rabbi a charlatan."
"Each century had its lineup of Messiahs. In the 16th, David Reuveni was received by the Pope, who believed his story that a powerful Jewish kingdom existed which could join forces with Christiandom to attack Muslims. The Pope received Reuveni as an ambassador and even gave him letters of recommendation to the king of Portugal. The Jews also believed in Reuveni's imaginary kingdom and army. In the end Reuveni could not convince the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, Charles V., to join forces to defeat the Turks. His fate is not known. He may have been burned at the stake."

Protestant Messiah

"The 16th century also saw the pretensions of a man the Jews did not see as messiah, but hoped would be a savior of sorts - Martin Luther."
"Luther wrote in 1523 that `Jesus Christ was born a Jew.' He asked Christians to stop persecuting the Jews. The Jews were so taken aback; they thought that perhaps the Messianic Era had arrived. Luther, however, expected the Jews to react to his kindness by conversion. When they did not, he published his notorious `Against the Jews and Their Lies.' Luther became a classic, rabid Jew hater."
"The Jews' disappointment in Luther was dramatically overshadowed in the 17th century with the advent of Shabbati Zvi. Mystics among the Christians and Jews awaited the Messiah. On the ninth day of the Hebrew month Av, the day tradition says the Messiah will be born, Shabbati Zvi came into this world. Shabbati was a handsome charismatic man with a melodious voice. He was born to lead. In 1648 he proclaimed himself Messianic King of Israel."

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Undaunted by the excommunication of his own community, Shabbati Zvi had a wedding canopy erected and took the Holy Torah as his bride. Zvi found a patron in Raphael Chelabi who sent Zvi to Israel to distribute funds. To the Rabbi's of Jerusalem, Shabbati became a savior of sorts, since the Torah scholars in Israel were starving."
"Shabbati then met Nathan of Gaza, who launched his Messianic career. Professor Scholem explains that Shabbati Zvi was not really taken seriously until Nathan promoted him."
"Nathan was known in Israel as somewhat of a holy man and prophet. Shabbati went to Nathan, who was renowned as a physician of the soul, to be cured of his manic depression. Nathan convinced Shabbati that he was the Messiah. Without Nathan's conviction, Shabbati may have remained only a dreamer."
"Meanwhile in Poland, one Nehamia the Cohen proclaimed himself a prophet of the Messiah. Shabbati Zvi summoned Nehamia to a fortress at Abydus where he had been imprisoned by the Turks for his Messianic claims. Nehamia came to Shabbati and announced that Shabbati was certainly not the Messiah. Nehamia may have tried to convince Zvi that he was the Messiah, the son of David. Then Zvi could claim to be Messiah the son of Joseph."
"Rambam doesn't mention the Messiah son of Joseph," I said.
"The Messiah son of Joseph, is a warrior Messiah," Isaac answered.
"I guess the two charlatans' egos got in the way of a two-seated throne," I said.
"Perhaps," said Isaac.
He continued. "The followers of Zvi were intolerant of Nehamia the pretender, and threatened his life. Nehamia went to the Sultan and advised the Turks to take Zvi to the Sultan. The Jewish Messiah who dreamed of sitting on the sultan's throne as king of kings was now put to the test. Aware of his powerlessness, when offered a choice between Islam and the sword, Zvi opted for a petty office in the Sultan's court."
"This should have put an end to the Messiahship of Shabbati Zvi. Loyal followers refused to return to their senses and admit defeat. Nathan announced that Zvi's apostasy was a deep kabbalistic mystery. The paradox of an apostate Messiah formed the basis of a new theology. Eventually a sect known as the Donmeh within Islam waited for the second coming of Shabbati Zvi."
"An anthropologist would see Zvi-ism as a crisis cult," I said.
Isaac asked me to explain the term.
"A crisis cult is a religious phenomenon that originate with visions of a new way of life by individuals under extreme stress. During these times of great cultural crisis the community looks for a hero to set the world right. The Jews have certainly known extreme stress and persecution. I see each crisis persecution. I see each crisis produces another Messianic pretender," I said.
Isaac continued.
"Around 1740 one Jacob Frank announced in Poland, strange Sabbetian doctrines with some twists of his own. Frank claimed to be the reincarnation of Shabbati. Frank took Sabbetian doctrines

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to their limits. The world had not been redeemed through good, so he and his followers would bring redemption through evil. Desire would be defeated by giving in to every temptation. Wild orgies became part of worship. Traditional religious morality was turned on its head."
"Was this revolt against traditional religion limited to Jews?"
"No," Isaac answered.
"Within Christianity, Messianic expectations were also high. The Ranters, like Shabbati, taught freedom from conventional morality. They also sought redemption through evil. They differed by being anti-intellectual and anti-Bible. Other sects attempted to use scripture as the rationale for diversions from tradition. Free spiritism is not a phenomenon of the 60's only," Isaac said.
I thought of the flower children at Berkeley who sincerely preached their simple doctrine of "Make Love Not War," and of the Hollywood Messiah, Charles Manson.
"Free spiritism taught that the only sin was to disobey the leader. Manson was a terrible reincarnation of the worst elements of Free Spiritism and Frankism."
"These Messianic pretenders are dangerous men," I said.
"Yes," Isaac answered, "and not only men."
I wore one of my puzzled looks. Isaac explained.
"The Messianic impulse moves towards revolt against the banalities and evils of the status quo. Religious ethnocentrism is revolted against by Jews attempting to assimilate the doctrines of Islam and Christianity into their religious world views. Christians study the kabbalah and search for Judaic insights to illuminate their spiritual path."
"The entire social structure is called into question and tested by Messianic movements. John Noyes envisioned a community where every man was wedded to every woman and every woman to every man. After the children were weaned they were placed in a common nursery. Every adult was mother or father to every child, one family."
"Especially in the past few centuries Messianism and sexuality have been coupled both in theory and practice. Baruchia Russo preached a New Messianic Torah where the 26 transgressions, punishable by keritot, the utter extension of the offender's soul, were turned into Positive Commandments. Adultery, incest, even bestiality were practiced. Russo unleashed the sexual beast. Russo preached the divinity of Shabbati and later his followers made Russo divine."

Messianic Feminism

"Before women had feminism as a way to revolt against their oppression and domination by men, they discovered Messianism. The religious authorities and traditions denied women access to being spiritual leaders of local communities. But no one could deny a

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woman filled with the holy spirit or a woman prophet. Even the most chauvinistic of men might be persuaded that the Messiah's mother would be a woman."
"Margaret Peter, born on Christmas day, believed herself destined to do battle against the Devil. She offered herself up as the final sacrifice so Satan would be defeated. She even used hammer and spikes to nail herself to a cross!"
"In the 18th century, Joanna Southcott believed herself to be pregnant with the Messiah. In the Third Book of Wonders th Southcottians teach:
`This year in the 65th year of thy age thou shall have
a son by the power of the most high."
The Southcottians sing:
Shiloh to our faith is given
on this bright auspicious morn
Shiloh choicest gift of heaven
For a faithless world is born
Hail Joanna! Favored mortal Chosen maid of heaven's love
Thou canst ope the blessed portal
of the joyful seats above."
"Who is or what is Shiloh?" I asked.
"Shiloh, properly pronounced She-low, is the expected godchild," Isaac answered.
"Is this a fictional fabrication by the Southcottians?" I asked.
"No, not actually. It is an extension of the traditional belief that the name of the Messiah is Shiloh."
"I am not familiar with this name," I confessed. Isaac was overwhelming me with his knowledge of Messianic pretenders. I wondered about the fate of Joanna and asked Isaac.
"Joanna died while pregnant. Her followers demanded an autopsy to find Shiloh. Joanna was examined and no Messiah was found. The Southcottians believed Shiloh had been taken to heaven."
I asked about Shiloh in Torah. Isaac rushed around the room and grabbed two copies of Genesis and various commentators. We first looked at the test (Gen. 49:10) in the Mikrot Gedolot. Isaac again explained the set up of the text. To the left of the text, Onkelos and other ancient Aramaic translations. Then Rashi, Nachmanides Ibn Ezra the Sephorno and Rashbam.
"Jewish textual exegesis is, as you know, always process," Isaac said.
We read the text.
The scepter shall not depart
from Judah
Nor the ruler's staff from between
his feet
As long as men come to Sheloh (Shiloh)
And unto Him shall the obedience of
the people be.
"This is one translation," Isaac explained. "The verse needs to be retranslated according to each commentator. The meaning of the word

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is cryptic in the extreme. Its meaning has not yet been linguistically clarified."
"Where did Joanna get her idea to call the child Shiloh?"
"Christianity assumes that Shiloh is a name of the founder of their religion." They read:
The scepter shall not depart
from Judah
Nor the ruler's staff from between
his feet
Until Shiloh (Jesus) comes
And unto Him shall the obedience of
the people be.
"Does Jewish tradition recognize Sheloh as the name of the Messiah?"
"According to one opinion in the gemara in Sanhedrin, Shiloh is the Messiah's name."
"What about the biblical Shiloh north of Jerusalem?"
"I believe the actual place of Sheloh is part of the meaning of the verse. Sheloh is a place and the name of the Messiah, or more accurately, a title of the Messiah. When the Messiah comes, sovereignty will be Shel-oh, (the Messiah's), and all will assemble at Sheloh to greet their long awaited leader. The Messiah, Sheloh, will announce a teaching of Peace from Sheloh."
"Both Christians and Jews await a Messiah called Sheloh?" I asked.
"Yes."
I remembered reading in a survey course in Jewish Literature, a disputation between Christians and Jews on "Shiloh."
Isaac explained.
"In the 13th century a renegade apostate Jew named Pablo Christiani challenged the great Ramban, Nachmanides, to a debate on the Messiah. The Christians argued that the Messiah had appeared, was human and divine, and that the Mitzvot of Judaism were no longer binding. Christiani and his peers quoted our Sheloh verse as a proof text in favor of the Christian view. Ramban explained the text differently, attempting to prove the humanness and non-divinity of the Messiah."
"How did Ramban understand Sheloh?"
"Sheloh is the `son' of David who will have the obedience of the nations of the world."
"Ramban argued for the purely human origins of Jesus by showing that Shiloh also means `afterbirth,' a Messiah born naturally, of an earthly mother and father."
Isaac was silent a few moments and he smiled a deep contented smile. His fingers danced over the commentary on the bottom of the page. Isaac knew I wanted him to share his insight.
"The Sephorna teaches," I stopped Isaac. "Please forgive me. Obadiah ben Jacob Sephorno, the Renaissance Physician who usually seeks the simple meaning of a text. He says on Sheloh: "know that the expression Sheloh is from the root which means quester or seeker, and the root which teaches peace."
"Sheloh means those who seek and quest for peace and tranquility,

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and a Messiah to show us the way to Sheloh and Sealah. "
I was more than ready to end our Messianic speculations, but thought of another question. I expressed my question as a statement, actually a challenge. "I don't believe I can accept the idea of the Messiah as a person. This idea leads the Jews into too many dead-ended, blind alleys."
"Tradition teaches belief or acknowledgement of the coming of the Messiah as a fundamental of our faith. Reformers and radical Zionists did not want the Messiah to come. Many completely rejected the idea. Ironically the Zionists ultimately put their faith in our most recent Messianic pretender."
"Who is that?"
"Theodore Herzel."
"What?" I could not believe what I was hearing from my friend.
Isaac was not concern with my incredulity. "The Messiah is a person," Isaac said. "Not only an idea or an essence, but a person."
"In the first blessing of our divine service, in the Shmoneh Esray, the reformers changed `God brings a redeemer' to `God brings redemption.'"
"That sounds reasonable to me," I said.
"The difference in the Hebrew is slight, an exchange of two letters, Yet the difference is a difference of one God, whom they deny by rejecting the doctrine of the personal Messiah."
I did not care for Isaac's numerical Kabballistic Midrash. Gematria, the science of interpreting Torah according to the numerical value of the Hebrew letters, could prove anything.
"Isaac, you yourself must admit that the idea of a personal Messiah is the most abused in history."
Isaac did not answer, but reached for a book by Franz Rosenzweig.
"In a note to a poem by Yehuda Halevi, Rosenzweig says: (I did not admit I did not know who Rosenzweig was. Halevi's sublime poetry I had studied in a Hebrew literature class.) `The hope of the coming of the Messiah ... would be meaningless ... a mere idea in the philosophical sense, empty babble, if the appearance of a false messiah did not render it reality and unreality ...' The false messiah is an old as the hope for the true Messiah ... the changing form of this changeless hope."
I was unconvinced. "When will your Messiah come?" I asked.
"The Midrash on Tehillim (Psalms)," Isaac said, "tells when."
"God says `Everything depends on you. Just as the Rose grows with its heart towards heaven, so when you return to me and turn your heart heavenward, I will cause your redeemer to appear.'"
Isaac recited the Midrash so sweetly and with such sincerity, I even found myself wanting to believe.

Dear Theophilos,
My discussions on the Messiah left me weary. I could not believe with perfect faith in His coming, but I did believe in my

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friendship with Isaac. I would be spending more time than I imagined away from the university in the Yeshiva.

Hebrew University

I do not remember much about the courses I took at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Nothing memorable or spectacular was taught in most of the junior year abroad classes.
I do remember seeing "The Jazz Singer" with Al Jolson, and how rudely we Americans booed an Israeli filmmaker off the stage in the stage in the theater room when he began, in Hebrew, an in-depth analysis of the film. A critic or art historian's analysis of an event most often does not measure up to the event itself. We wanted to see and experience Jolsen as the Jazz Singer and resented the critic as a mediator.
I did not realize at the time how deeply disillusioned I was with the entire format of undergraduate education. Especially survey courses in the humanities. We regurgitated vast quantities of information in exams that had been delivered in dull monotones by equally bored graduate assistants or assistant professors. When they did teach, the full professors were often the greatest pedants. I took courses in Judaica. More precisely, the courses were about Judaism. I wanted to learn Judaism. We were taught about the Bible, the Torah, so I sat in the library and read The Torah. I read the Five Books of Moses, and Deuteronomy twice, as Michener recommends in The Source.
The Book of Joshua stopped my reading abruptly. The wars against the native inhabitants during the conquest were violent in the extreme. Men, women, even children and property were utterly destroyed in a war commanded by the warrior God.
The Israeli students at the university were painfully aware of the problem. The Bible - The Tanach in Hebrew - Torah, Prophets and Writings were fluent on the tongues of my Hebrew speaking brothers and sisters. If Joshua's campaign became the model for the reconquering of Israel, we all felt our nation was in trouble.
I sometimes wore a skullcap Isaac had given me. One Israeli student pointed to the book of Joshua I was carrying and then looked mockingly at my skullcap. "This dear friend is our Judaism."
"The prophets," He interrupted, "teach and preach `Peace, Peace,' but the kings and Prime Ministers of Israel go to war."
"The prophet is like the social critic of today," another student said. "If he opposes violence and believes in social justice, does this change anything?"
The talk depressed me.
In my readings I got bogged down in the section on good rulers and evil rulers in the two books of Kings. Yet on the whole, I had to agree with Isaac's father, the Reverend. The Bible is an

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anthology of literature unexceeded anywhere in world literature. Sure it is uneven, Leviticus and Numbers and animal sacrifices are burdensome on first reading. Gandhi became disillusioned with the Torah after reading these books. Isaac would explain and give them meaning for me. Unfortunately, Gandhi did not also have Isaac as a teacher.

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Yes Theophilos, the joy of reading the Holy Torah and Prophets and Writings I remember; and visiting Isaac at the Yeshiva, and one professor, and one mysterious lover at Hebrew University.

Radas

Dr. Daniel Sechelman taught a course on the philosophy of Moses Maimonides as an elective in our program. Dr. Sechelman was also a Rabbi. He had, to put it mildly, a passionate love affair going with Maimonides. The Rambam. From Moses to Moses there is no one like Moses. The ideal Jew, religious pundit and philosopher.
On my way to Sechelman's first class, an Israeli student noticed I was carrying Sechelman's book Maimonides - Philosopher and Torah Scholar. "I see you're taking Sechelman," he said. "You'll learn the ideal Jew lived in the Middle Ages. Sanctify our days as of old. Sechelman refuses to understand that Torah and Reason were separated and divorced centuries ago. Irreconcilable differences.' Sechelman believes Rambam found a way to be reasonable and to be a Jew," the student scoffed. "Look at the Chassidim, side curls like devil horns swinging from the sides of their medieval skulls. Black frocks and fur cape in the Mediterranean climate of Israel." He walked away shaking his head - "Reasonable."
At UCLA, my philosophy professor, who recommended I learn Einstein's Theory of Relativity, had presented the standard line of the Jewish philosophy professors on Maimonides. Sechelman called this approach dualistic. He suggested an organic view of Maimonides. Isaac Husik and Leo Strauss, two great historians of Jewish intellectual history, split him into a dual personality, Maimonides the philosopher, and Rambam the Rabbinic Juror and Doctor of Law. Sechelman's task was to prove that Maimonides and Rambam were one, and that he accomplished a synthesis of the philosophy of Reason of Athens with the Revelation of the Torah.

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Dear Theophilos,
Kindly forgive me my digressions and pedantries. Our dialogue, I

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pray, will set a precedent making it impossible to canonize these words as a monolithic scripture. Here the written and oral traditions become one. Since I can talk to you as a friend, I will continue to chronicle the events that led me to Sheloh. This is no monologue and no sermon, so the whole truth and all details are chronicled. This is one of the Books of the Final Testament - The Book of Laurence. Its truth is the truth, the whole truth, as seen by Laurence. I pray it contains nothing but the truth, and I remind you, I speak so much of myself in this testament to the Messiah's life only to remind you that this is only one disciple's view of Isaac. I pray it is honest and accurate. So help me God.

Turnabout

My first year in Jerusalem was one of singular occurrences. I discovered the One God; was inspired by one professor of one course; and had one relationship, with a woman from New York.

We met on kibbutz in the communal dining hall. I was visiting relatives. She looked Sephardic, an Israeli I thought. Her darkness melted my heart. She spoke Hebrew perfectly with a slight New York accent.

I still have her picture. She is wearing her long black hair in a braid. Surrounded by a Jerusalem mist, dressed in a full, sequined shirt, she gives the impression of being a princess, from India or perhaps from the Yemen.

We caught each other's eye and ate the Sabbath afternoon meal together. Inspired by Sechelman, I had begun to observe a few basic Jewish rituals. I washed my hands before eating bread, and recited an overlong eight paragraph grace after meals. She knew the grace by heart. She had attended Yeshiva high school. On the Sabbath the community recited grace together. She was silent. After she looked up sincerely and said "Thank you." Her grace seemed more inspired than mine.

We walked. I talked of Torah, she of love. In the apricot orchard she took my head into her small strong hands and pulled me close. She stared straight into my eyes and said, "You will be my mate." I kept quiet but thought, soul mate, or playmate? Then she kissed me, and bit my lower lip so hard I thought it would bleed. I was angry and aroused at the same time. I asked that we return to the Sabbath afternoon Mincha prayer.

In Jerusalem we became companions. I loved walking the streets and walls of Jerusalem. We began to walk together. She loved taking my hand in Mea Sharim, the religious section, where the ultra-orthodox forbade public signs of affection, even handholding. The young children rebuked, "Tsneeus Tsneeus," -Modesty modesty. Children picked up small pebbles to throw at r hands and legs. She picked up a rock and chased the young

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children all the way down the narrow street. Laughing, she chased them, transformed into a mad child.
We held hands in the movies. She took my hand. When I made the first move she pulled hers away. She also had to kiss first. I was afraid she would bite my lip again. Sometimes she would wrap her arms around me innocently, again a child, and weep. I comforted her, patting her hair, which was as dark as blackberries. Her hair smelled like the almond blossoms on the hills of Jerusalem in Spring.
We went out only when she came to my room in the dormitory. I was not to visit her.
In the early Jerusalem winter she invited me to dinner at a restaurant. She was a vegetarian, but insisted I eat meat. She took me to a movie. In the theater she put her arm around my neck and her hand on my shoulder. She whispered, "When I was a young girl, I woke early and fixed oatmeal for breakfast. I went to the porch to fetch the morning milk delivery. I found my father dying by the milk, clutching his heart. I thought if I hadn't awoke and made the cereal and needed the milk to cool the oatmeal, he would not have died. Now it was only me and my sister and my mother."

A Day Like Purim

The holiday Purim came in the Spring. Her sister was visiting from California. She had also been a Yeshiva student in a girl's Yeshiva, but had left that world and was now an art student in San Francisco, and a hippy. She had been in Jerusalem only a few days and already had an Arab lover.
My costume for the holiday was a long navy coat, sun glasses, a black yeshiva hat, and a branch from a tree I carried as a staff. A religious student in my dorm rebuked me for the frivolous outfit saying, "Purim is a day of Joy, but not of mocking!" He said it was Yom Ha-key Purim, a day like Yom Kippur...If our enemies had their way, we would be fasting and beating our breasts on Purim. I did not take him too seriously.
I wrote on the back of my coat in chalk: "When Haman saw that Mordecai would not bow down to him or bend to his will, he was exceedingly angry and sought to destroy all the Jews." I was dressed as Haman. My dorm mate was one of many Mordecais.
On Purim everything is turnabout so I went to visit her. She and her sister sat at a table with three glasses and a bottle of Jack Daniel's whiskey. They smiled mysteriously. Both were dressed in long Arab dresses with crowns of flowers braided in their hair. Modern versions of Queen Esther, or Vashti.
"The Mitzvah is to drink until you cannot distinguish between the curse of Haman and the blessing of Mordecai," they said with one voice.
We three went to sit on her bed to finish the bottle. We left the glasses on the table and drank straight from the bottle until it

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was emptied. I can only remember putting my arms around and kissing one and then the other.
In the morning I woke feeling the Jerusalem sun on my face. My eyes were shaded by the sunglasses. The staff, hat, pants, and shirt were in a pile by the bed. I still wore Isaac's skullcap and the long jacket. I was in the middle. The sisters slept on either side of me, one in each arm. Their arms were under my head, entwined.
Her roommate came in shaking her head, smiled and laughed. "Purim is over; you better go back to Mea Sharim." Her look made me feel I needed to do atonement for sins I could not even remember committing.

*** Passion - Reason - Revelation ***

She came to one of Sechelman's classes with me. Sechelman spoke of the Fear and Love of God in the worldview of Maimonides. I still have my notes.

Source:Mishna Torah, Chapt. 1-4
Theme:The God of Being may be understood and loved by all.

Source:Guide for the Perplexed (S. Pines translation final chapter)
Theme:"And you shall (through philosophic knowledge) Love the Lord your God." (Deut.)

Love:Higher stage / individualism / Le Shma / longing-worldcome / free will / pluralism / philosophy

Fear:Lower stage / community / Lo Le Shma - serving for reward / longing-Messiah / obedience / ethnocentric / Halacha

The professor gave an involved explanation of the apparent contradictions of Rambam's views on the Fear and Love of God in the Laws of the Fundamentals of the Torah and the Laws of Repentance. I did not follow the argument of reconciliation. My notes stop with the above chart.
She had taken off her sandal and was pressing the instep of her foot on the arch of my foot. She then removed my sandal with her foot and caressed my foot with her toes. She massaged and caressed the nape of my neck with her hand. The professor glanced at her disapprovingly. He continued the lecture and she continued with her caresses. She did not come to the next lecture.
Her comment on the class: "The conflict is not between Reason and Revelation, and Torah and Philosophy, but between Passion and Revelation, and between Passion and Reason."

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I asked her to explain. She would not.

Final Encounter

I saw her only one more time. We alternated paying for our outings together, Mates. That night it was her evening.
She picked a restaurant fancier than our usual choices as students. She insisted that I eat red meat and went so far as ordering a rib steak rare. She also chose the movie. A Clockwork Orange.
She did not hold my hand that evening in the movie. Instead she held my wrist. She shook her head like a person perplexed or unsure of something.
We were both aroused by the movie. Still holding wrist, she whispered in my ear. "Tonight I am a virgin. By the morning I will be a woman."

We are about to embark on a voyage on the sea of the Talmud Theophilos. The sails are open, ready to be moved by the wind. Many sailors have been lost this sea. You are a lover of wisdom, and I imagine you will want to join me on the journey. If not, you can continue with "My Wild Irish Rose," or the story of Lillith, which follows.

The Sea of the Talmud

Throughout the year I visited Isaac at the Yeshiva. He encouraged me to attend classes. I did and found them challenging but over focused. Judaism was studied. We did not study about Judaism. The sources. The text.
I was frightened when I learned that everything one studied, they were expected to live.
The beginning Talmud class I attended was taught by the Dean of the Rabbinic College, Rabbi Brauerman. I learned to love the dance of his hand over the Holy Text. His hands were exactly as one would imagine the hands of a Talmudic scholar to be, thin and pointed. His arms were slender, but his shoulders were broad and strong. He had the protruding stomach one expects from a scholar who exercised. He inspired thoughtfulness in his students and demanded a keen critical mind.
I still have his picture in my study. It stares at me now even as I write. He will not approve of everything I chronicle in the Final Testament, but it was he who taught me intellectual honesty. I did not know then that I would learn to love him as a father.

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His large eyes appear even larger in the photograph, magnified by his glasses. A sardonic smile masks the gentle concern he felt for everyone he taught. The smile warns of a sharp tongue and cutting wit. In the picture his beard is close-cropped to the face and trimmed on the cheeks in the manner of the enlightened in the Rabbinic orthodox world.

We studied the Talmudic tractate Gitten, on divorce laws. The Rabbi began with a basic introduction to Talmudic literature. He explained the dynamics of the oral law and how it came to be written down. We turned to a passage in our Gemara: "Matters which are written (The Written Law) you are not permitted to say orally and the tradition transmitted orally (The Oral Law) you are not permitted to write down." (Gitten 60:)

Rabbi Brauerman explained "The Written Laws of Torah are eternal. The Oral Law is fluid and in theory should not be committed to writing. It flows to meet the new realities created by change. The Oral Law, based on precedents in the Written Law, is dynamic and processes each new event in the light of the Torah. This keeps our Torah a living tradition and defines Torah as an ideal constitution.

"Then what is this text before us?" I asked.

"A single," the Rabbi said.

None of us knew what he meant. Nor did anyone ask. He explained the inability of our ancestors to keep to memory the vast quantities of oral tradition that were ever changing and ever expanding. In the second century of the common era the material was redacted in six orders called Mishna. We discussed this process of compilation of the extraneous Mishnaic material called Barita and Tossefta.

Rabbi Brauerman ended the class with a quote that summarized the essence and importance of the oral tradition to Judaism. "God made a covenant for Israel only for the sake of matters discussed in the Oral Law. (Gitten 60:). I also learned in the first class that one always quotes one's sources in a Talmudic discussion.

I came to class the following day also, skipping a lecture at the University. The Rabbi continued his introduction to Jewish Law.

"The fundamental issue of Jewish existence is the validity of the Oral Law. Moses received two Torahs on Sinai, one written, one oral." I wondered and felt jaded when I thought of Rebbe Satman and his Freudian preoccupation with the Oral Law. "This belief distinguishes the Jews from other faiths. It is the essence of and the meaning of the Revelation of the Torah on Mt. Sinai. All schisms in Judaism center on this issue. The Sadduces accepted the sanctity of the Written Law alone. Christianity proclaimed a New Testament that abrogated the Jewish authoritative approach to scripture, the Oral Law."

"The Karaites rejected the Jewish oral tradition and were forced to promulgate their own. The Reform Movement in our own day has, in my opinion, unsuccessfully wrestled with this issue. One defines himself as a Jew by Halacha, the path laid down in the

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codes that reflect the Oral Law."
I asked the Rabbi about Herman Strack's contention in Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash, that the existence of the Anshe knesset Hagedolah (Men of the Great Synagogue on Assembly) was a fiction. The other students frowned or scoffed at my question, but the Rabbi smiled so I continued. "If Strack is correct, then the chain of tradition described in Avot (1:1):
Moses received the Torah on Sinai
and handed it on to Joshua
Joshua to the Elders
and the Elders to the Prophets
who handed it on to
the men of the Great Assembly
is broken!"
"A good question," the Rabbi said. "At least a triple." I understood now that the Rabbi was using baseball terminology, but had no idea why.
"You are correct that the existence of this great group of sages is held implausible by some contemporary scholars. The Persian period is historically hazy because of a paucity of original source material. A lack of evidence makes the thesis that they existed difficult to substantiate. But this lack of evidence does not a priori demand that we doubt the existence of the assembly. No, there is no reason to doubt the existence of the assembly, or that Ezra founded this assembly.
The Rabbi now had a question for me. "Where does Strack make this contention?"
"Page nine of the Atheneum College Edition."
The Rabbi beamed his approval. "Excellent Reb Aryeh. A good Talmudist always quotes the page of his source."
My fellow students looked on with envy. I had prepared for class the evening before by browsing all the books in the Talmud section of the library at the University. I had read the first two chapters of Strack and felt a bit guilty that I received so much praise for such little reading.

The Text

"Let us get to the text," the Rabbi said. We opened our Gemoras. The Rabbi explained that the very structure of the page of Talmud reminded the student that the study of Oral Law is process. Dialectic. We referred to the legal decisions of Rabbi Alfonsi at the end of the Talmud and the commentators also found on that page, and the comments of the Rosh and more. (Isaac had explained this process to me in relationship to Maimonides' Mishna Torah.) The Rabbi pointed out the Eye of Judgment, the Light of the Commandments on the upper outside corner of the page. These are cross-references to the Pesak Halacha, the legal decision rendered in the Mishna Torah and Schulchan Aruch.

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The Rabbi then raised his index finger and placed it on the Mishna and then the Gemara. "This is how we learn text in my class," he said. He took his index finger and pointed towards Rashi on the inside of the page. "This is how we learn our most valuable commentator on the page." He then raised his pinky. "We do not learn like this," he said, holding his index and pinky extended and the middle fingers bent. "Rashi comes to help only after we learn the text. One time, three times, one hundred times. We read, we memorize the ideas and learn them until they are fluent on our lips as a living oral tradition. We raise questions. Then we turn to Rashi to begin our dialogue with that great commentator." The Rabbi then pointed to the outside of the page. "These are the words of the Balei Tosafot. The Balei Tosafot are a number of Rashi's disciples who cross-reference the student to parallel Talmudic passages and explain our text in the context of all of Talmudic literature. They also refine and comment on Rashi's commentary. We do not learn Tosafot in this class. Tosatfot is for advanced students. Students need to finish this tractate before the first Tosafot has meaning. Tosafot is taught too early in Yeshivas," he said. "In theory, one should finish all the tractates of the Talmud before Tosafot is studied. Our first Tosafot assumes we have studied Baba Batra."

"Nu," the Rabbi said, "let's begin."

"One who brings a Get from the province of the Sea is required to say: `In my presence it was written, in my presence it was signed.' Rabban Gamliel says also one who brings from Rekem or Hegar. R. Eleazar says even from the village of Lod to Lod ..."

We discussed the Mishna until a student asked why it was required that one say "In my presence." The boundaries of Israel were delineated based on our questions.

I had a difficult time relating to the entire discussion. We read the Talmud on the Mishna. Questions were raised and discussed and we read the Gemara once again. We then learned Rashi. I followed the logic of the Gemara's argument, but found myself bored with the factual technicalities. The class was nearly over and I asked, "The tractate is called Gitin, yet the Mishna and Talmud do not discuss divorce. I do not understand why the document is discussed before the legal and moral principles of divorce are discussed." Again the students looked annoyed with my question. I was stared at like I was a heretic.

The Rabbi answered calmly, almost serenely. "Reb Aryeh has not yet played in our ballpark. Yet his question is a valid one." He looked at me. "We will discuss this question after class." We then discussed the Rashi on one point and the class was about to end. The Rabbi had one final question for the class. "The Gemara, you will note, starts with Daf Bet, page two. What happened to page one? Please think of or find one of the reasons for this."

Rabbi Brauerman spoke to me after class. A school boy impulse made me feel slightly uncomfortable, as though I had been bad and was therefore kept after. The Rabbi quickly assuaged that

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feeling. "You ask good questions. We will have to teach you how to find equally good answers." I was told not to come to class. We would learn together privately. The Rabbi assigned me the Thirteen Chapters in the Mishna Torah on divorce for our next meeting. We would meet in his study.

The Rabbi's Study

The Rabbi's study was lined with books from floor to ceiling. Over the doorway a portal was cut to allow the Rabbi and his visitors into the sanctum. The shelves were deep enough for two sets of books on each shelf, one set behind the other. The holy books were topically arranged in an order similar to the one of the Judaica library at the University. Secular and critical tomes were behind the Holy writings. They were not allowed in a traditional Yeshiva. Years later when I visited the Rabbi, I noticed that here and there on the shelves the modern commentators and critical editions of Judaica joined their holy brothers on the front line of books. The Rabbi was now th Rosh Yeshiva, the college's director, and he felt more comfortable displaying the books outside of the tradition.

The Rabbi greeted me with a "Shalom," and a smile, and asked how I was in Hebrew. "Ma Neshma?" Literally, "How is your soul?" With the Rabbi I felt comfortable giving the traditional answer. "Baruch Hashem." "God be blessed." This answer covered all, for we were taught to bless God for the good as well as the bad that we encountered in our lives.

The Rabbi allowed me a few minutes to get to know him personally. I learned that he was a professor at the University. He had been ordained at Yeshiva University in New York. Rabbi Sechelman and he had been study partners in Talmud one year. As Dr. Brauerman at the University his field was Semitic languages. One area of his expertise as a scholar was the development of the Hebrew language in its nascent stages. He was also an Ugaritic scholar. He had an Ugaritic typewriter.

The Rabbi moved us on to what in his mind was essential. We would learn Talmud together. Iyun, a depth study where we would trace the Deuteronomic verses on divorce and commentators and see how the Written Law was developed in the Oral Law. Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds, Rabbenu Alfasi and Commentators, Rebbenu Asher, The Tur, Schulcan Aruch, Aruch Ha Schulchan, and finally modern Responsa. At the time I did not know who these rabbinic commentators were. Our in-depth study lasted the rest of the year. We studied one and one-half hours a day. I filled two notebooks. The Rabbi also explained the technique and limitations of scientific Talmud study and indulged my questions on Christian approaches to divorce. In this study I began to master the rudiments of Talmudic research. It was a depth study. I also needed breadth of knowledge, as the Rabbi had explained in class.

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Bakkeut.
The Rabbi suggested I attend Rabbi Wilner's Mishna class. I did, and we eventually completed the Six Orders of the Mishna.
The Rabbi taught us how to question the terse teachings of the Tannaim, teachers of the Mishna. We were taught how to be Amoraim, the Rabbis who analyzed and compared Mishna for four centuries, from about the third to the seventh centuries of the common era. The Rabbi prepared all the Gemara for each Mishana we studied. This is comparable, perhaps, to going through all the ideas of the Encyclopedia Britannica in one year. The Rabbi was a Master Teacher. When a student understood the Mishna and asked the Question of the Amora, the Rabbi would say "Excellent Reb Aryeh. This is the question of Abbaya," or "Excellent Reb Yitchak, such is the question of Raba." Needless to say, since we were made to feel like competent Talmudic thinkers, this is what we became.
I was assigned a tutor. The Rabbi was pleased by my exuberant joyful "Yes" when he mentioned Isaac's name.

First Session

We began with the verses in Deuteronomy:
1) When a man takes a wife and marries her and it comes to pass that she no longer finds favor in his eyes, he has found in her something indecent; then let him write her a Sefer Kretute, place it in her hand, and send her from his house; 2) and she leaves the house and she goes and becomes the wife of another man; 3) and the other man hates her and writes her a Get, or the latter man dies... 4) the first husband may not remarry her since this would be defilement, an abomination before Hashem.
Even these few verses unfold into a library of commentators. We read the translation of Onkelas on the page of the Mikrot Gedolot along with the various English translations. I learned that translation was the first step in Biblical exegesis and that every translator is an interpreter. At the time my Aramaic was not sufficiently fluent to do the Targum of Yonatan, the son of Uziel, or the Targum of Yerusalmi. We did study Rashi, Rambam, Ibn Ezra, Seforno, and Rashbam. Our dialogue expanded, and soon we were speaking with all the voices of the past who read the Written Law. These studies took up most of our first hour and a half. I asked too many questions on the lives of the commentators. The Rabbi said, "we shall learn who they are Reb Aryeh not by what they say, but by what they teach."
Only at the end was I allowed to raise personal comments. "The law centers on what the man does to the woman. He takes a wife, he marries her, he masters her and then decides whether she is favorable in his eyes. He then, for reasons that are not clear, but that seem to imply some sexual impropriety, writes her a Get

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and sends her out of his house. This is not an approach that recognizes any women's rights in the matter."
The Rabbi smiled his, by then, familiar smile. "We explained that the Oral Law allows the Torah to be an ideal constitution. Divorce law evolved with our tradition to the point where a woman had to consent to divorce except in the case of divorce provoked by adultery."
"But still," I protested, "a woman cannot initiate a divorce. What if the husband is the adulterer, and what about the Aguna?"
All students of Hebrew literature are familiar with the Aguna problem. One gets the impression from the literature of the Jewish "enlightenment" that the problem was widespread, affecting large numbers of women. The Rabbi had a differing view.
"The Aguna problem is overstated by the enemies of the Torah. It must be admitted that the Aguna is chained to her husband when she is deserted or the circumstances of the husband's death cannot be substantiated by witnesses. A solution will be found. The chain of tradition is not the chain of a slave anchored in an unredeemable past. The Aguna will be freed from her bondage. Halacha has changed dramatically since Sinai, and precedents for radical change are inherent within tradition." I thought of a discussion I had with Grove one night in a orchard near his home. Grove argued that Christians were now the true Israel and that Jesus had forever set me free from my personal slavery to my Jewishness. Grove had a wonderful relationship with his wife and I loved and respected the way they inter-related. Grove knew I might open my heart to Jesus because of my deep feelings for one of the female students who was a leader in the high school campus crusade for Jesus. Grove claimed that Jewish women were oppressed in every was imaginable by Jewish law, and that the only salvation was in the grace that comes in accepting Jesus Christ as our personal savior. All this passed through my mind in a moment. I said, "What does the New Testament say about divorce?"
I was surprised when the Rabbi sent me to the New Testament sources. We discussed them during our next study session.

On the Shore of the Sea

The next session the Rabbi asked if I would read the Mishna in Hebrew. I did;
The House of Shammai teaches that a man shall not divorce his wife unless he finds something unseemly in her conduct as it says, "He has found in her something indecent." Hillel teaches "even if she overcooks his food," as it says (Deut. 24:1), he has found in her a thing of unseemliness.
R. Akiba teaches, "Even if he finds another more beautiful," as it says, "if it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes."
I had reviewed the Mishna many times before our study session and said, "Bet Shammai's interpretation seems closer in meaning to the

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intent of the text in Deuteronomy. Arvat Davar in Hebrew implies sexual impropriety. Hillel's exegesis seems strained, as does his legal opinion. If we are allowed to divorce our wives for overcooking or oversalting our food, where would this leave the institution of marriage?" Before the Rabbi could answer, I fired off another question. "Akiva's view is a wonderment. If one is allowed to marry another woman simply because she is more beautiful than his present wife, what happens when the woman who is more beautiful than the new wife invariably walks by? Where will the matter end?"

I felt like a Jesus giving a sermon on a mount after so vehemently protesting Hillel and Akiva's more liberal understanding of the text.

The Rabbi said, "So you support the reasoning of the School of the Shammaites?

"Yes," I answered, "but I am bothered. Jesus favors the position of Shammai over Hillel in the New Testament. I always thought Christianity was in favor of liberation from the law."

The Rabbi said, "You have read Matthew and Mark and I hope Corinthians. Do you think the position of Jesus is so different from the position of the Pharisees?"

I had bought a copy of the New English Bible at the Hebrew University bookstore and turned to The Sermon on the Mount in Matthew, to reread a passage before I answered. (Matthew 5:31-32) I decided to read aloud. The Rabbi joined in, and I stopped.

"If a man divorces his wife for any cause other than unchastity, he involves her in adultery," he quoted from memory and hesitated. The Rabbi was translating from the original orally and stopped only to be sure he was satisfied with his own translation. He continued, "Anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery."

Even after a short period of studying Talmud I could not resist analyzing the text Talmudically. I said, "This goes beyond Shammai. Does this mean that once a woman is divorced for adultery, she can never marry again? Is this Christian compassion?" I was relieved to find a point I disagreed with. I laughed at myself for applying Talmudic reasoning to the New Testament.

"The verses must be considered in the context of the whole sermon," the Rabbi explained. "In verse seventeen, Jesus says that he does not want to abolish the law. He then offers a number of cases where he demands his followers to go beyond the letter of the law."

"So you don't think Jesus is uprooting Judaism?" I said.

"No, not necessarily. Precedents exist within Rabbinic tradition that form the basis of Jesus' sermon. The rabbis did not attempt to legislate against one who is angry against others, or commits adultery in his heart. But in many stories of the Aggadah, it is clear that anger and lust lead us away from the path of Torah and good deeds."

"Certainly the statement that one who marries a divorced woman commits adultery is not considered a viable legal precedent in

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Judaism."
"No. A Priest may not marry a divorced woman, and a man may not remarry a woman he has divorced if she remarries. But Judaism considers the viewpoints expressed in the Sermon on the Mount extreme."

*****

I prepared for my next session - Talmudic and New Testament sources.
When Jesus left Galilee, according to Matthew, and came into Judea, he preached to the great crowds that followed him there. There also the Pharisees put Jesus to a "test" on the issue of divorce. I had spent more time on this passage and wanted to discuss it thoroughly with Rabbi Brauerman.
This time I quoted Jesus' response to the Pharisees.
"Have you not read that the creator made them from the beginning Male and Female," (Genesis :27), "and for this reason a man leaves his father and is united to his wife. They are one flesh! Can man separate what God has joined?"
"Why did Moses teach that a man may divorce by a Get?" the Pharisees asked. Jesus answered, "Because you have closed minds. But it was not like this in the beginning. I teach `if a man divorces his wife for any reason other than unchastity, and married another, he commits adultery.'"
"Now it sounds like the Pharisees were actually following Hillel or Akiba's views. Jesus has a point, I think, in supporting Shammai. His proof text from Genesis is illuminating. Two people should marry forever. I remembered a lecture at U.C.L.A. on the quest for self in Eastern religion that one way to enlightenment is finding one's eternal soulmate." The Rabbi, in principle did not disagree with me. I was not sure why.
He asked me a side question, "What of Jesus' view of marriage in verse twelve?" I looked down to the verse, "Let those who can, take it (celibacy) upon themselves." I knew in my personal life I had not found a woman with whom I could become one flesh with in a spiritual sense. (As you know, Theophilos, my sexual encounters had been anything but sacred and sanctified.) But my study session with the Rabbi awoke within me an inner voice that whispered quietly, "Find your soulmate and you will find yourself, and you will find your God." No, celibacy was not for me. I said to the Rabbi, "I'll seek my salvation in the life I can build with a nice Jewish woman." The Rabbi smiled. "Next session we will see what the American uncover in their comments in the Gemara."

The Gemara - In the Depths

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My friend Theophilos, I am afraid it is impossible to recapitulate all the nuances of the dialectics in a Talmudic study session. We shall have to sit and learn the material together. Written, a Talmudic discussion is like a charred black carbon on the white page. The heat of debate is needed to ignite the words. I can only offer you my notes with some explanations. and a glimpse of the discussions I still remember. I must be Rashi to my own text.

Gemara Gittin 90 A.D. Summary - one verse-three views

1. Deut. 24:1-4 A. Basis three opinions. B. No word in Torah superfluous. C. The House of Shammai and Hillel come to conflicting views based on same verse. D. Amorian discuss their respective ways of learning verse.

2. Akiba's position is explained by the Amora Resh Lakish. A. His legal view is based on the beginning words of Deut. 24:1. Akib's view <u>not</u> apparent based on literal reading of teat. B. Neither in Hillel's! The Hebrew word "key," is central in understanding verse.

3. Legal opinions are hung on scriptural page (mountains hanging of a thread?) Each rabbi searches scripture for a way to prove his view!
R. Meir explains some apparently aggadaic (extra legal) stories. He used to say "One's relationship to food is analogous to their opinion (relationships) to woman:

i. Some, if a fly lands in their cup of soup, will throw the soup out. Like Pappas who locked his wife in the house when he left (!?!?).

ii. Some throw away the fly and drink their soup. Most men allow their wives to talk to their brothers and relatives (how liberated of them. The prancer! Rampant puritanism and chauvinism!).

iii. Some squash the fly and then eat the fly. This is the man who sees his wife go out with, (1) her hair uncovered and, (2) her pits (arms) uncovered (hairy?) and, (3) spins yarn(s?) and, (4) bathes with men. (a) The Gemara qualifies: 1. Bathes with men (surely a harlot as this has never lived) 2. Say more accurately - bathes in the same area as the men bathe in, 3. Sneaking glances as they dress - (Rashi).

Question for Rabbi: Do three types of women relate to three cats in Mishna?
1. Malachi II - 6 is analyzed. Connection - to our verse in Deut.
i. Meaning of many phrases in all of second chapter -

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murky.
ii. Isaac's comments on end of Malachi (ask him if O.T. + God-wife of your youth Verse 16 - God hates divorce - lawlessness!)
iii.Mal.2 verse 16
Targum:If you hate her, send her away (proof for Akiba now.)

Rashi:Refers us back to our Gemara.
Ibn Ezra: God hates it when a man sends away his pure wife.
Radak:Explains like the Targum, that it is good when one who no longer loves his wife sends her out with a Get. Perhaps the new husband shall love her! But if he hates her in his heart and holds on to her, this is an abominable falsehood!

2.A.Gemara: R. Judah interprets Malachi to mean "if you hate her you should send her away." R. Yohanan says it means "The one that sends out his wife is hated."
B. (i) There is no real contradiction. One speaks of the first marriage, the other of the second, as R. Eleazar said, "If a man divorces his first wife, the holy altar cries, as it says (in Malachi 13-14) this you also do (a second time, the second wife also?) you cover the altar with tears, you weep and sigh, but God refuses to accept your offering from your hand. And you say, for what reason? Because your God is witness between you and the bride of your youth, you have been unfaithful even though she is (verse doesn't flow) your wife by covenant."

Tractate ends. Notes end.

I had many questions. We consulted Rashi. Rabbi Judah reads the verse as Akiba. R. Johanan reads the verse as Shammai. Rashi brings a variant textual reading that would bring Hillel's opinion into the discussion, who holds that while we do not prevent the husband from evicting his wife, even for reasons other than adultery, nevertheless, he is hated by God.
"So what is the ruling already?" I asked boldly and impatiently.
"We are not ready for rulings, Reb Aryeh., We must cross-reference with Tossafot. See the Gemara in Yevamot on divorce, and the Gemara in Sotah. Even then we are not ready to speak of rulings"
I said, "The Gemara seems to imply we follow Shammai! What of the Radak's exegesis on Malachi? Are two who hate one another in their first marriage bound for life?"
The Rabbi held up his hand, a dam against my questions. He turned

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to the back of the Gemara and pointed out the commentaries of Rebbenu Asher, The Rosh, the Maharsha, the Maharam, and many others, too many to list.
Finally we turned to the ruling of Rif - Rebbenu Alfasi. I was slightly overwhelmed. It would take me months to learn the methodology of these commentators. I wanted to know when they lived, how authoritative their respective rulings were, and if information I gleaned from biographical studies would illuminate the historical and sociological influences on their decisions.

The Rif

I remember some of our discussions on the R.I.F. (1013-1103). Our Rabbi, Isaac bar Yacov Alfasi, who prior to the Mishna wrote most authoritative code giving rulings from the Talmud.
The Rif reports the Mishna word for word. It is now the fixed text. The Gemara, however, is greatly abbreviated. Only those legal viewpoints accepted as law are recorded. What is omitted is rejected as law or does not affect the outcome of the legal disputations. Additions are also found, cross-referenced from other tractates whose rulings are relevant to our subject. The Rif will also follow the Jerusalem Talmud, when the Babylonian Talmud reaches no decision.

The Rif, Gemara

The question of how Hillel and Shammai read Deut. 24:1-4 is excluded by the Rif. He extrapolates from this discussion that in a case where neither sexual impropriety nor domestic disharmony are present, one is initially not allowed to divorce his wife. Rabbi Akibi's opinion is evidently rejected. It is not clear why the Rif gives a synthetic legal decision based on both the opinions of Hillel and Shammai.
The section about the three who found a fly in their soup is recorded, indicating that these stories or parables will have a bearing on the Halacha.
The second husband with the fly in his soup removes the fly and eats the soup. The text of the Gemara reads: Compare this person to most men who allow their wives to talk to their brothers and relatives. The text of the Alfosi reads: "to talk to their neighbors and relatives." The Rabbi explained. "In the time of the Gemara, speaking with those outside the family was considered immodest. Social norms change. Even in Arabian society of the eleventh century, conversing with neighbors was not considered indiscreet. A Posek, a codifier, may define the moral parameters of modesty based on the values of the society in which he lives."

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On the commandment to divorce a wicked wife, I see in my notes, the Rif adds, based on a cross-reference to the Talmudic tractate's Yevomot, a verse in Proverbs (22:10), "Send out the insolent wife and contention will leave and strife and disgrace will cease."
The Rif then records the final section of our Gemara on Gittin with the following ruling also based on a cross-reference to Yevomot (62b):
"One who loves his wife as himself
and honors her more than himself"
...is referred to in the verse
"And thou will know your home
will be at Peace"

*****

Dear Theophilos,
The words and conflicts in the Gemara prophetically foreshadow my own marriage. I know of no blessing for wisdom after the fact.

To Moses

Sometimes during our second month of study we began the Mishna Torah. The time sequence is blurred. It is over ten years from the time of our sessions studying Giottin to the time of this writing.
Maimonides' decisions based on all legal materials before him follow. (Chapter 10 - Halachot 21 and 22) 21. A man may not marry with the intent to divorce ... Nor divorce his first wife unless he finds in her indecency as it says in the Torah "he has found in her something indecent." It is not fitting to hastily expel the first wife. The second wife however, if he hates her, he may send out (Immediately).
22. A wife who is bad tempered and not modest (chaste) as the kosher daughters of Israel, it is a Mitzvah to divorce. As it is written, "Send out the insolent and contention will leave." (Prov. 22:10)
A woman who is divorced for indecency should not be remarried by a kosher man. Thereby it will not be said, "one sent this wicked woman from his house and this other brought her into his house."
The text of the Mishna Torah raised many questions in my mind and we spent a number of weeks studying the commentary on Maimonides.

A Guided Tour and the Ordered Table

The Rabbi said that in our next session we would see The Tour .. I had heard "take a tour." I asked "Where?" He answered, "Here

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in my office, of course."
The Tur is the most prominent code after Rambam. Rambam recast the structure of the law into a thematic code. The Tur, the son of Asher ben Yehiel (The Rosh) critically sifted through the Halacha to his time. The Ordered Table, the code that is definitive even today was arranged by our teacher the Rabbi Joseph Caro in the 16th century.
The Tur does not give direct decisions, but the student may ascertain his opinion by the way dissenting opinions are brought down. Joseph Caro, writing as "The House of Joseph" comments on the Tur. I shall attempt to reconstruct a few of the points we studied based on the text of the Schulchan Aruch.
The Schulchan Aruch begins the Laws of Divorce and Divorce Documents where I expected the Talmud to begin, legal grounds for divorce. Law 3) A man may not divorce his first wife unless he finds in her indecency (Haga, but in Sanhedrin (Vilna Gaon gives source on inside)) it says "the altar sheds tears when one divorces his first wife" (Tur). And this is specifically the ruling for those times when a woman could be divorced by force (without consent) but if she (the first wife) consents, it is permissible.

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Theophilos, I will show you a copy of the page when we study together.

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This should make it clear how we spent a few months on the Ordered Table.

I asked two questions before reading the Haga.

1)How could we still be speaking of the law in terms of the opinion of Shammai? This is a question also on the view of Rambam.
2)I also wonder why one cannot hurry the first wife. If she committed adultery, she should be expelled immediately. If we are deciding like Hillel and not Shammai then it rests well, she should not be hurried. So what opinion, Hillel or Shammai, are we following?
The Rabbi swayed back and forth as I asked the questions. I found I was also shokeling, and my thumb went up, in the Talmudists' gesture of a question, as I asked.
"Ah," Rabbi brauerman sighed, "Reb Aryeh asks the questions of the Bet Shmuel. Let us see inside how the Bet Shmuel answers your questions." And we studied the entire session on this point, arguing until it became clear.

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My Great Uncle - The Order of the Table

Again, I did not know it at the time, but the last text we studied on the Mishna in Gittin, the Aruch Ha Schuachan, is a relative of mine. This will not be well received by any orthodox Jew who reads this Final Testament, for it, and I, shall surely be put in Cherem, under the ban, excommunicated.

Rabbi Jehiel Michal ben Aaron Epstein, the author of the Aruch Ha Schulchan, the order of the Table, dreamed in the late 19th century of bringing the rulings of the Mishna Torah and Schulan Aruch up to date by giving "final" legal summations of Jewish Law. His commentary unfortunately is too long to be included as an integral printed part of the Schular Aruch. Rabbi Epstein showed he was a visionary, as was Maimonides, by also commenting on whole sections of law the disapora oriented Schular Aruch omits. The Aruch Ha Schulchan of the Future speaks of agricultural law, laws pertaining to the rebuilding of the Temple, Peace, the Messiah, and so on. His work was, as is, essential for the modern state of Israel if Torah is to be its constitution.

The Aruch Ha Schulchan begins with the verse in the Written Law and reviews all relevant material. This is both an excellent introduction and an excellent review of the material. (The sea of Talmud becomes shoreless when one dives in, and landmarks are essential.)

I have his work in front of me now and will highlight some of his decisions. The law is according to Hillel, but one cannot leave one's wife simply because he finds someone more beautiful. Except perhaps the second wife; yet Reb Epstein leans towards forbidding Akiba's opinion even concerning the second wife.

"Some authorities argue that in essence the law that one is not to divorce except if they discover sexual impropriety as Shammai says, or as Hillel says the relationship `spoils,' is not forbidden by authorities of the Torah or even the rabbis, but it is merely good advice. Yet a number of Rishonim (rabbis with great authority) from the former generations apparently hold it is forbidden (either by Torah or the Rabbis) and the Rashba writes in his response literature that this is the reason we do not require a blessing for the divorce `ceremony' since some divorces actually transgress Torah law as in the case where people divorce without any real legal cause...etc."

When we finished the legal discussions we returned to our discussion on Jewish and Christian divorce. Torah law was advanced in some areas, allowing for divorce for reasons other than adultery, generations before secular law. Still I was amazed at the male bias of divorce laws. This criticism was not only directed towards Halalcha, but also against the "secular codes." On the other hand, I was haunted by the powerful metaphors of Malachi and felt that he also spoke to my generation who still

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divorce too easily.
I was most amazed then, at the time I spent at the Yeshiva studying with Isaac, studying with Reb Wilner, studying with Rabbi Brauerman. And I still had time to do well in my less demanding University courses.

My Wild Irish Rose

My first love in California was Rose. She was in Catholic high school, a senior while I was at U.C.L.A. I had an uncanny premonition of the destiny of my relationship with Rose.
I met her through a close friend who was dating her. He and she visited me at U.C.L.A. Late one night when my friend fell asleep she crawled into bed with me. The next day I mailed her a dozen thorns in a white envelope.
My friend and I dated her at the same time. We were being hip; cool. Jealousy was for those who need to possess. Love was not possessive.
Rose left us both for a hippy who owned his own motorhome. They would travel through the early Seventies together. In away my buddy and I were relieved, for we were good friends and a shared woman will strain and eventually rupture the best of relationships.

Love Sick

I first saw her with Isaac. They were walking from the area of the central bus station across Allenby Square. I assumed they were together.
She wore a shawl and a peasant dress covered by a heavy, natural-colored wool coat. The coat was protection against the cold damp of a Jerusalem winter day. The wind had malingered into the early Spring. I was struck dumb the first time I saw her. Reminded of Laura in Pasternak's "Dr. Zhivago," I just stared. I had seen the movie before leaving for Israel, with my friend, the one I shared Rose with. I had become ill after the movie. I do not know if the "cold" had been coming on, or if the emotional turmoil the movie stirred up within me, caused the illness. Zhivago loved both his wife and Laura. He had no choice. It could happen to me. And it was the adultery that birthed the poetry.
She even looked like the actress who played Laura. Somehow a beam of light from the Jerusalem sky illuminated her face as one sees in a play or movie. This special effect was courtesy of the wind that blew two clouds apart, allowing the sun to shine through. Isaac saw I was entranced and attempted to introduce us. I walked off without saying a word.

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Isaac walked Lillian home to her room. She had moved into an apartment across from the campus that week.
When I returned from the University, Isaac explained that he and Lillian had just met. I would not have to share Lillian with my friend! I had resigned myself to a relationship of the imagination and now Isaac had made a real relationship possible.
Lillian would not be a Rose. Like a lily among the thorns, so would my beloved be among the maidens. She would sustain me with raisins and almonds and refresh me with apples and honeycake.
I spent the Sabbath in the Yeshiva with Isaac. The first time he invited me I had walked off to smoke a cigarette after dinner. I could not handle all the restrictions. Sabbath day I disappeared after the overlong morning and additional prayer services. In Jerusalem the movies and shops were closed, and I took a Sherut, a type of shared taxi, with seven other passengers, to the beach in Netanya.
This Shabbat I would stay around the Yeshiva. Belief did not yet sustain me. Study did. I could not do all I heard and had learned. Rabbi Brauerman encouraged me to move slowly - with patience and even caution. A number of Yeshivot for Returners and beginners were opening in Jerusalem. Some encouraged a complete transformation to the rigors of the rabbinic lifestyle. Students one day - with long hair - Chassidim the next day with long, side curls. I also would stay around on the afternoon of Shabbat to visit Lillian,

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A number of students in my program at the University were also coming for Shabbat. They seemed intrigued and yet uncomfortable in the Yeshiva's pious environment. Some students wore the black hats of the ultra-orthodox. They were still identifiable as American by their rich tailored suits and colorful ties. Some wore black suits and black ties to indicate their total allegiance to the lifestyle of the pious Jew. It is written in the Torah, "and to walk humbly with thy God" (Micah 6:8). The Shulchan Aruch - Chapt. III "Laws Relating to Dress and the Manner of Walking," explains that black is indicative of "humility, humbleness, and modesty." The black suit, white shirt, and black hat and tie are mandated by law. At that time I wore my longest most pastel California pants with a blue shirt, purple tie, and tennis shoes. I was not yet ready to enlist in God's army.
Isaac wore dark blue pants and a white shirt with no tie. He wore the white ritual fringes mentioned in the second paragraph of the Shema: "fringes on the corners of your garments in each corner a thread of blue. That you may look upon it and remember all the Mitzvot of Hashem (Numbers 15: 38-39). The thread of blue, Isaac explained, was not worn in our times by most Jews because the dye had to come from a mollusk found in the waters near the coast of

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Phoenicia. The dye was used during the time of the Mishna. To wear the blue thread was controversial. A few Chassidim claimed they knew the proper mollusk to produce the dye. Most rabbinic authority dissented. Isaac seemed untroubled by controversy. He explained to me that it is taught by tradition that the blue resembles the sea as the sea reflects the heavens and the heavens resemble God's Throne of Glory. The blue thread was essential to Isaac's spiritual path. None in the Yeshiva questioned his answers when he was asked why he wore the thread of blue. My first pair of ritual fringes - given to me by Isaac - would also contain the thread of blue.

The Mincha service began before all the guests arrived. The students recited the "Ashray" prayer, the 145th Psalm in accordance with the Talmudic promise that "one who recites this three times daily is assured a share in the world to come." (Brachot 4b)

The students bowed and swayed like trees in a forest moved by a gust of wind. The neophytes shokeled and bowed the lowest. Their fervor incited one of the visiting university students to near hysteria. I imitated Isaac who bowed gently at the prescribed portion of the prayer, but otherwise stood straight with his prayerbook held in front of his face. The leader of the prayer service began the repetition of the benedictions. Isaac interrupted his silent prayers to join the quorum in reciting the Kedushah, and then continued silently.

He finished his prayer around the time the leader finished the repetition. Isaac recited his prayers with great care and devotion, especially the Mincha service.

Rabbi Brauerman led the students in a song to set the mood for the greeting of the approaching Sabbath. Isaac, following his own personal custom, recited the Song of Songs. He traveled in lands I had not even imagined. Rabbi Brauerman waited until Isaac finished before we began the service welcoming the Sabbath.

Isaac looked around and greeted each guest with a smile. I imagined my friends from the University speculated about Isaac. Was he Jewish? He did not look Jewish. If he was Jewish, he was certainly too "All-American," too normal, to be a Baal Tsuva. A Returnee to Orthodoxy!

Wild tales were told at the University about the instant Chassidim, hippies who cut their hair except for the sidelocks, and never returned to the University program. They donned silk caftans and fur hats, and slid back into the early 18th century. The fear of these Chassidic "cults" was exaggerated, but sometimes justified. I will never forget the snare of Rabbi Satman.

The Altar

After services we entered the dining room for the Sabbath meal. Rabbi Brauerman's wife had brought her silver candlesticks from

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home and a silver Kiddush cup along with a blue velvet Challah cover with the word Shabbat embroidered on the velvet. Two candles filled the room with their radiant yellow glow and warmth. The Rabbi's young daughter sat quietly looking into the flames. Her smooth, soft, child-like face reminded me of Lillian. The ends of two giant braided Challah loaves extended beyond the embroidered border of the Challah cover. Two small loaves - completely covered - were in front of Isaac. In front of the Rabbi's seat and Isaac's were Kiddush goblets filled to overflowing with a dark purple wine that reflected the candles' light.

The Rabbi or his wife patiently answered the visitors' questions. The tablecloth was white to remind us of the Manna which fell in double portion on Friday (this also answered the two loaf question) and was fine like a white frost.

The two candles represent the two versions of the Torah's injunctions on the Sabbath in the Ten Utterances (mistranslated as "Commandments" the Rabbi explained) "Remember the Sabbath day" (Exodus 20:8) and "Observe the Sabbath day" (Deut. 5:12).

We sang the four verses of "Peace be unto you" three times. A student asked why. The Rabbi related the Talmudic story about the angels who accompany the Jew from the Synagogue to their homes on the Sabbath eve. Another student attempted to launch an involved discussion about angels. I was hungry and annoyed with the questions. Isaac sensed my impatience and calmed me with a smile. He recited Ribon Kol Ha Olamim to himself during the question and answer session. I was happy when the Rabbi cut the questions short but felt like the wicked son at the Passover table who wanted to get the rituals over with as quickly as possible, to get to the meal.

We sang a "Woman of Valor" (Proverbs 31: 10-31) which describes the ideal Jewish mate. The metaphors struck me as slightly sexist, domestic, and overstated. I imagined an oppressed Jewish mother as wide as a merchant ship, bringing food from afar. The Yeshiva students sang the verses in Hebrew. Near the end they emphasized the verses by singing loudly:

Charm is deceptive and beauty is vain
Only a woman who fears God
Shall be praised.

I noticed Isaac's silence. He did not even utter the verses. I did not ask why. I wanted to eat. I thought of Lillian and imagined I understood Isaac's silence.

One student from a semi-observant background asked in a reprimanding tone why the long knife to cut the Challah was not covered as the law demanded. Rabbi Brauerman ignored the haughty tone and answered quietly. "The table is an altar. The Torah teaches, `Thou shall not lift up any tool upon the altar (Deut. 27:5).' The reason the altar is built of unhewn stones untouched by tools is explained as follows:

The tool - forged of iron - is a symbol of destruction. The altar, in contrast, is built to prolong life. It is a symbol of a

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covenant of reconciliation. The iron tool may be forged into a weapon that cuts life short. The altar is built to bless us with long life and sanctity, and Peace. Our table - our altar - also atones for our transgressions. We invite honored guests who are accompanied by angels and the divine presence - then also join us in worship upon this altar."

The custom prevails, and the custom of Israel is Law, to cover the knife before Grace after meals, or to remove the knife from the table. This is the custom on weekdays. On Shabbat the Schulchan Aruch explains - the might of Esau is put to test, as is the power of Satan and Evil. It is therefore unnecessary to follow th custom of the week.

The Rabbi raised the Kiddush cup and recited the prayer of sanctification on wine. Isaac also lifted his cup and recited quietly - so as not to compete with the Rabbi - his own sanctification. I noticed he recited the 23rd Psalm and followed Kabbalistic customs as did Rabbi Meir. We all shared the wine. Isaac, noticing I also listened to his benediction, shared his cup with me. We then all got up together to ritually wash our hands for the breaking of the bread.

I turned on the hot water tap to wash my hands. The ritual washing, I felt, was not sufficient for clean hands. A Yeshiva student protested that I would ignite the hot water heater and thus violate the Sabbath. Isaac rescued me, explaining that he had turned down the thermostat on the heater to make the hot water ritually acceptable. The student was following what others had told him and did not seem to follow Isaac's line of reasoning concerning the use of the water. In the end, he bowed to Isaac's superior knowledge and reputation in the Yeshiva. Isaac washed with hot water and liquid soap prepared before the Sabbath. He then picked up a two-handled vessel and poured cold water on each hand three times as did all the Yeshiva students. I also washed my hands ritually. Isaac filled the vessel for me and I then filled it for the next person.

We all sat after the ritual washing for the Motzei; the breaking of bread. The Rabbi grasped the two large loaves - spreading his ten fingers and recited the ten words of the benediction in Hebrew. The Rabbi would teach me the Ten Commandments concerning bread found in The Ordered table which he meditated on before the blessing. He raised the loaves when he pronounced the divine name.

Isaac waited until the Rabbi finished. As the Rabbi passed out the fresh yellow egg bread, Isaac looked at the loaves in his hand. He spread his ten fingers and seemed to meditate on each finger. Isaac would teach me the mystical meaning of breaking bread and the meaning of the ten Sephirot represented by the ten fingers, which grasped the bread. Isaac's loaves were short square loaves of whole wheat bread called Lechem Chai, which means both "Living Bread" and "The Bread of Life." All were required to dip their bread into salt before eating.

Naturally, all the students asked why the bread was dipped in

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salt. I raised my hand to answer. The Rabbi bowed in my direction, indicating that I could answer. "The reason," I said, "is to remind us (I paused here for dramatic effect) to take everything the Rabbi says with a grain of salt!"
Isaac smiled.
The Yeshiva students gasped and shot daggers at me and looks of contempt from mean, narrow, squinting eyes.
The University students, unsure of the proper response, were silent.
The Rabbi's wife laughed a deep hearty laugh and the Rabbi and their daughter joined her. I had not meant to embarrass my teacher, and was relieved when the Rabbi smiled.
The Rabbi answered the question. "The food we eat is to be uplifted on this Ordered Table which is our altar. Salt is required with all that is offered on the Altar (Leviticus 11:13). The Covenant of Salt is everlasting (Numbers 18:15). Just as salt preserves and does not putrefy, so shall our covenant of Good Will as we eat together endure."
I was silent during the remainder of the meal. Isaac did not eat the soup. He had prepared his own salad and ate brown rice and a special soya dish that he himself made with great love and care. He shared his meal with a vegetarian from the University. The rest of us ate our chicken soup and meat.
Isaac ate slowly. He was more concerned with song than with finishing his meal. I ate too quickly. Isaac set his fork and knife down and looked at mine, indicating I should do the same. He recited "I Sing With Praise," in Aramaic. Written by the Kabbalist Rabbi Isaac Luria, the Ari Hokodesh (The Holy Lion) the hymn was comprehensible only to the initiated. Rabbi Meir, I remembered, also sang this hymn my first Shabbat in Jerusalem. I was learning Aramaic for Talmud but Isaac still needed to translate and explain.
The forces of Evil are nullified by Songs of Praise to God. When we embrace the Sabbath bride, we bring her Joy, and the forces of Evil are exiled.
The Gates of Paradise are open. We enter Eden and the apple orchard. We couple with the Sabbath bride as her groom. So God unites with Israel with great love. We then comprehend the Thirty Two Paths of Wisdom: The Torah, the Prophets, the Writings, and the seventy words of the Kiddush.
The Menorah represents wisdom, and the bread prosperity, and they are put in their proper places to assure the continuation of prosperity and wisdom in our lives.
On the Sabbath we learn secrets of Torah which are not revealed during the week, when they are hidden and concealed.
The bride is crowned with supernatural mysteries at the Joyous Feast of the Holy Angels.
The metaphorical fires of Hell do not burn on the Sabbath. The Accuser and Angels of destruction have no power over the Sabbath Peace. The Sabbath is a model of perfection.
I listened without comment to Isaac's translation-explanation. I

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would have accused anyone else of uttering kabbalistic mumbo jumbo.

God's Table

We all sang the traditional Sabbath evening hymns, The Zmerot. Even the University students were drawn into this fellowship of song and praise. I felt in awe of the beauty of the Queen Sabbath. Isaac gave a Devar Torah. He spoke briefly and to the point summarizing and highlighting the major events of the weekly Torah portion. Isaac brought the Torah to life and quoted various commentaries or verses to stress the non-monolithic nature of the Torah. At that time I was not recording Isaac's teachings. I do remember he quoted the Ethics of the Teachers:
Rabbi Shimon said, "Those that eat at one table without speaking `Torah' it is as if they have eaten sacrifice offerings to the dead... But those who converse on the Torah have eaten from God's (literally from the God whose presence fills space) table, etc. Chapter Three Mishna Four." Isaac explained that Rabbi Shimon was the student of Akiba and the author of the mystical commentary on the Torah, The Zohar. He explained the mystical significance of raising the sparks found in food up to their creator.
"Eating, as all areas of our lives, is to be an act of uplifting and holiness." I remember being deeply affected by Isaac's Torah and feeling like a child who still needed to learn the proper way to eat.

Havdalah

Lillian came for Havdalah. She stood at the entrance to the study hall and was ignored by the pious students. Isaac and I noticed her at the same moment. He indicated with his eyes that I should invite her in. Shy and confused, I walked over to Rabbi Brauerman to ask permission. Women and men are separated by a Mechitza, a partition, in orthodox Jewish practice and Lillian was the first woman in the neighborhood to show up for services.
Rabbi Brauerman gave me his best, "Your question need not ever be asked," look and nodded his approval. Some checked Lillian out. She wore a long black pleated skirt to her ankles. Her toes peeked out of the front of her sandals. She wore a vest. Her shoulders were covered with a woven shawl. One of the students was staring at her head, caught in the curls of her tresses. She lowered her eyes. I invited her in.
Rabbi Brauerman asked me to do Havdalah. Isaac held the candle as I took a goblet of wine and chanted:
"Indeed God is my deliverance"
(I thought of LIllian)

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"I will be confident and fearless"
(Please God! I prayed) "For God is my strength and song...
You shall draw water with joy
from the wellsprings of Salvation...
(We will live in Eden - in the apple orchard)
"For the Jews there was light and joy, gladness and
preciousness so let it be with us"

I looked at Lillian
She smiled.

The cup of Salvation I raise
and the name of God I praise."
I transferred the kiddush cup to my left hand and recited the blessing on wine.
I held a citron with cloves stuck into it for the blessing over fragrant spices.
Blessed art Thou, Adonai Elohenu, who creates various
types of spices.
I caught a scent of must from Lillian's body. Yes, I thought, the gates of Paradise, let them open once again.
I set the spiced citron down to make the blessing over the Havdalah candle on fire.
I looked at Lillian but she was looking at Isaac as he held the candle high above Lillian's head. At the time, I did not understand the meaning of this mysterious action. Lillian understood and turned her gaze from Isaac to me.
I returned the goblet to my right hand for the final blessing.
"Blessed art Thou, Adonai Elohenu, who makes
distinctions between sacred and profane."

Distinctions.
I saw a bride crowned with supernatural mysteries of
the joyous feast of the holy angels.
My beloved would be to me
and I to her.,
My life would never again be the same.

Lillith

I wanted to spend the evening with Lillian. She knew her way around the prayerbook and recited "May God give you," as did the Yeshiva students.
I chose to pray another way as I stared at her pleasant face set on an elongated Picasso neck. Yes - she resembled Picasso's "Jacqueline" with the towering neck, large eyes, and long straight nose. I stared intently as though this were the first time I had seen a face.
Lillian's hair was parted down the middle. Auburn medusa curls

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framed her face down to a pointed chin. I saw a heart. Her lips were thin bows.
She looked up from her prayerbook and saw that I was staring. Her large eyes were warm and brown. She smiled and lowered her eyes. I watched the long lashes that met and parted. I could almost hear a butterfly in flight.
I roused my courage and asked her out to a movie. "I have another commitment," she said pleasantly. I was too hurt to ask her if we could make it another time. Lillian returned to her apartment. I spoke to Isaac.
I told Isaac I wanted to marry her. He looked at me with disbelief. "You don't know the woman." Isaac warned. "You have fallen! Love may begin with infatuation but you must make the ascent. Don't be a fool in love with love." I did not understand the warning.
That evening I saw Lillian on the back of a motorscooter embracing her lover. I was crushed. I went to her apartment Sunday evening. She offered me herbal tea and crackers with butter and honey. I was extremely nervous. "I saw you last night!"
She did not answer but looked at me, not understanding.
"I want you to know," I said, quoting the Song of Songs, "that even is you cannot be my bride I would like you to be my sister."
She came over to sit next to me and seemed touched.
"Laurence, Laurence. What are you talking about?"
"Last night, I saw you with..." I started.
"With my cousin," she finished. "He picked me up for a family gathering."
I sat as silent as an ass tired of braying.
She reached out to touch my hand. I surrounded her with my arms in a bear hug that told her I never wanted to let her go. She held me tight and, for reasons I still don't understand, cried.
"Would you like more tea?"
I did not answer, but looked at her as she got up and stood near the lamp. I saw a woman who was a curious intermingling of peasant and aristocrat. Her strong, wide shoulders were capable of carrying water or other heavy burdens. Lillian's biceps were larger than mine but her arm tapered into a thin wrist that was out of proportion to the large hand with thin fingers.
Lillian's breasts were the breasts of a peasant - the breasts of a proud nursing mother. In a wedding picture I hold in my hands I am reminded of the pride with which she displayed her cleavage. Now they are strained against her blouse and seemed to defy gravity - jutting and turning up - as high and as proud as an aristocrat's nose.
Neither of us knew how to make the first move. She sat on the bed. I sat next to her. We kissed slowly. She slid her tongue into my mouth and I immediately became hard. She lifted her skirt, revealing legs purple in tights. The purple accentuated the leg's shapeliness and I was aroused beyond control. I removed my pants and Lillian removed her top and bra. Her breasts were so lovely I moaned. I pulled the purple tights off her legs and

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followed the musky scent to heaven's gate. She turned to face me and lovingly massaged my face with her breasts. For the first time I saw the necklace with her Hebrew name swinging between her breasts. Lillith.

Sitting

Isaac asked me to attend at the Yeshiva. I would be near Lillian and learn how to be a Jew. I told Isaac I did not believe.
He said I did not need to believe but to be-live. Isaac explained, "Learn the way of Judaism. You must walk down the path to see where it leads. Belief is not the first step."
I did not follow Isaac's argument. "I want to know, experience, and find God," I said. Isaac shook his head,"No."
"Find yourself. Follow your heart. You said it yourself. You want to learn how to be a Jew, not about Judaism. You must let go of your analytical self and movement and experience a Jewish lifestyle by living as a Jew."
I moved into the Yeshiva. My course work at the University complete, I settled into the Yeshiva study routine. Lillian returned to the States for the summer and I studied full-time. Up at seven for the morning service and lunch at noon with all the appropriate blessings on the food. The afternoon and evening prayers, the University study until eleven. A special prayer before retiring.
Isaac taught me how to go to sleep. He opened the prayerbook of the Ari Zal - Rabbi Yitzchak Luria - the founder of Lurianic Kaballah. We recited:
Master of the Universe! I forgive anyone who has angered or cursed me or sinned against me, whether it be bodily or financially, against my honor or anything that is mine, whether by accident or intention, inadvertently or deliberately, by speech or action in this incarnation or any other. And let not any individual be punished because of me. May it be your will Lord, my God, and God of my fathers, that I not sin again, nor repeat past transgressions, so that I do not anger you, doing what you consider wrong.
And where I have transgressed, erase in your great mercy, but not through suffering or severe illness.
May the words of my heart and the meditation of my lips be acceptable to you my Rock and my Redeemer.
This is only the first paragraph of the Shema recited before going to bed.
I loved this ritual.
Especially the part about forgiving those who harmed me in another incarnation.
Isaac was pleased when I added that I must also forgive myself for any follies I committed.

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He explained, "Before we retire, we do a Chesbon Hanefesh - and assessment of our inner being and how it manifests in the day just past. This introspection is the essence of returning to God and self. We review moment by moment the actions of the day.
We then pray that our sleep be one of Peace and we get up in the morning reborn.
Each day is like a lifetime. With fear we face the night as we slip into its dark arms. We enter a dream kingdom in a type of death. Ascending or descending Jacob's ladder, we are judged by our deeds of the preceding day. The next day is a new creation and we are given another chance to recreate our world. Yesterday I slipped many rungs but today I shall continue the ascent!
Each day is a prelude, a practice for the final day. A chapter in the book that is our life. Each book has an end. The same end. Each chapter moves to that end. The story is as individual as the person living it, but the end is never in doubt.
And before he dies, a Jew recites the Shema.
Listen Israel, the God Yehovah and Elohim are one.
And the communal confessional, "We have transgressed; robbed; slandered; rebelled, etc. So each night we prepare for the final night and say these prayers."
Isaac was in rapture.
We recited the Shema to ourselves and Isaac explained the Kabbalistic section of the service. We said a number of verses three times.
"When you lay down, don't fear, you will lay down and you sleep will be sweet." (Proverb 3:24)
"May I sleep well, may I awake in mercy."
and then Ha Mapeal:
"Blessed art Thou Lord our God, King of the universe, who causes to fall the bands of sleep upon my eyes ... give light to my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death."
"After Ha Mapeal, one should not speak," Isaac explained. "Concentrate on peaceful sleep with pleasant dreams."
Isaac also explained the other prayer services to me, especially the afternoon service which he prayed with special devotion. That entire summer we studied all day, every day.

Dear Theophilos,
If I could recreate the intense joy of our devoted study on a day to day basis in words, I would. My friend, I would love to sit and learn together all that Isaac taught. I became adept in Talmudic studies. As a scholar, you may understand the unholy mingling of awe and contempt of our colleagues towards Talmudic research. Mastering the material takes a minimum of three years, time most scholars cannot spare. Their assessment of its content is not difficult to fathom and is most often jaded by jealousy.

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Isaac was a most excellent navigator on the Sea of the Talmud. We set sail from the shore on the "Menstruate Women" We chartered the agricultural laws and laws of charity and moved on to the sanctification of time in the holy days and Sabbath.
The Mishna has six sections. Shaas. One entire section on Woman, one on Damages, one on Sacrifice, and one on Ritual Purity. Seeds, Seasons, Woman, Damages, Sacrifice, and Purity. In Mishna the order is essential. All interrelates.

We studied the commentary, the Talmud, on all the Mishnas superficially, only skimming the surface. Still the voyage took three years. We also did thematic depth studies. I learned how to dive for pearls.
"A Yeshiva," Isaac explained, "as the Hebrew indicates, is a place for sitting. In a Zen sitting we would empty our minds of the clamor of the world to hear the void whisper her ineffable song. In a Yeshiva we become sense and mind satiated, filling our heads with the meat and wine of detailed and nuanceds legal problems. We transcend the world only by being totally immersed in the world. When the mind's appetite is satiated, it is stilled, and thoughts turn to God."
"The Way of Judaism - the Halacha - is like the body. The spirit of God animates the body and should be manifest in the action of every limb. God's will and spirit can be embodied in the world by those who walk in the Way." "The Way of Judaism is not nameless. It has a most detailed map. The directions are clear."
"Where can I get a copy?" I asked half in jest.
Isaac's answer was serious. "God speaks to the Jew through the medium of the Schulchan Aruch. In its pages are the distillations of the centuries of Talmudic speculation on the proper embodiment of the will of God in our world of action.
I began to read the Schulchan Aruch from cover to cover. I would have many questions on this map and where it would lead me.

Awakening

Lillian returned at the Summer's end. She had not written except to tell me of her return. She told me in a monotone of her summer. Her first month home she missed her period. She was sure she was pregnant. A few days late, she worried herself into the next month and also delayed that period. When the period finally came she bled like she had been stuck with a spear. I told her I would have married her if she had been pregnant but she looked at me vacantly.
. Lillian transferred to a non-orthodox, more egalitarian Yeshiva, without telling her parents. In the morning I studied with Isaac, in the afternoon by myself. Isaac used afternoons for

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his PhD. studies. Saturday and Wednesday evenings I went out with Lillian. She demanded more time together even though we had begun to quarrel and our relationship was becoming strained.
I learned how to awaken from the Schulchan Aruch. I would follow the map to wherever it would lead me.
Isaac taught me the following about its order:

The Four Turim

The Four Turim that are the model for the codification of Jewish Law in the Schulchan Aruch are based on the arrangement in the legal codification called the Tur, which is modeled on the Breastplate of Judgment worn in ancient times by the High Priest.
The sacred vestments made for Aaron were beautiful and dignified. They included a knitted tunic, a turban and sash. Aaron, the first Cohen Gadol also wore a Breastplate of Decision and Judgment. The breastplate was gold, set with four rows of turim or gems. Each row had three stones. Engraved on the stones were the names of the 12 sons of Israel.
When he entered the sanctuary, Aaron wore the Breastplate of Judgment and Decision. The breastplate also contained an Urim and Tumim. One translation of the Hebrew is "Lightings and Perfections." The Urim and Tumim were consulted by the high priest as an oracle and gave forth its decision like a type of divine computer. Program your questions and the Urim and Tumim would reveal the will of the Almighty. This flashy divination inferior of course, to the direct communication with God that the prophets experienced. A priest is not a prophet and this may explain why his lower level revelation was of necessity more speculative.
The Septuigent translates Urim and Tumim closer to "teachings and truths." The Torah does not explain how the divine message was manifest in the Breastplate of Judgment or how it was deciphered. I imagine it lit up with radiant colors like the control panel of an alien spaceship.
Rashi, Rambam and the Zohar Hakodesh say that the Urim and Tumim were based on mystical combinations of the holy letters of the names of God. The priest would meditate on the letters and attain divine wisdom.
Mystics still seek the divine names even though the Urim and Tumim were lost in antiquity. The Schulchan Aruch is the Breastplate of Judgment of our time. The four rows are the four major divisions of process of seeing divinity manifest in the laws that order our lives. We now have only the light trapped in the black coal letters on the white or yellowed pages of legal codes.
We pray for the day, may it come speedily, in our time when again prophets will dialogue with God and the Priest in their service will renew their spectacular divine service.
Our form of service today is to ignite the coals with the heat of

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study and imagination, to watch the letters ignite. This is done with the help from the divine sparks in the words.
Ignited, they consume the mind and page, and again became one with their divine source.

Isaac, as you see Theophilos, was easily carried away by elegies which were a cross between encyclopedic discourse and sermon. Still I loved listening to him. He laughed at himself and came back to this world. "We turn the letters into light by study. The book is like the body. We must breathe into it the breath of life. When you study the Schulchan Aruch, do not forget the source of the letters, the light of the Perfect One," Isaac concluded.

With all this I opened the large first volume of the Schulchan Aruch with commentaries.

Volume One Chapter One
LAWS ON AWAKENING IN THE MORNING

1. "Set God always before you..." (Psalm 16:8)
Will you hide in secret places assuming I shall not see you?
I who fill all space! (Jeremiah 23;24)
"Consider this" the Mechabar, the author of the Schulchan Aruch tells us, "and awe and humility will overwhelm you and you will fear God."
I immediately had questions the traditional commentators did not answer. God was a given, assumed. Always there. Become aware and then you fear. I did not want fear or authoritarian religion. I do not want my own children to fear me. I want them to love me. I went to Isaac.

"Read the next halacha." he said returning to his own studies. I did.

2. While a person is still lying in bed they are obligated to acknowledge in whose presence they have awakened. At the moment of awakening be mindful of the Mercy of God, who is blessed, that the soul has been renewed...and so worship with your Very Being as we are taught in Lamentations. "They are new every morning. Great is thy Faithfulness." This means every morning we are like a new creature and for this God should be thanked with all ones heart.
While in bed one must say:
I offer thanks to you living and Eternal King for you have mercifully restored my soul within me. Great is Thy

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faithfulness.

Theophilos, I wrote this prayer out in Hebrew and English. At the time I felt neither reborn nor convinced of God's or my own faithfulness.

The third and fourth laws of the first Tur of the first volume or row of the Schulchan Aruch lit up for me like the Urim and Tumim. The coals ignited. I saw the light and the fire.
Rabbi Judah, the son of Tema taught: "Be as bold as a leopard, as light as an eagle, as swift as a deer, and as strong as a lion to carry out the will of your Father in heaven."
"Strong as a lion," the Mechabar explains, means not being ashamed when mocked for serving God. I prayed that I not mock that part of myself which was the Lion. "Strong as a Lion" also refers to the service of the heart which is the source of divine service. It is our duty to strengthen our hearts and to prevail over evil inclination in the manner of the hero who makes every effort to prevail over an adversary.
The book warmed in my hands. I had found my manual of discipline to defeat the sons of darkness. I would be the Lion. Aryeh. The Lion of God.
A Lion, I strengthened myself and rose quickly the nest morning to serve the Creator. The winter and summer would have no power over me. I would warm a cold morning with a burning desire to experience God, set always before me, in every act of my life. In the summer, tired from fewer hours of sleep I would yet get up with the sun to praise God along with the first rays of its radiant light.
Isaac was always up before me. I loved his warm grin of approval. My friend and my guide helped me rebirth as a born again Jew. I would and could not do it alone. The shift from head to heart, from speculation to strength, occurred only by Isaac's example. I knew that intellectually he was more gifted than I, and that he believed. I learned how to set God always in front of me.
I also wanted to know God. I told Isaac. His eyes beamed at me - two gentle sun=filled bright skies.
Isaac said that I would not only learn the knowledge of God but that I would also experience it. I did not ask what he meant.

Chassidism

The next Sabbath Isaac was my spiritual guide on an adventure. We left the world of the Yeshiva and the 1970's and we walked in the direction of Solomon's Temple. We walked down the Kings of Israel

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Street into Mea Sharim. I took this road often to pray at the Wall, but never understood the connection between the Kings of Israel and the Chassidism of Mea Sharim. Isaac would explain. Walking alone, I always felt I was walking into the past.

Dear Theophilos: This journey is also described in the Psalm section of Final Testament, Final Interlude.

Isaac shared the same feeling. It felt like we were walking into the 18th century. I almost said Middle Ages. The dark frocked Chassidim seemed from a darker age. The street narrows and then narrows again. Symbolism I did not grasp at the time. The litter is not noticed by the people who are not of this world. The only trees I remember are in the Arks of the synagogues. The Torah, a tree of life to those who take hold of it. These exiles from Eden have all but forgotten the Garden. Many Israelis, the Non-Jews in Old-New Land, despise the Chassidim.

You may have heard the gossip Theophilos. You can get the Chassid out of the ghetto but you can't get the ghetto out of the Chassid.

Isaac explained the spiritual significance of Mea Sharim's architecture. Mea Sharim was built as a fortress. The gates were closed at night as protection against enemies. The houses needed to face in upon each other and the Chassid preferred it that way. A fortress for a Jewish lifestyle they are trying to preserve.
In our time, say the gossipers, in the language of the evil (La Shone Ha Rah) brigades of dark frocked Chassidim sweating in their fur hats under Jerusalem's sun, sweating and stinking, patrol the streets armed with stones. Silly sidecurls fall from their defiled temples. This stereotype, Isaac said, is unfair.
My only fear was the Satmans lurking in the dark doorways.
Isaac however, saw and sought and found only holiness. He studied with many of the rabbis of Mea Sharim, and for every hour he put into his studies, he reaped one hundred measures of wisdom.
During the week, bus after tourist bus visits Mea Sharim. The locals earn much of their living from these visits. They never see a Mea Sharim Sabbath. No buses allowed.
With Isaac as my guide, I was able to experience what went on behind the 100 gates.
The streets were all but deserted. All were at home at table enjoying the Sabbath meal. The nest day I would see hundreds of housewives wheeling young children in carriages, stopping to converse.
This was a Chassidic version of the world to come right here on Earth. Excluding cars and buses set the mood. One day a week the

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hustle and bustle is transformed into the Sabbath's tranquility. This evening, Chassidim who were not at home, were with their Rebbes. We entered a synagogue.
The room was dim. Coarse wooden benches and tables were pushed together to form a square U with the head table. The Chassidim had finished the Sabbath evening prayers. The Rebbe had not. His prayer area was a private room sectioned off within the small synagogue. It looked like a confessional.
The Chassidim prayed, studied, and met, in their sacred brotherhood, in this same room. Tonight the Sabbath table was in the center of the room. An oversized Challa bread as long as outstretched arms from finger to finger, was at the center of the table along with an oversized silver goblet filled with sacramental wine. The Rabbi's followers, his Chassidim, waited for their saint to complete his prayers and filled the time with Niggunim - wordless songs to set the Sabbath mood. The synagogue was not crowded but the Chassidim packed in close together, hands on each other's shoulders. The song was slow and sad and I felt myself sinking back into my old cynicism. The Chassidim appeared dirty to me, like dark fallen angels. The Rabbi emerged from his private prayer room. He was greeted with an uplifting, fast niggun and faster shokeling. The Rebbe greeted each Chassid with a Sabbath Greeting. He smiled warmly at Isaac. He stared at me and I looked away.
The Rabbi chanted the blessing on the wine to sanctify the Holy Sabbath. I looked at him in the glow of the Sabbath candles. Perhaps he was a saint. Long, pure, and white. His side curls hung straight. Unlike his followers, he was not so vain as to curl them. In contrast to their drab, he wore caftan silks the color of royalty. The caftan was stitched with a fine flowery design.
The Rabbi spoke after Kiddush in Yiddish. I did not understand and was soon bored. When the singing began, I joined in. The Rabbi did not sing. At one point he appeared supremely indifferent or bored, but I realize now I may have been projecting. He rolled his eyes, perhaps seeing a heavenly vision, and began to drum a beat on the table with his fists. He started the song. His followers went wild responding with intense joy. They shokeled back and forth with such intensity I was afraid we would fall. A circle was formed and all but the Rebbe danced and sang. We danced around him.
Bread was broken and pieces passed from hand to hand. The Rabbi recited the blessing. I did not was or eat but Isaac did. The Rebbe raised the holy sparks in food to the upper worlds. Isaac reminded me that I need to learn this skill. I could not get into the spirit of the meal. Isaac saw sparks and I saw germs. I wanted to leave but Isaac wanted to stay. I watched with the detachment of an anthropologist observing the bizarre rituals of far off tribes. I wanted no part of this crude form of the Last Supper. I was upset by how negative I felt. Isaac ate each piece of food as it was passed from hand to hand by the Rabbi after he

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touched each morsel. For Isaac, each bite was a communion.
I insisted we leave. Isaac recited grace and we left.

A Real Chassid

"Imagine," I said to Isaac as we left, "we just walked through this door into the Dark Ages."
"Isn't it wonderful?" Isaac said, missing my sarcasm. In the dark he saw only the flame.
"I find the entire scene Medieval," I confessed. Isaac must not have assumed Medieval meant backward, because he again didn't hear my cynicism.
"I'm trying to find God," I complained to Isaac directly. "What am I to learn from these pietists stuck in time? I live in this century. What can these throwbacks to 19th century Poland teach me?"
"The Chassidic movement began in the 18th century," Isaac corrected.
"I know," I said defensively. "I've read Buber's stories."
"They call them Buber ma-asays," Isaac said.
"What?"
"The Chassidim loath Buber. They call his stories Buber ma-asays a play on the words Baba ma-asays, old grandmother tales."
"What could they possibly have against Buber?"
"The Chassidic story is the main vehicle of its teachings. A story is a Ma-aseh. But a Ma-aseh is more than a story. A Ma-aseh is also an action. A story is told as a bridge to an action. It is a fiction we are to make real or a true story that guides us to become adept in the action it describes.
Chassidim teaches how to bring Godliness into our world. The hero is the Tsadik, the Rebbe, who manifests God in his every breath and action. To borrow Buber's terms, the Rebbe becomes the living model of the `Thou' in the realm of actions.
Buber is critiqued by the Chassidim for telling the stories but forgetting the reason they are told. The stories are but lampposts on the way, illuminating the path of Jewish practice, the Mitzvot and Halacha. In some ways this critique is valid," Isaac explained.
"Chassidism is not an intellectual system that remains in the realm of theory. The stories were not told as fiction. Chassidim is a technique that teaches one how to act out and dance the divine will!"
"Who were the first Chassidim" I asked, wanting to get off Buber.
"The first Chassidim existed over two thousand years ago. They are mentioned in the Mishna. Also," Isaac added, "I'm sure you remember from your readings of Scholem the Chassidim of Ashkenaz (Germany) in the Middle Ages.
The most recent manifestation of people who call themselves Chassidim began with the Baal Shem Tov. Baal Shem Tov means

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Master of the Good Name. He began his ministry in 1734 at the age of 36."
"What is a Master of the Good Name?"
"A miracle worker."
"Miracles. That sounds Christian to me!"
"No," Isaac said. "The Baal Shem Tov was adept at the use of God's secret and holy name. He performed many miracles."
"Was the Baal Shem Tov a messianic pretender?"
"No, but the miracles he prayed for were definitely messianic," Isaac answered.
"Meaning?"
"The Baal Shem Tov (Besht), like all traditional Jews, wanted with all his heart and soul and very being for the redemption to come. The messiah is the forerunner of this radical transformation, this paradigm shift, into messianic time. Up to the time of the Besht, messianic pretenders were rampant. The Jews had recently survived but barely, the antics of Shabbati Zvi. Two years into his ministry, the Besht was faced with the messianic pretensions of Jacob Frank. The idea of the Messiah had reached a crisis point in Jewish history. As Scholem explains, Chassidism had to remain spiritual but also had to neutralize the dangers of false messianism."
"And his solution?"
"A refocusing of the Messianic hope form the Redeemer to the Self. It is explained most beautifully by a Maashal of the Apter Rebbe Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel of Apt." I interrupted Isaac.
"Does this mean Chassidism gave up on the idea of the Redemption of history and the Redemption of the community?"
"God forbid!"
"It's now a matter of what we do until the Messiah arrives."
"Perhaps there is danger in his solution," I said.
"Explain," Isaac said.
"By focusing on ourselves, on the individual, more people may come to feel they are the Messiah."
"They are," Isaac said.
"What?"
We had covered this before, but it was just beginning to sink in.
"Each and every person is the Messiah of their own unredeemed world."

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Dear Theophilos, you might want to turn to the Psalm section to see how this theme is poetically explained at the end of the Final Lecture.

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"So there is no need to wait for another to magically transform us?" I asked.,
"Exactly."
"But what of the messianic dreams of the redemption of the community of Israel?"
"Actualized spiritual individuals become the models for others in the community to attain Redemption."
"The Tzaddik, the Righteous Ones?" I said.
"Yes."
I thought of the Tsadik we had just visited.
"Isaac," I said, "this is fine in theory, but if I remember correctly, the institution of the Tsadik quickly became corrupt."
"Not in all cases," Isaac said. "The corruption of the institution of the Tsadik is over stressed in Jewish literature, especially the literature of the so-called Jewish enlightenment."
I was annoyed when Isaac spoke this way. He sounded like Chassidism's P.R. man.
"On the whole, the Rebbes were pious God fearing and God loving individuals. Amidst the miseries of poverty, of persecution, they uplifted their followers into sanctity and joy."
"But it all sounds so tribal," I protested. "Hundreds of thousands of Tsadikem or Rebbes each with their enclave of devout followers."
"The model is more like that of the Kings of Israel," Isaac explained. "King David was a Tsadik." "What about Uriah the Hittite?" I protested. "And all the blood David spilled in wars."
Isaac laughed. "I said a Tsadik, not a god. David was flesh and blood. So were the Tsadikim. They suffered the tests of all who are tempted by power."
"I believe the Chassidim could have chosen a better model," I said.
Isaac shook his head. "The Chassidim didn't choose this model, it chose them. Jews lived in small communities, isolated form one another, all over Europe. In many ways the economic basis of the society they lived in was feudalistic. So spiritual fiefdoms are not a surprise, are they?"
"But this model brought us no closer to the Redemption," I complained.
"That remains to be seen," Isaac said.
"It seems to me that the Chassidic isolationists of today are content with trying to save their own little worlds. And I wonder if they're successful at that."
"What do you mean?" Isaac said. "Here they are, living together as an organic community, praying, often in ecstasy, to a God they love, ministering to one another with Charity and other deeds of loving kindness. That to me is success."
"But Isaac," I said, "They are so dreary. Where is the spontaneity? The joy? And why do they seek to forsake this world? It's filthy here. Have they no pride? If the Tsadik teaches the individual to actualize himself, and if the system works, then Mea Sharim should be an ideal community, a showplace,

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so that all who enter would say, `Ah, here it is, a Jewish community that can be a model for the communities of the world.'"
Isaac did not answer directly. "The Besht resurrected the Jews from their spiritual death." Isaac said pointing a finger at me. "When his vision ignited, sparks flew all over Eastern Europe and a spiritual renewal began. The embers have died down, but the teachings remain."
"Isaac," I said, confronting him directly, "this is not enough!"
"Why?"
"This turns the Messiah into a fiction. An escape. This world is intolerable so we'll make up stories and escape into unreality. A paper Messiah crushed between the pages of a book. If you're honest with yourself," I said to Isaac, "you'll admit that the Chassidic movement is all but dead."
"No. I don't believe so," Isaac answered. "We still have Tsadikkim who are the living embodiment of the Torah's teachings."
"Who live in isolation, thinking only of themselves," I interrupted.
"Not so," Isaac said. "The Ladover Chassidim actively seek new members."
I knew Isaac would mention the Ladovers. They were the Chassidim who had tied Tefillin to my arm and head on my trip to Israel. Isaac said we would visit a Ladover Rabbi after seeing the Rebbe we had just visited.

The Ladovers

I had arrived in Israel with many of their leaders and the Sefer Torah that was to be presented to the Messiah. At that time I would have laughed if told that I would study with them and consider joining their group. I mentioned to Isaac how distasteful I found the Mitzvah Tanks fashioned from a Tefillin design, and the guns in the film. "God's Army," I said scoffing.
"The Rebbe, the Tsadik, as General."
"The Messiah is a role model, like a Tsadik," Isaac answered.
Isaac was not offended by the militant spiritualism of the Ladovers. He said that in time I would come to understand.
"According to the Besht," Isaac explained, "The Messiah comes when all Jews everywhere become illuminated by Chassidic teachings."
"Will He die?" I asked, not wanting to dwell on the Ladovers.
"Of course," Isaac said.
"Who will succeed?" I asked.
"That is a better question," Isaac said. "The Chassidic dynasties like the ancient monarchy of Israel followed the line of succession from father to son. The Torah honestly reports that many of the kings were competent, but that they were wicked. Some who ascended to the Chassidic throne were not worthy. The monarchy is a divine concession to Israel's need to be ruled. The issue we will face is: who will succeed the Messiah?"
"His son?"

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"Perhaps."
"Will the Messiah marry?"
"Of course," Isaac answered.
"If his son is not worthy?" I asked.
"Elections?" Isaac speculated.
Isaac laughed. "Messianic election or Messianic elections, that is the question."

Conversation With a Tsadik

Isaac had promised to introduce me to a Tsadik I could speak with. Isaac didn't seem surprised that we had met. When I told Isaac the story of my arrival to the Holy Land, I had forgotten that I had mentioned Rebbe Meir. Satman overshadowed that memory.
Reb Meir's table guests had left and we were greeted by the Rabbi and his wife as honored evening guests. The Rabbi ran to fetch us water and the Rebbetzin prepared tea and cakes. After the appropriate blessings, we talked.
The Rabbi's home was lit only by kerosene lamps. The Sabbath candles were burning down to their bases. Entering their home, I was reminded that we were also entering a sanctuary, a place made holy by a sanctified lifestyle. We were also entering a story, the living, continuing story of a Jew and his wife who lived, and were, Judaism. I sat across from the Rebbetzin. I was warmed by her smile. The Rabbi was a Ladover. Quoting the words of his master, the Ladover Rebbe, he explained the meaning of Ladover Chassidism (in Hebrew).
"Chassidism Is an all embracing world view which sees our central purpose in life as the unification of the Creator and creation.
We are creatures of heaven and earth, with a heavenly divine soul and an earthly physical body with an animal soul. The goal of our lives is the transcendence of our nature, and to unify ourselves with God.
God sends Torah and blessings down from above. The Torah is revealed in the words on a page which are like a body without a soul. Our challenge is to follow these words and direct our actions and intentions again heavenward.
The teachings of Chassidism are a fountain of living waters with God at its source. These living waters must be deepened until the stream widens into rivers of righteousness. Our teachings must cover the earth like the ocean. Then every Jew can draw from the waters of salvation with joy and bring new inspiration and sanctity into their lives."
"How can I, as an individual, know God?" I asked. "The well has not run dry?"
It was the Rebbetzin who answered. "God forbid! Some of the rivers have dried and no longer flow to the oceans. The well of salvation is filled with sand by the evil forces called Philistines, but the source will always offer its waters to those

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who thirst. We have to redig into the well to uncover the living waters."
The Baal Shem Tov taught that the rivers of holiness run so deep that many wells may be sunk to tap the source. You may dig your own well, or drink at the well of others. I drink from Miriam's well." she said. I wanted Lillian to meet the Rebbetzin.
Rebbe Meir took down three copies of a Chasidim tract. The Rebbetzin had her own book she studied. I was initiated into the mysteries of Chassidic discourse.
The next few years, I returned often to drink from the holy well at Reb Meir's. Isaac often came along. He was adept enough to learn on his own but he enjoyed just being with the Rabbi and his Holy mate.
I brought Lillian to their home one Shabbat. She saw only dinginess and darkness. The Rebbetzin, she said, served the Rabbi. She was his slave. No argument would convince Lillian. The Rebbetzin was, by the end of the visit, matching her judgment with judgment. Lillian said, as she left, "If there are wellsprings of salvation, they are polluted."

Sechelman's Home

Isaac studied with Rabbi Dr. Sechelman in his home. Isaac had the magical ability to bring Time, Place, and People into a type of holy harmony. He was always at the right place at the right time with the right people to lead him towards his destiny. I felt honored to share even a small portion of that grace of living that was Isaac's life.

Chassidim Without Sidelocks

A different type of Chassidism was taught by the professor.
We studied the Mishnaic material on the term Chassid.
"The first Chassidim would not wait one hour before praying. They prepared with meditation and meditated one hour after prayer." This means they spent up to eight hours per day in praying. A Chassid of the original Chassidism knew how to initiate a dialogue with the creator of all beings.
In the Talmud (Baba Kama 30a), three definitions are given of a Chissid:

1. A Chassid prays with intense dedication and devotion.
2. A Chassid observes the teachings of Avot. Avot are the ethical rules that define, as principles, the laws of Judaism. It is a moral guide book for the Way, the Halacha.

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3.A Chassid observes the words of Nezekin, the tractates of the order that deal with not damaging our neighbor.

"Which of the three would you choose?" Sechelman asked.
"According to the plain meaning of the Talmud, the opinion of Rabbi Judah bar Illai a pious saintly person, a Chassid, is one who is scrupulous in the law of damages."
"Explain." Sechelman said.
"The Mishana teaches, `The person who hides their thorns and glass and the person who makes a fence of thorns or a fence that falls onto public property is liable for injuries caused by their neglect.' Our rabbis taught `the original Chassidim would hide their thorns and glass in their fields and bury them to a depth 3 hand-breadths so they would not be unearthed even by the plow.' Rabbi Sheshet (who was blind) threw them into the fire. Raba threw his into the Tigris River.
It is apparent that Rab Judah's opinion is the definition of the pious, the Chassid."
"Good," the Rabbi Professor said.
"Now," he asked, "can you reconcile the three opinions?"
"I will try," Isaac offered. "A saint follows all three opinions. When praying, they do more than is commanded. Their prayers are like a burnt offering that is totally consumed. But they do not stop with prayer. They learn the teachings of Avot, which is also a guidebook for the Judge of a Rabbinic Court. Avot, ethics, are the moral principles that birth their offspring, the specific laws a Jew follows to sanctify their lives. The offspring, the children of these ethical maxims are the specific laws of Nezekin, torts, which teach us how not to damage our neighbors."
"Excellent," the Rabbi said. "A wonderful drash."
I objected. "The chidush (innovation) of our Mishna is that observing what seems to be the letter of the law is not always enough. One who puts thorns in a fence or builds a fence on their own property is not transgressing the strict letter of the law. However, since extenuating circumstances could lead to the wall falling, one should go beyond the letter of the law. This is what a Chassid does to be saintly and we are taught that the law itself, when it came to damages, is to be Chassid. This is the meaning of R. Judah's opinion that a Chassid fulfills the laws of damages. In interpersonal relationships, all are expected to be saintly."
"Good Reb Aryeh, what you are saying is technically correct. But hear also what Rebbe Isaac has to say."
"Your approaches are not contradictory. One who prays and is knowledgeable of ethics and observes them is the Chassid."
"But," I protested, "I think Rabbi Judah's opinion is more pointed. Many people spend hours in prayer and then act in most unsaintly ways. Any hypocrite can quote ethical maxims while living unethically in their interpersonal relationships. Rabbi Judah offers almost a philosophy of religious observance." Dr.

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Sechelman answered:
"While it is true that not all who pray are saintly, nor are all who judge righteous. Judaism teaches that prayer directs the individual towards pious deeds."
Isaac smiled and appeared pleased that I, his student, was creating Talmud with the Rabbi.
"Serving God and interacting ethically with our neighbors are connected, directly, in Jewish moral systems. Before action comes contemplation."
"Give a concrete example of being a Chassid based on our text." Sechelman asked.
"Pray devoutly, judge righteously, and love your neighbor as yourself," Isaac said.
"Don't throw a banana peel in the street," I said, keeping to my thesis.
"Good," Sechelman said. "Both answers are inspired by the words of our living oral Torah."

Fur Hats and Sidelocks

"Being a Chassid has nothing to do with fur hats and sidelocks and black clothing," I said aloud, not realizing I was verbalizing my thoughts.
Both Sechelman and Isaac smiled.
The Rabbi taught: Maimonides explains that a bore, an empty individual, does not fear sin. They have neither wisdom nor moral attributes. The individual who does not have intellectual virtues but has moral virtues cannot be a Saint (Chassid)."
"But the original Chassidim of our times," I said, "are lacking in knowledge but full of fervor in the service of God!"
"They were opposed," Sechelman explained, "exactly for that reason."
"Please explain." I said.
"As Maimonides writes in his introduction to the Mishna, anyone who says that the ignorant can be saintly, denies the teachings of Judaism and Reason. First comes study. Then observance. Learning must precede practice. Through learning one comes to practice and practice does not bring about learning."
"I think that learning and belief are secondary," I said. "Jews are defined by what they do."
"But what one does is the result of belief and knowledge, which is acquired by study and reason." Isaac added. "An individual's actions influence his learning. The action itself, even if performed mechanically, is a teaching. And many who know the meaning behind the action still act mechanically."
Sechelman interrupted. "Maimonides creates a paradigm of the excellent individual, one who achieves a unification of the meditative ideal and halachic observance. He calls this individual a Chassid."

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"So Maimonides was a Chassid who wanted all Jews to be Chassidim," I said. "According to Maimonides, are the Chassidim of today real Chassidim?" Sechelman didn't answer, but he bowed and swayed.

On the Park Benches of the Earthly Jerusalem

Lillian and I continued our relationship. I needed to hold her and be held, and we walked and talked and became companions.
We studied together. At first I helped Lillian with her Talmud assignments. She had a fine intellect and was my equal in deductive proofs, but far superior in inductive leaps. A week of preparation using the many commentators she could intuit in an hour session. I loved learning with her.
We ate together and went to movies together. There we could hold hands kiss and caress. After the show, she loved to eat Schwarma's braised lamb sandwiches in pocket pita bread. Then we would find a bench in an isolated section of one of Jerusalem's parks. She sat on the bench, legs spread. I sat on the ground, legs crossed, Hindu style. One time a Chassid walking by came close to see this ritual of the new religion we were practicing. Lillian covered my head with her skirt. We became hysterical. The Chassid, I would learn, probably did not even understand what he had just witnessed.
Lillian was from an orthodox Jewish home. Her family expected her to marry a Jew, perhaps even a rabbi, and raise a nice Jewish family. Like her own family, the wife would be Queen but the husband would be King. The arrangement worked just fine for her parents who had a long, happy marriage. Lillian's mother was a loving, devoted wife who served her husband in the best tradition of the Jewish Aishet Chayal, the Jewish women of valor. A woman's place was in the home. She ruled over that sacred space. The man's domain was time. That was why he was obliged to perform religious deeds bound by time and the woman was not. Lillian's father claimed that while the man and woman had different domains they ruled, they were, in fact, equal. One Shabbat he explained his view of women in Judaism.
"Go to an old orthodox synagogue and you will see in its very structure the veneration Judaism feels for women. Upstairs, elevated over the first floor where the men pray, is the Ezrat Nashim, the women's section. Elevated. Exactly as it was in the Holy Temple when the women were elevated and separate from the men. This is indicative of Judaism's views on women. The Jewish woman is put on a pedestal."
He was not in Jerusalem to see just how hard his own daughter fell off that pedestal. She would spend the next ten years picking up the pieces and in the end she would choose a role like that of her mother.

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But I race ahead, Theophilos, and we shall speak of this later. Being a biblical testament we move chronologically and to a climax. Please be patient my gentle friend. I know that this testament is the chronicle of the Messiah and that this Paul follows tradition and speaks over much. But Isaac assures me that this is fine, for it is my testament to his life. "Each of my apostles will recreate me in their own image," Isaac says.

*****

Lillian loved her father. Her father loved his tradition and truly loved his daughter. Perhaps they loved one another too much. He told stories of Lillian as a child and was always ready to show the home movies. Lillian was told to put something on her feet before she went out to play. She put washcloths on her feet. Daddy protested and she precociously answered, "But you said put something on my feet." He never tired of these stories. Lillian's father was the only man I ever met who was more infatuated with her than I.

This love made it all the more difficult for Lillian to find herself as a woman. She was torn between the safe lifestyle of her parents, and the New woman being birthed with tremendous pain by the feministic movement. Lillian began to live a life of ambivalence. She would always love her father and his tradition, but the Chain of Tradition became the chains of tradition. She took to rattling those chains.

I remember her first hotdog in Copenhagen. She bought it from a street vendor, because it was advertised as pork sausage. She bit into the hotdog and dropped the bite on the ground as if the dog had bitten her back. The lightning did not strike.

"It's good," she said on the second bite.

And what is sweeter than the forbidden fruits. A new world was then created for her, one without sin or punishment. Her second year in Yeshiva, Lillian read the feminist tracts so popular at the time. One gave a lurid account of cliterectomy and the sewing together of the labia by Bedouin tribes in Saudi Arabia. She read this account over and over, along with other cases of the repression of women by semitic societies.

She lectured, "The patriarchal system was established to repress women. Originally there had been a Matriarchy. The men took over and began to dominate the women." She read and dreamed of Amazons and Lesbos. Her parents had named her Lillian and Leah. She chose to become Lillith.

Dear Theophilos: See her "History and Herstory" in the Psalms.

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Lillith worked on making me the first convert to her New Revelation. She used the Schulchan Aruch as the proof text of Judaism repression of the female.
She purchased this Schulchan Aruch from a used bookstore in Jerusalem. The black bound volume was frayed on its bindings. The gold embossed letters as the title Code of Jewish Law (Schulchan Aruch) were fading. The title page read:

Code of Jewish Law
(Kitzur Schulchan Aruch)
An (Abridgement) of Jewish Law and Customs

Lillian was not concerned with laws on Rising in the Morning, Laws concerning Slander, Benedictions on Food, Oaths, the Sabbath, or Festivals. It was the fourth volume, the fourth Tur she insisted we read together.

Chapter 145
The Laws Pertaining to Marriage

1. A man is duty bound to take a wife in order to fulfill the Biblical precept "Be fruitful and propagate." This precept becomes obligatory on a man when he reaches the age of 18.

A teacher of a new revelation, Lillian taught me her novel way of interpreting the text.
"This law seems reasonable," I said. "People are commanded to marry and to propagate."
"Man," she hissed. "You've missed the whole point! The man takes the wife! A woman is acquired in three ways," Lillian said, quoting the first Mishna in Kiddushin. The Talmudic tractate on marriage:
1) By silver (money)
2) By contract
3) By sexual intercourse
"The woman is acquired. Purchased. Signed and sealed, and then raped! She becomes the property of the man." Lillian said.
I reread and my eyes opened to Lillian's view.
"This is one of the least offensive laws," Lillian said. "Read Law Four!"
"If one married a woman and stayed with her for ten years and she did not give birth, he should divorce her."
I understood what Lillian was saying. He marries her. He divorces her.
"She serves no purpose if she's not a baby factory." Lillian added.

Chapter 150

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Lillian turned to Chapter 150, Halacha one, and said, "This you won't believe, the complete repression of the sexuality of the female, and the male:

1. A man should accustom himself to super-holiness and be in a proper frame of mind when having intercourse...he should have intercourse in the most modest manner possible.
    A) He under and she above is unchaste.
    B) Both at one and the same is improper.

"This really is puritanical," I said.
"The Chassidim use a sheet with a hole in the middle!" Lillian said. She pointed her slender, painted finger at the fifth halacha. She had begun to paint her nails red, and I noticed her lips were also a darker red than before.
I read: "It is forbidden to glance at that place, whoever does has no shame and violates `Be chaste!' Certainly one who kisses that place violates all this and `You shall not make your soul abominable.'"
"Vekol-sha-cain Hanoshek Sham," Lillian quoted in Hebrew.
I was an easy convert. This was Puritanism at its worst. I was amazed to find it in a Jewish book and even more amazed to find it in the divine oracle. I would ask Isaac about these Laws.
Aroused by the prohibitions of this most forbidden of fruits, we did the acts forbidden. Lillian fell asleep and I returned to the Yeshiva.

To Er Is Human

Isaac and I had continued our patterns. He worked on his thesis at Hebrew University. We studied together and visited Reb Meir and Rabbi Sechelman to learn with them.
Shlomo had moved into his own private room on the third floor of the Yeshiva. I moved in with Isaac. I loved being Isaac's roommate.
This evening he knew I was troubled and asked me what was on my mind.
"The Kitzur Schulchan Aruch," I said.
"A dangerous book," Isaac interrupted.
"How so?"
"It gives the impression of giving authoritative rulings and misrepresents the legal process."
"Explain."
"No Jewish text should be printed without commentaries. Jewish law is a dialogue between Jews and God. Rabbi Ganzfried's code is not necessarily binding on Jews today."
"Thank God!" I said, thinking about my encounter with Lillian.
I asked Isaac about Chapter 150. Isaac commented. "The rabbis

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realized that when male and female join they are in the image of God, and that sexual communion is the highest sacrament God gives individuals `to be as God'"
"So how do you explain the Puritanism of the Codes?"
"Environment."
"Meaning?"
"The Mechabar and Rabbi Ganzfried in his selection of laws codify opinions based on their understanding of the world. Both lived in Puritanical, repressed societies.
"So the problem is not so much with the divination as with the one doing the divination." I said.
"Yes."
"Would an orthodox Rabbi agree with your explanation?"
"No."
"Why not?"
"Because the diviner is expected to be neutral and to allow God's will to manifest itself in legal decisions based solely on the test."
"But between the text and the decision there is the worldview of the codifier."
"Exactly."
I had a more pressing practical question., "The last halacha of the Chapter, I find particularly offensive." I expected Isaac to know it by heart, but he asked that I read:
"Semen is the strength of the body and the light of the eyes. When it effuses in abundance, the body weakens and one's life is cut short. He who overindulges ages quickly...his eyes grow dim, his breath becomes foul, the hair of his head, eyelashes, and brows fall out, while the hair of his beard, armpits and feet increase. He is afflicted with many ailments."
Isaac laughed. "A bit overstated I must admit."
I looked thoughtful and said, "Now I understand!"
"What do you understand?"
"Why the Chassidim have such long beards. I'll have to check their feet at the Mikva!"
Isaac grinned.
"This is pure nonsense," I said.
"Not exactly."
"What?" "The sperm is the living water of a man's strength. That strength should flow into proper channels. The Kaballah teaches that the ejaculate contains the essence of the thought at the time of ejaculation."
Isaac said he was tired and needed to sleep.
I was aroused from being with Lillian. Isaac said Ha Mapil and went to sleep. I thought of Lillian and masturbated.
The next evening I visited Lillian. She wanted to study the chapters on the regulation of the menses.
I explained to Lillian what Isaac said about the Kitzur Schulchan Aruch. It was not the final opinion. Lillian was not impressed.
"So what is it? Don't you think the orthodox of Jerusalem follow the Schulchan Aruch?"

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She moved closer to me and turned to Chapter 153. She put her hand on mine and read halacha one:
"A woman from whose fountain there issued a drop of blood...is considered menstrually unclean until she counts 7 clean days and takes a bath of immersion in a Mikvah.
He who lays with her is punishable with Karet, being cut off from his people. She is subject to the same punishment. To touch her in a caressing manner is punishable with 39 lashes of a whip."
Lillian caressed my hand. "I'll have to get my whip," she said. "It's my period."
"I don't mind," I said, caressing her back.
I noticed a new halacha to wrestle with following the admonition against excess cohabitation.

Chapter 151

"The spilling of semen in vain is more severe than any of the sins mentioned in the Bible."
"Aught-oh," I said.
Lillian giggled.
"Those who fornicate with themselves using their hands causing a vain effusion of semen violate a grave prohibition..."
"It doesn't say someone else's hand," Lillian added winking.
"Concerning them it is said (Isaiah 1:15) `Your hands have spilled blood.' Masturbation is analogous to killing a person."
"See what Rashi wrote concerning Er and Onan in the Parsha Vayeshev that both died committing this crime."
The diligent scholars that we were, we looked up the story in Genesis, Chapter 38. Rashi says that Onan interrupted his lovemaking and came outside of Tamar because he did not want to mar her beauty through pregnancy and childbirth.
We disagreed with the Schulchan Aruch's interpretation of the text and Rashi. No sin is committed in the spilling of semen, only in Onan shirking his responsibility to marry his sister-in-law, an injunction of biblical law. Lillian felt Rashi was wrong in calling Onan's desire not to diminish Tamar's beauty through pregnancy a crime.
The Schulchan Aruch lists remedies for those caught in the trap of masturbation or nocturnal emissions. The list is extensive and includes giving charity, scrupulous observance of the Sabbath, to be called to the Torah and to be among the first to come to the synagogue for prayer. Evidently, this was quite a problem. The Schulchan Aruch encourages sublimation of this sexual energy into pious religious acts.
I read the second halacha in Chapter 151 as Lillian prepared tea and cookies. She had slipped into a lose-fitting magenta Arab dress embroidered with purple and black.
"One is forbidden to willingly harden himself or to think of a woman."

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I thought of Lillian without her robe and immediately became hard. "If he does think of women, he should divert his thought to Torah which is a favorite wife and full of grace. The thought of fornication comes only unto a mind devoid of wisdom."
Lillian took the book from my hands. We kissed and held a long time.
"You are tainted," Lillian said. "You shall be utterly cut off from your people!"
I slipped the finger between my lips and said, "If I die, let it be for this noble cause!"

The Favorite Wife

Isaac taught me how to prepare for the Queen Sabbath. He carefully washed and cleaned his garments and shined his shoes. He offered to shine mine. The clothes and shoes laid out, he said it was time for the Mikvah.
I had heard tales of the dank and dirty Mikvah the Chassidim used for ritual immersion. Lillian spoke about the absurdity of a woman going to wash away her menstrual impurities. Chassidim used the Mikvah after wet dreams. I did not want to go.
"You will have to learn the meaning of baptism in the Mikvah." Isaac said. "It is a rebirth in the pool of living waters that awakens the dead part of our spiritual soul and resurrects the part of us that dies." I did not know then why I specifically had to learn this mystery.
Isaac prepared for the Sabbath in the manner of a groom preparing for a wedding.
"On the Sabbath, the Jew is married to Eternity," Isaac said.
"On the Sabbath, the people of Israel and the Holy Shechina are redeemed from exile and dwell together in a place of time, embracing for an eternal moment."
"To the Holy Black Jews of Ethiopia, the Falashnas, the Sabbath is God's favorite angel and is adored by all other angels who they greet and celebrate with song."
When the bride enters the wedding canopy and is betrothed, the sanctification is by wine. Kiddushin. Betrothal.
When the Sabbath Queen enters her abode, we betroth ourself to her by kiddish, by the sanctification of the Seventh Day."
I was more interested in an answer to a question Isaac promised to give me that evening. I had asked him about Ur and Ohan and about masturbation. Isaac said that he would explain Ur and Ohan on the eve of the Sabbath and that until then I should not masturbate. I wanted to know why. Had Isaac been entrapped by Puritanism? One night after seeing Lillian, I think he heard me trying to quietly touch myself beneath the sheets.
As we prepared for and entered the Sabbath, I tried to be in the spirit of Isaac's devotion.
We chanted the Song of Songs. A love song between two lovers. I told Isaac I was skeptical about the Rabbinic teachings that the song expressed the love of the Jews for God and the love of God

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for the Jews. "The teaching is a true teaching," Isaac said.
"I prefer to see it on a more sensual level. The love between a man of flesh and blood and a woman of flesh and blood."
"The Song of Songs is a model for interpersonal relationships." Isaac said, reflecting on my objection. And it is also a love song the Jewish people have written to their Creator."
I began to feel the unification the service was singing of when I said the Shema. I felt at one with God, the people I prayed with in the Yeshiva and all Jews everywhere. I wondered if the Shema included non-Jews.
After Kiddush, a Sabbath feast was served. "A Wedding Feast." I ate too quickly. Isaac laid his arm on mine to tell me to slow down. He set his fork down after every bite and seemed to raise up the fork in a type of offering before the food entered his mouth.
We went for a long walk after dinner and finally returned late to our room.
I was ready with my question. "What about Chapter 151?" I asked.
"Please."
"Chapter 151 of the Schulchan Aruch. You know. About spilling semen in vain."
Isaac explained again that the sperm is the strength of man. It is the essence of manhood.
"I know," I said. "I'm asking about the gravity of the sin. The Schulchan Aruch says this is the greatest sin mentioned in the he Torah. Certainly this is an exaggeration." "Yes, it is an exaggeration."
"It says masturbation is analogous to killing."
"Also an overstatement," Isaac said. "However, what Onan did was a type of death."
"Explain."
"Onan means `sorrow,'" Isaac said. "His mother had severe pains at his birth and vowed never again to give birth. She went so far as to name her son my `Sorrow.' She mourned his birth. She knew not how to prevent birth and being a normal healthy woman, loved the sensual pleasure of sex and gave birth to another son. She named him `Disappointment.' She then learned a way to prevent and control birth.
Now, her first-born son was Ur, which means `Awakening.' After Judah found a wife for Ur, his first-born Tamar, his mother awoke within him the desire to spare the travails of childbirth to the beautiful Tamar and to spare her of its toll on the body. Ur is slain by God. He does not pass on the secret of controlling birth to his brother, and his mother, fearful for the life of her second son, is also quiet.
Now, their mother, Shua, had also raised Onan with the sorrowful teaching that childbirth was to be avoided at all costs and that if sex were used only for enjoyment we would remain forever young. One look at young Tamar's body convinced the sorrowful but virile and handsome young Onan that he could not get her pregnant. Now Judah had instituted the Yibum, the duty of a brother-in-law to

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marry the wife of his brother if he dies. So the father Judah, explained to his son Onan that while he would raise up the children for his brother, the children would be called sons and daughters of Ur, not sons and daughters of Onan. Shua, Onan's mother, then reminded her son that he should not mar his sister-in-law's beauty by getting her with child.
Onanism then, is shirking the responsibility of an ancient act of love and respect. The children that were not born, Onan, in a way, murdered."
"You certainly make it more reasonable," I said to Isaac. "What frightens me is the Puritanical reading our rabbis give to the story."

"What frightens me," Isaac said, "was the preoccupation with this practice. It indicates that the relationship between man and woman was lacking."
"Perhaps man's sexuality is stronger than woman's." I said.
"No. It is a myth that a man's sexuality is stronger than a woman's. Tamar agreed to go to bed with Onan even though he was not consummating the act of love with the gift of life. Tamar so wanted a child that she tricked her father-in-law into getting her pregnant. And this is the same righteous Tamar who refused to make Judah into the fool, even after Judah said she should `be burned.'"
"So what do we do until we're married?" I asked Isaac. I knew the answer to my question immediately. While Isaac was discreet, he had a few women with whom he was intimate.
"Is masturbation wrong Isaac?" I asked. "No," he said. "It is not wrong. But isn't it a bit like dancing alone?"
"That's the style today," I replied.
Isaac laughed at the connection.
"Onanism is not a sin," Isaac said. "But it is sad. The real meaning of sexual pleasure is revealed in the actual joining of male and female. When the connection is cosmic and female and male exchange essences, a child is formed. This is the closest we come to being God-like."
I described my sexual relationship with Lillian and why I masturbated so often.
"Get out of that relationship!" Isaac said.
"Isaac, I love Lillian!"
"You are not strong enough," Isaac said.
"What do you think of when you masturbate?" Isaac asked.
"Lillian of course," I answered.
Isaac laughed.
"Lillian is afraid of you sperm, I understand that. But why won't she take birth control?"
"Lillian says birth control is dangerous for the female."
"Why?"
"The I.U.D. can puncture the lining of the uterus. The Pill may cause cancer. Prophylactics are not 100%. She is well-read in this area Isaac."

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"I think you should hold back some of you attention. You are too loving. You worship her and allow her not to reciprocate. This is unbalanced. Think about what I'm saying. You are too attached to your Love."
I thought of Lillian and became aroused.
"Isaac," I said, "you told me not to masturbate and I didn't. But I need to."
"You masturbate too often, and improperly," Isaac said.
"Improperly?"
"Yes, your technique is all wrong."
"What?"
"First we talk about theory," Isaac said.
Isaac must have heard me touching myself beneath the sheets. Technique? Theory?

Isaac taught.
"When the great and holy Rabbi Hillel of blessed memory taught the essence of Judaism, he indirectly quoted Leviticus 19:18. `You must love your neighbor as you love yourself.' `I am God,' Rabbi Akiba quoted Leviticus directly.
This teaching is usually analyzed according to the meaning of Rea Neighbor. How far does the sphere of Rea extend. Actual neighbors? Jews? Each and every individual of the universe?
I believe it extends to the farthest boundary of the universe and returns to the self. You remember my speech in high school? Let's focus on the verse
`Love your neighbor as yourself.'
"We forget the `As Yourself.' This is also a Commandment. Love Yourself. Socrates says `Know Thyself.' The Torah teaches `Love Thyself.' It does not command narcissism, the self-obsession of those devoid of love. By loving ourselves, we learn how to love others. Know that it is this simple."
"So what does this have to do with your Theory?"
"Everything," Isaac said. "You masturbate. You don't make love to yourself."
"I still don't see a difference."
"When you make love with yourself, it is a prelude to the time you don't have to dance alone. The sexual dance involves movements towards the beloved and away from the beloved. Think of the motions."
.
"This giving and receiving teaches both partners how to be Adam; how to be male/female. If you make love without a mate it is easy to fall into the trap of seeing sex as only one motion. This throws off rhythm and timing by disturbing the speed of the act of lovemaking. It is a type of death."

My friend Theophlos, I pray I do not offend you. This Testament simply would not have been complete if I had not related to you how Isaac taught me to love myself.

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On the Sea of Galilee

The walk to the Sea of Galilee is a descent after an ascent. The roads through Samaria and North are twisting and dangerous, and the hills difficult to climb. The final descent into Tiberius brings one below sea level. Isaac, my spiritual and geographical tour guide, mapped the way of our journey to the Heart of the Kingdom of Israel. He told me one of the reasons for the journey on the way. He was to meet his father and mother. They were leading a tour from Laguna Beach.

I loved walking the land with my friend. Here Abraham entered the Land from Haran, and Isaac and Jacob played. This was the Biblical Holy Land. I imagined a young David with his sheep and an older David dancing with the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem.

Isaac was the guide. He knew the genus and species of the flowers and their curative potentials. We foraged and ate our way to Galilee. Isaac had bread he said he had baked, in a backpack. He quoted chapter and verse about the places we passed through, and related the anecdotes that united these holy places with their Biblical narratives. I learned the meaning of holy places in the Holy Land. "Everywhere our feet touched," Isaac taught, "we make holy land if our intention is to bind together place, time, person, and God." Isaac it seemed to me, had walked this road many times before.

I asked Isaac about his parents. He spoke with awe and respect for his father and love for his mother. I knew Isaac wrote home once a week. He explained that this fulfilled in action the Commandment "Honor thy father and mother." Isaac often asked me about my family. Only now did I think of asking about his own family.

"My parents, bless God, are well. Mother volunteers at the hospital and helps run the Sisterhood of the Church. Father continues to build."

"Build what?" I interrupted.

"Churches and housing developments. Father's ministry is spreading from San Diego to San Francisco and beyond to the North. He dreams of also expanding to the East and even to the West, to Hawaii, the Orient, and of course, Israel."

"And what are the teachings of your father's church?" I asked.

"Bible true Christianity," Isaac answered. "A fundamentalist approach to the Old and New Testaments as a guidebook for spiritual guidance of our everyday lives."

"Who is attracted to his church?"

"The beach people who have become as gods in the body, all golden and bronzed, and as kings in their regal lifestyle. All those in the newest of Promised Lands, California, who seek the spiritual, after being successful materially. People seeking Truth and Prayer, and community and..."

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"And an authoritarian father-figure to tell them what is right and wrong," I added.
"Yes," Isaac said. I hoped I hadn't offended Isaac.
"What about building homes?" I asked. "How did your father get into that business?"
"Through me," Isaac said. He explained. "When my grandparents passed away, they did not pass on to me my spiritual legacy as a Jew. I think they knew, but it must have been a family secret. I'm sure my father doesn't even know. He certainly isn't aware of the Jewish lineage of my mother. Anyway, they did leave me a material legacy of $17,000. While in high school, I decided to invest the money. I didn't want it just sitting in a bank. I knew someday the money would buy me the power and freedom to determine my own destiny if I invested wisely. I bought an old house overlooking the beach that was structurally sound, but in need of repair. With a carpenter, we fixed the house up and leased it out. With the equity in this house, I bought another. We fixed it up, rented it out, and continued the process. I allowed the carpenter to choose some homes and he worked for me full time. My only stipulation was that the homes have an ocean view. I also bought land in the late 1960's. One could still buy land then. You know that prices began to rise dramatically. I owned ten or eleven homes and land and kept buying. I bought until recently and now we are sitting on much of the holdings. The money generated on the leases of over 1,000 homes is tremendous. I have been too busy to even think about the Real Estate business, so I have my father run the corporation. He is vice-president. With my approval he began to build housing tracts, entire neighborhoods, and create new communities."
I felt light-headed, trying to process all this information and all I could say was, "Company?"
"Yes," Isaac said. "Sheloh building."
"Sheloh, like the name of the Messiah?" I asked.
"Exactly."
"Does your father mind working for you?"
"I don't believe so. The only thing he's objected to is the spelling."
"Please?" I asked.
"The spelling of Sheloh. He insists that the proper spelling is Shiloh. I tried to convince him that Sheloh, or Sealah was the correct transliteration of the Hebrew, Sealah the right pronunciation.. He disagreed. I explained that someday he would understand my spelling and I ended the conversation."
We arrived and met Isaac's parents at the hotel. We must have smelled from our journey, because Isaac's mother insisted we shower.
I did so first, and afterwards sat and talked with Isaac's parents. They stared at my ritual fringes which were visible under my well-worn white Yeshiva shirt. The Reverend went to a bureau and pulled out a sky blue, expensive looking sport shirt. "Wear this," he said.

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Isaac came out of the bathroom in his Yeshiva clothes. He looked like a rabbi. Ritual fringes hung over his belt and pants. They were white against his leg except for the thread of blue, which matched his pants. Isaac also wore a white shirt.. His mother remarked that he looked thin. His father offered Isaac a magenta version of the shirt he had given me. Isaac respectfully declined. I felt uncomfortable in the shirt. I looked like Isaac's parents' son. Isaac looked like a poor rabbinic student being given a free dinner. Isaac's mother asked that he please wear the magenta shirt. Isaac changed. Now we looked like brothers.

Isaac's parents wanted, and were expecting, to eat with the tour. Isaac said the restaurant was too fancy. He insisted he could not eat in a room with all the windows closed and that we eat on the shore. His parents excused themselves and we left the dining room of the hotel. The tour members watched Isaac. They were excited. Expectant.

On the way out, Isaac and I noticed the sign on the bus the same time: SHILOH TOUR.

Isaac shook his head and smiled. He turned to his father. "It's Sheloh, with an E. Cherek," Isaac said. "E in Hebrew."As in Sea. "Shiloh with an I," said his father.

The old controversy continued.

Breakfast

Isaac's parents had booked us a room at the hotel. Isaac stood on the balcony looking out on the lake. "Maybe it was frozen," he said. "Maybe he found rocks that jutted like stepping stones." I had no idea what Isaac was talking about. He spread his sleeping pad and bag on the balcony and slept on his left side facing the sea.

I was ravenous for breakfast. The full buffet was a feast to this starving rabbinic student's eyes. I piled my plate high. Isaac said the fish had too high a salt content and that I should eat only one piece. Isaac took tomatoes and cucumbers and one hard-boiled egg.

We sat with the Reverend and his wife and a number of people from the tour. Everyone seemed to be watching Isaac. They looked at him with reverence.

Isaac lifted the tomato and cucumber and said

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, King of the Universe, who creates the food of the Earth."

He cut a small slice off the tomato and ate.

He then raised the egg and said another blessing. The room quieted. Everyone looked at Isaac and ate their food. Isaac

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carefully washed his hands and ate a small piece of bread. He usually did not eat bread at breakfast, and like a child on Passover, I almost asked what was up. Isaac cut up the tomato and cucumber into small pieces, added pepper and oil, and then carefully peeled the shell off his egg. He seemed thankful for the shell and the way it so carefully protected the egg. The Reverend annoyed, said, "Remember, My Son, It is not what goes into the mouth that is important, only what comes out of the mouth!"
Isaac smiled and said quietly, "What goes into the mouth must be sanctified, as well as what comes out of the mouth. We uplift with a blessing the food that goes into the mouth, with a benediction what comes out of the mouth. The two are closely inter-related." Everyone strained to hear, but Isaac was making every effort not to publicly embarrass his father. A number of people did hear and passed this teaching to their neighbors. Soon the entire room was talking. The Reverend was silent for the remainder of the meal.

No Ice and No Rocks

Isaac's father invited us to go rowing in the afternoon. Isaac looked at his father understanding something I had missed. It seemed a bit late by the time we got to the lake, but Isaac was unconcerned and we rented a boat. A crowd from the tour followed us to the shore.
We pushed off into the sea. Isaac and his father sat facing the Galilee. I faced the shore and the crowd. I had no idea why they were watching.
The waves of the sea rolled gently under the boat. The fishermen were returning with a good day's catch, their boats low in the sea.
The Reverend looked first at the fishermen and then at his son, He expected Isaac to say something to the fishermen. He did not.
Sunlight sparkled on the water and all was quiet, except for the sound of the oars breaking into the water and pushing against the sea. Isaac spoke to his father, but I did not listen to what they were saying. I rowed strongly, loving the feeling of exerting myself and the motion that resulted.
The sun slipped behind a cloud. More clouds appeared quickly, and the wind picked up. We were in the midst of a storm. I dipped the right oar and turned us around. We were near the middle of the lake when I headed back. The wind became a gale.
The Reverend was shouting at his son, but I could not hear what they were saying. The wind had turned into a squall and waves began to break over the bow of our boat. I rowed furiously.
Isaac and his father stood up in the back of the rowboat. They were struggling. I shouted at them to sit down. The Reverend screamed like a madman over and over, "Calm the sea!" "Calm the

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sea!"
Isaac pulled his father back down into a sitting position so that I could row the boat. Isaac sat with eyes closed, like he was asleep. I was afraid we wouldn't make the shore. I was astonished that Isaac sat so calmly.
The clouds moved so swiftly I could see them skipping like sheep over the mountain tops into the distance. The storm died as quickly as it had come. We neared the shore.
Isaac stood with eyes still closed. The sun had almost set and the storm had brought us into the approaching darkness of evening. The Reverend looked at his son expectantly. He waited for Isaac to walk upon the water to the shore.
The Reverend's congregation could see us from the shore. They also awaited the Miracle.
Isaac moved back and forth. He was shokeling. He was davening Mincha, praying the afternoon prayer that is obligatory before dark.
The Reverend stood and shouted at his son, "Walk! Walk!" I noticed a number of congregants ready with cameras to witness the miracle. Isaac continued to bow and sway. The Reverend told me to move, and took the oars.
Isaac took three steps backward to end his prayer. His father used the oars to steady the boat. He waited for his son to walk to shore. Isaac opened his eyes. The Reverend said, "My son, it is time to reveal yourself! Walk to your flock, they await you!"
Isaac stood and stared at his father. Isaac did not move. The Reverend understood that his son was not going anywhere. He lifted an oar out of the water and swung it in Isaac's direction.
Isaac said, "Father, I forgive thee," as the Reverend knocked him into the lake with the oar.
We were close enough to the shore that I could see the faces of the Reverend's followers. Isaac fell into the water and then stood up. For a moment I also thought I was seeing a miracle. Isaac stood half in the water and half out, and walked backwards to the shore. I thought he might rise and actually walk on the Galilee. All of us then understood that we were close enough to the banks of the sea for Isaac to be walking on the shore.
Only Isaac was not disappointed. Still standing in the water he turned to speak to the crowd.
Baptized by the water, he spoke with the authority and force of a prophet.
"The Peace, it shall come soon. Sheloh draws near.
You stand huddled against the night
Waiting to believe that which is unbelievable
Shaking in expectation and fear

Did I not still the storm?
Will you still your own fright?
Expecting the miraculous as a sign; instead
I ask of you
As one rising from the dead

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To listen well and hear;

A teaching of the Son
Of Man and Woman:

Ascending into the sacred chambers of the celestial
heavens
Entering the marbled palace of the Queen and King.

I heard a madman's voice, shouting
`Water, water,' and another
`Ice, ice'
Yet I calmed my inner storm
And heard the still, small voice say

`A miracle, my son, is not a mirage
Nor a Messiah a magician.'

Teach this my son
And that we are all, each one
of us, sons and daughters
Of the Living God

Keep your feet always planted
Like an oak growing
Firmly in the ground
When thoughts ascend towards heaven.

Hear the Song of the Kinneret
A New Song of the Sea
As the wind plays upon the
water, of her, my harp
The Galilee.

Isaac and I returned to Jerusalem the next day. Our relationship was fundamentally changed.
"Isaac," I asked. "Are you the Messiah?"
"Did I walk on the water?" he asked.
"No. But your prayer, your song."
"If you record my sermon on the Galilee, that would be good," Isaac said. "The time to speak of messiahs has not yet come."
The Shiloh Tour came to Jerusalem. Isaac refused to walk the Via Delarose Friday morning with his father and Tour.
The cross is carried from Antonia Fortress where Pilate condemned Jesus, to the Holy Sephlacure, where his body was laid on Joseph of Arimitea's tomb. It is not difficult to understand why Isaac did not go. Instead, he spent time with his mother.
Isaac's parents returned to the States and we returned to the daily rituals of our lives. Isaac received his PhD from Hebrew University. His thesis was on the Holy War idea in Judaism and Islam. Isaac also completed a special Rabbinic ordination in the

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four Turim of the Schulchan Aruch. My ordination reads: "You may teach, you may teach." Isaac's read: "You may judge, you may judge." We both became Rabbis but Isaac was also a Dayan, a Judge. Isaac helped me get through my ordination regime. The laws of slaughtering animals and salting meat turned me towards vegetarianism. Isaac insisted I finish my studies. I did and also enrolled in the PhD program at the university.

The Summer Before Diaspora

Isaac asked that we spend the summer together on a Kibbutz in the Galilee. Lillian wanted to join us. Isaac and Lillian were not happy about a summer together. Sparks ignited whenever they were together.

We arrived in the middle of June. The Galilee felt oppressively hot after Jerusalem. Even in summer, Jerusalem is cool in the evening. The Galilee was stifling and sometimes humid. The weather affected my mood and I felt oppressed by the humidity.

Isaac and I were assigned a room together in the volunteer quarters. Lillian wanted to room with me. This was impossible on a religious Kibbutz. Men and women volunteers had separate buildings. Lillian threatened to leave. The three of us sat and talked about the situation. Isaac agreed to work in the library when we needed the room. Isaac was reviewing college Chemistry and Biology. He was memorizing an anatomy manual. He had decided to enter medical school in the Fall in Jerusalem. Rabbi, PH.D., M.D. I told Isaac he must be a Jew, he was a hopeless overachiever. Isaac smiled and said, "I must be a physician."

Isaac wanted me to stay in Israel. We could room together. Isaac explained that I should learn Arabic and ancient Semitic languages. He wanted me to research the `Pacifist Transmutation of the Holy War Idea in Joshua by the Rabbinic Exegetes.'

"And afterwards," I said, "do you also want me to go to medical school?"

"It would not be a bad idea," he answered. Lillian rolled her eyes. "He's already a rabbi. You can't expect him to follow your choices like some kind of a disciple," Lillian said. Isaac was silent. He went to the library and Lillian and I made our curious style of love. This time, however, she also pleasured me.

In the morning we awoke at daybreak to work in the fields. Lillian had been assigned to the laundry room. She ignored the work list and worked harvesting grapefruits.

The work was demanding. We wore rough sack cloth bags over our shoulders, climbed high ladders, descended, dumped the fruit into a bin and went up the ladders again. Isaac worked like a maniac. He wore two bags. "For balance," he said. Isaac picked four times as much as the other volunteers. He wither didn't sense, or chose to ignore the resentment of the other, slower workers, especially the Americans.

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Lillian, of all people, felt challenged by Isaac, and put on two bags. She filled them. Standing on the top of the ladder, weighed down by the burden of her harvest, she could not descend. Isaac went up to help her. Lillian was angry. The other volunteers watched.
"Fuck you!" Lillian said, embarrassed.
"Not a chance," Isaac answered.
Everyone laughed. They watched every move Lillian made in her tight work shirt. They would have loved a chance. I resented the whole scene.
After word, we showered and sat on the steps of our bungalow in the shade.
"This is the life," Isaac said. I looked at him skeptically. Lillian glowed from the work and the shower and sat, eyes closed, letting the sun dry the curls of her thick, dark brown hair. "The work is good for you," Isaac said. "Too much sitting around turns the mind to mush. It's a shame the Yeshiva isn't here. One could study and work, a more balanced lifestyle."
We were on a religious kibbutz. I asked Isaac about the bizarre marriage of Religion and Socialism.
"Labels," Isaac said. "Remember the Essenes. Religious ideals do not affect society at large until they are woven into Society's fabric. Today we have Kibbutzim, socialist villages, which are the most significant democratic effort towards radical social change in the last 1000 years. From the Eden of the Qumran community to the Kvutza of Degania, we find attempts to reclaim meaning of the concept of the Holy Land."
"But Isaac," I protested, "the original kibbutznicks settled the land as a result of a secular atheistic vision."
"I know," Isaac said. "But even the first Kvutzoat, like Degania, were, in my opinion, essentially religious communities based on the principles of social equality."
"But weren't the original Kibbutzim supposed to be small communist cells in a capitalistic society that would eventually influence Israel to become a communist society?"
"Yes," Isaac said. "And initially the kibbutz movement had strong ties with the goals of international communism,. So you see again the religious impulse in the beginnings of the kibbutz movement."
I didn't follow, and said so.
"Communism," Isaac said, "is a system that demands of its followers, belief in a world view that promises to perfect mankind. That is not only a religious dream, it's also a messianic dream."
"A secular, messianic dream," I added.
"The original kibbutzniks remind me of Essene communities in another way. They had a profound contempt for possessions and practiced a type of secular asceticism."
"That's not apparent now," I said.
"No," Isaac said. "Thank God. Here on the kibbutz we eat together in a magnificent dining hall, on food fit for a king."
"I wouldn't go that far," I said. "The food is good, but lacks

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the character that all mass produced food destined to lack."
Isaac would not let me throw the conversation off track. "The initial tries to Soviet communist have all been pretty much severed." Isaac explained. "Perhaps the Soviets were embarrassed to see communism working on kibbutzim in Israel, when it was not working in the Soviet Union. Also the virulent Anti-Semitism that is part of the communist vision of world domination forced them to recognize Soviet Communism for what it is. A religious movement that is a messianic pretender."
"How did Israel come to have religious kibbutzim?" I asked.
"The kibbutz, as a model society, in no way contradicts the ideals of the Torah. The Torah demands social and economic Justice. The prophets dream of a society in which none go hungry and all are clothed and cared for. Yet no practical blueprint is given to implement this vision. The religious kibbutznik lives their Torah lifestyle with the added sanctity of economic co-operation and equality."
"The women are the proliterate," Lillian said, her eyes still closed. "For women, the kibbutz movement is another failure of the Utopian dreams of men. The last item on a long list of male messianic pretenders. The original Chalutzim were chauvinistic pigs!" Lillian said. "The great socialist dream of equality was still sex stereotyped. They the builders. They women slaves. Some liberation!"
"You only see the dark side Lillian," Isaac said. She opened her eyes. "Radical changes in stereotyping take at least one generation to die out. Also, institutional changes do not, of themselves, automatically eliminate chauvinism. It gives only the potential, a structural unit. The structure of the kibbutz, with children's houses and communal dining, free women to seek new roles in kibbutz society."
"Sure," Lillian said. "They can all go to the ironing room and iron sheets eight hours a day, instead of doing a diverse number of chores in their family unit. Isaac, why don't you come down to Earth and stop lecturing your high ideals! The women are leaving the kibbutz. Surely you understand that eight hours of household chores or child care is not the liberty the feminists seek."
"They could always join your cult of negativity and bitch their lives away," Isaac said.
Lillian smiled. I think she enjoyed Isaac's challenge. I saw it as an attack.
"Isaac," I said.
Isaac continued, "The kibbutz is the only path in Utopia in our century to work. Women will find their equality here. It may take a generation or two, but they are patient. First economic stability and equality were established. Now they are working on the rights of individuals in the community and the needs of the women. Then the final step."
"The final step?"
"Yes. The rediscovery of Jewish values and the creation of a new Jewish lifestyle based on Jewish values. The next step will

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include the steeping of the kibbutz movement in Jewish studies. Buber's dream."
"Bubers?" I said, feeling a bit like a dull parrot.
"Buber felt that small communities as models can have a profound affect on society. The kibbutz is a model for Jews in the 20th century and beyond."
Lillian looked at Isaac thoughtfully. "As a theoretician you're unsurpassable," she admitted. She stood. "But I have to go now and convince the head of the work committee that I be permitted to work in the orchard and not on the assembly line with empty headed gossips whose brains have dissolved from lack of activity!"

We stayed all summer on the kibbutz. Lillian got her way about work. The volunteers called her `the brass balls queen.' She was moody and bored. She talked of returning to college and perhaps going to medical school. She wanted to leave Israel. I was undecided. I had to decide by the last week of July.
Isaac's habits left us together in the room often. We began to make love. Lillian had planned the first time. She took a day off work and bought a new box of prophylactics and a bottle of brandy. She returned before I finished work and glass by glass finished the bottle. She threw the bottle in the trash and laid down on Isaac's bed.
Isaac's crew returned first that day, finishing their quota of grapefruit before my crew. He found Lillian in his bed. Masturbating. She invited Isaac to bed.
Isaac showered and went to the library. I entered the room and Lillian smiled at me. I showered and dried. Before I dried, Lillian invited me to bed. She was naked. She wrapped her legs around my waist and her arms around my neck. "Lillian, what about birth control?" I asked. She had the prophylactics under her pillow. .
Isaac insisted I stay in Jerusalem. Lillian wanted me to come back to America with her. I would have to choose between my two messiahs.
Lillian reacted calmly when I told her I planned to stay in Jerusalem.
She listened patiently as I explained the importance of my studies and the work Isaac and I would be doing together.
Lillian went to Haifa and bought two ticket to Copenhagen, two tickets from Copenhagen to New York, and two tickets from New York to Indianapolis. She planned everything carefully. She handed me my tickets along with the lab tests from the kibbutz doctor.
"That's right," she said. "I'm pregnant."
Isaac's response upset me. "How do you know you're the father?"
"What? Who else?"
"Ask Lillian. She offered herself to me."
"When?"
"The day she lay drunk on my bed."
"Did you..." I asked, confused and frightened.
"Certainly not," Isaac answered.

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Lillian walked into the room without knocking. She must have been listening at the door.
"Aryeh, you are the father," she said, looking at Isaac with contempt and hate. "I was drunk. I'm sorry. I shouldn't drink. I promise only you have made love to me. No one else could be the father."
"Don't feel trapped," Isaac said. "You have a higher obligation."
"Do you plan on keeping the child?" Isaac asked Lillian.
As I spoke, Isaac turned toward me and Lillian slapped him hard, leaving marks on his cheek. Isaac did not flinch or in any way acknowledge Lillian's slap. He knew things at the time that I did not comprehend. I looked to Isaac for clarification. Now Lillian was angry with both Isaac and me.
"Abortion is not murder," Lillian said. Why, I was not sure.
"Do you think you are ready to be a mother?" Isaac asked Lillian.
"Yes." "No."
"I'm not sure."
"Abortion in this case is murder," Isaac said. "When I asked you if you would keep the baby I meant after you give birth. Many sterile couples would welcome the chance to raise the child. If you do not plan on keeping the child," Isaac added, "you have no right to make demands of Aryeh."
"Aryeh's obligation is to me," she said to Isaac. "And I'll make my own decisions about what happens in my body." Isaac left the room.
"Are you ready to be a mother?" I asked.
"Yes," Lillian said. "We'll return to the States and be married."

Mundane Years

We left Jerusalem the end of that summer. Jerusalem was experiencing a Chamsin. The temperature approached 110F as the Dead Sea's winds blew sand in a storm that covered the city.
We arrived in Copenhagen. It was raining. The temperature was 40 degrees cooler. The contrast in people was also stark and refreshing. Blond, blue-eyed, calm aryans, after the hot, dark, excitable Mediterraneans. Lillian suffered morning sickness and vowed that one child would be all she would carry. She feared bringing a child into a world on the brink of global suicide. The ultimate orgasm, she called it. Phallic missiles faced off ready to come, the ultimate male power trip, the rape of the world.
And if the world didn't come to its end, she worried about bringing a child into a world vastly overcrowded. Each new mouth took food from the mouths of starving children. The only moral option, Lillian argued, is adoption.

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After the Child

"After the child is born," Lillian told me, "we will adopt. If we have a boy we will adopt a girl. If we have a girl, we will adopt a boy." This seemed reasonable enough to me. "After the child is born," Lillian said, "we will have to find a safe form of birth control." I know Lillian considered the IUD and the pill unsafe.
"What do you have in mind?" I asked.
"A tubal ligation or a vasectomy," she said. This radical solution did not appeal to me.
"What about prophylactics?" I asked.
"Not 100%."
"And foam?"
"Inhibit lovemaking the rest of our lives?"
I agreed to go see a surgeon with her in Copenhagen. Lillian assumed that Copenhagen would be a good place for a young couple to find a doctor who would do a sterilization operation. On the "walking street," explicit sexual literature was offered for sale to tourists who came from around the world to experience this form of Danish liberalism.
The doctor refused to even consider operating on either of us. Lillian asked how long she would have to stay in the hospital with a tubal ligation. "One week," the doctor answered. She seemed to know the answer before the doctor gave it. "But you'll never find a surgeon who will do a sterilization on such young people as yourselves. Either of you" He dismissed us from his office with a wave of his hand.

New York

We found the doctor in New York. The operation could be performed on an outpatient basis, and required only one hour total. Lillian convinced me to get a vasectomy.

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Oh, my friend, Theophilos. I know. I know. I could have waited until after the baby was born. But Lillian convinced me only a New York doctor would do the procedure. The voice of authority of the Torah said to me, "Be fruitful and multiply. People the Earth with your seed." The voice of conscience said, "The world is overpopulated. Children are starving in Biafra. Adopt. Fix the world before bringing more hungry mouths into an imperfect one." I did not have the insight at the time to realize the possible

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irreversibility of my decision. The appointment was made.

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The surgeon was skilled and his schedule full. He could only see me on Saturday. The Talmud teaches: Each evil deed drags along with it another evil deed. I desecrated the Sabbath.
Lillian wanted to watch the procedure. The surgeon told her she would have to stay in the waiting room.
We had shaved my testicles the evening before. The doctor opened the scrotal sack with a minimum of discomfort and blood. He snipped twice on each side. I looked up to see Lillian standing in the doorway. Her tongue slid between her lips and snaked back into her mouth. Her tongue appeared sufficiently sharp that she could have used it to assist the surgeon in his operation.
We traveled to Lillian's home in Indiana and were married. I took a job as a Rabbi in a Jewish high school. Lillian taught art.
Lillian never mentioned the child to her mother or to her father. I returned from school one day to find her ashen-faced and in bed. She said she had a miscarriage. I cried. The one child I could have fathered was now dead.

Diasporas

We moved around a lot. I taught successfully for a number of years in Indiana, but Lillian became restless and we moved to Hawaii. We lived on the beach for half a year. I read and attempted to write. We moved to California. I taught at Berkeley high school and Lillian discovered the Berkeley feminist scene. She worked at a women's health collective, joined a support group, and learned that women came from clitoral stimulation rather than from the almighty penis.
Lillian asked if I would be upset if she took a woman lover. I hesitated and imagined the three of us in bed together. I said yes. They became emotionally involved and her lover had no interest in men. I said no. Too late.
This was the first time I left Lillian. I moved South to Laguna. I rented a room in a house overlooking the Pacific. A local jeweler made an earring of a male sign with a section of silver cut out of the circle. I wore it to bars and took women home who yearned for the freedom of lovemaking without any worry of conception and contraception. For skeptics, I had a monthly sperm test done at a local lab.
Lovemaking is more than dancing and a night with a woman was not enough. I loved the women I come into and wanted at least friendship after physical intimacy. I began to form rules. I would not make love with women who would not stay the night. The

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holding was as important as the act. A number of times I took women home who were helplessly drunk. Then I could hold them without making love. The women I met were content to bump bodies and were not into building relationships. I quickly tired of this lifestyle. I stayed home and slept alone.
One morning I awoke and found Lillian in my arms.
Lillian and I decided to move back to Indiana and the safer lifestyle of Middle America. The school welcomed me back. Lillian decided she wanted to paint. She took the year off.
I taught courses in Biblical Personalities, Mishna, Talmud, Prophets and Jewish history and law. The next year I expanded to Hebrew literature and Peace studies. I enrolled in a Masters Program at a local university, in History and Education.
I did not completely forget Isaac and what he expected of me. I studied Islam and learned Arabic. I wrote my masters' thesis on the Spiritualization of the Holy War idea by Jewish and Islamic mystics. I taught a course on Peace in the Middle East at the University.
I taught about Peace in the Nuclear Age, but there was no peace in my home and no peace in my heart. Lillian took one year to complete one picture. It was nude. Lillian used herself as a model. The woman in the painting was more angular than Lillian. Her shoulders were covered with yellow shawl of light. She sat with her legs spread. Lillian hung the painting in the living room until her father came to visit. She was going to casually display her work, but at the last moment before he came, she brought it into the bedroom.
The second painting, the second year, was of a mother and a child. They were one, their hair flowing together. The woman was drawn with sharply ethnic features, and looked like her sister, and her daughter.
Lillian had the talent and the time, but did not paint. She went to the library and looked into the books on the wall for visions of a life that would make her happy. For a few months, it was a dairy farm. I suggested communal farming in Israel on a kibbutz. She would not hear of living on a kibbutz or moving back to Israel. She found a book on open relationships and suggested we open our marriage to other partners again.

Dear Theophilos, the opening of the marriage led to its death. Looking backwards I am awed by my inability to think or act straight with women. I was married, with a vasectomy. There was no chance we would have children. The security guaranteed to a woman by a marriage document was not necessary. This was not a true marriage. But Lillian demanded joint bank accounts. And I played husband. Dear God, forgive me the many sins of my "marriage."

Messianic Years

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Isaac wrote to me from Jerusalem as he finished medical school. I missed my friend, but the love and support he gave me in person, he conveyed in his letters. Their arrivals were significant events in my life. Isaac consoled me on the loss of my child and never spoke ill of Lillian after we were married. I did not tell Isaac about my vasectomy.

Isaac wrote weekly during his years of medical school. Lillian always wanted me to read the letters aloud to her. She was jealous of my love for Isaac.

I did not hear from Isaac for five years. I wrote to his parents. At first they also heard nothing. Then Isaac sent brief notes from Teheran and Mecca. From Delhi and Bombay. From Nepal. From Japan and Korea. Isaac's father wrote short notes to me describing Isaac's spiritual journeys. The Reverend was angry beyond words. He wanted his son back. I also felt abandoned by my friend.

The last year of his journeys Isaac sent his father a return address and asked his father to send it to me.

I wrote Isaac and told him of my life with Lillian and teaching. I confessed about my vasectomy and told Isaac all I thought and felt.

Isaac wrote a lovely letter in return. He was living in the forest in Korea learning a form of Taoist Yoga called Sun-Do. The yoga was not only passive and mediative, Isaac explained, but also active and structured into the movements of this newest martial art. Isaac explained that he was also learning sword technique and was happy to be learning the way of the spiritual warrior. He would see me soon, God willing, upon his return.

I dreamed of being in Korea with Isaac. He was learning centering and how to be in a body that was a well-conditioned temple for his divine soul. My center was surrounded by fat as I lived over much in the spirit and not enough in the body.

Isaac's Return

Isaac mailed his possessions to Laguna from New York and backpacked to Indiana.

I was at school, so Isaac walked there when he found I was not home. I was embarrassed when I saw my friend. My students laughed. Isaac looked like a biblical prophet who walked into the 20th century. The rabbis gaped at Isaac. Their eyes narrowed as the bell rang and the students stayed in the hall surrounding Isaac. The light of Isaac's countenance was shining and the children were moths to that light. A few touched him. He glowed

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even brighter.
Isaac asked the students to return to class. Isaac introduced himself to the rabbis as Rabbi Isaac ben Avraham. They shook their heads over his "pretension" to be a Rabbi and returned to their classrooms.
I invited Isaac into my class. I was teaching Talmud. Isaac taught the class for me without consulting the text. My students were amused as I took notes on a number of novel insights Isaac illuminated from the test.
Isaac stayed with us until after the Sabbath. The old tension between Isaac and Lillian continued, but mostly from Lillian. She knew Isaac was insisting I have my vasectomy reversed. He also suggested I not live in an open relationship if that was not what I wanted.
"You are neither physically nor spiritually married to Lillian because of your vasectomy," Isaac said. "Have it reversed by microsurgery, two surgeons, one on each side, will reconnect both sides and restore to you your potential for divine creation. If Lillian doesn't want children, find someone who does and don't try to love all women Aryeh. That is the illusion of the New Age. Love one woman as the essence of womanhood and the fruit of that love shall be a child in the image of God and the flowers of that budding will be your own realization of your own divinity."
Isaac was open about his feelings about my relationship with Lillian. Lillian wanted Isaac out of the house. I told her she could leave, but Isaac was staying. Lillian accused me of loving Isaac.
"I mean you love him, and want him."
"Want him?" "Yes. Want him. You're gay and Isaac is your closest potential male mate."
Lillian stormed out and stayed with a friend.
Isaac left for California. He would begin his ministry there. Healing and teaching and reconciling with his father.

The Newest Promised Land

Isaac was in no hurry. He walked and hitched West. I received cards from Boulder, Colorado, Reno, and San Francisco.
Isaac was at home in San Francisco. He spent time in Tiburon and Mill Valley with New Age healers.
The Bay Area has its darker side, attracting pathological homosexuals, and their dreams of leather and bondage, and the sick heterosexuals who confuse love and violence. Yet the light of the spiritual seekers there will one day illuminate the entire West Coast and from there the waves of the Pacific dream will break on the shores of the very consciousness and being of even the most inland of American minds.
Isaac walked from San Francisco to Laguna. His morning ritual attracted early joggers and people walking their dogs on the

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beach. Isaac awoke and chanted "Modeh." He danced directly into the sea and immersed himself in her healing waters. Isaac sat facing East and stretched and meditated, reciting the Psalms of Praise in the Hebrew prayer book. He arose and did some Sun-Do Katas, highly ritualized dancing, where the spiritual warrior subdues the evil inclination. He then began chanting Shema inviting all who came to join him.
Isaac then recited the 18 benedictions and the end of the service Isaac taught after her prayed. And this is how he slowly walked South to his home and the confrontation with his father.

The Study

Isaac's father's study was bordered on three sides by bookshelves that reached high to the ceiling. Older volumes, from seminary days, had not been opened for fifty years. Journals he once contributed to were stacked on the floor. Index cards with half finished notes lay scattered on his desk, apparently by imaginary winds, in a windowless room.
Front and center on the desk was letters from journal editors requesting footnotes and sources. The Reverend reread a letter of rejection and his response, demanding a return to the primary source, the word of the Scripture, the rock of all Bible study. The Reverend could find no refuge or comfort in the study. He awaited the act.
Long weary of words, his eyes scanned pages on his desk, the words marching in military order to the end of the page, or to oblivion, or the next line, only to continue, again and again, to where?
He shifted in his well-worn leather swivel throne to stare at his Rembrandts'. The trinity of paintings had been his favorite for years. In the center, the Raising of the Cross, Jesus' body transparent and suffering.
On the left, a red and white chalkwash drawing completed by Rembrandt in 1635. Abraham stands over a bound Isaac, forcefully pressing back Isaac's head to bare his throat. An angel stops the sacrifice so abruptly the knife is suspended in mid-air.
On the right, an etching done in 1655. Abraham and Isaac submit to God's will, as Isaac kneels, allowing the gentle Abraham to lovingly cover his son's face with his open hand. Isaac is not bound. In their gilded frames these three images absorbed the Reverend when he could no longer think of words. When he could think only of the Word made Flesh. The word "crucified" and the word "resurrected." of the Second Coming of the Lord.

Isaac Comes Home Again

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Isaac brought light and life and joy into his father's study. They studied scripture together and Isaac loved his father, and the teacher was humbled, as the student taught the teacher. The Reverend was overjoyed to return to the script of the Scripture and Isaac saw the story mirrored in the paintings and smiled peacefully.

Crucifixion: The Text

The Monday before Easter, father and son turned to the "By Faith" section in the Letter of Paul to the Hebrews. They studied Chapter Eleven in depth. The Reverend sat in his leather throne and Isaac fetched needed books for commentary. They began with the old Greek and Latin translations the Reverend had purchased in seminary.
"These pages in Hebrews," the Reverend said, "are the most crucial in the Canon."
"Explain," Isaac said.
"These verses are the support and fulcrum of Holy Scriptures, on them all faith is balanced."

Hebrews

And what is faith?

Now Faith is the substance
Of things hoped for
The evidence of things
Not seen.
 It is by Faith
That our ancestors are remembered
For by it the Elders
Obtained a good report.

By Faith we see a world
Created by God
The visible coming forth
From the invisible.

Through Faith we understand
That the worlds were framed
By the Word of God
So that things which are seen
Were not made of things
Which do appear.

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Two Verses - Two Edges of the Sword

By Faith
Abraham when he was tried
When the test came
Offered up Isaac
And he
That had received the Promises

Offered up his Only Begotten Son

Of Whom it was said
`That in Isaac
Shall thy seed
Be called.'

Accounting that God
(Abraham reckoned that God)
Was able to raise him up
Even from the dead

From whence also he received him
And from the dead he did
In a sense
Receive him back

In a figure.

Now this was the pointed tip of the fulcrum, Verse 19. The Reverend had Isaac retrieve various translations from all parts of the study. After comparing the Vulgate, Rheimes, and Bishops editions, the Reverend said, "Abraham's actions were a parable for future generations. The act was made complete when God the Father sacrificed His Son, Christ Jesus, for the sins of the world. God the Father completed what Father Abraham left unfinished." "I read it differently," Isaac said. "The revised standard translates that figuratively speaking, Abraham did receive Isaac back from the dead. The meaning of the parable is clear. Abraham did not need to offer his son on the altar because he understood that his willingness to sacrifice that which was most precious to him, his only son, sanctified Isaac. God does not require burnt offerings. My father requires only love and mercy."
"Rabbi," the Reverend said, "I am your father, and I tell you father Abraham's actions were the shadow of the act and only the light of Jesus on the cross fulfills that which was not seen on Moriah, the Resurrection of the body of Christ."
"The story in Genesis stands on its own," Isaac said. "The Midrash Rabbah describes the journey as one where the lad carried

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his cross, the wood for the burnt offering, to Moriah."
"Rabbi," the Reverend hissed, "will you Judaize the Truth and mistranslate the text, and reality? The Greek en-parable means that Abraham's actions were not to be taken figuratively, but as an example. A parable of the willingness of the father to bring his son to the altar. Saint Cyril of Alexandria teaches that the stories fit inside one another. Tertullian teaches that the binding of Genesis foreshadowed the completion of the Act at Golgatha."
"And the Jews have been on the cross ever since," Isaac said.
"What are you talking about?" the Reverend said.
"In your misreading," Isaac explained, "you forget that Isaac and Abraham and many, many Jews, including Jesus, and after Jesus, were in occasion, asked to bear their cross to Moriah. The cross was carried with dignity and the sacrifice acceptable to the Lord."
"So?" the Reverend sighed. "You confuse me!"

The sacrifice was acceptable to the Lord," Isaac explained, "but never desired by the Lord. The Lord gives life and the free will to each of us to choose life or death."

Laurence

I arrived on Tuesday. We visited Vista Point and other holy places in the Canyon. We prayed the morning and evening services facing the Pacific on "The Top of the World." We prayed the afternoon service jogging on the shoreline and we were baptized in the great ocean of tears and purity as we recounted our years of separation.
We spoke of Sealah and the New Jerusalem. Isaac read Genesis again and Hebrews and Revelations. He prepared his script for the Good Friday service and the Final Act.

Dear Theophilos: By now my friend, you must have been accused of being Theophilus, not the Lover of God, but the cleric enmeshed in this devil Jew's net. You have come this far with me my friend. The orthodox say with the coming of Sheloh that you are obliged to renounce Christianity and deny Jesus.

Have I asked you to never again make the sign of the cross? This is not for me to ask. Sheloh has come, or come again, if you wish. But I am only Reshone La Sealah a chronicler. This time I will not be Paul, nor do I desire that role. The Final Act is recorded, forever, on film, and will be replayed over and over. This final testament will go behind the scenes, so that you may

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experience the Final Act through Sheloh's eyes.

Good Friday

This April day the sun was reborn in clarity and light and again promised a day of perfection. The rising sun split through the clouds, as the light fog lifted. Isaac and I finished our prayers in the Gazebo. The gardener was now dead, but we spoke of him and saw him in his garden, lovingly caressing the seeds into the earth and watering the garden.

Services began at eleven and Isaac needed to be alone. The T.V. crews were setting up at the Church and the people of Laguna waited with expectation. At about ten o'clock when I arrived, people already were filing in. I looked at the massive church, whose granite walls rose, rock by rock, into sections that were further defined by stained glass alcoves. Perhaps they were Stations of the Cross. The Christian chronicler in this Final Testament can more accurately describe the structure and function of the Shiloh Church of the Resurrection. I was overwhelmed by the size of the church, as if a great and lofty cathedral grown on European soil had been transported to these Laguna Hills.

I walked by the Reverend's study and he called me in. I had not seen the Reverend for many years and was taken by how in the image of his father was my friend Isaac. Dressed in his clerical robe, the Reverend was an ancient patriarch. He wore black and red and a giant Medallion similar to the Urim and Tumim of the High Priest of Old.

I turned away from his intense stare and looked at the three Rembrandts.

"Do you realize what is going to happen today?" the Reverend asked.

"What? No. What do you mean?"

We were interrupted by a knock on the open door. The television producer called to the Reverend. The Reverend left quickly without a good-bye.

The lights from the camera were intense and hot. They were at my back, but on the Reverend's and Isaac's faces. I recognized some elders from the "Shiloh" tour. On signals from the producer and director, the service began.

Dear Theophilos: You can purchase the video. I will comment on the dialogue and disputation between Father and Son. The knife I saw was only a bulge near his belt in the study. The Reverend leaping towards Isaac is recorded in a moving version of the Rembrandt. But now the knife suspended in the air finds its target. My shout is also recorded, and the shout of Isaac's mother. I will record, my friend, how it felt to witness the final act and I will interpret it with a Sealah Midrash.

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The Reverend stood on a raised platform and podium, surrounded by a low wall that enclosed his pulpit. Only after the act, did I see. The pulpit was like the end of a bowsprit of a whaling vessel. The Reverend was the harpooner. The Reverend's pulpit had an oversized Bible with red satin markers. Isaac's pulpit was less elaborate; perhaps it was the preaching pulpit. The Reverend and Isaac covered a lot of scriptural ground in their dialogue, much of which I had heard from Isaac in Jerusalem. I did not hear all the words. We who were there felt, in a way articulated by the fervor of our singing and the tension in the church that we were to witness one of the events of all history, an act whose teachings would guide humanity for millennium. The Final Act.

The Final Act

The Reverend's black and red robe I have described. The Urim and Tumim were lit up by the cameras' intense light. Isaac wore a rainbow prayer shawl over his head. In his left hand was a little Torah scroll. In his right hand Isaac held a Menorah with seven burning stars of light. Eyes aflame, he was a living statue of Liberty.

On his forehead Isaac wore Tefillin. They were four compartments in one black box with the Shin of Sheloh on them. In each compartment written on lamb's skin, were verses of scripture teaching the One God.

Isaac hummed a Niggun, a wordless song. He radiated peace and tranquility, Shalom and Shalva, for he was God's holy warrior, at one with his maker. The hour of fulfillment was near. Isaac, dressed all in white, would now be the final atonement.

The Reverend picked up his Bible, the one he had preached from his entire life, and quoted:

"Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?"

Isaac laughed and smiled.

"Do not weep for the Lion from the tribe of Judah, the Sprout of David, has the right to open the scroll and break its seven seals."

"O, bright morning star, O, Scion of David, teach our flock, those invited to the wedding supper of the lamb, the word of God."

Isaac taught: "I see a New heaven and earth emerging, the Merging of the Two Jerusalems, one Old, one New. The old uplifted to Zion, the new on Earth, as it is in Heaven."

Isaac took a trumpet, a Shofar, and blew seven long blasts.

The Reverend startled Isaac by saying:

"Come hail! Come fire! Come mingled with blood! The Holocaustum offering is ready, with one heart, together, we step from Moriah to Golgotha, from Shiloh to New Jerusalem. The altar is prepared. The people are ready. The great wine press awaits the grapes of

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God's wrath.

The scepter is Shiloh's
And the obedience of the nations
He tethers his ass to the vine
The colt to a red vine
His cloak is washed in wine
His robes in the blood of grapes
Darker than wine are his eyes.

"Proclaim the eternal Gospel to every nation and tribe, language and people."
Isaac answered:
"Now at last God shall have a dwelling place among the people, as Torah teaches, `God will wipe away every tear from our eyes; there shall be an end to death, mourning, crying, and pain.'
The old order is passing, the new begins, Amen. Sheloh."
"Shiloh," the Reverend answered, astounded by his son's obstinate ness. Sensing his son would not respond to his script.
"You who hold the seven stars of light in your right hand, the Scepter of Judah, my son who is the Alpha and the Omega, give us your final testament before your victory over death, the final covenant."
Isaac answered, "One death is sufficient for my Father in Heaven."
"You have dwelled too long in Satan's synagogue," said Isaac's earthly father, scourging his son.
Isaac answered, "The perfect sacrifice has once been offered and accepted. A Peace of offering for Eternity."

"Nay," the Reverend shouted. "Nay. The blood of the lamb, blood is required to atone for the sins of the world. So says scripture. A war has broken out in Heaven. The Serpent of Old, Satan, the Devil is thrown down to Earth again, and his angels with him. This is the hour of victory for our God. The hour of His Sovereignty and Power. Come Christ, to your rightful rule! The Satan will be overthrown, but only by the sacrifice of the Lamb. Testimony is uttered. Witness is offered by those who do not hold their lives too dear to lay them down. The devil has come down in great fury. Time is short. Revelations 12:7-12," the Reverend said, to prove his point.

A New Song

"I come singing a New Song," Isaac answered. "One everyone can learn. Sing to the Lord a New Song."
"Let us make a joyful noise to the rock of salvation," the Reverend interrupted to prove he knew the source.
Isaac continued:

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"I am the Aleph and the Tav. Write! For these words are true and faithful. I was with God in the beginning, when He created Heaven and Earth."
Isaac held up a crystal glass full of water.
"This wine turned to water
I offer to the thirsty
This is my Final Covenant
The water of life.

The blood of my people
Spilled as water
Atones with the Lamb
The Pascal Pesach
Frees us from the plagues
Of the fearful and hard-hearted
The blood-thirsty and the sorcerers
Who seek fire and brimstone
And the Second Death.

Even these I will redeem
With this water of life

Let all who thirst, come
Those who have been slaves
Are now freed."

It was Sunday school again. The audience was divided in cross sections, some drawn towards the Father and others towards the Son.

The Reverend could hardly believe he and his son were arguing. He tried to calm himself
.
"My Son, My Rock, My Altar of Sacrifice and Salvation. Seven angels I see, dancing on the seven golden bowls of the Menorah you hold, and a loud voice I hear! Go and pour out the seven bowls of God's wrath on the Earth. Yea, the Seven Plagues of Armageddon are greater than the Ten of Egypt."

"This Passover," Isaac said. "We witness a miracle as great as the first Passover, for the children of the Lord shall all be saved from the second Death of Armageddon, and also the Egyptians from the Plague."
"My father," Isaac said, turning, hoping to get his father's attention. "This time you must learn the A.B.C.'s of God's oracles. I offer water, not wine."
"The Reverend stared straight ahead, as rigid and lifeless as a statue.
"You are a grown man," Isaac said tenderly. "You can take solid food and discriminate between good and evil."

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"My son, my son, why have you forsaken me?' the Reverend cried.
"Father," Isaac said.
`Today have I born you
Untie the fetters that bind
The umbilicus is cut
Isaac is off the altar
Christ is off the cross
Be now my disciple, My son
As I am disciple and son
Of my Father in Heaven.'"
"You dethrone your Father in Heaven and disrespect your father on Earth," the Reverend complained. "You take the Christ out of Christianity. You deny basics. Are you my son?"

"Let us stop discussing the rudiments of Christianity," Isaac answered. "We will not be laying over and over again the foundations of Faith in God and repentance from the deadness of former ways by repetition of instruction about resurrection of the Dead and Eternal Judgment."
"When people see the light shining forth from this Menorah, when they taste the fruits of the Final Age, and still desire to kill me, they are crucifying again this son of Man and Woman.
To the camera, Isaac said "My flesh melted with pain and sweat blood on the Roman cross."
"Drink of the water of the final covenant. Do not become lazy and easily seduced by those who speak in my name. By their deeds, daily, they recrucify me, and God's name defame. Imitate those who live by faith and patience, for they are still inheriting the Promises."

Isaac, who had turned away from his father to speak to us, turned again towards his father. The Reverend was unrecognizable. His eyes were wild, his white hair and beard risen like the locks of the Furies above his head.

The Reverend closed his eyes again to calm his emotions. He answered his son.
"My point is this, every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices. This one, too, therefore, must have something to offer. Had that first covenant been faultless, there would be no need to look for a second in its place.
But now my son, you are the high priest of good things which are to be. The tabernacle of your priesthood is great and perfect. The blood of the sacrifice is your own blood. Enter your sanctuary and once and for all secure our eternal deliverance. This is the Final Testament. In your death is deliverance. Where there is a Testament it is necessary for the death of the Testator to be established. Everything is cleansed by blood and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness."
Isaac spoke directly to his father.

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"Do not seal up the words of prophesy in this book. I am come. The hour of fulfillment is here."

"I am the Amen I have come for your blessing."
Isaac lifted the scroll and it unrolled.
"It is a Tree of Life to those who grasp it, all who hold it are blessed. Its ways are pleasantness and all its paths are peace."
Isaac walked to his father and gave him an end of the scroll.
"These teachings flow with the word of God from the wellsprings of Salvation. The word of God is a river of life's waters, a living Mikva, flowing from the Throne of God. On either side of the river stands a tree. One is the tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. The other is the Tree of Life. They are joined by this scroll. The trees heal the nations, curing every curse. The fruit opens the heart to God's light. Those who taste have their eyes opened. They become God-like forevermore."

"My son now plays the role of Satan," the Reverend said. "Would you have me repeat the first Sin? Your blood alone brought redemption to Adam's skull. If I eat of the fruit, will you then, die?"

Isaac offered the scroll to his father. "Take it," he said lovingly. "Taste its fruit. Eat this. It is the body of my teaching."

"My son," the Father answered, "your teachings grow sour in my stomach even as mere words. I shall not touch or taste it. You are in Satan's snare. Oh my son, when you were born, God's temple in Heaven was laid open. I saw within the Temple the Ark of the Covenant, flashes of lightning and thunder, and a storm of snow.
At birth you laughed and I named you Isaac, for Adam begat Abraham and Abraham fathered Isaac and Isaac foreshadows the Christ.
I called your name Shiloh in Hebrew, the resurrection of the Christ, the cornerstone of my church, our rock of Salvation.
I went with you to Moriah to bind you to the altar, to show you your destiny, bound by your fate."

The Reverend walked to Isaac's podium and returned the scroll.
Isaac offered his father water.
"I am not thirsty," the Reverend said.
The Reverend stood by his son. Isaac smiled, praying for atonement and reconciliation
.
"I and my father are one."

"Yes," the Reverend said. "We stand on Moriahs altar, a clear view to Golgotha. Do you see my son? Do you not see my son?"

"Yes," Isaac said.
"I see a Ram named Isaac and a Ram named Christ, and blood on the

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altar ..."

"Yes," the Reverend said. "Yes."

He took his son by the arm and turned him towards a life sized cross. Near the cross were a ladder, a hammer, and three long silver spikes.

"Take your place on the cross my son."
Isaac looked into his father's eyes and did not move.

"Reflection without passion will die in the arms of inaction," said the Reverend.

"Passion without reflection is the madman's inclination," Isaac answered.

"Jonah, Jonah," the Reverend shouted, remembering a Sunday school lesson of years ago. "You cannot escape your calling. The cross marks the way.
Jonah could not hide
Either/or
Is a way of Three days"

Isaac answered with calm authority. "I am not here to offer myself again and again as the High Priest of Old who entered the temple year after year to spill blood that was not his own. We have suffered enough, I and my people. Each of us dies, and after death comes Judgment. One time the perfect sacrifice was offered and by this parable
All is forgiven

This time Sheloh has come
To offer Salvation
To all those who are watching."

The Reverend was disorientated. "Is the devil speaking through the Christ?" He thought.
"The Jew in you, my son, speaks with a sharp tongue," he said. "But the tongue of Revelations is two-edged. Rabbi," he mocked, "The Jew in you is obligated to believe in Resurrection. It is one of the Thirteen Principles of Faith."

The Reverend asked us to turn to Deuteronomy 32:39.
God says:

`I kill
And I make alive
I wound
And I heal.'

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"And again in Isaiah 26:19" the Reverend continued, thumping the place with an open hand in his Bible.

"Thy dead shall live
Together with my dead body
Shall they rise."

Isaac spoke only one more line:
"Father, embrace me, as love embraces life."

Isaac turned to embrace his father. That moment the Reverend reached for his knife, leaping towards Isaac's heart.
Isaac's mother and I screamed at the same time. Isaac jumped back and high in the air with a graceful twisting motion, but was unable to block the arm holding the knife. The knife entered his body, piercing Isaac's side.

Isaac fell to the floor. He could not lift his head but wanted to speak. The camera moved in, and a crew member with a microphone, as Isaac said:
"Forgive my father. He knows not what he does." The camera focused on Isaac's eyes as they closed in quiet deathfulness.

No one moved. The scene turned still on the camera. The lidless eye chronicled without a blink.

I was the first to jump up to be with my friend. The Reverend, on his knees, wept, and shouted:

"He will rise. He will rise. My son is the Christ. He will rise. He will rise!" The Reverend fell completely to the floor putting his lips to the blood that flowed from Isaac's body.

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Epilogue

Easter Sunday

Sunday morning I helped Isaac rise from his hospital bed. He was in good spirits and embraced me tightly. I embraced him carefully so as not to add pain to his wound. I began to cry because, in a way, thinking he was dead, Isaac had again been returned to us. Isaac held his mother for a long time and they baptized one another with torrents of holy tears. Isaac asked for his father.

The security guard at the door heard Isaac and stiffened. Reporters swarmed the halls. The Final Act was already a media event playing on national television. It was viewed by more souls than those that witnessed Moriah, Sinai, or Golgotha.

Isaac's novel story was already on its way to becoming an established oral tradition, a scripture for the Final Age of the New Jerusalem written now in this Final Testament of Shelohs coming.

Amen. Sealah

My Dear Theophilos: It is the Friday after Easter and the Sabbath will soon be here. Isaac is sitting and watching and smiling as I write. I have become a reed to chronicle his holy deeds. I often ask for his help remembering the past. "You write, Laurence," he says. "This is your testament."

Isaac's father is due any moment. Security is not happy with the invitation. The press malinger, wanting to know why Isaac insists formal charges not be filed against his father. He is her now.

"Hello, Laurence," the Reverend whispered. "Rabbi Laurence," he repeated. He was pale and seemed overly subdued.
The Reverend turned towards his son. Isaac got out of bed and embraced his father. The Reverend brightened and wept like a child.
"My son is raised," he said. "My son is risen!"

"Yes father," Isaac said, kissing the Reverend's cheek. "Your son

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is risen."

Sheloh Has Come (Genesis 49:10)

My dear reader, I pray that you have become a Theophilos. Sealah is here with Isaac as the chief cornerstone as we begin to build our final age religion.. Sheloh is no fiction. Isaac is training Rabbi Physicians and creating other holistic ministries. I will be collecting other accounts of the Final Act for the final edition of Final Testament. Isaac is writing a description of what Sealah is at this very moment. Isaac's invitation to you to join Sealah is at the end of this Testament. My friend, Theophilos, soon we shall meet, for this is, as you know, not an ending. Amen Sealah..

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Now She Comes To Her Place In Peace

A EULOGY FOR MY GRANDMOTHER

By Laurence

The voices of the dying and the dead
chant the Kaddish with the living
when it is said:
Forever magnified and forever sanctified
you are remembered as a blessing
even in a world ruled by the laws
of husband and lord
as were all the daughters of Israel
bound like a lamb
under the suspended sword
of an arranged marriage
bound by a tradition
of an almighty, high above all
human enough to be deaf to your call.
Grandmother;
I called you Buby
as a child, (in innocence
I thought it meant, for you were,
My Buddy.)
That day after Hebrew school
I was frightened;
I visited and found
your mirrors covered
you sat and served
hard boiled eggs. "Why?" I asked.
"Because they are round."
I did not understand.
You tore your garments and cried
(as Zady shouted for his dinner)
"That man, who thinks
I am his slave,
would have me sew
pockets on his shroud."
"Grandson, I want to leave this one
and these cloistered halls of death
to wander through Jerusalem
through the streets of my youth
with my childhood friends,
through the green pastures
to watch the setting sun
where the breeze flows freely
the air so fresh
you can taste it on your breath."

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"If God is a just God
let him now bring my end."
This morning you died, Buby
I brought a basket woven from the willow's bough
while the others stood and cried
I brought you lilacs and a silent prayer;
Weep not for the dead, for now
she comes to her place in peace.

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Flower

Flower
what fugue
to praise

What refrain?

The Fibonacci sequence;
Three petaled lilies;
Thirteen pataled marigolds;

and the sun opening
those petals
to the falling rain.

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Chun Tzu - for John Steinbeck

Genesis 4:7

The sun has descended into the long valley
you now lay nestled in Nod, East of Eden,
where the soul wanders free.

You said:

"I yearn never to have lived."
Yet in living,
wrote the lyrics
harmonizing song and voice,
editing the analects of confusion,
smoothing the dialect and dialogue
between the living and dying.

Loving all, but champion of those
exiled from Eden

Your life's works describing:

The flowering, the dance
of the courting honey bee.
The swelling in the tide pool
of the sea anemone

Every movement a transformation
of idea
into reality.

You, who could only choose
to rule over
the crouching form.

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Creation: A Speculation

PRELUDES

"Include the knower in the known."
Julian Jayne

"Myth embodies the nearest approach to truth that can be stated in words."
Ananda Coomaraswamy

"I speak through the prophets in simile and metaphor."
Hosea 12:11White light, ivory light
contemplation
During the gestation

Time began
The future
in the swiftness of a glance
passed away
into the past

The Moment
The Divine Mind spoke...

"let there be"

the words ordering eternity;
"in the beginning"

"In the beginning was" the Mythos
before the John's Logos
were words
and the words were of the people,
spoken by the people
(all thought made through them,
and all of creation)
the dark cave lit,
and laughter, and the birthing cry

The Moment...

Before the cosmic comic scene
When God began creating
the worlds before this world,
destroyed, because:

The Martians were too quarrelous
Venetians overly amorous
Mercurrians fickle, and (naturally)
Mercurial

even the Jupiterians -too jovial
they died laughing

White light, ivory light
limitless and without end
where argent canescent shadows
illuminate infinity's bend

Then... The Moment...

Before the circadian rhythm
of the six act drama
the limitless light neonate

The Moment...

Before the quantum chaos
or the splitting of the spectrum

Before the differentiation
the amorphous sun's splendor
soon to light the sapphire sky

Before the word, before the speech
Zeno's tortoise or the race
Before the patrimonial creation through
Baritone Divine Articulation

Before the eon, before the movement

The Moment...

chaos became creation
and matter began

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and that proved deleterious

The Moment...

Before Chronos, the sickle, or the seasons
before the notion of faith
or any thought of reason

and the word was of woman
and the word was of man
and the word was woman
and the word was man

But
Before the word
the voice
Before the voice
the thought
Before the thought
the fiction
Before the fiction
the perception
Before the perception
the inspiration
Before the inspiration
text and interpretation

And before the text
or the interpretation

White light, ivory light
limitless and without end
The light in
pure emanation

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Genesis Again

"The letters of the Jews are dancing knives that carve
the heart of darkness 7 ways."
The Alphabet Karl Shapiro

When God began creating

(in wisdom God began creating)

When God began
begin again

When God began creating

In the beginning: the electrum
within our stellar amnion
ions, interacting
ions, resonating
swirling `Yods' at the river's source
spiraling and expanding
still singing ineffable songs
from the river's source.

In the beginning was the Verbal
the God of being, Ein sof, of emanation
the God of saying, but voiceless, of creation
the God of doing, yet effortless, of formation
the God of seeing through lidless, of foundation

in the beginning was the Nomos
time then

denser than water

in the beginning was the equation

And there was the beginning of
the nucleosynthesis
In the beginning of
Creation, the day of the One.

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And It Was So

by Laurence

"And God saw everything that had been created, that it was Very Good."
Genesis 1:31

"Why Very? The perfection of the Total creation exceeds that of the separate parts."
Sephorno

Then the firmament split
flowing from the flesh
rivers red from birth's depths
forming The Earth,

The Rose,

and Sun's vermilion rise
When, from the Amnion flowing;

The Salt,
The Sea
The Sky

And the Woman blessed the child
and it was good.

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Adam Kadmon: A Sermon

"For now we see through a mirror, dimly, but then, face to face."
1 Corinthians 13:12

Four sages there were.
Four bibles, with four readers
and four who entered
The Orchard.

Only Akiba entered in Peace
and returned complete
passing each mystic image
through imagination's prism
not blinded by the source,
saying:

"All the eye sees is legend,
image, poetry or parable
and the truth is also
in a child's fable."

reading Genesis again:

After the cleaving
one woman
one man
as God
in the joining.

Three creations there were.
Three stories, three tellers
and three visions
Of Eden.

And an Adam before Adam

Two sexes there were
after the cleaving
of the One Being,
male and female, *Adam Kadmon*
the image of God, EveandAdam

At one time the sculptor,
the clay, and the hand
that forms the image.

One Tree
in the midst of the Garden
bending under the burden of its fruit.

Then
The serpent, legs shriveled,
slithering from its sheath
and slides around the bough
saying:
"The Fruit,
it is forbidden
save for progeny's increase.
Eat it!
And you die!"

And Gentle Eros (some say Tiresias)

silencing the snake and saying:
"The Fruit
will not defile
your hand.

Touch It!
You will not die!

"The Fig.
caress and taste of It.
Let your tongue explore
the dark inner space.

The seeds,
press them between your lips
and then return for more."

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A Child's Fable Of Cain And Abel

One day iron and the Tree
in unknown innocent conspiracy
fenced the parcel of a farm
cutting the land into pasture and barn.
Two brothers, twins, two voices of demand
"I will be the owner, you, the hired hand."
"I will eat the fruits, you, till the land."
And a voice, of God, spoke to them and said:
"*Cain* is *Abel*, and *Abel Cain*.
Possession is vanity, O, the vanity of possession.
Share one table and take one name."
One wanting only his name above the door
crouched in the dark opening upon the floor.
In his hand a plowshare or a sword
waiting for the hacking and an unkind word.
And God said, "Where is your brother?"
"My brother? My brother was slain
with a blind man's cane."
(and he stammered)
unable to hide his hands
or their stain:

"am
am I
am I my
am I my brother
am I my brother's keeper?

O God, My brothers' blood
cries out to me
O God, so alone, so alone
in the Land of Nod
in a city of stone."

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Interludes

A. The Begats

Adam begat Seth, Seth begat Enosh
and Enosh begat all his grandsons. turned down,
Methuselah begat Lamech, Lamech begat
Noah
and Noah begat three sons. The dove again is
free.
And men multiplied upon the Earth
when the Sons were of the Gods
and daughters of man
he progeny of our miraculous forefathers
begat, and once more, begat again.

B. The Flood

Still, the raven is content
death in the darkening sky.
The dove snared in the net
of dominion and descent.
Noah, the metaphysician,
saw myriad refracted colors
the sun, the cloud's waters
in reflectory position.

Noah praised God
for the rains
and not sending
the flood of fire.

The bow, after the rain
stringless, empty-quivered.
The rivers flowing into the sea,

C. The Tower

One being, one God, one vision,

then division.
One text, one story, one reader,
then revision.
Tubal-Cain forged the tools
(though he thought the Babylonians
fools).
Now landless, the Garden off afar,
a vagrant in the city's hire,

building a seventh-heaven spire,
a stairway to a distant star;
front room view of the Moon,
Ziqquart the name of Marduk's home,

Herodotus came knocking and found
celestial silence and an empty throne.

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Night Vision (For My Father)

"Ten generations from Adam to Noah and to Abraham, ten again."
Midrash on Genesis
Beyond the city,
the glare of Ur,
Abraham,
alone,
watched the wandering planets in their orbs.
Terach, his father, taught:
the predestination of thought.
Heaven above, earth below,
light and shadow, fire and glow.
The Wars of the gods, mimicked in the battle and the cry
of the foot soldiers, columned or quartered, waiting to die.
Terach taught:
Shadow readings of the mind,
horoscopes, and the ebb of time,
the future, in the hand's line.
Destiny, in the planet's motion
and the twelve-phased Zodiacal notion
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All measure and emotion.
Prometheus kneeling in the sky
destined, from time's inception
to his fate,
crucifixion
by rigid preconception
fated to forever die.
Epimetheus beguiled by his wife,
(forethought and afterthought)
Pandora, hearing a voice
("No choice, No choice")
releases from her jar of strife
forethought and afterthought
And all this written in the night.

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Dawn: A Prayer

"And in thy goodness Thou renewest the works of creation every day, continually."
Siddur

The seer, Abram, envisioned
and began his meditation:
"Soon the morning,
once again the borning
the imaginal imago imagined."
O Apollo, god of light
but not God of the Light
The earth
is not the
Center
of the universe.
The self
is not the
Center
of the earth.
And the spheres, how do they revolve
without one to initiate the revolution?
And the species, how does it evolve
without one to begin the evolution?
Awakening this aurous day
the imaginal imago imagined
alights and flies away.

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Abraham the Iconoclast

"Let law be father of our peace."
Mark Van Doren

When Abraham left Haran the ascent to Moriah began.
When Abraham left his father's house, then the quest began.
Melchizedek, King of Salem, offered bread and wine
only to find a shaken Abraham, trembling, in a daze.
dark sleep, deep dread
deep sleep, dark dread
Four dream kingdoms sever the limbs, carving the flesh, an arm, a leg and the last severing the head

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Four dream kingdoms of exile and the covenant is cut, too many corpses to count the dead.
And Abraham would not feast
on the spoils of Sodom.

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A Second Time From the Heavens
A Divine and Earthly Drama

DRAMATIS PERSONA:

Narrator - setting the pace of the drama

A Voice - unidentified

Sarah - The Matriarch

Abraham - Father of many nations

Elohim - a deep-baritoned voice of authority

Ishmael - Abraham's beloved son

Isaac - Abraham's beloved son

Mesha - King of Moab

Immanuel - Angel and philosopher

A Tentmaker -theologian (Paul not Psaul)

A Child

"Offer the ram of pride instead of him. But the old man would not so,
but slew his son and half the seed of Europe one by one."
The Parable of the Old Man and the Young, Wilfred Owen

"Listen to the truth even from the mouth of the defiled."
Martin Heiddeger

"*Nullum existit magnum ingenium sine aliqua dementia*."
Quoted by S. Kierkegaard in his Journal

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Act I - The Voices
Scene One

(Narrator) The day begins to breathe
a warming early morning breeze
soon the umber shadows will flee
from the Mountain of Myrrh
incense and cinnamon fill the air.

Soon what is far
will be near.

And Abraham looked up, his eyes
heavy from three sleepless nights, and
weeping Sarah would not let loose her sons
the tent could not contain the cries.

Sarah: "You must promise!
promise!"

Abraham: ”We will go
and we will be returning."

Sarah: "Then go in peace
and return in peace."

Scene Two

(Narrator) They depart, two brothers, the servants
the old man holding two reined steeds,
one black, one white
the writing on the page
the only witness to their deeds.

Elohim: ”Abraham!" "I speak!"

Abraham: "I am here."

Elohim "Take now Thine Son
to the Mountain of fire."

Abraham: "I have two sons."

Elohim: "You must give the firstborn Unto Me."

Abraham: "Each is the first born of its Mother."

Elohim: "The one you love!"

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Abraham: "Each was suckled at my own wife's breast
This one a wild son, seeking his Father's love
This one a mild son, meek as a dove
Each dear to me as my own life's breath."

Elohim: ”You pompous man
bombast who delights in rhyme
would you argue
with the Creator
the Judge
the Ruler
of all mankind!
offer them both
then, It is commanded
from on High

(pause) so this be no crime."

Scene Three

(Narrator) Abraham takes the oakwood, and cleaves it for
the journey laying it upon Isaac's shoulder,
and the knife upon the shoulder of Ishmael, and
material for a two-sided altar, one side for
each of the brothers.

Isaac: "Abba, Father Abraham"

Abraham: "I am here
my son."

Isaac: "I see the altar and the wood, but where
are the sheep
for the burnt offering?"

Abraham:
(hesitates) "Elohim will provide them Himself
A Ram named Isaac
A Ram named Ishmael"

Ishmael: "Father, your face so pale
do you fear
the way of the warrior?
In the wilderness I learned
the art of the archer,
There the hunter pursues the hunted.

Do not be fainthearted!
Do not be afraid!

(chants) There is no God but Allah!"
Isaac: "Abba, This madness, Where will it end?
would you have me expose

and stretch forth

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my neck
to the Priest
as the timid
dove
Abba
I see in a vision
Six dead sons.

Am I to be
The Seventh One?"

Elohim: "Surrender, I say, surrender!
As it is written: `The beginning of wisdom
and Godly decision
is the Fear, the Fear
of invisible heaven."

Ishmael: "Aslama Allah Aslama
I surrender, God, I surrender."

Isaac:
(shielding Ishmael)

"Father, would you abandon your sons?
remove these crowns of nettle.
"Father, do not abandon your sons!
weave for us crowns
of flowering henna
"Father, would you sacrifice your sons?
soon it will be spring
the blossoms
magically awakening in bloom.
There is time enough to die
let that too come in its proper season
The dew will resurrect
The Garden
But father, Ishmael
and I
cannot so,
Father, so not sacrifice your sons
or tear the eyes out of reason."

Elohim: "Silence!" "I say, Silence."

(aside) "When the King issues a demand
(and so much more so
The King of Kings)
Then, obey, or be Thou damned!"

Mesha: "I, a sheepbreeder, with a myriad of Rams
and another hundred thousand Lambs
I, in the midst of battle, my troop's blood
flowing
as freely as water, heeded the gods' call
and offered my son slyly on the city wall
and only then the battle turned

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ransoming my kingdom's fall."

Scene Four

(Narrator) Abraham lays out the wood, and the firestone
and ties Ishmael to his side of the altar
then leaps upon the weeping Isaac
binding him from behind
(his hands and knees) and then
Raises up the blade.

A Voice:
(urgent) "Old Man! Old Man!
have you lost your mind?
Is not this fear of God
this madness
your folly?
Father Abraham
What are you doing?"

Abraham: "I am
to make an offering
to my God.
I am praying."

Voice: ”Praying? Praying?
Then why the fire
and
Why the knife?"

Tentmaker: "Abraham,
The Elohim demands your sons!
When a heavenly voice commands
Would you withhold your hand?

Do not fear
the morning mingling with the dark

`On the Second day He will revive them
on the Third He will raise them up.'

Do not fear the evening, the war of light and dark
The night is descending, casting the rigid shadows
of the Law upon the broken tablets of stone.
A light is ascending, and one step
from Moriah to Golgotha.

Faith, Father Abraham, By Faith
In the land of promise
another son will come.
Let faith give a face
to that which is unseen.

The Father requires a son
A parable

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of what is to come."

Child: ”I accuse You
Old Jew
Embracing the old
Rejecting the New."

Elohim: ”From the Throne of Justice, I command
of you, again, Abraham, envision
the great warrior Jephthah, a man

(aside (brave, though son of a whore)

overcome in battle, the tides of war
turned upon the troops, then
from the mouth of Jephthah this promise:
`Bh my courage, I vow, if only now
this battle be won, the first to enter my door
victories offering to this war.'

destined to die a virgin, an only child,
he had no other, neither son no daughter
willingly she offered herself for the slaughter!"

Act II - The Throne of Mercy

Either/or
in an old desk drawer.

A poet

Let law be father of our peace.

Mark Van Doren

Scene One

(Narrator)

A voice calls
a second time from the heavens
to Abraham, who still stands posed
knife raised
his forearms formed of copper
forged by the fires of Ur
gleaming in the Judean sun.

Immanuel: ”Abraham, Abraham!
do not send your hands
as unwitting messengers
or unwilling accomplices
to an unknown act.

Drop the knife!

Let your upraised arms

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embrace your sons
as love embraces life."

Scene Two

Abraham hesitates, lowers his arm,
but does not drop the blade.

Abraham: ”Who speaks?"

Immanuel: ”I, Immanuel, emissary of the Nameless
One, Hashem (Unutterable)
The God of Mercy

On this Mount there is vision
Yet you wait, eyes downcast
for Peace to descend from the heavens!"

Abraham: "God commands a burnt offering
A Holocaust
Completely consumed."

Voice: ”Abraham
Have you forgotten your lines?
When you envisioned the smoke of Sodom
rising like the smoke of a kiln
For the sake of ten
righteous among the wicked
you pleaded for the lives
of all!
For the sake of two
your sons,
You cannot speak?"

Abraham:
(aside) "O faceless voice
this my own heart whispers

Is this of God?

The voice is the voice of God
Yet the command
as of a demented man."

Elohim: ”Would you listen to this voice
of faithless choice?

Away Satan!
Away Accuser
Away enticer!
The sacrifice Abraham
It is commanded!"

Immanuel: ”Abraham, a moment, wait!
Your love has known no bounds:

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unbind the knots of servitude
untie the binds of fear."

Elohim: "Reflection
without passion
will die in the arms of inaction."

Immanuel: "Passion
without reflection
is the madman's inclination."

Elohim:

Take the leap! Ein seliger Sprung in die Ewigkeit.
Abraham, I demand Your sons,
The Knight of faith Is bound to the king's command!"

Scene Three

(Narrator) Abraham, overwhelmed and in confusion from the many voices, and desiring to fulfill the will of God, draws with heavy heart the slaughtering knife over the necks of Ishmael and Isaac, scoring their necks gently, a faint red line marking where the heads would be hacked, in one swift motion, so that his two sons might die painlessly, and mercifully.

Immanuel: "Father Abraham:
In every generation, A father, a child,
the fires of Moloch, the fires of war,
In every nation, priest, patriot, and hero
to feed the fires.

(aside)

And Agammenon his own daughter
had not Artemis in time
switched the child and the hind.

and those who worship the wargod
call this God's desire,
though I, Emissary of the Merciful God
The One
God who sent me does not want
an offering of the Sons.

(reads from book)
In the name of the Merciful,
the compassionate
`This burnt offering, this sacrifice
is no command of Mine,
I never spoke It,
Neither did it enter My mind.'"

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Elohim: "The offering,
Abraham,
Now!"

Isaac:
Father
this Mountain
that you stand upon
This rock
is not suspended
over your head
by a thread
and what evidence
and who the author
and by what authority
is the Voice divine,
this voice of Justice
that demands our death?

Would you murder Your sons?"

Elohim: "Do it now, Abraham
I beg of Thee
I command
the deed!"

Narrator: Immanuel
grabs Abraham's arm
grasping it firmly
as the satan
knocks the knife
from his hand.

Abraham,
hearing Immanuel's weeping
looks up, as their tears
extinguish the altar's fire.

Elohim: "Abraham!
The fire!
Relight it!
The knife
pick it up

from off the ground."

Immanuel:
(still grasping
Abraham's arm)
"Out of the mouth of your son
the words as sacred as the
infant at the breast.
Let the voice of this commander
this demander, this elohim
be known, less than a god
the voice of the elohim

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allusive as the sound of
a phosphorescent angel, yet
legs shriveled and wings clipped
to the bone, seen
in the light of the morning Sun,
when Justice would dethrone
Mercy, your face is shown
Lucifer, the deceiver!"

Elohim: "Abraham, do you believe this angel's voice
who serves the enticer?
Immanuel, Satan's messenger?"

Abraham: "O elohim, are you
A god? an angel?
and which the voice of evil
and who is heavens shadow?

I am not sure
and never can be certain
But
that I out not kill my sons
of that I am certain and sure

And if this drama would end
a voice again resounding
from the visible heavens
a voice again demanding
from behind the curtain:

Elohim
(faintly) "Your sons still lay bound
Do it, Abraham, or
it will be the death of me,
Elohim, The death of God!"

Abraham: "I will not endure
the command of the deathgod
and if this be the death of God
Let the elohim die.

I choose Mercy
and the God of the Good
and when the satan speaks
in the name of heaven
I listen to the truth
even from the mouth
of the defiled."

Epilogue:

Narrator: After these words Abraham lifted his eyes, and
behold, a ram and then another, caught in the
thicket by their horns.

Elohim: Behold, a ram named Isaac

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a ram named Ishmael
Let Isaac for Isaac come
Let Ishmael for Ishmael come
In place of your sons."

Narrator: Abraham grabs the rams by their horns
to free them from the thicket
and a horn breaks off
from on of the rams.

Abraham: "Neither will I offer, None
not rams, not sons."

(sounds ram's horn three blasts)

Narrator: "O Soren and Regina, Now embrace."

Abraham: "Instead, My lips offer praise
and the altars of blood, fire,
and sacrifice are razed.

(sounds ram's horn three long wails, and three
short cries)

(looks into
the distance) "My sons warriors by day
and monks by night
scripture in one hand
(there they find the battle plan)
and weapon in the other
battling one another
even brother against brother
shouting:

Jihad! Jihad! Milchama! Mitzvah!

Holy War,

as if these two words could be spoken in
one utterance
without defiling the mouth of the speaker.

On this Mountain
A Vision of Peace
rising from this altar's ruins

A City of Peace
where Sufi's and Chassidim
Join hands
in a circle dance
chanting the ineffable Name."

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Interlude II
A Mother's Lament

Do not seethe a kid in its mother's milk

(Exodus 23:19)

My tw(struggling)in sons,

will they come
from my womb
completely formed

strangling
one another?

If brothers
My sons,
act so,
Why am I?

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The Book Of Names - The Exodus

PROFESSOR P. G. GERUNDGRINDER'S LECTURE ON
THE ULTIMATE NATURE OF GOD, THOUGHT, LANGUAGE, PHILOSOPHY, AND REALITY

T. & Th. 10-11am Fee - NOMINAL
(TAPS ON LECTERN)
Students! Students!
Silence Please!
Noses to the Gerundstones
this class commences.

I. Lesson One - A Down To Earth Grammar

A. NOUNS

1. Adam was a Red man
(the Hebrews taught).
His game: the Nouning.
Eve called the Rose
a Dungadoo
but she was only Clowning

B. VERBS

(INQUISITIVELY)
A word on Verbs:
(A LITTLE POMPOUSLY BUT WITH OBVIOUS DELIGHT)
My namesake is found
when the Noun
is becoming
through doing
O, the holy gerunds sound!
Are transitive verbs transient

C. INFINITIVES

(THOUGHTFULLY)
Infinitive, you make my thought so...
so finite.
You predicate every subject;
in a phrase you beckon
Maya to go
and weave the curtain
of the night.

D. GERUNDS

2. When you say "I Love You"
(Korzybski warns)
be sure to tell your wife Love[1]
and to your mistress tell Love[2].

E. SYNTAX

objecting to possession?
Do intransients live in tents
to modify my confusion?
This sentence is exclamatory!
And this one interrogative?
One shouted out - declarative
Kant's categorically imperative.

Questions?
No!!
Not even one -
Rhetorical?
No! No questions.

II. Lesson Two - Meanings

Professor Gerundgrinder: Students! Pupils!
My abecedarian friends
in three words,
in one phrase
I teach you Meanings
beginning, middle and end.

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A student: (CALLS OUT, WITH GREAT SERIOUSNESS!)
This we have learned, Sir
Cognito -Ergo - Sum
I think
therefore
I
Am

Professor: (SHAKING HEAD) No, Mr. Cophant, No.

Student: Call me Sy.

Professor: No, Sy, not
I think, therefore I am

for that
puts the horse
before Descartes!

Not even
Sum - Ergo - Cognito
I am, therefore, I think.

Heiddeger's magical existential mantra
as he sat
in his overstuffed
chair
meditating
On Being and Time, Time and Being
NOT
Choosing and Doing, Doing and Choosing
as
he
smacked
the morsel Fascism
sweet between
his Aryan lips
during cake and tea time.

III. Lecture's Conclusion - <u>God's Name and the Ultimate Nature of Reality</u>

Professor Gerundgrinder: In the Book of Names
etched on the parchment
by a pen aflame

EHYEH ASHER EHYEH

Student: Why Sir, these words
are not translatable
and every translator
is a traitor!

Professor Gerundgrinder: No, Sy.
Every translator
is an interpreter.

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God's answer to Moses our teacher
when he asked the divine Name,
according to the translators,
I am Whom I am
I am That I am
I am, that is, Who I am
or
My Name is Nameless.

Student: (ATTEMPTING TO TAKE OVER THE LECTURE)

Allegro says:
abracadabra
Elohim and Jehovah
the secret seed, the sacred spittle
the semen from the sky
When God was "U"
a copulating copula.

Professor Gerundgrinder: (DISMISSES STUDENT, WHO SITS DOWN)

Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh
when the future, past
and present meet,
having one meaning
this is the divine grammar
a verbal God of becoming
are you sustained by allegrogories?
I will be
whom I will be,
I am
what you create
with Me
The God of Becoming

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Songs at the Sea

Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.

1 Samuel 17:45

SONG ONE:

I, Moses, a man of prophecy,
(at the Exodus, my people free)
am saddened,
the enemy's horse and chariot
swallowed by the Sea.

A demented poet
anonymously penned a line,
and penned that line on Me.

God (is a) Man (of) War

Being not man
nor warrior
loathsome the thoughtless supplication
of those that link these three

War, Man, Divinity
God a Man of War
unholy trinity.

SONG TWO: And Miriam Weeps

Does the Lord indeed speak only through Moses? (see Micah 6:4)

"Sanctify our days as of old"
the reader intones
looking backwards for a future
as the story is retold;
in Genesis
the serpent enticing the lady
that winding binds
wife to husband
the genius of Genesis, also
a proof text for travail
(*Ve El Esach*
tshukatach
Ve who yimshal
bach)
Your urge shall be
a bended knee
and He shall rule
over you.
In Exodus
that supernatural snake
transforms itself
into the staff
speaking the Law through Moses
preaching the sanctity of separate
but equal seating (in Satan's synagogue), from Sinai,
and this from the mouth

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of the Almighty
(with perfect alliteration)
to Mr. Moses the interpreter
(a nice enough man
but also a stutterer)
teaching the Levitical laws
with Sarah's authoritative recipe
for cholent, chopped liver, and
gefilte fish, swallowed down
with raspberry concentrate
and Sotah water
with warnings to wayward women
that wandering eyes
beget swollen ankles
and bloated thighs.
And for the doubters
of this holy writ
it is written
in Numbers
verse eleven
chapter five.

And Miriam Weeps

Miriam weeps
her timbrel fallen
from her hand
the prophetess's song censored
by a sly
editor, the heavenly voice
in manly guise
expurgating her song.
Miriam hidden
under snow white,
leprous lies.

And Miriam Weeps

into her well of bitter waters
lamenting the rabbinic vision
of the men and women
marching on separate sides of the split red sea.

And Miriam Weeps

for the women passed-over
at the *Seder*
baking the bread of affliction
with no time to recline
preparing pyramids of food
as the men recite the story
in a sing song, nasal rhyme
"We were slaves unto Pharaoh"
pass the soup
and bones with marrow
"But now we are free men."

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As the women answer:
Amen.
Amen.

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Aunt Deuteronomy, Uncle Leviticus

Aunt Deuteronomy
set before me this day
Good and Evil
with milk and cookies
on a tray.

"Nice girls wear
white lace skirts
patent leather pumps
and ribbons
in their hair...
Nice girls cross
their legs
fold their hands
on their laps
and don't touch down there."

Uncle Leviticus
gave me some sweets
made me promise
not to tell
Aunt Deuteronomy
or my mom
where he touched me
beneath the sheets.

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Footnote

"The chimera of scholarship,
I, Professor Gerundgrinder, proclaim
(see my famous magnum opus:
Sir Francis Bacon and Eggs)[1]
assumed the symmetry of the syllogism
premises, and following conclusion[2]

A logician once lamented:
'One day I metaphor
I never hope
to meet another,
I'll wipe that silly smile
from simile
metaphor's bombastic brother'[3]

But I, Professor P. G. Gerundgrinder
have it on authority[4]
as it is written:[5]

'I spoke to the prophets
it was I who gave
vision after vision
I spoke through the prophets
in parables.'[6]
And since I submit
this thesis, properly footnoted,
that will be
my final proof of it."

*****

1. Also known as *Enlightenment in the Morning*.
2. Ibid. see my chapter "The Logos and the Question it Begs"
3. See also the *Ancient Albion Library Plaque* (1789) containing the following lines attributed to Blake:
Stack the books
stack them high
Where do they lead?
to the eternal Why.
However, Dr. S. Cophant, in his dissertation, *Ancient Albion Plaque - A Fake!* controverts their originality.
4. From God, the *Good Book*'s author.
5. This is the form of the original footnote.
6. Hosea 12:10 includes simile, metaphor and parable *The Torah speaks in the language of the people*.

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And this Jerusalem

A Love Song for Two Voices

"All the Writings are holy, but the Song of Songs is the holiest of all."
Rabbi Akiba

BRIDEGROOM -REMINISCING
Alone hours of the afternoon
dust on the covers
the bound volumes
love poems in my room.

And love sick youth
in love falling,
falling in love
sweet wine for sipping
and drunk with infatuation.

But I heard
Another voice calling:

"Soon, the voice sang, Soon
so I sat to write a line,
But what to say
and what to say?

Only the fears of
another loveless day.

Jerusalem in Spring.
The first fragrance, the almond
tree, erect and budding
the blossoms open bright
with white bloom.
In the tree's shade
a woman sits
her feet planted
in the ground -
a woman surrounded
by the morning light.

BRIDE -SINGING SOFTLY
O, My beloved, You are not alone
No lover to lay with, no warmth to share.
Nothing is as cold
as Jerusalem stone.
Nothing as cold
as Jerusalem stone.
No, my beloved, You are not alone.

(TURNS TOWARD BRIDEGROOM)

My brother, My beloved
Your hand, the page it turns
pale ivory white
The books, the walls they build

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a parapet
against the night?

Would you sing
how fine the tree
how fair the field
in this hour
of the opening
of the flower?

(BOTH RAISE THEIR HANDS, FACING ONE ANOTHER, LOOKING INTO EACH OTHER'S EYES)

You are beautiful, My love
You are beautiful
Your eyes the blue
the Mediterranean
of sky and sea.

This day
I watched the mingling
of the evening and the morning.

(JOIN HANDS)

Let our hands do so, joining
and heaven and earth
in passionate embrace.

Now is our moment
let me gaze upon your face.

BRIDEGROOM
Your aura, my friend, in the midday sun
how warm the feeling
your skin against my skin
and eyes of Mother Earth.
Now I hear
the cooing of the swallow and the dove
in this season of song and love.
I too will plant my feet
as the tree's roots
planted in the ground;
and the branches entwining
alive with sound.

BRIDE
Your smooth nakedness I feel
in your caressing voice
the passion of your loins
crouching as the lion
Let us be one body,
making our love real.

BRIDEGROOM
My love grazes her own flocks

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a shepherdess of the hills
She weaves the wool
and gathers fleece from clouds
Dancing with their fleeing shadows
far from the market's din
and bidding of the crowds.

My love, to what may I compare you?
Your fragrant thighs
opening and closing as heaven's gates?
The scent of nard and musk
rising as the sacred incense
of the Ancient Temple?

Your heart-shaped haunch
not timid as the dove
more graceful than the gazelle
throbbing with life

That which is beautiful
I can only
compare
to
you.

(THE TWO LINK ARMS AND RECITE AS THEY WALK AWAY)

BRIDE and BRIDEGROOM TOGETHER

I could not tell my tears
from the rain
The night we parted
from Jerusalem

The kindness in a mist was falling
And David with his lute, calling
Lovers to a wordless song
I could not feel my tears
in the rain
But you beloved
And this Jerusalem

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Interlude
On One Foot

A Midrash on Shabbat 31A
and Sifra 19:18

Once, one who did not know the Way came before the great sage and legalist Rabbi Shammi, who was the founder of a school of thought called the House of Shammi, known for strictness and following the rigour of the Law, and asked:

"What, Rabbi, is the Way?"

Shami: "Would You be a Jew?

Seeker: "If you transmit to Me
all the teachings
as I stand
on one foot!"

Shammi: "If you sit, my good man
I will teach you
of the ever Compassionate God, and
the Justice, Mercy and Freedom
of the Living Law

But you must sit and learn."

Seeker: "I have no time for sitting"

So Shammi, like a Zen Master pushed the Seeker away with the builders measure he used as a staff. The way of the builders is a way of discipline.

The same man came before Rabbi Hillel, also the founder of the House of Hillel.

The seeker asked the same question to Hillel. Hillel answered, on one foot:

"What is hatefull to You?"

"Do not do
to others."

This is the essence of the Law

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Seeker: "Why state a fundamental
principle in so negative
a manner?"

The voice of Rabbi Akiba, one of the Ten Martyrs and the son of a convert, comes to explain to the seeker the meaning of Hillel's statement. Although Hillel flourished before the Tannaitic teachers of the Mishna and oral law, and Akiba was of the Third generation of Tannaim, their voices speak to one another beyond the confines of the chronology of history, in a time transcending dialogue:

Akiba: "This fundamental principle of the Torah
is found within the Levitical Laws
and knowing the Heathens' confusion
about the nature of the Law
Hillel would appeal to your reason
rather than a quote from Holy Writ

Yet,
let it be stated
positively

Love
your neighbor
as yourself."

Seeker: "Love?
Can Love be commanded?"

Akiba: "Love in thought
and Love in action."

Seeker: "Neighbor?
Do you mean
those next door?
all those in the neighborhood?
the members of my tribe?
or all the inhabitants
of my village,?
those of my own state?
or all people
of all nations?"

Ben Azzai, Akiba's son in Law, and a mystic, becomes impatient with all the seeker's questions and interrupts:

"I know a principle
greater than
`You Shall Love your neighbor as Yourself!"

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"This is the book
of the generations of Adam
When God created the first being

in the likeness of the Creator

was this creature created
male and female they were created" (Gen. 5:1)

All in the image
of God!"

Akiba gently rebukes his son in law:

"My son
many have sought the image
of God
in the mirror of Scripture
and seen onlyu distorted reflections
of a god
in the image of men

Yes, My son
That we are all created
in God's image
is a great principle
But I will teach you
Why mine
is greater Yet

`Love your neighbor
as Yourself.'

We are one and all
as one soul

Love yourself
then you will love your neighbor
Both in the divine image
and God
You will love
and your neighbor
as yourself

Be not content with those
that praise only with words

They recite their creeds

Be one with the living God
and those who do
in works

They are known

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by their deeds."

Hillel: "This principle I teach you
on one foot, but
The task takes two feet
planted firmly on the ground
for every ordinance, and precept
and their commentaries
must be examined
thru the prism
of this principle

Will you then
Go, and learn?"

The seeker converted, and began pruning the hedges of the garden of the Way.

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The New Covenant and The Broken Circle

A line, drawn from Earth to Heaven
and across the earth, horizon to horizon
circumscribing the globe:

The sun, a spinning fire wheel
over a mountain of decaying bone,
at the crossroads, Jerusalem,
where supplicants kneel to
those curcified on every hill
hanging from St. Peter's cross

When the Roman General Tineius Rufus
asked Akiba in Caesarea
as Akiba's flesh was being torn
from his body
strip by strip
by the iron torturers' rake:

"This thoughtless devotion

Now you pray?
Your only emotion
a peaceful smile!

Are you a sorcerer?"

Akiba answered:
"I am no sorcerer
but have loved God
with all my heart
with all my soul
and now
with my very being
as he died whispering
`God is one.'"

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The Chapel at Auschwitz

The village silent, early
this Easter, the Sunday sun
arises
gray
from the sacrifices
of yesterday

The chapel's steeple

and black charred dust
rising in the air
And the stained glass
windows, soot darkened
no light enters

consumed in the Judas fire
the Bavarians burn
the Easter man.

After the sermon
the children singing
skipping rope,

Old Miser brown bags
saves her pennies,

goes in old rags,
hides her gold,

under the floor,
where is it hidden?
in her kosher store!

Old Miser brown bags
steals our eggs

Old Miser brown bags,
kills our Lord,

Old Miser brown bags,
MORE, MORE, MORE!

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The Ninth Hour

"Two Christs were at Golgotha
The Slum man they killed
The mountain man lives on."
Early Lynching
Carl Sandburg

"Wer, wenn ich schriee horte mich den aus der Engel Ordhungen?"
Rainer Maria Rilke

-Crucifictions -

Three crucifixions there were
Three Christs on three crosses
Three versions of
The passion, the dying words:

FICTION ONE

"My God, My God

Why
Why have
Why have You
Forsaken Me?

Why have You
separated Yourself?
Answer Me!
Split the beams
of this cross
as You split
the Sea!

My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?

The soldiers, they laugh,
they mock Me.
`King of the Jews' they shout,
`Let the one none can see
save you...'

My God, when will You deliver Me?
I am but a man
suckled as my brothers
at my mother's breast
a humble Jew,
Stripped of my robes,
once as human as You.
how long my strength?
how long my spirit?
how long my soul?
how long can these limbs

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persist?

am I not flesh and blood?

and still I praise You, for
this vision, a gift
before I die:

Not suffering alone
in this valley of the rotting skull
and limestone powdered bones

(this cross marking out the deaths)

In each generation
blood on the hands
pinned to the twisted cross
and depraved passion

O God, How long, How lone
'til the advent
of compassion?

My people, and I, We
die
the moment
married
to eternity

and I, too, a simple Jew
die a man reciting my psalm

Eli Eli lama sabachtani."

FICTION TWO (THE REAL FINAL WORDS)

My Father
into thine hands
into thine hands I commit
My spirit.

FICTION THREE

consummatus est

τετλλεγτα

It is finished.

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Mother of Pearl - A Polemic

by Laurence

The family bible
black as ink
with gilded edges
where it is written
and where it is written
as each verse
and each misdeed demands
The Word resurrected
speaks not to women
it is the catechism
for the sons of man.

The Madonna utters nought
a carved status, mother of pearl
to adorn the alter of the Lord
cold to the touch, mute as stone
still as a church after prayers
As it is written
and as it is taught:

"Let your Wyves keep Sylence
in the congregations
Let them be submissive
knitting a bonnet
or a mitten
as also the Law saith."

If the Madonna were to breath again
brought back from the Abaddon
where we venerate those we hate
If the Madonna were to speak again
denying the sin of the apple Eve ate
declaring the sanctity of carnal birth
The fathers would intone
"Anathema Maranatha"
"We come in the name
of the Lord of love
to proclaim this (Odium Theologicum.)

Forgive me father, for I cannot move
The icon of the Cretin Church
My crown spun with silver threads
of elliptical reasoning
My hands holding the Ephesians encyclical

where it is said:

"Wemen, Submit Unto Your Awne
Husbands, for He the Husband
is the Bound Wyves Head."
We will go to mass Sunday
to hear the sermon of
As it is written

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and as it is written,
The Word on the cross
with each utterance
once again is smitten.

The Priest, from Timothy
his sermon will say:

"Lykewyse Wemen
Should Not Araye
in Broyed Hair
Gold or Pearls...
And worship is only
through good words."

As we nod and pray,
nod and pray.

The Christ has come
and departed
leaving few words
and the ghost written
gospel of Saul
who became Paul,
casting women as the
toothless crone
who conceives all life
in original sin's womb,
so celibacy he found
a life alone
the only answer
to his life absurd.
Paul, not Psaul.

And all this
with nihil obstat
of God the Father
with Jesus his son
and Paul
the Imprimatur.

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History and Herstory

A Dialogue *by Lillith*

HISTORY

I am History
from Genesis when time began
until this moment
I witness and span
Mankind's glorious ascent;
Adam, Enosh, Kenan,
and the sons of Ham
Solomon and David
to the Son of Man.
I begin my story, history
with Adam and God;
in his image made he man,
Eve an afterthought, a wombman
for the father saw it was not good
that his son be alone
so from the bones of Adam's bones
Eve the Madam, the first woman
in the image of the first man
Adam.

HERSTORY

I am Lillith of the *li-lah*
lady of the night
called Queen of the demons
seducer of all life.
I am Lillith of the lilah
chronicler of Herstory
and Adam's first wife.
Open your bible, Sir History,
the book you seldom read
but quote
to justify every manly atrocity,
open and see that the first creation
was a nation of two
created equally
"*Zechar Venekeva bara Otam*."
Malefemale was the first being of creation.
Adam ignored God's command,
no two crowns for that primeval man.
I, Lillith, daughter of Tiamat
would not heed
that haughty man's demand
to lay supine, beneath him
(also lower in his mind).
Adam would not concede
that love's need is of equal mates.
And I, Lillith, knowing his desire
to blame his serpent and lowly wife
for all specious judgements of his life,
Adam the apple polisher,
Adam the fool, who would refuse
the even sweeter fruit

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of life long harmony
Adam, who with Eve did choose
white-winged, fairyland,
Immortality.

HISTORY

I remain History
the Narrator,
History the Originator,
History the Generator,
of all of civilization.
Patrimony is the legacy
of every human nation.
The Fathers of Philosophy:
Aristotle, Socrates, and Plato.
The Masters of Art:
Michelangelo, da Vinci
to Van Gogh.
Even the Lord a man.
Women you are the body
and Men the mind
as Christ is the head
of the embodied church.
Body and mind
women's biological design
mothers of the leaders, rulers
and creators of mankind.

HERSTORY

History, the pompous diary
of inquisitions, crusades, world wars and tirades
interspersed with bombastic diplomatic charades.
The diary of young men fighting
each for their Fatherland
each warrior praying to his patron saint
each believing the ironic blasphemy
that God is a man of war
each marching, backwards, through the pages
of History.
Mankind
will you ever tire
of the uncountable dead
of History?
Will you never tire
of the never ending recounting
that is History?
History the has been
remembrances of things passed
documentation of oppression
and fear of future things to come
if the cycles repeat again
fear of the movement
of each moment
closer to the end
Time your obsession,
and death

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Will this breath
be your last?
And you erect, Sir History
"immutable" monolithic city nations
with phallic spires and marble monuments
piercing the sky, a severed member
pointing towards the future when soon you will die.
And remember your will, Sir History, to insure
wealth's proper passage through primogeniture
of your artifacts and art,
The empty canvasses mirroring
a perfect reflection
of the patritage of man:
A still life
of a bowl of fruit
hairless naked women
battle scenes
virgin Madonnas
or Life
forever crucified
This you pass on History
Father to son.
Now, mother to daughter
women to women, and to men
Herstory will sing
of life celebrating,
of life giving birth
to itself, of wide open spaces
bordered only by the changing tide
of the moonlit sea
and unfenced verdant meadows
all bright with every shade of green
all whispering of timelessness
rebirth and eternity.
Now women, draw near
for it is time to hear
the voices of our matriarchs
all resonant and clear.

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Wovoka's Dances

"Some said they saw the Son of God... We doubted that because we had seen neither him nor his works." Red Cloud

Dream Dance

Now we see him sitting there
in the prairie's diminishing grass,
Now we see him shimmering
(in the wind of the song)
through the Nevada desert pass where the feet of the dancers
dancing trace
(in the wind of the song
dancing the Great Dance)
and rising from beneath them
the Paiute messiah's face.

In the wind of the song
dancing the Great Dance
rising beyond the Shining
Mountains, following
the blood red sun, setting
into the horizon, gaping
to the open darkening sky.

In the wind of the song
chanting the Great chant
("I am the Earth, The Earth I")
eyes upward, following
the hawk, climbing,
and wing dreams calling to the braves
unafraid to die.

In the wind of the song
in the eye of the dream
The Village
quiet as the white
Man's Eden.

The smoke rising peacefully from the pots
The smoke rising peacefully from their pipes.

There, the buffalo roamed
the deer and the antelope
(and the lion and the lamb) played
and stillness, even in the storm forming
and hope, even in the dark, descending.

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Death Dance

Sand Creek on a sunny morning,
(before the awakening of the weaponless Chiefs,)
surrounded by the soldiers burdened
with the sword, laying heavy in their hands,
shifting in their saddles from side to side
heartless as cossacks ready to ride:

"The only good Indian is one that's dead."

After the Pogrom
The blood of the children
the blood of the women
and the Sand Creek
Red.

TWO HEARTS PIERCED BY ARROWS,

STAND AND FIGHT TO THE LAST MAN,

FORGOTTEN BY THE GREAT SPIRIT,

SMASHED BOW OF BROKEN WILL

WHITE MAN COMES FLEE,

WOVOKA DO NO HARM DO NOT FIGHT

HURT NO ONE ALWAYS DO RIGHT,

LIKE A WOUNDED DEER,

BURIED ON RED MAN'S MOUNTAIN,

All Dead.

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Ghost Dance

Now we begin the Great Dance
winding towards the Westward Sun
Now we begin the Ghost Dance
Finding at the end of day
crossed staves to mark the way
we who must go
The way of the Travois

In the song of the wind
The Ghost dance begins
(look closely, listen, and hear)
The Great Wovoka, dancing, chanting
In the wind of the Song:

"The God who formed the Paiute
made the Navaho

The God who formed the Whiteman
made the Arapaho"

"Time to die."

"I am the Earth
The Earth I."

In the Nevada desert's heat
on the Deadlands sand
the feet of the dancers
dancing trace
(in the wind of the song
dancing the Great Dance.)
the spring rain falls
the desert flowers bloom full formed
and the feet of the dancers
dancing trace,
Wovoka, the Paiute Messiah's face.

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The Professor P.G. Gerundgrinder's Final Lecture on Teleology, Theology, Space, Thermodynamics, Time, Evolution, History (Mundane and Messianic), Apocalypse, and the Individual, A Double Helized Perspective on the Hidden Future of Becoming within the context of a Unified Theory of Reality (with, thank God, Interludes)

The Laws of Thermodynamics

1) The Energy of the Universe is constant.
2) The Entropy of the Universe tends towards a maximum.

"The ancient tradition that the world will be consumed in fire at the end of six thousand years, is true, as I have heard from Hell."

William Blake

"But I am not bound by the vast work of creation I am and I watch the drama of works."

Krishna Bhagavad Gita (9:7-10)

"It does no harm to the mystery to know a little about it. For far more marvelous is the Truth than any artist of the past imagined."

Richard Feynman, Introduction to Physics
Vol. I, pp. 3-6

"I am reluctant to hitch the wagon of faith to the shooting star of scientific fashion. For all we know, Relativity, and the quantum theory, and entropy will one day join their predecessors in the limbo of discarded scientific fads."

Arnold Lumn

"A poet differs from a historian...because the historian relates what happened, the poet what might, and should, happen. That is why poetry is more philosophical and nobler than history."

Aristotle - Poetics 9:51b

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Commencement

The Professor:

"O, My dear disciplined discipleson this illustrious, alliterative dayyou sit, before me, in well-defined lines
square-hatted and black-robedliving vestiges of a hopefully vanishing tradition, knowing the
hypotenuse,
maxims, theories, theorems, or hypotheses
and all that would lead to salvation

Yet

Before you depart on primrose ways
a shady lane and lined with trees
I must impart
some shocking news, these final words
not lectured upon, but found
hidden behind
The Physics Chairman's frown
this thermodynamical world
even with life's endless aspiration

the Earth
fading, and
the Sun
setting
over the Event horizon
then, darker than the black holes
of hell
the heat death

not one more
circumjovial
revolution
that time of morning
no sun rising

(flustered and excited)
at maximum entropy
energy's implosion
and you and I
I cannot say
it without tears and crying
O, My dear, dear disciplined disciples
The Universe is dying!"

Student:
(raises hand but speaks before being called upon)

"Sir, is cosmogony
then
not a theogony?"

Professor:

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"When the sage Socrates heard the words
of Anaxogores, that the universal design
was the order of an intelligent, divine mind
and therefore
for the best
he happily slept the night
in peaceful rest.

And Plato and the Milesians
found the physis breathing
and Heraclitus (of Ephesus)
eternally becoming
all hylozoically proclaiming:

`The universe is living!'

Then Aristotle's cool eternal world
out of nothing, comes nothing
into nothing passes nothing
no beginning, no ending

And those that follow
the God of Aristotle
and those that go
to the Church of Plato

and Science and Religion
still ask
What place
in space
What time
on the line

and those that
say yes
and those that
say no
to creation
ex nihlo, or
ex deo."

Denouncement

Another Professor
(probably of Theology):

"Good God!, Good God!
The nature of time
entropy defines
a beginning!

God's creation
The First Law? Energy
The Spirit is constant

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Even in a world content
with Godless speculation."

(sits, applause)

The Professor P.G. Gerundgrinder, ignoring side comments -
sets out to answer the question.

"We begin again, from the beginning,
the genesis, the first six seconds
(words are silent that describe)
before the infinity of the abyss
was bounded by the outermost
confines of the mind, Then
energy, in the interval
of space in time

and the hydrogen was born
(a most elementary composition)
which formed, as a matter of speculation.

1 H +n
1 hydrogen

2 H +n
1 deuterium

3 H +n
1 tritium

4 H -e
1 (unstable)

4 He Helium

2 plus energy

(capture the neutron, like a school boy's game)

and the Helium formed pre-biotic carbon
and the carbon bore oxygen
in imbrace and intermingling
as poetic and pleasurable
as any coupling

and the elements were born
and the carbon bore oxygen
in embrace and intermingling
as poetic and pleasurable

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as any coupling

and the elements were born
and molecules (formed)
the pairbonding
(so subtle, so subtle
the process)
reproducing and replicating
as thru some metaphorically
(shall we say divine)
prearranged design.

And the photosynthesis
life and light
and light and life
the ancestral process
photophosphorylation

A silent, moving, phototropic
epiphany, bowing to the sunlight.

A fern by the side of the pond.

And the photosynthesis
a delicate permeable line
and the organic defined
all that is living
double-helixed linking
genetic codes whispering
thru ascending and descending
spontaneously forming, infinitely turning
rungs of RNA and DNA
and the ascent: Chordata,
Vertebrata, Mammalia, Eutheria,
Primata, Anthropoieda, Catarrhina,
Hominoidea, Hominidae, Homienenae,
Homo Sapiens (self-named)

With analogous and homologous
forms, spanning membrous memories

a sperm, an egg, the unrolling
reliving the six act drama
the tohu and the bohu
then the firmament splitting
(sunrising, fruit ripening)
and reptilian leviathans
unfettered by time, alight
a bird flying, from the nestling nest, then
those
suckling at the breast and
on the Aretes pinnacle
there stands
a woman and a man.

The Mosaic evolution

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a diverse and varied groping
(some gone with Gondwana)
and wings that flew
now hands that grasp
and so the poet's aspiration
can only hope to rise
in words
to unknown destinations
O, vestige wings
embrace those truths
that words despise."

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Ode to the Spontaneous Generation

My dear disciples, the avant garde
of the spontaneous generation
disciplined in the Arts Liberal, or Science
degreed now in one
of knowledge's vast and multi-faceted
categories (these are no times for a Renaissance
man)
with fragmented visions
of a divided world.

(Professor shakes head, My, how I lecture, how I lecture.)

Listen:
A Unified Field Theory of
Reality, Action, and Knowledge

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Interlude One: A Reminiscence

Aeons ago, as a high school biology student, I remember asking the teacher, Mr. Wainright, a former missionary who left the South American jungles (to recover from malaria and live out his later years in the relative quiet of the classroom), about the implications of the clash between science and religion with the advent of the ingenious theory of evolution by his colleague Sir Charles Darwin.

Wainright was forever doing x-radiation experiments with Drosophila (fruitflies), presumably to somehow prove that the natural world was created by his Lord's God, as if he personally was responsable for that proof. I vividly remember to this day his giant weathered hands and thick fingers, overgrown with hoary down that resembled some ancient exotic fungi. From Wainright's ears grew tufts of hair so thick they might have hosted a myriad of organisms. (Earwigs?)

Knowing that I had an audience of the Scientifically advanced and "enlightened" members of the sophomore class, I remember casting the bait!

> Is it true, Sir, that God
> created fossils
> to try the Christian faith?

Wainright's expression did not change as he stared first at me, and then at the blackboard, where he drew:

"This," my teacher said, "Mr. Isaac, is the story of the evolution of life from Amoeba, to Fungi, to Plantae, to Animalia: Coelenterata, to the Omega Point (as he drew on the bell curve)

> …the Christ Jesus who died for our sins."

Needless to say, the boldness of this assertion shook my sophomoric mentality, and my now inverting smile traced the bell curve's line. I sat down, and finished my project of reconstructing organic molecules using wooden balls and pegs, a school boy playing with his toys.

Origins of History: The Mundane and Messianic

For Laurence

Interlude Two: With Choreography of the Imatination

A dark forest, A deep jungle,
Listen: a drum's carnal rhythm.
Imagine: a woman and a man, dancing, planting, reaping

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The sun swallowed by a cloud
(then all poetry was alive and all that was alive was poetry)
and the light unfolding into darkness,
and the darkness, once again becoming light.
Wordless meditations on
the origin, creation, direction of all that is living
Memories of the sea, swelling,
dreams of leaf light journies, flying
sophomoric speculations on what God
created God, The evolutionary spiral, a spinning
stairway, with rungs to climb
(each an era of time, and some still climbling)
Yet
no ascent
of bee or ant since Oligocene
nor birds since Miocene
nor mammals since Pliocene
and of man, what of man?

Some timelocked still at the ape dance

some, who in friendly conversation,
have no ears to hear, those dark-eyed,
Medieval, empty faces, they chant
the hymns that only hear
the dead, or near to dying.

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The Mundane

The History of
thru this battle, or that war
names and dates changed, yet
none innocent
the most meticulous chronicle,
Now
the Age of Barbarism
our recurring fate.

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The Messianic

Macroscope

Professor: recites in sing song nursery rhyme voice

Through macroscope or microscope
the cosmos and the atom

The Tree The Fruit of hope
the root, the branch
all blossom forth
full formed
from the head
of Adam.

The Professor now removes from his tweed jacket pockets miniature soldiers and horsemen, similar in size to those that can be ordered from the back of comic books, but possessing an intruiguing life-like quality, one set in earth brown tones, carrying cylinder shaped weapons, the other set weaponless, colored an ethereal blue, the faces on both sets so real one suspects that at any moment they might speak.

The Professor warms up with another nursery rhyme:

I am a little man, I have a little gun
my bullets are made of lead, lead, lead

I am a little man, stopped growing as a boy
never started growing again gain gain

I went then to war, and shot a young man
the toy soldier fell over, dead, dead, dead.

Again, the Professor reaches into his pocket, and into the hands of one set of soldiers (the weaponless) places miniature banners, neatly lettered, that say

/ One World / One God /

/ One God / One World /

/ The People / Not the State/

/ Legions of the Kindhearted/

/ A whole day wages for a loaf of bread/

/ A whole day wages for a loaf of bread/

2) The End

The Professor, sensing the audience's restlessness (after all it is a sunny spring day) draws his commencement address to its conclusion.

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The Merging of the Two
Jerusalems
One old, One New

On the Mountain of Magedon
Armagedon - a final battle
the final struggle, only the fit
to survive

The Professor peers down at his little armies, as though he can actually see the opposing forces drawing into battle formation.

Gog of Magog
the final turning
of the cogs
mind against mind
(so impatient, so impatient)
to hasten the heat death
to explode the moment
in space and time
all are agog
the final battle
Aarmagedon, against
Gog of Magog.

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Interlude Three: The Professor on Social Darwinism
Survival of the Fattest

The Scholars tell us Charles dear
that species battle out of fear
of being sat upon by saddists
and call your theory
survival of the fattest.

So Herbert Spencer, and the Robberbarons too
like demented Lancelots the goodness dragon slew
that's why today in our democracy
we bow lot to stately aristocracy
(Rockefeller, Ford, and don't forget Carnegie)
who live in kingly castles high upon the hills
while we, the peasants and the plebes
live in shoebox houses
and all to feed the fitter theives.

On our weekends we motor to the sea
covering every bit of beach like sand
for every spot for two, lay three
beware while sunning, for one false move
and once again the jungle law you'll prove
survival of the fattest.

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Interlude Four
Essence and Existence
(a schoolyard hand game)

one, two, three
paper knife
ideas that cut

one, two, three
knife fist
smashed by the rock

one, two, three
rock paper,
covering all

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Interlude Five: Ism's Ology's and Osophy's

(The Professor has inadvertently mixed papers from an advance philosophy class in with his commencement notes, but believing in the moment, continues as though the philosophy notes were pre-ordained:)

These are pedantic poems
with messages like fingers pointing
of Ologys seeking Psyche
of scholars chasing the young virgin
allusive as the breath of life
whose wind floats ideas on angels' wings
the pedants and Cupid forever pursuing, but
Never reaching, never touching
Psyche, thru their Ologys and Isms.

Ism's
Individualism: Not love of neighbor
but glorification of Self
not Love of self, but egos discovering Persona
those costumes of long defunct plays
whose masks are chipped and peeling
And we paint bright with every shade
of brown and white and gray and blue
To say this is Me, yes this is I
and you are He, and that is She
Masking, always masking
the Thou.

The logic of those obsessed
with the reflections of the mirror
"Egoism, ergo egotheism"
and if you like fancier formula
"Egoism ergo apotheosis"

Enter a more fletting ism
Racism: denying we are all living branches
growing from a common root
Racism: the rapid currents
fresheting into a contest of the quickest
Racing
Racing
Racing
to hatred's shoreless sea
racing to drown every you
and every me;
baptism by death
into the empty spaces
of Eternity

Enter racism's bastard brother, Nationalism
the pseudo-scientific sanction:
every nation's arrogant declaration
that, "my people are the noblest
of all the flag-waving, ethnocentric nations."

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Then, stumbling over bumbling thought
Nicholas Chauven, Napoleon's main man
with Decater, lover of his nation, right or wrong
worshippers of every political sham
Chauven, symbol of a century,
The man
kneeling to the deitys
of State
and Sex.

Final Lecture
At the University one learns dissection
of dead cats and dead cultures
and Anthropo, Geo, and Theo Logys
techniques of seeing light thru prisms
the ossification of ideas
sentencing action to its prison
let out only to see the marriage
of bitch and bastard
of ology to ism
or the coronation of the queen Osophy
philosophy, articulate as a swishing faggot
seeking specious causes with no effect
of moving closer
to the source of light:

action and compassion

We therefore declare as dead ideas
and logical treason
all hyphenated ideas
that do not come alive
in loving kindnesses gentle reason.

We seek lovers of wisdom
and would lay to rest
all osophys, ologhys, and isms
in knowlege's multi-volumed tomes.

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Final Interlude
A Journey thru Earthly Jerusalem

Rommema

With each step a year passes
away
from the heights, Rommema
downward, a view of the old
city, and tomorrow,
emerging
from yesterday.

Mea Shearim

The hundred sects and their hundred gates
a mourner's scene in grays and blacks
even the children dusk garbed
in frocks solemn and drab

Who took the Chesed
from the Chassidim?

Who stole their joy?

And more real than a poet's fiction
the eyes of hatred's imagination
of the enemy nations: Imagine
Framed in the gate's shadows
a lone oak, fronting
the Transylvania Yeshiva School

a spread winged bat
in an eyes blink
a black cloaked Rabbi
walks away
wearing a sable hat.

The Market - The Walls

Within the walls - the old city
thru the Damascus gate
where the same beggars
for centuries have sat
palm upturned, there
they still sit
and wait.

In the *Souk* (the market), the sheep
butcher
his face: lines etched and framed
by Dead Sea winds
as his fathers
and his fathers' fathers,

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with scars from the battles
of Jerusalem, hands calm

and without a grimace or a shake
draws the dull knife edge
severing his victim's neck
another sheep's fate
A barrel
for the front legs
another for the hind
one shelf for heads
a hook for the carcass
and the flies feast
on the red meat.

A Wall, A Church

I walk on
up the fifteen stairs
to the temple mount
hearing on each step
a song
of ascents

No longer waiting, but asking:

Is that the Messiah there?

The young Chassid with skyblue dove eyes
whirlwind sidlocks and golden hair?

Perhaps that soldier there
doing his duty, so meek, go proud
protecting the crowd from the crowd?

No, not that one - not that one

Walk on, Walk on.

Thru this city within cities
labyrinth within labyrinth
at the end of each alley
a wall, a church

Each marking the end of a journey
each shrine the end of a search

I do not stop, continue
Walking, looking, seeking

Then - a voice

"one thought, one spark, will ignite
celestial visions of luminous white light"

"The one you are seeking

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is also seeking you."

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Interlude: Today, If You Hear the Voice

(Midrash on Sanhedrin 98A)

At the city's gate
not thinking of coming or going
the sage sits calmly, the hour late
waiting only for the time of doing

I asked this blanched and ancient sage
(as on naive and young of age)
"When Rabbi, will the Messiah come?"

With index finger pointing,
then flipping the page
of the eternal book (his home)
he answered
"Go and seek yourself
he stands at the gates
of Rome."

There, enwrapped in prayer shawl
embracing the lepers,
the protector of the meek,
The Messiah.

"Peace unto Thee, Master and Preacher"

"Peace unto You, my friend and teacher"

"By what name may I call the Messiah?"

"And what is your name?"

"Isaac, the son of Israel."

"That then is the name you seek."

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The Messiahs
The Culmination of a History of Messianism and Messianic Pretenders

for my father

If I am
as you say
a
messiah

then none other
will save me
from Myself
for myself, but myself
I am the author
None speak my lines
But me
Directing
the plot,
scenery
dialogue
I am my own destiny, Free!

But God
so alone, so alone
and whom to save
but Myself?

(A Chant - chorus)
Do not fear
My beloved
it takes but one
spark
to ignite
the fire
and all have hands
to gather their kindling
and all have hearts
to share the warmth
and all have feet
to dance around the fire
which consumes the beasts

Usury, Greed, Envy

the beasts that consume

Violence, Hate, Cupidity

will themselves be consumed

in the hand held circle dance
around
the evening fire

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Then the many messiahs
(every you and me)
saviours all, all anointed
autonomous, self-ruled, each free
each making real
our commen destiny, and
will awaken
those
huddled in fright, and embrace them,
when, the
night, embraces
the dew
awakened dawn.

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Denouement

The Professor uncovers from beneath his notes a well thumbed, leather bound copy of the Two Testaments. A trialogue is opened with two ancient rabbinic sages on a nuance of textual exegesis: (Deuteronomy Twenty)

"The fearful and fainthearted":
unwilling to be numbered among the dead
preferring the warmth of wife and bed?

Coward, traitor, lacking courage?

afraid of wars iron horns?

Weak kneed in the face of dilemma?

Heart faint in the presence
of the stoic, manly warrior?

Unfit for the natural struggle?

(The voice of Rabbi Akiba:)

"The fearful: trembles at the sight
of the naked, unsheathed sword
seeking appeasement of the unkind word
he trembles at the sight
of the naked, two-edged sword."

(The voice of Rabbi Jose the Galillean)

"Fearful
the sacrificial sin offering
on the battleground, the unkind home
welcoming the spoil; blood and bone

(Akiva:) (In Toseffta)

The Rach HaLavov

not faint, but
kind
hearted
even the greatest of the warriors
the bravest of the brave
the strongest of the strong

the kindhearted: declaring
"I choose the battle

(no captains, no generals)
This War : is wrong"

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War and Bread

The Professor The warrior Messiahs
and fate's Son
not Peace, but the Sword
all mortal men

On the precipitous cliff
this sacrifice for God
and the Jew
to the devil
Azazel.

(aside) I think I need
a rest
from the West.

(an orphan in rags innocently recites)

Little Tommy Tucker, sang for his supper
What did he sing for? White bread and butter
How could he cut it, without any knife?
How could he marry, without any wife?

The Professor: Unaware that some of the commencement audience is at a loss trying to understand his many diversions, returns to his toy soldiers.

(Points) The Chief Priest of Gog, the Scythians, the Cossacks
the minions of dominion, descent, and submission
brave soldiers, all, awaiting the attack
of the unwalled city, the desolate land;
and blood drinking Tafurs, as content
to kill with scythe as with seord

The Professor knocks over the soldiers of Gog with his hand, and falls to his knees:

And those who still await
salvation from the sky
Peace from the Heavens.

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The Merging

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem
One from heaven, above, descending
One from earth, below, ascending

O, God of Jerusalem, of stone and alley
give us this day, our daily bread
feed the poor, revive the dead.

One dream, one vision, one morning
the sun awakening the valley
For without clamor, without prayer
child, woman, or man
The sun will rise
and set
and once more
rise again

O, Jerusalem
City of Peace,
Indwelling of Peace
Inheritance of Peace,
On Earth
as it is in Heaven,
and God
and the Name of God
in the pure tongue
that is Peace
will be One
and the Name of that City
From that day shall be
Ehyeh
The God of
becoming
will dwell here
in
Final Jerusalem.
in
The Final Age

Amen Sealah

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FINAL ACTS
BOOK 3 OF THE FINAL AGE® TESTAMENT

Theophilos, my friend, check Webster's Collegiate Dictionary on "Faust".

A prophecy.

"After a sensual life, he is carried off by the Devil, but in the Final Act he is regenerated and his soul is saved".

Rumor reports that Faust rationalized Jesus' miracles and said, "Anything he can do - I can do better."

My poodle still shadows me. His name is Isaiah, a dark, coal black, curly haired, standard.

If the poodle be Satan, Theophilos, I must say - he is most obedient and yes, even, trainable.

Isaac commands the poodle best -

Shake!
Heel!
and most important - a quite believable -
Play dead!

Amen, So may it be God's will on Earth as it is in Heaven. Heaven on Earth.

Rabbi Laurence (DeLeon)
Re Shone
La Sealah

The vision of Christ that thou dost see
Is my vision's greatest enemy...
Both read the Bible day and night
But thou reads't black where I read white

Do what you will, this Life's a fiction
And is made up of contradiction.

The Everlasting Gospel William Blake

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Faust (mit dem Pudel here-int redend)

Schon warnt mich was, dass inh dabei nicht bleibe
Mir hilft der Geist, auf einmal seh ich Rat
Und schreibe getrost: Im anfang wan die tat.

My translation must be changed again
Then, I am warned as I grasp the pen
The spirit helps me. I have it - exact
Write: In the beginning was the (F)Act.

Faust
Goethe

"The beauty of the Bible is that the most ignorant and simple minds understand it best."

William Blake

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Theophilos:

Every printed Hebrew Bible since the Ninth Century include the Torah and Prophetic Trope. They are the Soul and Song of the Torah.

At least seventy distinctly different versions of the tune of the Tropes exist, including Babylonian, Yemenite, Lithuanian, German, Indian, *Minhag* American and Sealah. The Sealah Trope are jazzy and fluid.

Each of the Trope musical systems require a teacher. Final Testament is but a taste. The music in the text represents *Minhag* American with Sealah twists. They are only guides, Theophilos, so let the symbols awaken the melody in your heart.

My friend Dr. Harold Bloom, in his introduction to Olivier Revault D'Allonnes Musical Variations on Jewish Thought teaches that the freedom to move from the Broken to the Free Tablets depends on these musical variations. D'Allonnes teaches the music of the inwardness of the Moral Law.

Final Testament and Acts and the Final Revelation of the Moral Law are not idols of broken lines and stone. The word is always broken. the Song is always Eternal. Sing unto the Lord the New Song. Finally in New Jerusalem.

Amen
Sealah
Laurence

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Sit in a quiet place and envision seven circles in motion, radiating outward from the center.

The First circle represents the Self.

The Second; all relationships of the Family.

The Third and Fourth; Neighbors and Community.

The Fifth circle corresponds to the Nation or State.

The Sixth; to all Terran life.

The Seventh circle radiates out to the apparent limits of the Universe.

These Seven circles radiate outward from the Inner self to the Outer World, from Shalvah to Shalom.

The Still Point of our Turning Worlds, at the center of the first circle, is Shalvah. Shalvah is at the root of Sealah and means: tranquility, inner peace, inner perfection.

Just as the sphere is the apparent outer limit of space, the point at the center of the First Circle is the apparent inward limit, the Aleph point, the beginning of all Creation. The movement of a sperm cell as it seeks the Circle of the Egg and the spiral motion of a forming galaxy describes the dance of the Sealah spheres. The sperm, a circle in motion, merges with the Egg and life is born. Particles at the center swirl outwards as a Galaxy is formed.

This is the Yould point of the Aleph. Yould is the first letter of Gods' transcendent names. The Yould's subtleties are ineffable. We can say that at the center of all creativity is God.

The perfection of Shalvah, of inner Wholeness, is found in the imitation of the motion of the dancing Yould. A restful motion, A holy pause. A Sabbath of the spirit, like a comma.

We pause and move outwards from the Center, bringing AtOneMent to all spheres and dimensions of our lives. Shalvah is atonement with God in the First Circle.

All spiritual striving begins in the First Circle and enlightenment is not possible, except through God's grace, if the Sphere of Shalvah is not filled full.

One cannot hope to save the World if they have not saved themselves.

Focus on the Center and throw the first pebble into the Well of Self. Watch the circles ripple outwards to infinity. Meditation, prayer, singing an dancing are all ways to be in touch with the Center. The Music of the Seven Spheres is heard with this focusing and the harmony is the New Song, Sealahs Song. Arise, spin like a Dervish, and feel the circles begin their merging an overlapping.

The First Circle is an apparent boundary to the Second Circle of Family. When filled, however, it spills into the Second the Way water overflows the circumference of a full vessel. A Second Circle is created, through Love, as Sperm and Egg become One Circle. This follows the pattern of Divine Creation. The Second Circle is perfected in the Love of Parents and Children. The Ten Utterances command: Honor Your Father and Mother. Sealah prays for Love for the Second Circle to be perfected.

Peace in the Home is the starting point for Peace on Earth. In the Golden Sealah Age, the hearts of children and parents are One.

The Third and Fourth circles include neighbors and community. Our Sealah Model reminds us that to "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18) we first must Love Ourselves.

Peaceful homes are the foundation of peaceful Sealah communities. The circle of community begins in neighborhoods and expands outward to the circumference of ht Globe. Then Sealah's Peace will come to our Terran Global Village.

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The Fifth circle, the state, and the Sixth, the potential community of nations, are in great an immediate need of healing. Wars will end when Sealah's teaching are Law. Our century, what future chroniclers will call the Age of Barbarism, will end in Peace if the Fifth and Sixth Circle are Perfected. The alternative is Death by Nuclear Holocaust.

The choice of :Life, not Death, will refocus humanity on the real Holy War, the War for Justice and Economic equality.

As long as one child in one family in one community of one Nation is malnourished, we are all, each of us, unredeemed.

Sealah will nourish this child with food and love. Our good world has been blessed by God with enough natural resources that none need want, enough food that none need to go hungry, enough love that none need be lonely, enough wisdom that all may be enlightened.

Sealah Teachers of Peace

Sealah is here. The nations shall be unified into one world with Jerusalem as capital. The United State of Israel. From Zion this Torah goes forth: One World, under One Flag. Sealah's banner worn as a prayer shawl, of Seven concentric circles overflowing from Shalvah to Shalom. One world ruled by the One God with the pure language of Liberty and Peace, Truth and Economic Justice for All.

Religion will be whole, and One, in Sealah. The world is made sacred by Sealah Teachers of Peace. The Ark of God's Final Covenant shall heal the world. The Ark that does battle against injustice shall teach us to put together the broken pieces of the Tablets, the shattered pieces of the Covenant that remain broken as we daily dance around the Golden calf. Sealah's Tabernacle of Peace teaches us how to put the pieces of the Covenant together again to S.T.O.P. poverty, S.T.O.P. injustice and S.T.O.P. war.

Learning in the Final Age®

Beyond the University, where individuals worship at two altars, dividing Science and God

The Body and the Soul, is Sealah.

In Sealah, nothing is secular. Sealah takes all of life as its province. We pray for the healing of all schizophrenia.

Beyond the Seminaries, which preach God but practice denominationalism, is Sealah. Wholistic Scholarship, *Shema* learning, sings the New Song of Spirituality: "You are no longer Jew or Christian, Muslim or Hindu, this sect or that sect, but one in Sealah. All disciplines of knowledge shall be one.

Sealah trains Rabbi physicians, economists, sociologists, ecologists, politicians, etc., in our Final Age® all disciples require integration. We shall survive the Nuclear Age and enter the Sealah age as all our endeavors in medicine, physics, engineering and business and religion submit to Sealah's vision of wholeness and Peace.

Join us in our Sealah circle dance as we worship the Lord and choose life.

Amen

Isaac Sealah

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Dear Theophilos,

We speak again my friend. The Final Act is complete. It is no fiction. Our task is to interpret the meaning of that Deed to the world. Then this Gospel according to Laurence will be Good News and Truth.

Final Acts is one of the theoretical blueprints for Sealah as God's Tabernacle of Peace. The Gospel, The Good News; Isaac lives! Praise the Lord. God is good. God's kindness endures forever. Those who fear God declare: God's kindness endures forever. By strength and song we are delivered.

The Final Act, the exaltation of God's right hand. Isaac lives to teach God's deeds. The Gates of Righteousness are open for all to enter. Hallelujah. In the end you answered. Now you are our Salvation.

From among your
Sons and daughters of the Lord
Sons and daughters of women
And men

The One
The builders rejected
Is now the cornerstone
A marvel
In our eyes.

The cornerstone, the Rock, scorned by the Church, is Sealah's cornerstone. The living Tabernacle of Peace rests on the Rock of God. Many stumbled on the original stone, fragmenting and shattering the Promise.

Moses' Revelation was chiseled into stone. The Apostles chipped away at their Rock. Israel twice dances around Golden Calves.

The broken pieces of Tablet are placed in a Tabernacle. The broken body of Christ is placed in a sepulcher.

The Revelation of Pentecost is once a fiction, once a failure. Being more kind, the Revelation of Pentecost is once a *Midrash*, once a Prelude.

Another *Midrash*: This day of atonement we accept for a second time the second set of stone tablets. God's Law whole and unbroken. This Final Day of Atonement we be-live the Second Coming, God's living Torah, alive and well. A marvel in our eyes.

We pray - God save us
This time - we pray
To be successful.
With a capital S

Blessed is the One
Who comes in God's name
To arrange the Marriage
Of Israel and Judah
In the Holy Tabernacle of Sealah
Which is called
God's home.
God's strength is enlightening
a Menorah of hope

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God's festivals, sacrifices
Were bound with rope

And Isaacs on the altars

The sacrifice unbound
Satan's horns broken
Off the altar

Now you are our God

We praise:

Praise is do, good God
God's *chesed* is forever

Theophilos, enough hallelujah talk. I confess that at first I was not convinced about Sealah. My first role, doubting, a Thomas.

I was confused. What role would I play? What was my friend up to? When Isaac mentioned Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, or Paul, I recoiled, a Dracula response.

If Isaac had been crucified by his father, if I had seen the marks from the nails in his hands, I still would not have believed.

For three years I fled Isaac, at first to Jerusalem, my Nineveh. There in the first steps towards my return to Sealah, I read the Later books of the Torah. My greatest stumbling was John.

Isaac never said it. John did. But Isaac quoted John and Mark, and Matthew and Luke, and the Letters. John 14:6 says "No one comes to the Father except through me." John quotes Jesus. Isaac did not speak this way. He did say: "I teach the Way, the Truth, and the Life." Playing Philip, I asked to be shown the Father. Isaac's answer: "I teach more than the Father." My friend, lover of wisdom, lover of God. Theophilos, you know now that I was not moved from the beginning to be an Apostle.

I speak in Final Testament of my devotion to the Anointed One's life and teachings. Even I, who chronicled the Final Act, came to Sealah only after much stumbling. Therefore I begin with this apology.

I would learn how to form prayers to broken and reconstructed stone. Luke spoke to you in the Old Acts about Peter before the Sanhedrin. Luke hinted, or rather, reminded us that one of the things we learn from the original Revelation is that even broken stone can be resurrected. And stone-cold hearts can be circumcised with a chisel and feel love's warmth. So I became the stone and Isaac the sculptor. In this Final Book of Acts, I chronicle how I would learn to see Isaac as a living Torah, the fleshing-out of old, stone-cold ways.

Moses' Law is brought back to life in a ReNewed Covenant. Sinai itself is rigid and fixed, the Covenant grounded, chiseled into granite. The rivers of Eden flow to and from Sinai. The mountain gives form; the river waters the Garden. The river is the oral tradition. These words flow from that source.

Theophilos, I learned, as Isaiah promised, that if I trusted in Sealah I would not be put to shame.

In the beginning the cornerstone was my stumbling, the Rock on which I fell. In those days I did not know Peter from Paul, my left hand from my right, or my destiny.

What follows is the story of how I became *Re Shone La Sealah*, Isaac's right hand man and Apostle; as Sealah is God's Apostle and right hand.

Amen. Sealah.

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Pentecost One

The mist had not lifted. The seagulls were only faintly visible on the rock. A thick cloud drifted off the sea, surrounding the gazebo. The cloud was thick as smoke. The sun broke through the cloud and the cloud ascended, afire, the smoke of a furnace.

Isaac was then visible holding two scrolls of the Torah. The scrolls were covered in white velvet mantels. Two lions embroidered in gold held up the Ten Principles of God's Law. The Lions of Judah and Israel.

All stood as Isaac opened his arms and sang in Hebrew: "Wherever the Tabernacle traveled Moses would proclaim 'Arise O Lord, and your enemies will be dispersed and scattered will be those who despise your presence.'"

Then Isaac, following the custom of the orthodox, proclaimed the true Zionism of Isaiah and Sealah:

"For from Zion shall go forth Torah
The word of the Lord, from Jerusalem

And God shall judge between the nations
Debating and rebuking many

And they shall beat their swords into ploughshares
And their spears into pruning hooks

Nation shall not lift up sword against nation
Neither shall they learn war anymore."

Isaac and his disciples then sang together:

"Hear O Israel
All who struggle and prevail
The Lord
And God
Are one"

Isaac answered:

"Blessed is God's kingdom
On Earth as Heaven
Forever and ever"

The traditional response is:

God is One
Great the Lord
Transcendent God's name.

I was bothered by this change. Isaac noticed. Isaac continued with the traditional:

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"Magnify the Lord with Me
As we extol God's name together."

Isaac walked with the scrolls for all the Apostles to kiss. Isaac then danced through the crowd so all could touch and kiss the scrolls. They sang in Hebrew, but all seemed to understand.

Isaac opened one of the scrolls and chanted:

"And may God help shield and deliver
All who trust

And let us say
Amen.

Let the first called come forward, arise our Rabbi and teacher,
HaRav Aryeh ben Avraham, Re Shone La Sealah."

I was stunned. My jaw unhinged and fell open, a-gape.
Isaac laughed. "A-gape - Agape," he said. "Come, my friend, to this Feast of Love." I had no idea what in Hell Isaac was talking about. Too shocked to protest, I entered the gazebo and recited the blessing between the readings of the Law. Isaac handed me the *Yad* (the pointer), wiggled his eyebrows Groucho-style, and said in Hebrew:

"My strong right arm, please read."

Isaac smiled, but I saw nothing humorous in the situation, and was not amused. I did not read. I did follow the ancient text as Isaac sang the Hebrew with the special cantillation called *Tam Elyone*, for the Ten Utterances.

"I

Am Lord, Your God

Who took you out

Of the land of Egypt

From the house of Slaves."

Isaac sang the English in a chant following the pattern of the Hebrew cantillation.

He indicated that I should kiss the scroll and recite the blessing after the reading of the Torah. Isaac had not begun the reading in its proper place and now he was ending in the wrong place - the middle of the fourth reading. Isaac read my mind. "All are called today," he said. "Say your blessing so we can answer Amen." I did.

Isaac called each Apostle to read one of the Ten Principles. I was amazed when each chanted the text perfectly, in Hebrew, according to the exact voweling of the Masoretic text and High cantillation. Each also translated into their tongue, and English, if it was different.

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Isaac then motioned all the onlookers into the gazebo. The media crews with hand-held cameras, zoomed in on the crowd and inner circle.

Each Apostle wore a prayer shawl draped over shoulder and head. I wore the traditional oversized black and white *Tallit*. The prayer shawls of the Apostles were flags. One with a cross, another a crescent. One with a hammer transforming sword to sickle, another with designs of the American Indian. A flag of Asia. A flag of Africa. The flag of the United Nations with olive branch and the concentric circles of Sealah and others I could not identify. I did recognize the flag of Israel and the Stars and Stripes in red, white and blue. The stars were the stars of David. Each flag was fringed with *Tzitzit*, the tassels commanded by the Lord in Numbers and Deuteronomy, to be worn on the corners of one's garments. The ten formed a complete circle, holding on to one another's *Tzitzit*.

Isaac and I now stood in the middle. Isaac wore his *Tallit* flag as a cape. The *Tallit* was emblazoned with a cross of stars that was a Menorah. The cross-like outstretched arms, supported the Seven lamps of the Menorah. From each lamp a color of the spectrum emanated, creating a luminous mirror of the menorah and the circles of Sealah.

Isaac wore this rainbow, an inverted crown, as he moved the *Tallit* from off his shoulders to over his head in the manner of the ultra-orthodox Jew. I mocked my friend in my mind as I thought, Superman becomes Sealahman. I imagined Isaac wearing Superman's cape, the "S" a secret mystical allusion to Sealah. Isaac smiled.

On his forehead he wore the double signs of God as Lord. *Tefillin.* Phylacteries. The boxes, traditionally black, were white. On one side was a three pronged *Shin* or S. The first prong was red; the middle, orange; the third, yellow. On the other side the *shin* was four pronged. One prong green, one blue, one indigo, one violet. Roy G. Biv *Tefillin.*

The strap that crowned Isaac's head was white, as were the two straps hanging around Isaac's neck and over his heart. The Hebrew letter *Daled* was tied in a green knot over the base of his neck.

On his arm near his heart Isaac wore a red box. The box is traditionally made of leather. Isaac's appeared to be made of wood.

My eyes, as did the camera's, focused on the faces of the Apostles. Framed by the flag of Israel, an orthodox Chassidic rabbi with side curls. Woven into the white fringes of his *Tallit*, was a thread of blue. Under the flag of the United Nations, Sheila Baldwin. Under the Stars and Stripes, Isaac's father, the Reverend Raymond of Saint Clair.

I moved out of the inner circle and joined the onlookers as they moved in, facing the sea. The sun broke through the clouds like a tongue of fire.

The seagulls were out on their rock. They appeared to be watching us, as we watched them. I counted nine gulls. Perhaps they were waiting for a tenth to make a minyan. Perhaps they were awaiting their own avian messiah to descend from the heavens. They made sounds I heard as mocking. They could have come from my own throat.

Isaac then chanted in Hebrew: "All are now called."

The Apostles let go of one another's fringes and raised their flag shawls over everyone's heads, creating a massive canopy of Peace. Seventy people recited the blessing together and then sang with one voice: "All the people heard the sounds and saw the flames, the voice of the *Shofar* and the mountain smoking. The people saw this and trembled, and there were seven lamps of fire burning before God's throne."

All recited the blessing after the Torah, reading in unison.

Perplexed and still amazed, I asked Isaac in Aramaic, so as not to embarrass him, "What does this all mean?" Isaac smiled as all answered in one voice, "Sealah has come."

I thought they all must be on drugs!

The reading from the second scroll was, for me, an even greater stumbling. All called Isaac to the Torah. The second scroll was thicker than the first; as though material had been added. The scroll was near its

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end. Isaac chanted:

"And I saw a New Heaven and Earth...

I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem

Coming down from God out of Heaven

Prepared as a bride

Adorned for her groom

I heard a loud voice

Proclaiming from the throne

'Behold the tabernacle of God is with you

You shall be my people

And I your God.'

God will wipe away all tears

From your eyes

And there shall be no more death

Neither sorrow, nor crying

Neither shall there be

Anymore pain.

The old order has passed away!"

I had heard material like this recently, in Isaac's dreadful debate with his father. I thought of the Final Act and shuddered. When I began to listen again I heard Isaac chant:

"The Twelve Gates of New Jerusalem

Were twelve pearls

Every Gate a pearl

The streets of New Jerusalem

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Were of pure gold

Gold you see through

I saw no temple in the city

Save the sovereign Lord God

And the Lamb"

I stopped listening as Isaac kept on chanting, and I awoke when I heard Isaac say, "The one giving testimony speaks: Yes indeed, I am coming soon." All said: "So be it. Come Lord Jesus." Isaac answered, "May the grace of Lord Jesus be with you all."

I felt faint. Isaac chanted, "*Chazak Chazak Vanetchazak*." All responded with a song:

"Be strong
Be strong
And let us strengthen one another."

They began a circle dance. Isaac grasped my *Tzitzit* but I broke away and stood outside the crowd. I ran.

Dear Theophilos: The remainder of the service I watched years later, on video.

The people were crowding Isaac on every side. A poor woman who had suffered from severe bleeding for twelve years (she had spent all her money on physicians, but none had cured her) approached Isaac from behind and touched the fringes on Isaac's *Tallit*. Her bleeding stopped at once. Isaac said, "Who touched me?" The Apostles shrugged and one said, "Who can tell in such a crowd?" Isaac smiled and gently asked everyone to leave the gazebo. He then said, "Let the one who was touched come forward - they share in my power."

The woman, who had wanted to be discreet, entered the gazebo trembling with joy, and explained why she had grasped Isaac's *Tzitzit*. Isaac said, "My daughter, your faith made you well. Go in Peace!"

The sick sat outside the gazebo, now a doctor's waiting room. They were healed while holding the corners of Isaac's *Tallit*, the *Tzitzit*, in their hands.

Isaac then said the prayer for the sick, as the orthodox do during the Torah service to this day:

"May the God who blessed our ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah, bless and heal all who are ill."

Isaac asked the congregation, "Is anyone among you sick? Send for the leaders of the congregation to pray with you and anoint you with oil so you may also be messiahs in the name of the Lord. Prayers offered in faith help save the diseased, the Lord will help raise them form their beds, their sins forgiven. Confess your sins to one another, pray for one another and you will be healed."

Isaac then gave a short sermon:

"When Jacob, who became Israel, was on his deathbed, he was prepared to reveal to his sons the time of the Final Redemption. He knew well the shortcomings of his sons: Reuben's instability; Simon

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and Levi's cruelty; Zebulen's desire to be a sailor; Dan's destiny to be a judge, and so on. Judah's blessing Israel couched in the enigmatic prophecy that the scepter would not depart from Judah until the coming of Sealah, who would have the obedience of all people. The trials of Judah were hinted at when Israel spoke of Judah washed in blood, red as wine. Today Sealah teaches, 'You are no longer only Israel and Judah, Gentile and Jew, but one in Sealah. This day all who choose are chosen.

"Israel's vision was blurred by a vision of death and the end. Israel felt responsible for the continuation of the legacy of Abraham and Isaac and the divine presence, the *Sechina,* departed from him when he questioned the worthiness and integrity of his sons.

"Israel doubted if his sons would keep the faith. They all replied in one voice:

'*Shema Yisroal Adonai Elohayhem Adoni Echad*'
Hear O Israel
Listen Father
We believe
The Lord is our God
The Lord alone'

"Let us continue this noble tradition as we affirm our faith to our parents and chant the *Shema* putting in their names."

Isaac waited as all prayed, and then continued:

"Israel is also the nation dedicated to God. Jacob became Israel after his God-wrestling. The *Shema* is a call to pray.

Isaac turned to the Chassidic Rabbi (wearing the flag of Israel) who proclaimed, "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one."
The Reverend proclaimed, "Hear O America, The Lord our God, the Lord is one."
Professor Baldwin continued, "Hear all nations, the Lord our God, the Lord is one."
Isaac answered, as Jacob did:

"Let God's glory manifest in this world eternally."

Isaac continued to the camera:

"Israel's flag today is based on the ancient *Tallit* with its thread of blue. The threads frame the Star of David, the symbol of Israel's nationalism. Flags worn as prayer shawls with holy fringes symbolize the submission of Israel's nationalism to the kingdom of God.

"All nations will submit and be obedient to Sealah's vision. The flag of every nation becomes a prayer shawl as the scepter returns to Sealah.

"The nations will be healed by Sealah's vision. The fringes are the distinctive sign of my healing."

Isaac and the minyan of Apostles led the congregation in a song.

"We are one in the spirit
We are one in the Lord

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We are one in the Spirit
We are one in the Lord

And we pray that all unity
Will one day be restored

And they will know we are Sealah
By our love, by our love

Yes they'll know we are Sealah
By our love"

Some sang 'Christian.' Some sang 'Jewish.' One Apostle said 'Muslim.' Another 'Buddhist.' And so on. All ended with: "And they'll know we are Sealah by our Love."

Isaac then chanted the blessing before the prophetic reading that speaks of God's prophets of truth and righteousness.

Isaac chanted the *Haftorah* verse by verse in Hebrew and English, with traditional cantillation. He read the traditional *Haftorah* from the back of Ezekiel, the first chapter, and verse twelve of chapter three.

Now I understand the connection between the readings in Ezekiel and Revelation. In the beginning Isaac's innovations, in *Kabballistic* terms, broke my vessels. Isaac's unorthodox orthodoxy, or say better, orthodox unorthodoxy, was a shattering experience for an orthodox Rabbi. Isaac's sermon on Ezekiel is on the tape. I start and stop the tape as I write this commentary.

I am going to suggest to Isaac, Theophilos, following the *Mishna* in *Chagiga* 11:1 that he delete this section from tapes sent out to Sealahites. Some scripture is better taught face to face. When we next meet face to face we shall study this section of Ezekiel together.

The *Haftorah* Isaac chanted is recited in Sealah synagogues to this day, as Isaac did on the First Pentecost of the Final Acts.

We of Sealah stand at the end of the *Haftorah* where Ezekiel describes the Divine Presence departing from the Temple into the New Temple. The presence, in the likeness of a man, is surrounded by fire and light. An electrum bow emanates the colors of the spectrum.

At this point the leader, like Isaac at the first Pentecost of the Final Acts, falls to the ground, lying flat and still.

The congregation responds in a shout:

"Blessed is God's Glory
In this place."

Isaac stood and the Apostles grasped his, and each other's *Tzitzit* as all awaited the service for returning the Torahs to the Ark.

Isaac sang out, full throat, from Psalms.

"Praise the name of the Lord
God's name, alone, is exalted."

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All answered in Hebrew:

"God's glory is on Earth
As it is in Heaven
All power to God's people
All praise to exalted leadership
Praise to God's Chassidim
Israel draw near
Hallelujah
Praise be the name of the Lord."

That year Pentecost fell on the Sabbath, so the congregation recited Psalm 29, the Psalm for Peace in the Nuclear Age, a prophecy before Final Revelation. The psalm, you remember Theophilos, that introduces Final Testament.

The Torah scrolls Isaac had written by his own hand, as the Law commands, was passed from hand to hand, grasped and raised up by each congregant. They all sang the Psalm.

The scrolls were returned to Isaac who led in the ending of the Psalm in Hebrew:

"The Lord gives strength to his people

The Lord blesses his people with Peace."

Isaac then cradled a scroll in each arm, enfolding the Torahs into his body. All sang in Hebrew:

"And when the Ark of the Covenant rested - he said
Return O Lord to the
Ten
Thousand
Thousands
Of Israel
Arise O Lord, unto Thy resting place
Thou and the Ark of Thy strength!"

Isaac pointed to the Apostles as all but they sang:

"Let Thy Apostles be clothed with Righteousness."

Isaac pointed to the crowd as all sang:

"And let Thy Chassidim shout for Joy."

They all turned towards Isaac and sang:

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"For Thy servant David's sake
Do not turn away
The face of Thy anointed;

The Lord has sworn in Truth to David
He will not turn from it;

One of the sons of Thy body
Will I set upon my Throne
If Thy children keep my Covenant
And my testimony
That I shall teach them

Their children shall also sit
Upon Thy Throne forevermore."

Isaac continued:

"I give you good doctrine
Forsake not my teachings."

Isaac then sang to His Torahs, a father singing a lullaby to his children:

"She is more precious than rubies
Or anything you may desire
Length of days is in her right hand,
Riches and honor in her left."

All joined in:

"She is a Tree of Life
To those that grasp

All who hold by
Her teachings
Are happy

Her ways are ways of pleasantness
And all her paths are Peace."

The congregation did not sing the final verse from Lamentations. Isaac recited *Kaddish* and led the Apostles out of the gazebo part of the garden to the path to the beach.

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Mikvaism

I had been watching from the beach and observed the processional winding down the path.

Isaac and his followers stopped at the shoreline. Isaac, walking with a staff, was the newest Moses. He would split the sea and lead his children to Jerusalem. I stood on the edge of the crowd, behind the camera crew.

Isaac sang:

The Third Creation: A Song

When God began creating
When God began
Begin again
With wisdom God created
With the power of What (Ma).

In the beginning of God's creation
Light and fire
Earth and water.

Fire and water then one,
The firmament suspended,
And so one day Sinai,
Over the Earth, over Israel's head
The firmament
Separating
water and water
Above and below

God hovering
A dove
Over her young
Then
A light
Zohar Harakeah
The rainbow light
Soon to separate

The day
Called Two

Heaven and Earth, Sky and Sea
A Mikvah of Fire - Earth
A Mikvah of Water - Sea

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The world is born
God's waters broken
An amniotic sea
God names
Earth the child
Good

The Mikvah of *Mayim*
The Earth's blood
Four flowing waters of Eden
Heaven flowing on Earth

On Earth
As it is in Heaven
Together
A woman
And a man

A Song of Revelation, A Song of Corruption

Eden's four flowing rivers.
God prayed: Let them be
Rich-earthen and sun-rayed
Scented with Sinai Roses

But East of Eden
Beast with beast
And man with man
And beast with man
Distilling firewater

The first death by water
The death to come by fire

Eden's waters
Forty days and nights
Forty measures
To purify the light
As Isaiah saw even before
Noah opened the Ark's door

God's prayer for the people:

The mountains dry
The dove again descends
From the sky

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My Covenant of Peace
Light and water
Split
The sky
My Covenant:

I hide only a moment
My exile
Ending
In the twinkling of an eye
Wait

Earth and Heaven joined
In my rainbow gate.

Theophilos - I cannot imitate Isaac. The original Psalms are more poetic.

Song By the Sea - Three

Then sang Isaac
And the children of Sealah
This song
We sing again this victory
Together we enter the sea
God is our strength and song
This is our deliverance
Emulating God
As our ancestors

Praising God
The Lord is Peace
Peace is the Lord's name
All passed through the sea
Baptized into Moses

Egyptians baptized
Into death
The children of Israel
On dry land
In the midst
Of the sea

And after all this
Still not believing
In Me!

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From Sinai vistas see

Fired-kilned calves

Burnt gold

Why have you forsaken me?

A Prayer For Remembrance

All our ancestors under the cloud
All were *Mikvaized* into God
In the clouds and in the sea
All drank from the Rock, moving Testimony
Yet you preferred idolatry.

Final Song By the Sea

This Third Creation
We return to water
The Sacrament of Mother Earth
The Final Covenant, Earth's lifeblood
Drawn from the wellsprings of Salvation
For all who thirst

This Sea
Filled with Israel's tears
Uncountable, as the grains
Of sand we stand upon

Forged by fire, steeled in adversity
Honed by exile, true to God

Israel crucified
Israel resurrected
Israel redeemed

Rebirthed. Born again
In the waters of Sealah
The afterbirth is delivered
Lord we bless Thee
The umbilicus is cut
The child born
The dove again is free

Your baptism of suffering is ended

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Your baptism in Joy begins

One Tree - One Garden
One river of light

One body and one spirit
One hope and one calling
One Lord and one faith
One God and one immersing

Amen Sealah.

With this they entered the Pacific holding hands - with their garments on, and immersed in God - Israel's Mikvah.

The Kiss

I stood on the shore observing. Isaac saw me and smiled. He held out his hands and arms, which under his *Tallit* were wing-like. "Come my friend," Isaac said. "You are called first. My right-hand man." I didn't move.

Isaac moved towards me and stood by me on the shoreline.
My eyes filled with tears and Isaac and I cried. "My friend," I whispered, "I must go my own way."

"Go in Peace," Isaac answered. I hugged Isaac and kissed his cheek. The crowd responded with a gasp. Isaac hushed the crowd. He hugged me, kissed my cheek, and said "He leaves me for the moment, with a holy kiss."

Theophilos, for me, Isaac's Sealah had become *Sheolh*. Not heaven on earth, but *Sheolh*, a type of hell. I awaited the real Messiah, a Jewish messiah. I returned to Indiana and Lillian.

Indiana

Lillian did not meet me at the airport. She was in bed when I arrived. Lillian's father was leaving. He was in a rage.

"How could you let her do such a thing!" he screamed. "The Nazis conducted such experiments. You abandoned her for a *meshuganah*. You abandoned her! A goy. A boy who thinks he's God. I saw you on television with your pretentious friend. Bastards!" He stormed out of the apartment.

"Lillian," I asked. "What is your father talking about?" She was mute, ashen-faced and withdrawn.

Later she explained. She was sure I would not return. She wanted her freedom. I noticed her painting of herself, a nude, on her easel. She had been painting over her legs, extending a yellow shawl of light over her exposed genitals. Lillian's second painting of a woman and child was off the wall.

"I had a tubal ligation," she said, beginning to whimper. "My father called me a Nazi. He screamed at me. I tried to explain, so many starving children who need homes. He screamed louder that we lost two million children in the Holocaust, and now mine." She began to cry.

"He's the Nazi, the sonofabitch. I will not be a baby factory. I will not be a housewife-whore." Lillian put her face in the pillow and pounded the bed. I took her in my arms to comfort her and she pushed me away.

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I left the apartment to get some dinner.

Theophilos, I know that would have been the moment to set in motion plans for leaving Lillian. I wanted a family. Lillian and I were both as sterile as two wooden cuckoo birds. Our relationship was scripted, as to a clock. The same meaningless arguments, the same meaningless fights, and almost hourly we said to one another "Cuckoo."

Rabbi - Feel

Years later I asked a friend of mine, Rabbi Geresh, a physician whom I trained for the Sealah Rabbinate, who was also psychic, about my relationship with Lillian. He had me stand with arms extended and asked me questions. He checked my responses by having me push my arm up against his hand. He asked me to say "I am clear of Lillian."

"Weak," he said.

My wife Manna had just visited me at the synagogue with our son. I didn't want her to see this. I protested to Geresh. "I am free of her."

"The body never lies," he answered.

He asked: "Were you and Lillian karmically related in another lifetime?"

"Yes,"

He answered. "Were you married?"

"Yes."

"Were you in the Holocaust together?"

"Yes."

"As I suspected," the Rabbi said.

He sat down, meditating, entranced. "I see you in Russia. You, a rabbi, Lillian your wife. You are both naked. A German officer approaches. 'This one,' he says, indicating Lillian, 'will make a fine whore. Look at those jugs. Jugs, no, they are fine cantaloupes, ready for plucking.'"

This Rabbi Geresh said in a voice not his own.

"I hear Lillian screaming." The Rabbi stood up and lifted my arms. The scenario tested out as he envisioned it.

"What did Lillian say?" the Rabbi asked.

"I,... I don't, I'm not sure."

"Close your eyes, think, feel."

I stood with arms extended and said, "Aryeh, save me, save me."

"Yes," the Rabbi said. "Yes. And your answer?"

"I stood silent, a statue."

"Yes," the Rabbi said. "Yes. Then as now. Talk to her, Rabbi," Rabbi Geresh said. "Tell her how you feel."

"I,... I can't help you Lillian, don't you see? I can't help you."

"Yes," the Rabbi said. "Say it again."

"Lillian, I can't, help you. I am not responsible. I love you."

"More," the Rabbi said. "More."

"I can't see anymore. Only shots. I hear machine guns sputtering. The sounds are muted, almost toy-like. People are dropping around me. I see Lillian being taken away.

"No!" I screamed. "No!" I fall to my knees. "No!"

I was on the floor of the study of my Philadelphia synagogue crying, "No, no, no!" I couldn't help. "I am not responsible. I'm sorry Lillian. I'm so sorry."

Rabbi Geresh lifted me off the floor. I was embarrassed. Perhaps my secretaries had heard. The Rabbi

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held me, crying. I sighed loudly.

Again I stood with arms outstretched. He asked me to say, "I am clear of Lillian."

"Yes," he said. "Thank God. The pages of that book are cut."

He ordered me to say:

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"I am divorced from Lillian."

"Yes."

"Our karmic umbilicus is cut."

"Yes." And one more affirmation.

"You have made your choice in this life. I am not responsible. I have suffered enough. You have your destiny. I have mine. The fabric is unwoven, the garment is cut." I said it all.

"Yes." the Rabbi said, "Yes."

I smiled. Unburdened. My natural skepticism and cynicism about such things quickly returned. I looked at my student in amazement.

"Don't talk," he ordered. "Say *kaddish* for her." I did. "Now say *kaddish* for the relationship." I did.

Theophilos, I must again confess I had never been able to understand clearly why I stayed so long with Lillian. Isaac encouraged, almost insisted, that I leave her. I am still not sure. Rabbi Geresh, now a Sealah Rabbi, offered me his experiential answer, but I remain unsure. What do you think, my friend?

I returned early after bolting my dinner, concerned about Lillian. She lay on the bed unconscious. In her hand lay an empty bottle of pain killers prescribed by her gynecological surgeon. I stood Lillian up on the bed. "Let me die," she said pathetically, pushing me away. "Let me sleep. The pain." I took her in my arms and sat her up in our car. We were stopped by a police car and arrived at the emergency room with his lights flashing and siren blaring.

Lillian's stomach was pumped and the attending physician called a psychiatrist for a consultation. I told him the story of her tubal ligation, my return, and going out to dinner, and finding Lillian unconscious.

"Well," the psychiatrist said glibly, "It's good you didn't order dessert. She might be dead."

Reversals

I had missed over two weeks of teaching. That semester I only taught one course because I supervised the minyan of Rabbis and teachers in the Judaic Department. I was also responsible for curriculum development. The Assistant Principle, also a Rabbi, had covered for me. I signed up for teaching Summer School. The Assistant Principle informed me that my contract might not be renewed. Even in Indiana people had seen the Final Act, and the Rabbi suggested that I not return. Guilt by association. The vote was close, but my contract was renewed.

My reversal was done that summer. Two urological surgeons, one working on either side of me, performed a vaso-vasotomy. With microsurgery they were able to reconstruct my severed *vas deferens*. I instructed the surgeons to inform those that asked, that the operation was for infertility. They agreed.

Lillian made an appointment with her surgeon. His offices were near the school. We went together during our lunch hour.

The doctor had a Pakistani or Indian name. The receptionist, perhaps his wife, wore a *sari*. It seemed to be wrapped too tightly around her. Her midriff was exposed and hung over the folds of her skirt. I stared at a brown mark, a kind of third eye, above and between her eyes. She told Lillian rather coldly that she should have a seat. I explained that I had to be back by 12:30.

The doctor brought us into his private office. I noticed he watched Lillian's ass as we entered the room.

"I had hoped you would call," he said to Lillian. He sounded like a teenager stood-up on prom night. "I was called by the psychiatrist, and the police. I am disappointed with you," he said.

The entire conversation must have been filled with double meaning. Lillian stared him down.

"I made a mistake," she said. "I want a reversal."

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The doctor was angry. "You told me you never wanted to have children," he said. "I used a technique that has the least likely chance of being reversed. You signed a waiver," he said, sensing Lillian's next comment.

You Nazi!" she shouted.

He waved us out of his office with a motion similar to one we had seen years ago in Denmark.

Lillian went into a deep depression. I joined her when I received the results from the lab of my first sperm count. The surgery had been successful but my sperm count was sill borderline.

Summer School

That summer I set up a survey course in Jewish history. I taught Peace Studies. One other course was taught by another orthodox rabbi, Rabbi Chumash. Torah, Bible, the Five Books of Moses. A number of his students had failed Leviticus. "They didn't learn to love their neighbors as themselves?" I asked. He did not answer.

The Rabbi's texts did not arrive in time. He asked each student to bring in a family Bible. One student, the son of an orthopedic surgeon, brought in a combined Old and New Testament. The Rabbi was beside himself. The student, not wanting to repeat the course during the year again, tried to appease the Rabbi. He promised he would not read the later books. The Rabbi wanted to assure this. He took the Bible and ripped it out of its binding. He then carefully found the page separating the Book of Matthew for the Old Testament, and ripped the Bible in two pieces.

I am sure there is no need to tell you, Theophilos, that the student retrieved the torn pages from the trash. The Rabbi had discovered a new method of pedagogy. He piqued the student's interest to such heights that the student read the Four Gospels, page by page, the Epistles, and even the Book of Revelations. I was struggling with these books myself at the time.

If I had given the Rabbi my New English Bible, the one I had purchased at Hebrew University, and asked him to rip it in half, I too may have found it possible to diligently study the text.

Theophilos, I was a Torah scholar. I had mastered *Surus* of the *Qur'an*, in Arabic, with *Tafsir*.

My aversion to the New Testament? Yes, My friend, I see that you are nodding. I was suffering from the Dracula response. The cross and its message frightened me. I would rather read about the New Testament. I did this as I prepared for my class during the summer. I used Solomon Grayzel's A History of the Jews, as the text for the history class. Orthodox day schools do not usually teach history. They teach Talmudic text. The Law is eternal. History describes the rebellions and follies of mortals. Dr. Grayzel scatters his views of Jesus over a number of chapters. He calls Jesus Joshua, Mary Miriam, and Joseph, a pious carpenter.

Grayzel says that Joshua was condemned to the cross by Pontius Pilate and the Romans. I was relieved. Once in elementary school a bully, one that every Jewish boy meets in school, told his friends that the Jews killed Christ. "Christ killer!" he screamed in my face to start a fight. I lost it. The bully slapped my face with his open palm. I did not turn my other cheek. I grabbed his head and pulled him to the ground. I think his face hit my knee as he fell. Enraged, he stood up again and kicked my knee, splitting the skin open near my shin. I grabbed his hair and again pulled him to the ground near the curb. I bashed his head into the curb. Thank God adults came running and pulled us apart.

The next day I asked my mother about Christ.

"Christ was a prophet," she said. "A great man who was a Jew." I was really confused. "Why did the Jews kill a Jew? Why was the bully angry at me?"

Grayzel started me thinking: Christianity was misnamed. The teachings of Christ were transformed by Paul from Judeo-Christianity into preaching that became the basis of a new Pagan Christianity, Paulism. Jesus

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was rescued. Paul's teachings were responsible for Christianity's split from Judaism. Even Paul was treated compassionately by Grayzel. Paul was misunderstood. Paul preached living a godly life. Paul preached believing in Jesus. Pagan Christianity forgets the teaching about living godly lives.

I designed a long unit on Christianity. I read widely about Christianity. I knew I would have to read the sources, as my methodology in teaching required.

Each time I started to read a Gospel, I put it down. I skimmed and returned and still had difficulty finishing Matthew. The same with Mark, Luke and John. You remember, Theophilos, that I knew a few verses of the New Testament from my studies with Rabbi Brauerman on divorce. That was not reading, but proof-texting, and was as enjoyable and as sweet as any forbidden fruit.

Many quote the New Testament. Perhaps few have read it. I sat and forced myself to read the document form cover to cover.

Before I left Laguna, Isaac gave me a copy of the Psalms of Final Testament. He also asked me to read what he called "The Later Books of the Torah." I read Isaac's Psalms, but had to put off the "Later Books." Perhaps Isaac's Psalms sparked me to write my initial reactions to the New Testament in verse. I am sure you will notice, Theophilos, the influence of Isaac on my style and structure.

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Four Who Entered the Garden

Four entered Paradise
Four gates to Sealah
or Sheolh

Heaven
or Hell

Before the entrance
St. Peter
Before St. Peter
The Pearly Gate
Before The Pearly Gate
The Pearl

And before the Saint, the Gate, or the Pearl,
The irritant.

Before the irritant
The text of
Stone or Sand
Fire or Water

Pearls or
Before swine

The text: The Testament
Four Gospels
Four questions
Four directions
Four sons
Four cups
1) Brought out
2) Rescued
3) Redeemed
4) Taken

Chosen for sacrifice and redemption.
Four ways the garment was ripped
By history's Pharaohs

A Final Exodus
Testament
Act
And Redemption

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Only ten plagues on the Egyptians in exile
Ours four-powered more
Wrath, Anger, Gloom, and Trouble
Four evil angels
Sent by the Lord

_____
Enough already

The Lamb's the blood's
The Bread, the bitters

_____
Enough already

The binding
The cross
The Final Act

_____
Enough already

Afik o men
The hidden piece found
The old order ended
Those still in Egypt
Slaughter the Lamb
Eat of its flesh
Mark their doors
With its blood
To this day
Until it is finished

_____
Enough already

Let us say Grace
Drink from Elijah's cup
Sing Hallel Praise
Next year in Jerusalem
Sealah's Tabernacle rebuilt
All will know the One
God

All will know Two

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The tablets reconstructed
In their Tabernacle

All will know Three
Patriarchs who teach

All will know Four
Matriarchs
And the New Gospel
They preach

All will know Five
Moses and his Books

All will know Six
The six points
Of the oral Torah

All will know Seven
And rest will come then
on earth as in heaven

All will know the perfection of Eight
Circumcised of body
And heart

All will know Nine
After Sealah's birth

All will know
And do
And hear

Ten principle sayings
The Final Revelation
Fulfilled in Love

And Fear

All will know
And see
The Eleven stars
Of the dream

All will know the Twelfth star
The star's son
Twelve tribes

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Under Sealah
With Liberty and Justice
For All
Then all will know
God is merciful

Thirteen, are the Attributes
Of God's mercy

God's Justice
The kid
Scratched by the Assyrian cat
Bitten by the Babylonian dog
Singed by Persian fire
Diluted by the Greeks
Gored by the Roman ox

Slaughtered by God's Holy Warriors
Angels of Death
Feasting at the Wedding Supper
Of the Lamb
Angel of Death. Die

_____
Enough already

The Fifth who entered Paradise
Matthew
Envisioned but did not see
Mark the Sixth
The son of a Zoma - Mad!
John the Seventh
cut at the roots
Only
Luke
Ascended in Peace
But even he descended confused

Burned in the text's fire
Coal words that crumble
On white hot paper

Chiseled into ice
Cold stone
Shattered or unchanged

I know a Christian man

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An orchard man
Caught up in the Third heaven
Until God whispered in his ear

"*Midrash*"

Not stone - sand
Not ice - water
Even he sod Eden
With his fertile soil
Not even of him
Will I boast

Still, I am not an anti-Paul
I feel his pain
Four times
Reading at the Four Gates, feeling
Four sharp pains

Four times
I ask the Lord
To ease the pain
To open the Gates

God's answer:

"You know My Grace is all
You need
Power comes to strength in weakness
Scale the walls
They surround Paradise."

My answer:

These walls, higher than Babel
I scale and find
Walls within walls
Gatekeepers on every side
Of the Four Gates

They demand a high admission
A fortune
In spiritual currency

Two words: I believe
And a ticket that reads
One way.

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Theophilos, what can I say. Matthew, Mark, John, and even Luke, your friend, I found to be Jew-haters and Jew-baiters.

The Four can't get anything right. They even misspell your name: Theophilus. They turn the Lover of God into the fairy-tale-figure of Faust. They cut off the branch that might have grown straight and even have borne fruit.

My friend, was not Luke's gospel convincing to the faithful? You, my friend, the lover of God, are transformed from a butterfly into a religious caterpillar. Theophilos becomes Theophilus, an archdeacon who suffers disgrace, and turns to the Jews and their *Kabballistic* magic. When you enter the synagogue, the legend contends, we don't accept you.

Would a bad Christian make a good Jew?

You then cut your Covenant in human blood with the Devil. Luke's gospel becomes polemic and bad news when he writes to you about not one, but two attempts by Pontius Pilot to free the Jews. (Grayzel are you listening?) Luke even introduces Herod to support him.

Is it any wonder that the Devil and the Jew became enemies of the Church? John calls our Father the Devil, and our churches Synagogues of Satan.

Is it surprising that Theophilos becomes Theophilus? Is it surprising that in their confusion of the Jew with Satan, the war against Satan became, incidentally, a war against the Jews?

My friend Theophilos:

Enter Faust. Call me a Theophilos. My poodle still sits at my feet as I record the Acts of Sealah and the Acts of this wandering Jew who finds Sealah, his Tabernacle of Peace and tranquility, after much struggle.

I sent my reactions to the Gospels to Isaac. The following is his response:

"Rabbi, over the entrance of each gate hangs the key.

"Matthew traces the descent of the Christ back to our father Abraham. Matthew, the most comprehensive Gospel is by far the most important. This Gospel is more deliberately written than Mark.

Matthew is presenting Christ as King. A King is not democratically elected. A king is selected by birth.

"Matthew is at home in the world of Torah - quoting chapter and verse. Rather than teaching lawlessness, Matthew's Christ is a lawgiver even greater than Moses our Rabbi."

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Matthew Five Eighteen

"A key to Matthew is Five Eighteen. The Sermon on the Mount is the holy of holy's of Matthew's Gospel. Jesus is a New Moses, and the New Law is the Law of the *Chassid*.

"'Amen. So long as heaven and earth exist, not a *Yould*, or a stroke of the Law will vanish until it is fulfilled.' Christ demands fulfillment of the Law. Christ demands a higher consciousness. Christ demands inwardness.

"Seven contrasts burn forth, the flames that flicker on the wick of the menorah. Anger is a type of death. Lust is a type of adultery. Every divorce is also a divorce form God. Swearing is false. Strict Justice leads to violence. Your enemy is your neighbor. Piety easily becomes empty pageantry.

"Jesus' prayer is instructive to mumbling Jews and fumbling Gentiles.

> "'Our Father in Heaven
> Hallowed by Thy name
> Your Kingdom come
> Your Will be done
> On Earth as it is in Heaven
> Give us each day
> The bread of satisfaction
> Forgive our debts
> As we forgive our debtors
> Lead us not into temptation
> But deliver us from the evil one.'"

"I know I need not remind you Rabbi Re Shone," Isaac wrote, "That this prayer could have appeared, without change, anywhere in rabbinic literature.

"Over the entrance to Mark's gate, this key. No genealogy. Mark's Christ is a servant without pedigree. Mark presents a Jewish Jesus in a Jewish setting. On Mark's gate is written a verse from Isaiah,

"'I will send my messenger ahead of you who will prepare the way.'

"'You are that messenger.'

"Luke's gate: Again the key is over the entrance, Theophilos. You should write your Testament to Theophilos to keep the dialogue alive. Luke is the most skillful of the Gospel writers. The hostility of Mark and Matthew toward Jews is rare in Luke. A rarity indeed, a gentle Gentile. Luke's nativity is about admirable devout Jews.

"The family faithfully attends services every year at the Temple during *Pesach*. The Final Passover in Jerusalem, Mark and Matthew report that Jesus is condemned by the Sanhedrin before being taken to Pontius Pilate. Luke gives a more authentic report by not chronicling that fiction. The Sanhedrin in Luke never condemns Jesus, nor does the High Priest claim Jesus is guilty of blasphemy. In Luke, Jesus was never condemned by any authority. Jesus was lynched. Some versions of Luke quote Jesus as saying: 'Father forgive them, they don't know what they are doing.' Rabbi, I have also written on these themes in the Psalm section of the Final Testament. Read the Ninth Hour. Read Crucifixions.

"The key to John is also over the entrance.

"In the beginning was the misunderstanding. The divine logos. The Word became flesh and went to his own, the Jews, who rejected him.

"John says to the Jews, 'You do not understand.' Actually the Jews did understand. Whatever the meaning of the untranslatable logos, Isaiah reminds us that God's true word does not return fruitless without accomplishing God's purpose.

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"'This time we shall succeed in the task God has given' (Isaiah 55:11).
"Love - Amen - Sealah"

Theophilos, not a moment passed before I sat down to pen my response to Isaac.

"To Isaac - *Shelya* - Man of God - Sealah.
"Indeed your keys unlock the four doors. I am not at Peace with what I find within.
"Matthew's gate does open with your key. I wonder if it would not be better to lock that door forevermore and throw away the key. The Talmudic pun that makes Gospel, the so-called evangelism, into 'a wicked scroll,' seems fitting.
"What use is prayer, the Lord's or any Christian's, when the bad news is: Matthew puts all of the Jewish people on the sacrificial altar. We, our children, our children's children, our parents, our grandparents, carry the cross of blame. Matthew rebinds every Jew to the altar. Every Jew an Isaac. Every Jew a Christ to be crucified.
"Mark's key is bent. Mark's way is crooked. Mark teaches that Jesus healed the sick. Jesus exorcised demons. Jesus was forgiving. Who will exorcise the demons of Mark? Even the disciples of Jesus, being Jews, are seen as dark shapes in a mirror, reflected shadows.
"Mark was forgiving.
"For giving the Jews the devil's name. The crooked key of Mark cannot be made straight.
"Luke gives testimony to the existence of Christian *Midrash*. His dialogue with Theophilos opens gates to New Gospels and dialogue.
"Still, much of Luke is fiction. If Luke is canonized and enscrolled in the Tree of Life, will you also canonize Final Testament and the Final Act?
"John's fruits are bitter to my lips, filled with visible worms and lies.
"I bring my case against John. John's conflict is not with Pharisees or Scribes. John's axe to grind is wielded against the Jews and the Tree of Life.
"Is the Tree of Life human that it can escape his siege of hatred?
"Pontius Pilate is portrayed, contrary to the simple facts, the hinted facts, or the interpreted facts, as washing his hands of the Trial of Jesus. The Bad News according to John: Pilate says that he can find no case against Jesus. Then this evil fiction, 'You Jews have a custom that I release one prisoner at Passover. Would you like me to release the King of the Jews?' Tell me, my friend, where this fanciful 'fact' can be found, outside of this so-called gospel?
"Once again Pilate says he has no case against the Christ. The chief priests shout 'Crucify! Crucify!'
"'Take him and crucify him yourselves,' John reports Pilate saying. 'I find no case against him.'
"The Jews answer, 'We have a Law and by that Law he must die.'
John implies that the Jews would have killed Jesus if it had been within their jurisdiction and power. The Romans put Jesus on the cross. The Jews are responsible.
"In the end, John is the Lie.
"Rabbi - Isaac - Sealah (Joshua?). The Christian City of God is built on a Rock that marks the crossroads of four major theological faults. John and his gospel, and Revelation, be damned."
I added the latest about Lillian and myself and the following, on a separate page, folded according to tradition, in Aramaic and Hebrew.

A book of cutting
A bill of divorcement
Delivered this first day of *Tishray*
This first week of *Awe*

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This first year
At mourning.
After Jerusalem's destruction
By the rivers of Babylon
By the rivers of Sealaha
By the rivers of weeping
By the rivers four of Eden
Salted by our tears

I, Laurence - a son of Judah
A son of the Lion
A son of Sealah

Without regret - set aside
Release - set free -
Thee
The Churches of Babylon
Towers of discontent
And division
The self-proclaimed
New True Israel

The ground red
The unseemly things
Too numerous to list
In this *Tofes*
Or to specify
In this *Toref*

Torn by her own hand
From the Tree of Life
Permitting everything
To every man

So long as they believe

Let Judah no longer be hindered

Sealah has come
Obedience to the Lion
Protector of the torn

This shall be
From We
To Thee
A letter of release
A document of freedom

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Jew and Christian
Estranged
Now divorced

A book of cutting
In accordance with the
Law of Moses
And Israel

Isaac the son
Of Abraham
Witness

Aryeh the son
Of Abraham
Witness

I concluded my letter with 'As a duly ordained *Dayan*, a Rabbinic judge, I ask you the following Halachic question:

'The *Mishna* in *Yevamot* teaches that a man seen hanging on a cross cannot be presumed to be dead. Can a man on a cross order a bill of divorce to be written?'

Dear Theophilos, looking back at these letters I am aware of my rudeness and Isaac's amazing grace. His answer to my letter came, first class:

Rabbi *Re Shone*
My friend in God
My right hand
Enough of Gates and keys and faults
Is not every Revelation
Written by God's finger
Crumbled by our own people
Into broken stone?
Are not the pieces
And the Second Revelation
Each Kept in Holy Arks?

I teach a Final
Living Gospel
Good News
In every direction
The Four orchards are fenceless
In the New Jerusalem

The World, the Temple, Jerusalem, the Ark
The holy of holy's, on the Rock of Moriah

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The Rock of the binding and unbinding

The mountain of vision - All one

Four fenceless orchards
Between five mountains
The orchards tiered
And the mountains
On four levels
Hung by five threads
Over our heads

The wise smile
At similes
The discerning
Open the door
Called metaphor
Within your Final Testament
The New Jerusalem, orchards blooming
Almonds and capers daily blossoming

New ground broke
With swords
That are now plowshares

Old trees are uprooted
Branches pruned
With hooks that were spears

The rain on the broken earth
A New Covenant on parched soil
The rain of love after the rain of fear

The advent of Sealah
The hearts of parents
And children
Atone
The atonement
The heart of the Father
At one with the Son
And the Son with the Father

And Father and Daughter
And Mother and Son

Have we not one
Father

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And one
Mother
Each of us?
One parent in heaven
In Sealah we witness
The Final Testament
The Final Covenant
Never again to be torn
Asunder
The event
The marriage
The vows
Reaffirmed

Between Judah and Israel
Between Jew and Christian

The Final Act

Even the unseemly
Forgiven
The wayward wife
Estranged from husband and God
A *Shechina* exiled
Comes home

The branch is re-grafted
To the Tree
Of Life
Dead branches, false teachings, pruned
By the orchard man
And we
Warmed by the fire

The trees of the orchard
Trees of Knowledge
Trees of Good
Trees of Evil
Are now one Tree
The tree of Life
A Tree of Light

God's Holy Cross
Of Stars
A Menorah
Amen.
Sealah

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Isaac then answered my *halachic* question in prose and verse.

"A man hanging on a cross may order a divorce to be written for his wife. Even if his body has become weak, his mind is presumed to have remained sound, as we learn in the holy words of the *Balei Ha Tosafot* in the Tractate *Gitten*, the First *Mishna* of the Seventh Chapter and page seventy, side two of the tractate."

Isaac returned my Bill of Divorcement unsigned. His response:

"The bill of divorcement
I pray to witness
Is between
One Lillith also known as Lillian
And one Laurence
Also known as Aryeh

In Sealah
The marriage

You are invited
To help conduct
The wedding."

These were no empty words or metaphors Theophilos. Isaac was engaged to marry a Southern Christian from Tennessee. The wedding invitation was included in the letter. I was listed as an officiate, with a Baptist minister from Princeton. The wedding would take place in Shiloh, Tennessee and Sheloh, Israel, the invitation informed. The Ninth of *Av*. The year 5744. *Tashmad*.

I gulped. *Tashmad* spelled destruction in Hebrew. I called Isaac in Laguna.

"*Tashmad*!" I complained.

Isaac laughed. "*Tashmad*, my friend. The year that ends division. The year that destroys the split vision. The year that leads to *Tashma*

Come and hear: the year that leads to 5745 when we serve God *Leshma* from love. Then the words again will be fleshed out by Sealah, as we begin to rebuild this world with Joy."

Theophilos, I am recording that conversation now from memory. I must explain. In Jerusalem during the year 5744, the Jews awaited a terrible disaster. The Hebrew letters spell out 5 = T; 7 = Sh; 40 = M: 4 = D. *Tashmad*. Destruction. Similarly 5745 = *Tashma* and 5748 = *Ta* or *Tes Mach*. The only disaster Jerusalem saw, from the orthodox point of view, was the service on the 9th of *Av*. The ninth of *Av* is a national day of disaster. The first temple was destroyed on the 9th of *Av*. The second temple was destroyed on the ninth of *Av*. The expulsion from Spain began on 9 *Av* 1492. World War I broke out on 9 *Av* 1914. I told Isaac I would not conduct an intermarriage on the 9th of *Av*, or any day.

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On to Sealah and Jerusalem

Lillian complained about my reading the New Testament. She read Isaac's letter and proclaimed Isaac an apostate. A modern day *Shabbati Zvi*.

One apostasy followed another when Lillian declared that she wanted an open relationship again. As I have explained Theophilos, I wanted a family and a new life. Lillian found a woman lover. She brought her home. I awoke to two women in my bed. Touching the fruit, the temptation to taste is great. We made love together. Lillian found a man lover. Her fantasy was to make love with two men. She argued that I was obligated since she had brought home a woman first. This type of equality was too much for me. The man, a parent of one of Lillian's students, was exceptionally attractive. The night he came over for dinner I was aware of the attraction. I excused myself after dinner. Lillian shouted, as I grabbed my jacket and left, "You'd stay if it was with Isaac." I went to a motel. The parent, I believe, spent the night.

In the morning I told Lillian I was going to Jerusalem. I gave notice to the school.

"I want to come," Lillian cried.

"No way."

I told her I wanted a divorce. Lillian's father encouraged the divorce. I promised her I would send a Bill of Divorcement from Jerusalem.

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A New Beginning

I was in Jerusalem for *Sukkot*, the Feast of Tabernacles. I began the holiday of rejoicing in the Torah (at Simchat Torah) at Rabbi Brauerman's new yeshiva. I danced with Chassidim in Mea Sharim. I danced with the new inhabitants of the Old City. I met Rabbi Sechelman at the *Kotel* and we danced. It was good to be home.

We began again the Book of Genesis. The *Midrash* teaches that all beginnings are difficult. This one felt easy.

After the holiday I went to the Chief Rabbinate's Offices. They informed me I would have to go to Tel Aviv for a *Get*, a Bill of Divorce.

I used my time in Jerusalem to research Final Testament. I took the name from Isaac in the same way I copied his style in my writing.

Jerusalem

Thank God I still had Isaac's map of Jerusalem. I followed the route from the train station to Mt. Zion. I reread Isaac's letter on Jerusalem found in *Final Testament*, and his *Psalms on the Merging of the Two Jerusalems, One Old and One New,* that he gave me in Laguna.

One Old and one New. Gentle reader Theophilos, I wondered about my friend.

Was he a New Joshua who would spiritually reconquer the Holy Land? A New Christ? A Christian? A Jew? The old embodied in the new? I did not know then.

Reading Isaac's teachings in his Psalms, I found some answers. Isaac's teachings seemed old and new at the same time. Isaac's teachings were also questioning, His Psalms were not all Songs of Praise. Isaac's "sermon" on "Adam Kadmon" was an attempt to again see God face to face. Isaac sent me to Israel with a gift, the Collected Writings of William Blake. The following question was underlined in Isaac's edition: Was Jesus chaste? As I read the poem, I was reminded of Blake's question.

I would do Blake's Everlasting Gospel one better, and write a Final Testament.

> Yes William Blake - tis no mistake
> This Jesus will not do
> For Englishman or Jew!

Isaac's poem on Blake, "Footnote" (in Book 2: The Psalms of Final Testament), a classic, reminded me that my friend was no Fundamentalist. The Messiah with a sense of humor.

I realized, Theophilos, that Isaac's teachings went beyond not being Fundamentalistic. They were, fundamentally, New.

Isaac's masterpiece, "The Divine and Earthly Drama - A Second Time From the Heavens," forced me to rethink the Final Act.

I stood in Isaac's favorite spot overlooking the Valley of Jehoshaphat. To my left, again in sparkling clarity, Moriah. With Isaac's drama in hand, I meditated on Moriah in the distance.

Satori. The first light entered my eyes and the vision reflected was that of a seer.

Isaac has his Biblical namesake and Ishmael on the altar. In the end Muslim and Jew dance Sealah's dance, chanting God's ineffable name.

What I also saw, my friend, was that I too was bound with Isaac, to Moriah.

Isaac's story and my story are one.

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My father, an Abraham (actually, as his name is in its completeness, an Abraham Isaac), bound me and was himself bound to the altar.

Our drama played out when I was sixteen, about to enter university. The test was not necessary, say better, premature, because I was not yet at the age when I was required to sign up for the draft. Vietnam might well have been over before my student deferment ran out.

Still, we each acted out our part. My father knew I was against the war. I had proclaimed for all to hear that the acid test for (golden) democracy was whether or not society tolerated dissent in the form of conscientious objection. America's failure of the test, I am sure you remember Theophilos, is attested to by her throwing those with conscience into prison. America's democracy was, for that moment, fool's gold.

My father asked, from his throne chair, "Will you serve your country after college?"

"No, I..." Before I could lecture, he was out of his chair. My sisters and mother witnessed from the hall doorway.

"Coward!" he said. I moved away from him and the fireplace, towards the door. He cornered me before I could leave, raising his arm over my head. I crouched in fear by the doorpost and protected my head with my arms.

"I am not," I whimpered.

"I'll prove it," he said, waving a menacing fist over my head.

"No..., I..., am not a coward. The cowards are the ones who go, who don't have the courage to defy authority..."

I was cut off by "Coward!" again, and the fist raised above my head struck my arms. Thank God there was no knife this time.

My hands tremble even now as I chronicle the drama, years after the act.

Crouching, a lion, I leapt up towards Abraham. Caught off balance, he went flying toward the fireplace, landing on his back. Thank God my father's head did not hit the mantle. (I almost wrote 'the altar'). I ran from the house and never returned.

All this memory in the twinkling of an eye. I was back in Jerusalem. I walked down the hill, standing as far away from the Wall as possible. The doves were perched, still, on the Wall's protruding stones. No priests were within the walls. Perhaps the doves rejoiced in the Temple's destruction. The swallows sang their song of freedom.

The orthodox prayed for the Temple's reconstruction. "Sanctify our days as of old."

Altars, sin offerings. Rivers of blood. High Priests slitting the throats of the next offering with slaughtering knives.

I moved closer. Again I could not offer prayers to broken stones. I prayed with the birds. My spirit encircled Moriah. I rejoiced from that lofty perspective.

One dove, unblemished, soared with my spirit. It was the twilight hour. In ancient days this dove would have been the sacrifice. The dove alighted and faced the Wall. The dove's neck moved in rhythm with the *shokeling* Chassidim below. The dove's tail hung over the lip of the stone wall. The Chassidim *davening Mincha*, the afternoon prayer, never looked up. To them, the dove may as well have been invisible.

As the Chassidim chanted the high point of their service in unison, the dove made his offering - as white as snow. I move back, laughing, feeling a bit guilty and responsible since I had been one with the dove.

The lights went on as I remained with my dark thoughts. The *Kotel*, the Wailing Wall, considered the holy place of Judaism today, looked to me like just another Disneyland attraction. Israel was becoming a type of Disneyland for adults. Disneyland did I say? Say better, a carnival. A carnival, even that is a compliment.

A carnival, at least, has attractions. Rides. Fun. What was the attraction here? The outer wall? Was this the newest idolatry? To pray, to kiss, to cry to broken stone. To pray for the rebuilding of a temple where animals would again be sacrificed?

Sanctify our days as of old.

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Relive history. Moriah's stone again a four-horned altar. Christ again crucified on Golgotha. Eternal return.

The Temple again, broken, in ruins. The wooden Mosque again erected. The Temple again, a Temple Domini.

I sat down on a bench in the dark, ashamed of my cynicism. I wanted to pray but could not approach the Wall. I unfolded Isaac's letter on the binding of Isaac and Ishmael on the hill behind the wall, chronicled in *Final Testament*. What Isaac hints at in that essay, a denial by father Abraham to sacrifice Isaac or Ishmael, he now proclaimed aloud a second time from the heavens. The deathgod demands the sacrifice of sons. Sealah unbinds them.

With the Wall as a backdrop I continued meditating on Isaac's teachings. Now the Wall appeared as the backdrop scenery of a play. The Wall could have been made of cardboard. The movable scenery of Moriah was monotheism's stage. The show must go on.

In Islam the scene is explicitly central. One becomes a Muslim by submitting to Allah's Will, even when asked to bind, sacrifice or crucify one's own son. All this Isaac inverted. Sealah taught an anti-religion.

Isaac speaks of crucifictions in his poems. Yet he reads these fictions as holy scriptures. I was really baffled.

Behind the Wall, where the ancient temple stood, was the Holy of Holy's. I sat and could imagine only profanity after profanity. My heart, like the Temple's Holy of Holy's, was an empty room. My questions on the Gospels was an honest quest for the real Jesus. Now I had to ask the same question about the Torah. Where do we end up in our quest for historical Moses? If we view Moses as God's executive secretary, what are we to make of Moses' minutes?

Genesis' opening reveals God's impatience with creation. In one week, creation is corrupted. Flooded with violence. Noah, the only righteous one, is an alcoholic.

In Exodus we sing, as the Egyptians drown in the sea. God is a warrior.

Leviticus is an artichoke. The center is nourishing, but is it worth all the work?

Numbers is the Book of the March and the Roll Call. The book of murmuring. I, an Israelite in a wilderness, loathed the manna from heaven. Another malcontent.

Deuteronomy instructs final preparation for entering the Promised Land. The unadorned text in Chapter Twenty, commands a war of extermination against the native inhabitants.

I asked myself, Theophilos, if Isaac's answers on the Gospels make the Five Books of Moses also Good News. Yes. The orchard man trims off the dead wood of the Tree of Life.

Continuing my meditation, I considered Isaac's request that I chronicle *Final Testament*. I feared for my friend and his apostles. Isaac, like Jesus before him, was a dangerous man. Jesus died on the cross. Without that event there is no Resurrection and no Christianity.

I imagine, Theophilos, that many consider the Final Act incomplete. I feared for my friend. First being an apostle would be dangerous, but Isaac wanted me to be his right hand. This is exactly what I ran from. For if the right hand offended it also would be cut off. The fear became very real when Isaac came to Jerusalem for the Nine days before *Tisha B Av,* for his wedding.

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The Wedding

Isaac and his bride arrived at the airport on the eve of the new month of *Av*, of the Hebrew year *Tashmad*. The year of destruction.

Isaac looked well. He was, in fact, exuberant. When *Av* enters, the Talmud in *Taanit*, page twenty six, side B, teaches: "Gladness must be diminished." I wondered at Isaac's joy.

I had my own plans. I would convince Isaac to postpone the wedding to the 15th of *Av*.

Isaac introduced me to his bride. I smiled at her name, Christina. She smiled back, and sat quietly as Isaac and I talked. As we made our ascent in the taxi to Jerusalem, I said again I would not arrange a marriage on the 9th of *Av*. I appealed to the Rabbi in Isaac to postpone the wedding a week.

"Rabbi Shimon *ben* Gamaliel said that 'Israel had no festive day like the 15th of *Av*,'" I said.

"And so it will be," Isaac answered, "on the 15th, the final day of reciting the Seven Blessings. We will go to Sealah in Israel and dance into Jerusalem, announcing the Sealah age, the marriage of Israel and Judah.

I protested, "On the day the children of Israel were prohibited to enter the Holy Land, you will be married?" This was a continuation of the old disputation.

"This time," Isaac said, "the 9th of *Av* marks the day we enter the Promised Land."

"Do you remember Zechariah's prophecy on *Tishna b Av*?" Isaac asked.

"No, not really," I confessed.

Isaac handed me a *Taanach* from his backpack. "Zechariah, Chapter Eight," he said, "Verse Nineteen." I read the beginning of the chapter to myself. Jerusalem called the City of Faithfulness, the courtyards filled with the laughter of children, affliction turned to joy. Then nineteen.

> "Thus says the Lord of Hosts... the four fasts (*Tishna b Av* included) shall become occasions for joy and gladness - happy festivals for the House of Judah, but you must love honesty and integrity."

I read this as we entered Jerusalem.

The Ninth Day

I am sure you have anticipated, Theophilos that Isaac thought long and hard on the question of being married on the Ninth Day of *Av*.

So I must get on to the wedding. I chronicle the wedding out of order. I have not described my winter in the heights of the mountains and my calling as I sat on the A*rête* of the heights, overlooking the road to Damascus.

The rabbis teach that there is no "before" or "after" on Torah. Still, on the whole, the Testaments move on chronologically. This will be my way also, in this Torah, Theophilos.

We sat in my dark spot as far as possible from the Wall. Isaac wanted to sit with Christina. The black-frocked rabbis of our time had the space in front of the wall partitioned, one side for men, the other for women.

We sat with hardboiled eggs and bread. Isaac lit a paper plate and dipped the egg in the ash. He took the ash and drew a *Shin* on Christina's forehead.

Isaac sat and taught: "The day of Marriage is a day of Atonement. A day of awe commingled with joy. On that day sins are atoned, sins are forgiven."

I interrupted, reading from a Hebrew text I had prepared (*Taanit* 4:8.)

"Rabban Simon *ben* Gamaliel said: 'There were no happier days for Israel than the fifteenth of *Av* and the Day of Atonement. On those days the daughters of Jerusalem used to go out in white garments. These were all borrowed so that none would be ashamed who did not own them. The daughters of Jerusalem went out to

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dance in the orchards. What did they say? 'Young man, lift up your eyes and see what maiden to choose for yourself. Don't set your eye on beauty but on family, for grace is deceitful and beauty is vain, a woman that fears the Lord shall be praised.' Also, it is written: 'Give her of the fruit of her hands and let her works praise her in the gates.' (Proverbs 31:30-31). It is also written: 'Go forth, you daughters of Zion, and behold King Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother has crowned him in that day of his engagements and in the day of the gladness of his heart!' (Song of Songs 3:11). 'In the day of his engagements,' this is the giving of the Torah. 'And in the day of the gladness of his heart,' this is the building of the Temple. May it be built speedily, and in our days! Amen."

I summarized the Talmud's comments. The fifteenth day of *Av* is the happiest of days for many reasons.

1) The tribes were given permission to intermarry on the 15th of *Av*, allowing for the formation of one Israel.
2) The last generation of the wilderness, who contented with God, ceased to die on *Av* 15.
3) The honorable Hosea, son of Elah, removed the roadblocks and guards from the roads that divide North and South, allowing unity and pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

"The precedent is clear," I said, as I pleaded my case. "The 15th is the day for the wedding." Isaac grinned and opened his arms to embrace me.

"You are a son of Gamaliel, my friend," he said.

I won and lost. I would arrange the wedding for the 15th.

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Conversion

"One question," I said to Isaac, "Is Christina Jewish?"
Christina smiled around her egg. I looked at the ash on her head and laughed.
Isaac answered. "The conversion to Sealah will be part of the ceremony."

Theophilos, this became a source of future dispute. Christina, a Sealahite, would want to re-enter Sealah the way Rosenzweig was to enter Christianity, as a Jew.

"You are neither Christian nor Jew, Muslim nor Hindu," would be interpreted to mean "you who are Christian following that path, you who are Jews, Sealah is on the mountain's top. Sealah is the *Arete*. Follow your paths to that place." Christina's path to Sealah became Judaism, to heal her Christianity. Rosenzweig remained a Jew, but envisioned the star of Sealah. Christina chose to be a Jewish, not a Christian, Sealahite.

Beyond the Star
A cross of Stars
Beyond the cross or star
The Menorah
God's eternal symbol
Illuminating every tabernacle of
Peace.

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Arrest - No Trial

Thank God the wedding was not on the 9th. The pious would have rioted. Blood may have been spilled if Isaac had followed through on his initial plan. As it was, we were arrested and jailed.

In the morning Christina said she wanted to approach the Wall. She would have to go the women's section. We agreed to meet after services.

Isaac and I approached the Wall. "This day is one in which we rejoice in trembling." We tremble as we remember our suffering in history. We rejoice as we anticipate our future peace. The key verse of *Tisha b Av* is at the end of Lamentations, Theo. We will discuss it after the service.

Mourning Service

Isaac then fell to his knees, tore his garments and cried out so loudly it seemed that not only had his garment been ripped, but his very heart and soul. Everyone looked in Isaac's direction. Tears streamed down his face as he sat in a hunched fetal position holding his legs. Isaac continued to cry long wails, weeping, with broken sobs.

The crowd began to move towards and around Isaac, iron hearts drawn to the wails of Isaac's weeping. Others began to cry. Chassidim, soldiers, even the women on the other side of the barrier moved to its edge to hear Isaac, and to cry with him.

Isaac led the *minyan* that formed around him. He wept again when he recited slowly and with intense feelings the section on the binding of Isaac in the preliminary service.

I wondered if Isaac would recite the order of the animal sacrifices. He did. Evidently to the orthodox, Isaac would be orthodox.

Isaac read the Torah from the Book of Deuteronomy and the prophetic readings from Jeremiah. I shuddered to think what would happen if he added readings from what he called, "The Later Books of the Torah." He did not.

Instead Isaac gave a sermon, and many at the Wall pushed their way towards the *minyan* to hear Isaac speak:

I am the son of the suffering of *Tisha b Av*
I was with Eve and Adam
To comfort them
On the death of their son

I was with Noah
Submerged in that great Mikvaism
The waters salty with Noah's tears

I was with Isaac on Moriah
An offering of Love
No sacrifice to fear
I was with God when
The word of the Lord came to the
Son of Ezekiel, son of Man
And Woman:
"You sinned grievously

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On this land
I sent famine exile to purify
I sent water to purify
I sent fire to purify

Yet only the Noahs
And the Daniels
And the Jobs
Who were righteous in their generation
Only themselves
Could they save

And one who could not save
Even himself

Therefore says the Lord God
The vineyard of Jerusalem
I cut back
The Grapes of Wrath, blood red
Fallen from the vine

The vine of Jerusalem that bore no fruit
God gave to the fire for fuel
Sanctification
On blood red wine

The word of the Lord came to me
Son of *Tisha b Av*, son of Man
Prophecy to Jerusalem so she may know her abominations
Confront Jerusalem with her detestable practices
For when I, God, turned from you, leaving you as
An abandoned child
Swaddled in clothes
As you lay there in your blood
After travails of suffering and love
I said "Live"
I cut the umbilicus
A covenant, afterbirth
Of water
The water of Shiloh

The water of Sealah
Indeed, I washed away the blood
From my firstborn, my son
And anointed Sealah with oil
Again
The word of the Lord came to me

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Son of Jeremiah, son of Lamentation

Oh how
The city envisioned in Peace
Weeps bitterly - her tabernacle
and the covenant within, in pieces

Oh how
The city that could not answer
God's question to Adam

Where are you?
Naked, ashamed, the Garden
A walled city
Fencing the Tree of Life
From the orchard man
Who
Now asks

Oh how
And asks of God
Where are you?

Behold, the man
This son of Lamentations
Tis Sealah man
Has carried the scepter of affliction
As Isaac carried the wood
To his Offering

My path made crooked
My altar
Walled with hewn stone

(Isaac touched the Wall)

The Lion of Judah
Tearing at its own flesh
A laughing stock to all my people
To all people
This my song, all day long:

Misery wormwood and gall
Desolation and destruction

In my name they call
Atonement for the Fall

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Altars of hewn stones
Strewn with Israel's bones

Judah
Sons and daughters
Of God
Has heard all insults
As villains of the plot
Slapped and smitten
Again and again
Defamed and murdered
Again and again

I and my people
Are one

We sat in submission
And kept silent
The sadists seeing even
This as insult

We lowered our heads
But hoped

We offered the other cheek
To those who struck us

Believing God would forgive
Reborn each morning
Great is God's
Faithfulness
But greater is our
Faithfulness

Another vision of Isaac son of Abraham

I was with Abraham
Forged in the fires of Ur

I was with Isaac on the altar
Under the sword

I was with Jacob, struggling
When Israel became a word

I was with Joseph
Raised from the pit of despair

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I was at Sinai with Moses
Weeping for the Promised Land
I was in Jerusalem with Jeremiah
Imprisoned in wormwood walls

I was in Jerusalem with Yochannan
The son of Merit, *Yavnah* Man

I was in Spain with the Marranos
Crossed with stars

My flesh was torn
By tongues of Inquisitors and fire
My heart was torn
As Jew fought Jew
In the great war
The *Tishba Av* War

A war that ended
Worlds

My flesh ascended, ash
From the *Holocaustum* altar
That ash
Again flesh

We survived the cross
Neither were we totally consumed
In the Holocaust

Your star
Over the Eagle of Israel
In exile, America
The United States
Your menorah
Shall be over all nations
States in
The United States of Israel

All the world then
Israel
Israel a Jerusalem

Jerusalem
The holy of holies
The holy of holies, now

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Sealah
God's living
Tabernacle of Peace

The crowd began to murmur, "Who are you?" A black-jacketed American Yeshiva student shouted, "Who are you!"

I am Isaac
Son of Abraham
Called to deliver this Torah
Of Sealah's living waters

The Israeli Chassidim moved towards the crowd. They asked Americans to translate since Isaac spoke in English.

I see thousands crucified
On these roads to Jerusalem
Rabbis carrying Roman crosses
Crosses of exile
Crosses of baptism
Crosses of martyrdom
Crosses of crusaders

The Final Cross
On the Gethsemane
The oil press
Of Germany
Anointed with fire and blood
By the anti-messiach
Herr Heil
Whose soothsayers said:

"Christ is born again
Among the Jews
Let us murder
Every first born
Jewish child

Knowing not the year
Crucify them all
Sons and daughters
Of the crucifiers
Of the first Christ

A number of rabbis moved away from the crowd. They decided to call the police. Soldiers guarding the Wall must also have been alerted. This would not be the Wall's first riot.

Chassidim on their way to the Wall were also attracted. They filled their deep black pockets with

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pebbles that they threw at Sabbath desecrators, shouting "*Shabbos, Shabbos.*" Sabbath, Sabbath. This time a number of elders came armed with large rocks.

The police and solders arrived as Isaac said:

I am the son of the suffering
Of *Tisha B Av*
I am the Eternal Survivor
I am the Eternal Jew
My wandering
My sufferings

Now are ended

We, alone
Weathered Spengler's season
We alone, the living fossils

Survive

Where are the Nations that hated
Us? Their glory
Past
Dead fossils

Yet the people of Israel Live
I am the son of Abraham
Who saw
I am the son of Israel
Who saw
I am the son of Moses
Who saw
I am the son of Isaiah
Who saw:

Dark Jews in Jonah ships
Spit up upon many shores
To the farthest harbor

Starving there, the torch lady
At her feet, our people
Her message, our message
A New Israel

Isaac continued:

I am the son of the prophets
Son of seers
Son of Herzl

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Whose body was a body of Europe
His soul the soul
Of the Promised Land
Who said
On his deathbed

It is time for this Moses to die
The land of the Seven Nations
Is inhabited by worshipers
Of the Idol called Power
These sons of Pilate
Will be the Final Test
Herzl the seer, saw and said
I see a New Jerusalem -
Golden on the Temple Mount
The Lord's Temple
The walls for singing
not wailing
I see a New a Joshua
Tumbling the Wall
A second Joshua
(or say - a third)

Bringing Peace
Saving, with God
Herzl said:...

Isaac was interrupted.

The Chassidim and orthodox were ready to storm Isaac. The Israeli police and soldiers made it clear they wanted Isaac to continue.

Herzl said:
"When you return to our Land
Bring my bones to Zion
To our Land of Promise
Where Joseph's bones are buried"

Isaac continued after the mob was quieted:

The Word of the Lord came to David Gruen:

"I give you a new name
Ben Gurian
You are the Lion cub of Judah

The Lion of Judah will come
And be known as a son of

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Ben Gurion -

Prepare yourself for war - but
Beware the son of Korach
All beginnings are difficult

And so this Father of a land
And Judah
Resurrected bodies
As many as stood
On Sinai
From the wilderness of exile
To the land
Of Promise
Where I
Isaac, son of Abraham, son of
Israel, son of Joseph, son of slavery,
Son of Moses, son of Hillel,
Son of Gamaliel, son of Joshua
Son of Man

"Son of a bitch, bastard!" one of the black-hatted Yeshiva students shouted.

"Silence him, silence him!" the crowd shouted. The soldiers and police surrounded Isaac.

Isaac reached into his *Tallit* bag and removed the flag of Israel. The flag, a *Tallit*, was fringed on all four corners.

I am the Lion of Judah
the son of the star
the son of the scepter

I am Sealah
I am Joshua
Come to lead you to the Final
Tranquility and peace
Our Promised Land

Isaac deflected the first rock with his *Tallit* flag.

"*Tishabav Tishabav*!" they shouted, pelting Isaac with pebbles. Isaac held the flag *Tallit* over his head and moved towards a man holding his petition. It was Sechelman. The police and soldiers encircled Isaac and me. Sechelman shook his head at Isaac. The crowd followed us as we were led away. A large rock flew towards Isaac's head. "*Tishabav Tishabav*," the fanatics yelled. Isaac's hand moved swifter than the rock and he plucked it, Kung-fu style, from the air. The soldiers smiled. The police smiled. I did not want to go with the police. We had committed no crime. Isaac smiled as timidly and docilely as a tame dove. We moved away from the crowd with the police.

In jail we were told we were in protective custody. At nightfall we would be released. The police apologized. They told Isaac they enjoyed his modern day prophecy. They apologized again for the reaction of the orthodox, explaining they were shadow figures from the ghetto, shades. They used the term *Shadem*.

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The conversation ended when Isaac said, "We too are observant orthodox Jews."

In our cell Isaac, still very much the Rabbi, answered the question he had posed earlier, and promised to answer after services. This dove could not be caged. He was free and the bars which made me feel confined like an animal, Isaac did not seem to notice.

"The essence of *Tisha b Av*?" Isaac asked again.

I shrugged.

"One verse," the Master answered. He turned to the end of Lamentations.

> "Turn us to Thee O Lord
> And we shall be turned
> Renew our days as of old."

I thought of how we sang this one line in our synagogue in America as we returned the Torah to the Ark.

> Renew
> Renew our days
> Renew our days
> As of old

"Isaac," I said. "Isn't this exactly what is wrong with Judaism today? Our vision of the future is based on an imperfect past."

"In the days of old," I continued, "we offered animal sacrifices. Are we to return to the ancient priesthood? The orthodox at the Wall believe so. This prayer is unutterable. I noticed in Laguna you omitted it from your Torah service."

"Yes," Isaac said. "Omitted, past tense. Since then I have found a *Midrash* in *Eicha Rabbati*, that explains the verse 'sanctify our days as of old.'

"The *Midrash* on Lamentations gives one rabbinic view that this verse from Lamentations is a prayer for the reinstitution of animal sacrifices.

"Another view is offered which is far more illuminating. The beginning of the verse speaks of a turning and returning to God, as two lovers who quarrel and turn their backs on one another, are reconciled. This return is a renewing of our days as of old, like it was with Adam and Eve. A return to the Garden."

I laughed. Isaac always showed me light where I saw shadow.

I would now also sing this verse as the Torah was returned to the Ark.

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The Fifteenth of *Av*

Christina met us at the jail. We broke the fast with fresh falafel in Mea Sharim. I was afraid we would be recognized. Actually, we were invisible. The orthodox averted their eyes from women and strangers.

The falafel were *Manna Yerusalemi*, Jerusalem portions, not the falafel that are half a pocket bread that smile when you squeeze them. *Manna Yerusalemi*, the bread is a large circle of bread laid flat, and folded up and around the falafel balls, chopped cucumbers and chopped tomatoes. One portion was filling. After the fast I ate two. Isaac and Christina split a portion. Isaac made no comment about my overeating. My stomach strained against my belt.

Isaac and Christina went to their hotel. They would walk the land for five days and meet me in Jerusalem the day before the wedding. I would see them the next morning for breakfast and then they would be on their way.

Sealah, Israel

The minister from Princeton arrived that evening. His plane had been held up in London because of fog. A *Tisha ba Av* wedding was not yet meant to be.

We discussed the wedding at Sealah with the minister during breakfast the next morning. All agreed that the wedding of unification would be in the Israel of America, the South, in Sealah, Tennessee. The Princeton minister was not disappointed. In fact he was relieved. He toured Israel with Isaac and Christina.

The Wedding

Standing on Sealah, I understood why this place had been sanctified by the first Joshua. The mountains were round about Sealah the way they surrounded Jerusalem.

The tribes had been unified in Sealah. This area of Samaria was the landed legacy of Ephraim and Mannasheh, the children of Joseph. This land of Joseph the sages teach, "is the most blessed in the world."

The dew still lives on the ground of Sealah. In Sealah stood the Tabernacle, the sanctuary before it stood in the temple in Jerusalem.

Standing on Sealah, watching the sun begin rising over a cloudless horizon, I asked Isaac about the ruins of Sealah. The women were about to ascend to the top of the mountain. The Rabbi of Sealah also made the ascent, leaving his Yeshiva to witness the wedding.

Isaac recited a Psalm, a *maskil* of *Asaph*, an insight into exile and ingathering, Psalm Seventy-eight. He added *Midrash*.

> Moses' song: sung again
> From Sinai to Sealah
> From Promise to Promise
>
> I teach a theme
> Listen to my parable
> On riddles since ancient times
> Still go unheeded
>
> Hidden from my children
> The testimony of Jacob

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The Torah in Israel

The teachings, as at Sinai
The covenant broken
At our feet

Maida Bnai Yisrael

The broken tablets
Broken
By the children of Israel
And Judah

Heaped - piles of scorn
The broken pieces
Of the hardened heart -

In the desert
The food was wholesome
"But where," they complained,
"Is the meat of the meal?"
"Where the dessert?"

(Isaac grinned - then laughed)

Then they spoke against God saying:

"Can God set our table
In this wilderness?
We want
White tablecloths
And napkins!"
(In exile they would have them)

The gracious host, offended,
Overturned the table.
That altars pieces
Also part of this ruin

Still I led you into Sealah
Granting *Menahem* before *Av*

But the tribes carved idols
On these high places
Hewing them from stone

They would not dwell in my tent

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Deserting me again

When Israel would not dwell in Sealah
I ordained
Sealah to dwell in Israel
The presence dwelling as
In Adam the first

God's *Oz*, ___,
God's strength in captivity
Given to the sword

No strength, no peace, no song

Now the wedding
Now the strength
Now the song
Now is heard
In the cities of Judah
In the Outer Jerusalem

The song of Sealah
The song in Sealah

The sanctuary is built
Heaven our canopy
The heavens are again God's
The Earth, our tabernacle
Is again ours
On Earth as in Heaven

Judah is chosen
Zion is Loved
David again chosen
The Shepherd of Jacob
The inheritance of Israel

My children are suckling ewes
Israel, my very own
God - Judah - and Israel are one

Sealah is home
To tend with blameless heart
To heal with skilled hands
Amen, Sealah

The bride ascended the mountain with her entourage, the sun also ascending in the sky. Isaac handed

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me the script of the wedding service and opened his arms to his bride. I read:

We welcome all who come
In the name of God
We welcome you

Sechinah - Christina
Now called Judith
To wed Isaac - now called Sealah

We spread out a *Tallit* with rainbow stripes. The Rabbi of Sealah held one end. The minister of Princeton the other. An elderly Chassidic couple held the other ends as Sealah and Judith stood under the canopy - a *Sukkah* of peace.

I read from my script:

Singularly, the groom and bride
Enter this canopy
Spread over them
Like the heavens

As one they will leave
Under the wings
Of the divine presence

(Hebrew)

We acknowledge you
Hallowed *Sechina*

I said handing the cup to Judith:

(Hebrew)

Blessed are Thou - O Lord
Ruler of the world

I said handing the cup to Isaac:

Who creates the vine

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And its fruit - this wine
In the cup of salvation

Up raised - (I raised up)
And overflowing

I handed a braided Challah loaf to both Judith and Sealah. They raised their loaves and said with one voice:

We acknowledge Thee as She
Known as He - Adonai - Our God
Also She - eternally

Bringing forth new bread
From this Earth

I read the blessing of *Kiddushin* with the same new blessing formula. We shared the Seven Blessings. The Rabbi of Sealah used the old formula.

Isaac smiled. The world would not be transformed in the blink of an eye or as we stood on one foot.

The Rabbi of Sealah proved himself to be a loving tolerant teacher. He would not sign the wedding document, but went beyond Gamaliel in witnessing the event. May he people the earth with offspring, male and female.

We walked down the mountain towards the road to Jerusalem. All the inhabitants of Sealah sang and danced.

Parked at the bottom of the hill was the Volkswagen. It was white and simple - not a bug, but an open vehicle. I do not remember what it was called.

The Car

I chronicle beyond time and event again my friend, and want to tell you about renting the car. We will continue for a time, out of chronological order and speak of the wedding in Sealah, Tennessee.

Isaac insisted on an open car. The car Isaac wanted was rented. The representative showed Isaac a Chevy, a Buick, a Volvo. Isaac wanted a Volkswagen - the least expensive vehicle he had. The only car was sitting in Haifa. Isaac asked that the car be driven to Jerusalem. He would pay the extra gas and traveling mileage, and the driver's return trip home. When Isaac paid with his "gold card" the proprietor could do nothing but shrug.

An open top car was necessary to make portable the Ark we carried from Sealah to Jerusalem. Isaac began the journey by singing - and then stopping with the Ark.

We have come to the rest
Sealah is here
Shalom
Shalva
Sealah

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Amen

Over and over. Soldiers from Sealah accompanied us on foot and in jeeps. They sang and danced with Isaac. Isaac leaped in the air with dance and song, spinning like a dervish. Christina sat in the front seat next to the minister from Princeton.

Isaac acted more like Pan than the anointed one. He blew his *Challel* with abandon. I felt joy and fear as we danced by the Arab village. Isaac wanted to enter with the Ark. The soldiers, thank God, would not let him. I envisioned another near riot or mob scene.

In the back seat was the Ark of the Covenant. It was about the size of a standing man. Isaac reverently approached the ark, parted the curtain, opened it, and sang.

Whenever the Tabernacle traveled and came to a rest Moses would proclaim 'Arise O Lord and your enemies will be dispersed. Scattered will be those who despise you presence.' He continued, as is the practice in Sealah congregations to this day, with a proclamation of the true Zionism of Isaiah.

Isaac took out the red Torah, leaving one blue and one white Torah in the Ark. This Torah was thicker than the other two. On its mantle was an inscription in Arabic.

Yew my friend, Theophilos. Isaac had included the Holy Qur'an in this newest edition of the Bible. The logo of Sealah was also embroidered in the velvet mantle, highlighting the crescent of Islam.

Every arm of the Menorah was a crescent. A Menorah of crescents. Stars of light. To me it looked amazingly like a Joshua tree.

Isaac danced into the Arab village near Sealah with his Torah. He sang over and over again:

"Nation shall not lift up sword against nation."

"Neither shall they learn war anymore."

Isaac presented the villagers with a copy of his handwritten Torah and a prayer shawl. The flag of Palestine fringed with Sealah's healing *Tzitzit*.

Villagers joined as we danced to Jerusalem through Joshua and Joseph's land. I tired and sat in the back seat of the Volkswagen next to the Ark. I noticed that the Ark wobbled when we hit bumps and steadied the Ark with my hand. Isaac made it a point to ask seventy people to take their turn on the other side, insisting they touch the Ark.

Each time a new person sat by the Ark Isaac stopped his dancing and proclaimed:

"In atonement for the fifty thousand plus seventy
Of the House of the Sun."

and then:

"In atonement for Uzzah
Son of Sealah - son of man."

Only upon reaching the outskirts of Jerusalem would Isaac rest and ride with his portable Ark. He got into the car on the driver's side, sat low at first and then lifted himself up and around the Ark of the Covenant and grinned an Isaac grin at me and said:

"The two Lions of Judah," still upholding Tablets of the Law.

In Jerusalem we parked on the outskirts of the courtyard leading to the path to the Temple Mount. We lifted the Ark of the Covenant out of the car and carried it to the Wall. Isaac took Christina by the hand and they danced in the courtyard facing the Wall. They danced just beyond the partition that separated the women

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from the men. Those at the Wall, thank God, were oblivious to our singing and dancing.

Theophilos, the meaning of the Volkswagen dawned on me much later after the event. Isaac wanted to fulfill the spirit, if not every letter, of prophecy. He did not tether his rented Volkswagen to a vine or look for a colt and a red vine, but he did flash his milk white smile at all who accompanied the bride. One other detail Theophilos. Isaac had a bumper sticker printed. One was on the fender of the Rented car. It is the same sticker you see everywhere these days - Sealahites announcing the Final Age®. The stickers, as you must have guessed, say it all: (Gen. 49:10.)

The Wedding II

Theophilos, I must confess that my attitude towards the South parallels that of many or ignorant people. I expected prejudice and vile oppressive narrow minded bigots who hate Blacks, Catholics, Jews, and anyone not their own kind.

The only thing oppressive I encountered in the South was the humidity. The people of Tennessee were courteous and respectful even to a rabbi with beard and skullcap.

On the third day after the wedding in Israel, Judith and Sealah were wed in Sealah, Tennessee.

The Church allowed Sealah to take down all symbols of the Old Covenant. Sealah placed hand-sewn banners with crosses of stars that were menorahs all around the Church.

I hold in my hand a picture of Sealah, myself, and the minister from Princeton. The stained glass of the Church is behind us and we appear to be part of the colorful scene. I must say, Theophilos, that even today as I chronicle the wedding I am not sure of the meaning of the scenes or the symbols in the five windows. In the middle - wearing a red cape, is the Christ, arms extended, palms up. By his side are two branches. Perhaps this is Christ as the Tree and the Fruit. I am not sure., I remain Laurence - a Jewish Sealahite. I attend classes with Christian Sealahites, teaching them the old or they teach me the new as I chronicle the Final Testament.

All that happened at the wedding could fill a book so I shall focus on the act itself, which is the paradigm for Sealah weddings to this day - they are re-enactments.

We, the minister from Princeton, and I, wore white cotton robes. The minister wore his fringeless vestment and I wore my *Tallit*. Now the ministers all wear fringes on their vestments.

Isaac wore a pocketless white *kittle* shroud and a *Tallit* with the Sealah menorah on the back. At the time I saw the cross, not the stars or the Menorah, and shuddered.

I had by that time had my revelation - say better - transformation - and still the cross upset me.

I began the service with a teaching:

> "Rabbi Israel the Baal Shem Tov teaches about marriage:
> 'From every human being there arises a light. When two souls that are destined to be together, find one another, their lights come together and a brighter light goes forth from their united being.'"

Isaac and Christina beamed at me.

I sang:

(Hebrew)

> May the one who is glory
> May the one who is blessing
> May the one who is infinite

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Yet concerned with each creature
Bless this bride and groom

To this point the marriage was according to Jewish tradition. Then Christina circled Isaac three times, saying:

"I marry you forever
I marry in righteousness and justice
I marry in lovingkindness and mercy
and faithfulness
We shall know the Lord."

Isaac then circled Christina seven times, singing:

"Listen, listen, listen
To my heart's song

Listen, listen, listen
To my heart's song

I will always love you
I will always be here."

Christina and Isaac thus made one another the center of each other's lives. We proceeded to the rings. This also was fairly traditional. Rings were exchanged - circles of commitment and Isaac said:

"We are *kadaish*
We are Holy
We separate to one another
To again be Adam
And Eve
We are wed
With these rings
The circle
Not the gold
The symbol
Of our devotion
To one another
And God."

Up to this time Isaac refused to wear gold. He felt gold was vanity - the stuff of golden calves.
"Gold is also the stuff of tabernacles." I reminded him.
"No," Isaac said. "This time the Ark is acacia wood uncovered of gold. The gold will go to the poor."
"Fine," I answered, "but we can still use the rings of the breastplate."

This - Theophilos - became part of the wedding ritual.

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Then Isaac read from the script.

"The Lord commanded the children of Israel to make two gold rings on the breastplate of Judgement and Unity. On the plate are the stones of the Twelve Tribes. It was worn over Aaron's heart when he came into the sanctuary, a constant remembrance before God. The message of the breastplate was the Urim and Thumin, the lighting of perfection, the uniting of the Twelve tribes projecting the divine reflection. Aaron was bound to the breastplate and its message by the gold rings.

I give you this ring as a sign of our binding to the tabernacle of God - so that we may dwell together in the tent of God's presence."

Christine read from her script.

"I accept this ring so we may dwell together in the tabernacle of God all the days of our lives."

She read: "Hear O Israel the Lord our God, the Lord is One. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with your very being.

And these words which I command you this day shall be on your heart. Teach them to your children - while talking, while sitting, while walking in the Way, when you lie down and when you rise up. Bind them for a sign on your hand and *totaffot* between your eyes.
Write them upon the door posts of your house and on your gates."

The congregation, who also had scripts, responded:

"And New Jerusalem had a Wall great and high, and twelve gates, and at the gates, twelve angels. On the gates were written the names of the Twelve Tribes of Israel."

I read the Psalm of Ellul. "I am to my beloved as my beloved is to me." - A Psalm of David:

"One thing I ask of the Lord
Only that I seek
To live in the House of the Lord
All the days of my life."

The congregation responded:

"For every house is built by someone
But God is the builder of everything."

I read:

O Gates, Lift up your heads!
Up high you everlasting doors
So the King of Glory may enter."

The congregation responded:

"Here I am
I stand at the door and knock
To anyone hearing my voice
Who opens the door
I will come in
And eat with them
And they with me."

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I read:

"Therefore anyone
Who hears these words of mine
And puts them into practice
Is wise, their home is built
On the rock."

They responded:

"He has opened the door of Faith to the Gentiles."

I delivered my sermon, as Isaac had asked me.

"The Torah in the Book of Genesis describes the meaning of marriage: (Gen. 1:27)

"'So God created each one of us in the Divine image, male and female.

"And God said 'Have children and replenish the world and establish your dominion.'

"This great teaching of the Torah describes the marriage of two individuals in the image of the one God. Bride and groom are called to be one flesh - the woman, the helper of the man, and the man of the woman - and both of God.

"The first marriage is in the Garden of Eden. Marriage, of all the covenants, most represents life in Eden. Our blessing - the blessings of family and friends - each of us here at this moment - is that your marriage be an Eden - in all its beauty, tilled with love and devotion to God.

"The Rabbi of Kotzk, Menachem Mendel, once asked - as it is recorded in *Or Ha Ganuz*: 'Where is the dwelling of God?' A group of learned rabbis visiting him scoffed and replied, 'The question is absurd! We all know the 'whole world is full of God's glory.'

"Slowly and sharply the Rabbi of Kotzk answered his own question: 'God dwells wherever we let the presence enter.'"

"Love between two people may be considered the highest spiritual value of Sealah.

"One who says 'I love God - but not life' - loves only their own ideas.

"One cannot love God until they know how to love the world and other people...Every person contains a spark of God, and only when this spark is ignited and becomes light do we see God.

"To the Bride and Groom:

"Please close your eyes for a moment to feel the special blessing this marriage is to the world. You have enclosed yourselves off into a circle of relationship symbolized by the rings you now wear. You are surrounded by the love of family and the new family created by your wedding. You feel the excitement of love at this moment - as we say together - Amen."

The minister from Princeton read his sermon. His words may be found in "The Wedding Service for Christian Sealahites."

Isaac and Christina then read the joint wedding commitment. Isaac called this part of the ceremony *Ketubah*. It was written. They read.

Isaac: "I wear the Menorah. I am clothed in God's garment, surrounded by God's light."

Christina: "I wear the Circles of Sealah, my shawl of modesty."

Together they said, as they grasped one another's fringes:

"I hold these fringes in my hand
Accepting the healing of Christ
And of God's Commandments

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My heart is circumcised
By the circles of this wedding
Born again to God
And to one another
With Peace and Mercy
Joining together
In the Israel of God."

Isaac said:

"Let me be a seal on your heart and arm
Only love is stronger than death
Turning *Sheohl* to *Sealah*."

Christina answered:

"Our love is united to the Lord
The Lord cannot be defeated
Neither will our love."

Christina then changed the script, inverting Proverbs 12:4, "A virtuous husband is a crown for his wife."

Isaac laughed and answered, "May I always be that crown to you."

Together they said, from the Talmud:

"A man and a woman who love another as themselves - honoring one another more than themselves, guiding their children in the Righteous Way. The Torah says of them, 'You know that you dwell in Peace.'"

Together they said, from the old Epistles:

"And now I speak the excellent way (the way of Theophilos)
If I speak many languages
But not the language of Love
I speak brassily
Clanging symbols

Though I have the gift of prophecy
Fathoming all mysteries and knowledge
And mountain-moving Faith
But have not Love
I am nothing

Love is patient
Love is kind
Love does not boast
Love is not proud

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Love is not rude
Love is not self-seeking

Love like God
Is not easily angered
Love thinks no Evil
Love is charitable
Love bears all
Love believes
Love hopes
Love endures

Love never fails

Prophecy may cease
Tongues will be stilled
Knowledge passes away
For knowledge is inherently incomplete
And prophecy is partial

A child speaks things and understands as a child
While an adult puts away childish things

Isaac and Christina turned to face one another.

The past
Is a poor reflection
In a haze
It is mirrored
In our marriage
We see - now
Face to face
The image Divine
Startling and clear

And these three remain:
Faith
And Hope
And Love
Now love is seen clear
For love is the mirror

I turned to Christina:

Do you see
The divine
Mirrored

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In the image
Of your Adam
Isaac ben Avraham
Accepting him
As flesh
Into your
Flesh?

Christina: "I do."
The Princeton minister asked Isaac:

Do you circumcise your heart
In the circle of Love
To mate your soul
And body
To this woman
Judith Christina, daughter of Joseph?

Isaac: "I do."
The minister: "In the name of the Lord God, Jesus Christ...
Me: "In the name of Sealah...
Together: You are married."

And so Judah and Israel were also married in Sealah, Israel and Sealah, Tennessee. Our next destination, The New Jerusalem.

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The Reception

The reception was at a resort on the Tennessee River near Sealah. Sealah was by then a fledgling movement and many devotees came by to see the miracle of Sealah's wedding.

Isaac began the reception by singing the "Battle Hymn of the Republic." This really raised the eyebrows of the humorless press. Sealah disciples - chronicling every word of the event - were also constrained. Isaac laughed.

Isaac's mother purchased wine for the reception. She knew Christina's parents did not believe in alcohol - so she only brought one case of wine. The crowd was larger than expected. Misguided disciples rolled large barrels of water towards Isaac. Isaac's mother - not wanting to disappoint her guests, looked towards her son expectantly.

Isaac turned toward the camera, smiled and said, "Mother - I turn wine to water."

Isaac continued, "This time we shall not offer New Wine in Old Skins but Old Wine in New Skins."

With this out of the way, we spent the rest of the reception singing and dancing. It was a good, old-style Chassidic wedding reception.

As the sun set, the reception ended and Isaac and I went for a walk by the river.

Isaac wanted me to return to Princeton. The East Coast headquarters for Sealah. I would co-direct with the minister who performed the wedding. Isaac handed me a ticket to Princeton. I did not take the ticket.

Theophilos, the day before the wedding I was Isaac's shomar, his guardian - an old Jewish tradition. We went to the Shiloh (sic) National Park in the late afternoon and Isaac - animated - spoke of the civil wars between North and South, between Judah and Israel.

Isaac wept as he spoke of the bloodshed of the Battle at Shiloh He prayed the evening prayer and I joined him. He recited the Mourners' *kaddish*. I protested that we needed eight more for a minyan - a quorum of Ten the Law requires. The melody Isaac used was as haunting - as the twilight. I felt frustrated. Isaac had his minyan. He roused the dead. I felt the presence of the soldiers. I heard their death cries. Isaac sang:

Yitkadal Veyitakadash Shemay Raba
Great and Holy is God's name.

I said Amen.

In a world created by God's will
May God establish the kingdom
In our lives
During our days
In the life - in the house - of all Israel
Soon, soon
In a near time
And say"

I said "Amen."
Isaac said:

Blessed
Praised
Glorified
Exalted

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Extolled
Honored
Adored
Lauded
Be the name of the Holy One

I said “Blessed by God.” Then Isaac continued:

Beyond all song and psalm
Praises and consolation which
Are uttered in this world
And say

I said Amen

Let there be abundant Peace from
Heaven with life's goodness
For us and all people - Israel
And let us say
Amen

May God who brings us higher peace
Bring peace to us
And to all people - Israel

And let us say
Amen

I was happy to leave Sealah cemetery.

I did not speak. Isaac said, "We say *Kaddish* for the Old Age. The Age of Sealah begins. The shame demands unity. We shall bring the Ark from Sealah to New Jerusalem, the capitol of the United States of Israel. I remained silent. Intrigued. I had no idea how Isaac planned to make his Bible dream a reality.

After the wedding, Isaac, Christina, and I drove to the airport. They flew to Princeton, and I to Jerusalem.

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Old Jerusalem

I immediately regretted my decision to return to Jerusalem. I was no longer an orthodox rabbi. The Sealah wedding was a wedding to a new reality. The streets of Old Jerusalem appeared dirty. Every piece of litter annoyed me. Soon after arriving, I knew I must leave Old Jerusalem.

The Heights

I volunteered to work on a kibbutz in the mountains of Northern Israel in the Golan Heights. I worked from sunup until noon and wrote in the afternoons and evenings.

Theophilos - the setting was perfect for me to collect my thoughts and write Final Testament. We ate communally in the dining hall. Mt. Herman filled the window of the hall. I made friends with kibbutz volunteers from England, Finland, and Ireland. On Friday evenings I ate with an Israeli family from India. God blessed me with friends and family. Praise the Lord - for all my time was spent working and waiting.

Work was wonderful. The orchards needed pruning after the harvest. I was an orchard man! The work was so demanding it was difficult to hold my fork at lunch. Muscles spasmed involuntarily. When this happened I offered all around me a full Isaac grin.

Final Acts

These Final Acts were chronicled at the kibbutz. When Final Testament became a burden I moved to Final Acts. I also learned (in a vision) that I would write Final Revelations.

Isaac had instructed me to read Paul's letters again. I did so with great difficulty. The Letters as you know, Theophilos, are not easy.

I wanted to meet Saul before he became Paul. Saul was more accessible to my rabbinic mind.

I sought Saul on the mountain near the kibbutz. I found myself.

Volcano

The mountain was surrounded by brown porous volcanic rock. They appeared heavy, but were stage rocks. Anyone could lift the rock. A Hercules.

The volcanic mountain itself, felt scaled down, a Hollywood Mountain at Disneyland.

On the mountain top was a military bunker from the Yom Kippur War. At night the bunker protected me from the elements. I always brought a candle.

My ritual was to run to the top of the mountain every day after work. If I was blocked writing, I would also ascend in the late afternoon. On the Sabbath I would walk to the top - In honor of my Rabbinic training.

With each ascent I carried a rock and started a pile on the mountain top. Being an orchard man - I was also striving to be an Arete man. I became physically and spiritually stronger with each ascent. When I reached the top of the Mt. I always called out: *Shema*! *Yisrael Adonai Clokaynew Adonai Echad.*

The more my body became a temple, the more I was filled with the divine presence.

I felt God began to answer my *Shema*: "Who is like my people?"

“One people on Earth” was God's response.

One winter day it was not God but Saul who answered. *"Baruch Shame Kavod Malchuto La Olam Va-Ed."*

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Blessed is God manifest ruling eternally.

Saul is that you?

The voice laughed: "It is I, Saul, King over Israel.

"Saul?" I asked. "Sha-oul," I repeated his Hebrew name.

"Yes it is Sha-oul, lent by the Lord to this world."

"Saul the Benjamanite?" I asked.

I then saw him. His head floated with the mist of the mountain. He was much taller than I. His body was a long white robe, the color of the mist. Now I could see him from his shoulders and upward, clearly. He was a handsome man - more handsome than the average Israelite.

His head and beard were dripping with mist and oil.

I looked and saw Rembrandt's Saul. I moved closer and saw that he wore a shroud and a *Tallit* with one of the fringes cut.

"Are you Saul who became Paul?"

"I am Saul, King of Israel - the Lord's first anointed," he said, fading from sight.

"Saul," I said. "Saul." There was no answer. A bit frightened, I walked down the mountain.

The Next Day

The next day after work I changed into my jogging clothes, picked up a stone and began my run. A group of Israeli solders were marching to the top of the mountain. Many were winded from the sharp ascent. I waved as I passed them.

On the mountaintop I sang out the *Shema* loudly. I waited for Saul's response. Saul again gave the Yom Kippur response, but in a different voice. The voice was directed away from me. He sat on a rock facing West, staring at the road to Damascus. I walked toward the figure and put my hand on his shoulder.

The soldiers arrived on the top of the mountain and went through some kind of induction service. Saul shook his head and did not speak again until they left.

I sat nearby and studied his face. He was as odd looking as Socrates. He had a bald head covered with a rough-cut cloth skullcap. The prominent nose supported eyebrows that were thick and bushy and grew together. When he wrinkled his brow it looked like a bird in flight. Paul's thick white beard appeared as a cloud. In the midst of the cloud were two light sky-blue eyes - full of the light of the sunset. His was the face of a man who wanted to be an angel.

"Who are you?" I asked, after the soldiers left.

"I am Saul," he answered.

Confused by yesterday's vision, I asked "Anointed one, King of Israel?"

"Israel has only one king, our Father in Heaven. Israel has only one Christ, son of Jesse, son of David, son of Man."

We stood and faced one another. He was my height.

"Are you Saul the Benjaminite?"

"Yes."

"But not a king?"

"No, I am the King's scepter bearer."

"Which king?"

"The King Messiah."

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The Letters

"I have been reading your letters," I said.

"Yes."

"And I am writing a New Gospel and New Book of Acts."

"So I have heard from Theophilos," Saul answered, smiling.

"I am trying to understand you from your letters," I said. "The old Acts read like a travelogue, not history, more like a Greek romantic novel."

"You are right my friend," Saul answered.

"Let's talk about your conversion," I said as we both stood overlooking the Road to Damascus.

"Transformation is a better word," said Paul.

"Okay," I said. "Transformation."

"This Rabbinic caterpillar," Paul said, "was transformed into a butterfly."

"Exactly," I agreed. "And you became a bit flighty?"

Paul smiled. "When God appeared to Abraham and said, “It is time to go,” Abraham moved on to the Holy Land, passing his first test. When God said to Abraham, “Go into yourself and experience the future of your people in a vision on Moriah,” Abraham went.

When God bound Isaac to the altar, Abraham saw the future of Israel, bound on the altar of history. Each sacrifice on the altar, the blood of every animal offered for a sin offering, was a reminder of the blood of Isaac. On Yom Kippur the scapegoat atoned for the sins of Israel.

When God bound Isaac to the altar, Abraham saw the second Isaac bound on his cross. By the sacrifice, all sin was atoned, for all who would ascend the cross and experience this ultimate form of prayer.

Our people could not perceive God in the Temple service. Animals were offered daily as sacrifices but the people continued to sin. The sacrifice of the animal became the focus of worship, not the sacrifice of the animal soul of the worshiper. The blood of the animals was then only blood staining the Temple Mount, so God destroyed the Temple. A new perfect sacrifice was required, so God sent his second Isaac, this time to atone for all sins in the final sacrifice."

"God desires not sacrifice, but mercy," I protested.

"You are right Laurence, it was not God who required the sacrifice, it was Man. Does a father wish to see the death of his only beloved son?"

"And if Christ had not died on the cross?" I asked.

Paul sat and thought. "If Christ had not died," he said, "The crucifixion would have been another *akeda*. Abraham never desired to slay his son on Moriah. God did not desire the death of Christ. Yet Christ was crucified. If Isaac had been slaughtered on Moriah he would have risen after three days. It was God's choice that Isaac live. Christ was crucified on the mountain over against Moriah by Man. And so it is Man who is obligated to see the sublime meaning of the sacrifice. The Lamb of God, the final Passover offering, was the final atonement. The ancient Jewish worship by animal sacrifice was replaced by the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. Those who offered bullocks and doves for sin offering did so, often, with hardened hearts. The act of sacrifice, not atonement with God, became central. And what is sacrifice without inwardness? What is prayer without intention? What meaning can we give an act if it has no inwardness?"

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I interrupted. "Paul - I do not believe you have found an answer to the problem of inwardness. Bread and wine, body and blood, are at the center of much of Christian worship. When the Jews ate the flesh of burnt offerings there was no guarantee they were eating a sacramental meal. When a Christian drinks the wine of the Last Supper there is no guarantee they will experience the blood of atonement.

"Come to think of it," I added, reflecting on my polemics, "perhaps it is better for the Christian if the bread remains bread and the wine remains wine."

"Listen," Paul said, "for my time I offered a spiritual solution to all who would share in the suffering of God's servant. No ritual act can guarantee a connection with the spirit."

"But the spirit and ritual are the basis of everything spiritual," I said.

"I agree," said Paul.

"So why reject the Law?" I asked.

"I do no such thing!"

"Isaiah and the prophets were called to be messengers of god." I attacked, "and you write in Corinthians, it is your first contention that you are called to be a messenger of Jesus Christ."

"Let's take on one issue at a time," Paul said, responding patiently to my attack. "I know in the heat of the argument of the time, I made many ambiguous statements about the Law. But you know from your readings that the basic direction my thought takes is to see the Law as Good. I even argue that doing the Law is good."

"But," I interrupted again, "you opt for the argument that salvation is only through Christ. Doesn't this make the Halachic system worthless for salvation? If you deny that the Torah and its observance is a way to salvation, do you not deny Judaism?"

Paul was silent. I understood his silence as an assent and said, "I will tell you what you find lacking in Judaism, It is not your Christianity." Paul did not answer.

The Next Day

I descended feeling triumphant. That evening I worked on the end of Final Testament and read more of the Letters. The next day I ascended with a rock in my left hand and the New Testament in my right. "Hear O Israel!" I shouted.

"I hear," Paul answered.

"The Lord our God, the Lord is One," we chanted together.

"So we still believe in the same God?" I asked.

"We do," Paul answered.

"And the Lord and God are One?" I asked.

"You said it," Paul smiled, "In truth," he said, "the *Shema* is better translated: 'Hear O Israel, God Our Lord, God is One.'"

"Explain," I said.

"God means the transcendent eternal impersonal deity," Paul explained. "The transcendent deity beyond thought and time.

“Elohim, Our Lord, is the God of Creation. In the beginning Elohim created Heaven and Earth. In Genesis we are taught that Adam Kadman, the first human being, was created in Elohim's image. Each person is a microcosm of creation.

“Being created in God's image we are all types of God. We resemble God the way a son resembles a father.”

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Genesis Three

"That's the story in Genesis One," I said. "In Genesis Three, Eve and Adam's rebellion makes them godlike, like Elohim, knowing Good and Evil. The act of eating of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil makes Eve and Adam like Elohim. Does this mean that what you call the original sin makes Adam and Eve Christ-like?"

"Rabbi," Paul answered, "as you know, Elohim is the name of God. If an error occurs in the Torah - in the sacred scroll - the name Elohim may not be erased. It is cut from the parchment and buried. Sometimes in scripture Elohim does not stand for the Deity. It means a great man, a judge, a leader. In those cases it may be erased. In this passage Elohim is not holy. It means 'you shall be as the great - knowing good and evil.'"

"That is the reading of the Scribes," I protested. "It is clear from the *Midrash* on Genesis that Elohim here means God. Rabbi Joshua said in Rabbi Levi's name, 'The serpent slandered God the Creator, saying "Of this tree God did eat and then create the world. God therefore orders you not to eat the fruit so that you do not create other worlds."

Saul smiled and disappeared.

Evening Prayers

I thought I might have offended Paul, for he did not answer my *Shema* in the morning. That day I was unable to complete the end of Final Testament.

The sun descended in the western sky as I ascended the mountain. I chanted.

> "Hear O Israel
> God our Lord
> God is One."

I chanted. A voice whispered with me.

And together we said

> "Love God Your Lord with all your heart and with all your soul and with your very being. And these words I command today shall be upon your heart. Teach them to your children. Speak of them in the home, when you journey, when you are lying down and rising up. Bind them as a sign on your hand - let them be enshrined between your eyes. Write them on the doorpost of your house and gates."

"Paul - do you accept the Yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven?"

"I do," he laughed - "but for me it is no yoke."

"And do you accept the Yoke of the Mitzvot?"

"I do," Paul said. "This commandment - to love God as God loves us - this is the commandment that sets us free."

"So you do not deny the Law - justifying all by faith?"

Paul took my red New English Bible and turned to his Letters. "I wrote seven letters," he said. "The Letter to the Romans is by my hand." He slipped an old parchment bookmark into my red Bible. "Read Romans 2 and 3," he said, and was gone.

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Final Encounter

My last conversation with Paul was on the Sabbath. We prayed together. We studied together. I spent from morning until evening on the mountain. We focused on Genesis, Hebrews and Revelations.

I explained to Paul about Isaac and Sealah. I described the Final Act. Paul wept when I described Isaac's encounter with his father.

"So you are reconciled with my Gospel of the Second Coming and the meaning of those events I chronicle in Final Testament?" I asked Paul.

"Yes!"

"How can you answer so quickly?" I asked.

"What else do you think I have been sitting here meditating on for the last 2,000 years?" was his answer.

"Will you then be a Sealahite as Judaism and Christianity, the Father and Son, are reconciled?" I asked.

Paul did not answer - as you may have anticipated Theophilos. My visions ended and I found myself alone on the mountain asking myself the same question.

Final Act

Theophilos: Final Testament and Final Acts - minus my letters - was complete. Standing on the mountain facing Damascus - I understood what I was doing. I would write seven Final Letters. I would help organize Sealah. I returned to America. There I would experience and write Final Revelation.

The Divorce

I was in Israel for one full year. I traveled three times to Tel Aviv to arrange for the Bill of Divorcement to be sent to Lillian. A messenger from the Rabbinic Court of Chicago was appointed to deliver the Bill of Divorcement to Lillian in Indiana. She was not home.

Lillian knew of my whereabouts and travel plans because of the divorce. I was on my way to Princeton to work with Isaac setting up Sealah synagogues and churches. I would have to arrange for the Rabbinic divorce in America.

At the Airport

It was good to be home. The Israel of my imagination and the Israel of Temple - broken stone - and wars in the Middle East had irreconcilable difference. Between the idea of Israel and the reality of Israel, falls the shadow of Israel. Thank God the land had not been named Zion. Israel was not Zion.

In the middle of these thoughts I saw Lillian waiting for me at the airport.

A New Lillian

Lillian was dressed in the manner of the orthodox women of New York. Her long dress was stylish and modest. She wore layers on top - a long-sleeved shirt to cover her arms to the wrists with a short-sleeved sweater over the shirt. Even layers could not camouflage her full shapely breasts.

Lillian's head covering made it clear that she was wearing the uniform of an orthodox Jewish woman. The stark white cotton surrounded her long curls and crowned her head. Lillian's face was set off by the crown. Large brown doe eyes filled the upper half of her heart-shaped face. Lillian's nose appeared more Semitic when

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her hair was down. The brown curls softened the effect. Lillian's thin lips fit perfectly with her pointed chin at the bottom of the heart's design. Her tongue flicked through her lips like an arrow as she waved as I approached.

Springhill

Lillian had returned to the faith of her father, to Orthodoxy. I was evidently not ready to join Sealah. My parents were just beginning to observe the Sabbath and my father, retired, was considering a second career as a cantor. My parents did not like Lillian. At that point in my life, Theophilos, I was still a people pleaser and I was uncomfortable with my dilemma. But either choice, Sealah or Lillian, would upset my parents.

Springhill was a pleasant enough place to live. We found an apartment subsidized by a Yeshiva for returnees to Orthodoxy. The rent subsidy was part of the package the Yeshiva offered me.

The Yeshiva

The Yeshiva also had much to teach me. Organizationally they were superb, with branches in Jerusalem and New York and Canada. The head of the Yeshiva was a visionary and master fund raiser. His vision was to open the orthodox door to Judaism to the minions of unaffiliated college-aged Jews in the United States and Canada. Once recruited the returnees were educated in the ways of Orthodoxy and sent to Jerusalem. In Jerusalem the returnees were offered a community that was insulated from Modernity. Women who were uncomfortable with the fierce competition with men engendered by feminism could retreat into a world where a woman's role was clearly and comfortably defined. The men could discover a lifestyle devoted to Torah rather than materialism. Text, black on white, became the model of their existence. The alphabet of the Jews became their garb, all wore black, and all studied to see the white light of the Living Torah.

The orthodox community of Springhill was isolated from the world. They were a world within a world in a self-imposed ghetto. They did not watch television. They did not read newspapers. They studied God's word.

I was astonished, at first, that I was not recognized. Isaac's activities in Princeton were periodically chronicled in the newspapers. The articles made no mention of a Messiah, but did boldly assert that Sealah was the newest monotheistic religion. I called Isaac and he greeted me warmly and patiently accepted my choice to return to Lillian and Orthodoxy. He told me not to worry about our friendship and assured me I would not be recognized.

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My Woven Skullcap

My woven skullcap, blue and white and oversized, stood out like a flag at our faculty meetings. The other rabbis wore hats over black velvet yarmulkes. All of this has significance in the world of orthodoxy Theophilos.

Students in the Yeshiva, not rabbis, wore woven skullcaps. In Israel a woven skullcap usually meant that one affiliated with *Mizrachi*, - Modern Orthodox Jews who dressed and thought as moderns and supported the state of Israel. The Springhill rabbis were from the traditions of orthodoxy who wanted a Messianic, not a secular state - with a Messiah, not a Prime Minister for the ruler of Israel. Wearing a blue and white woven skullcap indicated that I had hoisted the flag of Israel over my head.

I did wear, however, as do all ultra-orthodox Jews, fringes hanging over the belt of my pants. The Torah commands of the fringes, "You shall see them." My thread of blue, also commanded, set me apart. A small group of Chassidim wore the thread of blue, but the custom was not universally accepted.

When we see the fringes, the Torah teaches, we are reminded of all the Commandments of the Lord and to do them, and not to be lead astray by eyes and a heart that may tempt as to go a whoring after sin. The eye sees, the heart desires, and the body succumbs. The fringes are outward reminders that command inward conformity to the whole of the Law. This leads to holiness and redemption.

When the rabbis saw my thread of blue they were reminded of the ancient controversy concerning the identity and the source of the dye for the blue fringe. All agreed that the sky blue fringe, (following the teaching of Rabbi Meir) resembled the sea which reflects the heavens and that heaven reflects the Throne of glory. Since all the rabbis who taught at the Yeshiva were scholars they knew that, according to *Tosefta*, *Menachote* 9:6; the Talmud Yerushalmi, Shabbat 1:3 and Ravaya on the Talmudic Tractate Blessings 3b: The blue dye was from an animal called in Hebrew *Chilazone*, a boneless invertebrate with a shell, a snail of the purpura family.

Perhaps, I thought to myself, the rabbinic aversion to the sky blue dye was its unkosher origins. Or, I mused, the color would remind them of the purpura and the purpura, being a snail, would remind them of the speed with which they were willing to accept change.

What my colleagues may not have known was the dearness of the dye of the *Chilazone*. Pliny says that each snail yielded only a few drops of dye. Thousands of snails were required for even a small vial. Perhaps the thread of blue was worn only by royalty. As the rabbis thought of the Talmudic arguments and customs that spoke against wearing the thread of blue, I thought of Isaac.

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Tolerance

The Returnees and Devotees of Springhill choose to live in a world within the world. The Jewish Reformation led largely to assimilation and rejection. Jews could not reconcile Judaism and what they perceived to be the truth of the modern world. They rejected religion to become citizens of modernity.

The challenge of other truths was met by many orthodox with an ostrich response. The challenge of others' truths is rejected by denying a forum for the questions they asked. What God has spoken is not in need of justification. The amazing truth Theophilus, one that I realized sitting with my rabbinic colleagues at our meeting, was that their world within a world was comfortable and workable - for them.

I sat and wondered. Was I here as an anthropologist studying ancient moderns? Could I escape the controversies and potential dangers of Sealah by escaping into orthodoxy? I also wondered about Lillian's retreat. Her father, an orthodox Jew, while displeased with our reunion, was pleased that Lillian had replaced her "on the edge" modern lifestyle with ultra-traditional Judaism. At least she was safe from unkosher food, the sexual revolution and lesbianism.

I looked at my colleagues' fringes and smiled to myself. The fringe of Jewish life. I knew I could not remain long within the community. In my lectures at Yale which the Yeshiva sponsored to attract students, I was expected to teach that Judaism was an anti-monastic tradition. No monks or nuns. I smiled again as I understood that this community itself represented an intriguing Monasticism within the world. The structure of orthodox life and the Sabbath quiet of this retreat gave me time to write the Letters. They were finished in seven weeks. This gave me ten months for Final Revelations.

The Meeting

I came back to the meeting when I was being discussed.

"Rabbi," the Rosh Yeshiva asked gently - voicing the complaint of other Talmud instructors - "Could you explain your methodology?"

"Certainly," I said. “We were studying the first chapter of the tractate Buba Kama. The Yeshiva was still on the first side of the second page. I was much father into the chapter, and had assigned my students chapters in Maimonides' Legal Code on Acquisitions and Oaths.

"The students must master the conceptual basis of the text," I argued. "They must see the breadth before the depth of the Halachic issues involved." This satisfied the head Rabbi. The next day a number of teachers attended my class to experience my teaching method.

The next item on the agenda was outreach. Eight or nine other rabbis were teaching classes at various universities to bring students into the Yeshiva. Under the guise of enriching the curriculum of the universities' Hillel foundations, designed to serve Jewish university students - our rabbis taught Talmud and Basic Judaism. A number of students each semester left the university or studied with us during the summer and entered the fold. These students wore woven skullcaps until their official initiation into dark-suited and black velvet skullcap Judaism.

The wives were sent out with their husbands to teach female university students. They studied at an institute for women. Marriages were arranged between our Yeshiva students and women at their institute.

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Lillian

Lillian did not want to move. She worked in the Yeshiva office. I taught at Yale which was within driving distance of the Yeshiva.

The Rosh Yeshiva's wife and the wives of the Talmud teachers worked with Lillian in the office. They wore wigs covered by cloth *Tichels* or head wraps. Under the wigs their heads were shaved.

Theophilos, I must stop and try to explain the issue of head coverings. During *Mishna*ic and Talmudic times it was considered immodest and unseemly for a woman to go into public with her hair exposed, as you remember from our discussions in Final Testament.

Hair was considered sexually provocative. Chassidic women shaved their heads and wore a head covering. This custom it seems to me Theophilos, is backward. A woman should be desirable to her husband.

A deep anti-sensualism must have taken hold of Orthodoxy. Heads were shaved. Women were told they could not sing because a woman's voice was likened to her nakedness. A custom arose a few hundred years ago - as a type of protest I imagine - for women to cover their shaved heads with wigs instead of tichels. These women could fulfill the rigors of orthodox custom and still wear hair in public.

This is truly remarkable, don't you think Theophilos? A colleague of mine - not a rabbinic colleague, but a literary colleague - who is well-versed in Judaism told me that on the streets Jews are Puritans, but in the bedroom as sensual as David and the ancient Israelites. This was not my experience with the orthodox.

Extremely observant Jews protested against the legal fiction of a wig not violating the Law since the wig was not the woman's own hair. The ultra-orthodox rejected wigs. God bless them. To this day the ultra-orthodox in Jerusalem shave their heads and wear a tightly bound black scarf over their heads. But they are, even within Orthodoxy, the fringe of the fringe.

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Lillian's Fringes

Lillian and I discussed the hair issue. Her long curls coiled around her head were truly sensual - the crown of her beauty. The curls fell like coiled hair fringes over her shoulders. When I looked upon them I thought of only one Commandment - the first - to be fruitful and multiply - or at least to go through the motions. In the Orthodox community none knew of Lillian's hair - only I would be captured by her tresses.

None knew until the first time Lillian went to the Mikvah in Springhill to be baptized and purified after her monthly menstrual flow.

The Mikvah

At the Mikvah the attendant pared Lillian's nails. Lillian's perfect body might not have offended the attendant if Lillian's hair had been cut to the skull like the other orthodox women. The attendant herself was captured by the tresses. She cut the nails too closely, drawing blood from one of Lillian's fingers.
Lillian entered the Mikvah and immersed.

"Not kosher," the attendant said, because her hair was not totally immersed. "Immerse again."

This went on for quite a while until even the attendant tired and declared the immersion kosher.

Lillian arrived home in tears - livid. Her hands were slightly bruised where the attendant had held them. Lillian screamed about the cruelty of the attendant.

Feeling helpless I suggested that the next time she cut her own nails and trim her hair a little.

She glared at me and left the room.

Theophilos, the reason a woman goes to the Mikvah is to prepare for lovemaking.

I sought out Lillian but she fled into the bedroom and went to bed with her wet head still covered by her tightly bound head covering.

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In the Office

In the office the next day I saw Lillian when I went to get the keys to the car I would drive to Yale. The rabbi's wives were smiling at Lillian. She wore a wig (I have no idea where she got it Theophilos), covered with her cloth head cover. She avoided my eyes.

Yale

I taught Talmud at Yale the first semester. Three orthodox students and one woman attended the course. None of them were good "catches" by Yeshiva standards. The class was in the evening and I spent the afternoons in the library.

The second semester I decided to teach about the religious basis for peace in the Middle East. The room was filled with Jewish and non-Jewish students and even a few Arabs. The class was well received.

I considered escaping the world of the Yeshiva by enrolling in the Doctoral Program at Yale. My research on Final Revelations was complete. I awaited the vision.

I am tempted, Theophilos, to review with you now my notes and thesis I presented to my Peace Studies class. I will not. In our Sealah newsletters Isaac and I both review our teachings on Peace. Sealah Publishing is printing my studies in the form of a monograph.

I fear, as I did in Final Testament, Theophilos, that I often speak too much of myself in these testaments.

On the other hand, God's portrayal of Biblical personalities in the Old Testament is sketchy. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, even Moses and Aaron are only charcoal etchings on the Biblical canvas. We do not hear enough of Jesus' life. Paul we meet through somewhat pedantic letters and travelogues rather than dialogue. This time gentle reader, we see ideas become reality as people live them. Isaac teaches that Judaism had the dwelling place of God's presence - Jerusalem. Christianity, the personality of God's presence, and Islam, the way to God's presence. Sealah - a hybrid monotheism learns from all three and so I focus on personality and plot rather than ideas alone.

Still, the ideas of Sealah are crucial. We shall not over-focus on Gospel works. The Letters will appear soon. After I chronicle Lillian's operation and how I came to experience the religions of the East and envision how they would submit to Sealah's rule.

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The Appointment

I encouraged Lillian to seek out a surgeon who could reverse her tubal ligation. She resisted at first, perhaps afraid that the other rabbis' wives would discover her secret. Lillian agreed to see the surgeon however, when I made an appointment for her in Manhattan.

The surgeon, according to my research in the library, was a renowned authority on infertility. Half of his practice was devoted to Chassidim and ultra-orthodox Jews who could not get pregnant. Many in the waiting room that day wore the black uniform of the ultra-orthodox. They averted their eyes from one another and especially from me.

Perhaps, I thought to myself, they felt ashamed, cursed that they could not perform the first and most basic of God's Commandments. They also may have wondered about the mismatch. Lillian wore her ultra-orthodox bonnet and I my woven skullcap. Also, we sat together - a breach of etiquette.

The nurse called us in to the office. The doctor smiled and asked us to tell our story. I was surprised when he began with me. The doctor was even more surprised when he heard the story of my vasectomy. The doctor was a secular Jew raised by orthodox parents. He reacted to my story from his orthodoxy.

"The Torah forbids such mutilation."

"My sperm count is now borderline," I said in my own defense. "The reversal may have been a success."

"How could you let him do such a thing?" the doctor demanded of my very orthodox looking wife.

She did not answer, but repeated her habit of darting her tongue out and licking her lips.

The doctor shook his head and said, "Nu," wondering why we were there.

"I had a tubal ligation," Lillian confessed. "I won't even ask," the doctor shot back.

When he heard of the technique used on Lillian he shook his head, took the doctor's number, and said, "I have developed a technique that might allow me to reconnect you. No promises."

We all looked at one another and no one verbalized the obvious. If Lillian's operation was a success, and my sperm count remained borderline, Lillian would have to find another father.

The surgery was scheduled on a Monday, about a month after the original appointment. The surgeon waved us out of the room.

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The Convention

We busied ourselves with preparation for the convention which would end the weekend before Lillian's surgery. Lillian handled the reservations. I called former students and Summer Institute people form around the United States and Canada. All the rabbis were on the many phones in the office. I was assigned the use of the Rosh Yeshiva's office since I would be making the arrangements for the Talmudic scholars and Torah personalities from Israel who would fly in for the convention.

Waiting for the overseas operator to call back I noticed a pamphlet on the Rosh Yeshiva's desk. It was called "Rahda Krsna." I picked up the pamphlet. The author of the pamphlet, Hari-das, began with some translations of the Bhagavad Gita - the Bible of Krshnaism. This first edition of the pamphlet was a translation of chapter one and two of the Gita. The first chapter was called "The Discipline of Arjuna's Despondency." It was almost unreadable. The second chapter called, "The chapter on the Discipline of Reason," I could not comprehend. A short essay by the pamphleteer gave me a frame of reference to understand the Gita:

'The Gita is a Hindu's main devotional book. Krsna - who is God in human form (Bhagavad) sings his song (Gita) in this scripture. Actually the Gita is part of the mystic doctrine (upanisad) sung by the Blessed One. The book is a dialogue (almost a monologue) between Krsna and Arjuna. Krsna is Arjuna's charioteer. Going to battle, Arjuna feels remorse because he will take human life.

Krsna justifies the war by dividing soul and body. Since the soul is immortal independent of the mortal body, there is no slayer or slain. I was reminded of Israel's song at the sea with God as warrior and the Muslim promise to martyrs that they automatically went to heaven when they died in battle.

The next article was entitled "Bhakti - the Most Excellent Mysticism." Hari-das taught that the goal of the Hindu was a direct relationship through a clear vision with God. He used the word "clear" often. Hari-das explained that he could not reveal all aspects of Bhakti worship - some were secret. Hari-das did reveal that he worshiped the dark lord of Jayadeva in the Gitagovinda.

The phone rang and I closed Rahda Krsna. I made arrangements with our keynote speaker in Jerusalem and gave him the time of his talk and his topic for the Sabbath discussions. I made other calls. Before leaving I noticed a short note to the Rosh Yeshiva on the front of Rahda Krsna. "Is this idolatry?

Hari-das' Wife

Hari-das' wife was coming to the convention. Lillian made arrangements for her, the child and Hari-das. Hari-das was only staying one night and then was flying off to India for business. Hari-das' wife told Lillian she needed to talk to the Rosh Yeshiva about her husband's religious beliefs.

In the light of her new found Judaism she wondered is she was living with an idolater or religious pagan. At the convention I would speak to her and her "Hindu" husband. The snare of Satan would be set by my own hand.

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Period

Lillian was bleeding heavily from her period. I was surprised when she walked over and touched me. I remembered our Jerusalem days. Lillian slipped her hand into my pants. She stroked and then squeezed me. Touching, as you know Theophilos, is forbidden by Orthodox Law when a woman is menstruating. Lillian squeezed again like an Eve throttling the serpent before it could speak. I did not protest. I removed Lillian's dress. She was wearing fringes - one of my woolen pairs. She insisted on wearing the *Tzitzit* and her wig and head covering as she led me into the bedroom.

I tried to kiss Lillian on the lips but she moved me to her breast. She touched herself and rubbed blood from her finger on her nipples. She informed me she would never again go to the Mikvah. She asked me to lick the blood from her nipples. She ordered me to stick my tongue in her mouth.

"Milk and meat," she said, putting more blood on her nipples. "Milk and blood."

Lillian flipped her wig off her head and let her curls fall around her shoulders.

Our rebellions began.

Milk and Meat

That entire week my rebellion continued. I cooked salami and eggs for breakfast, and drank coffee with cream at the Yeshiva, not waiting six hours as the Law requires.

During prayers I imagined myself bound to the altar in place of Isaac - with the black straps of my own Tefillin.

When I recited the *Shema* I summoned Paul and asked him if "Elohim" included Jesus and Krsna. When I grasped my fringes to recite the third paragraph of the *Shema* I imagined I was holding - and healed by - Isaac's *Tzitzit*.

During my week of rebellion I would eat a Glatt kosher sandwich at the deli and then go to the dairy restaurant and eat a piece of pizza made with "the milk of an Israelite" cheese.

Theophilos, it was obviously time that Lillian and I leave Springhill and the Yeshiva world.

New Hampshire

The arrangements were made at the convention. Hari-das' wife spoke to me and Lillian for a few hours about her new found Orthodoxy - Hinduism - Hari-das - and the legal definition of idolatry.

Hari-das met with the Rosh Yeshiva. They spoke in abstractions. Hari-das would not reveal the secrets of his worship. The Rosh Yeshiva lectured Hari-das about going to Yeshiva after it was clear to him that by his legal *Halachic* definition - Hari-das was a Jew. The Rosh Yeshiva recognized Hari-das' last name. Hari-das' father was one of the most lauded men in Boston. His name appeared on a Yeshiva list for potential major contributors.

The Rosh Yeshiva offered to personally tutor Hari-das in Hebrew and Talmud and Jewish devotional literature. He asked Hari-das to teach him about his worship. The Rosh Yeshiva mentioned some basic Hindu teachings he must have learned from the copy of Rahda Krsna on his desk - the one I had read. Hari-das raised his eyebrows, smiled, and then agreed. He would study with the Rosh Yeshiva after he returned from India.

Hari-das found Lillian and I in his room speaking to his wife. "Rabbi," he said, eyeing my skullcap, "did she tell you I'm an idolater yet?" Hari-das looked away from his wife, who blushed. Their child - about a year old - began to fuss as soon as Hari-das and his wife were in the room together. Now the child began to cry. Lillian took the baby from Hari-das' wife, but the baby could not be quieted. Lillian stood up to leave. Hari-das

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watched Lillian. He wondered why Lillian wore a long-sleeved shirt under a short-sleeved sweater. Hari-das asked, "Why the turbans - are you Sikhs?"

"No," I said, trying to break the tension caused by the crying baby, "but we are seekers." As everyone laughed, I took the baby from Hari-das' wife. I made dove sounds and then held her close to my heart. She quieted.

Hari-das' wife spoke. "I can't complain," she started. "Oh, yes you can," Hari-das said, interrupting. She started again.

"I can't complain about our material life together. We could use some more furniture, but the house couldn't be lovelier - or larger. We live on a mountaintop in New Hampshire. I have my own studio. Hari-das has his cow and his Darshan room."

"What's a Darshan room?" I asked.

"A prayer room."

"It sounds like a room where *drasha* or teachings are taught."

"I think he worships idols in there," said Hari-das' wife.

"Your narrow mindedness is the real idolatry," Hari-das answered.

The child lifted her head and began to cry again. Hari-das asked me to go for a walk with him.

The Walk

Hari-das talked about India. He was there during the '70's for almost ten years. He was fluent in Sanskrit and Hindu scripture. His guru, his teacher, lived in a small village in Northern India.

"My guru said my wife would be difficult," Hari-das said. "But I believed she would be a good wife."

"A good wife?" I asked.

"One who worships and cooks and makes the home into a Holy Temple," he said.

"You do not worship together?"

"No, my worship involves foods which I offer to Rahda and Krishna."

"Judaism also asks that we pray before we eat," I said.

"In Hinduism eating is praying," Hari-das said.

"So by not eating with you, she does not pray with you?"

"That's right. She cooks her own food."

"Will she at least eat at table with you?" I asked.

"I don't use a table, but the answer is no."

"She even mentioned bringing eggs into the house!"

"Eggs are forbidden?" I asked.

"Yes."

"Fried chicken embryos," I said,

"Yes - I see you understand," Hari-das said, misunderstanding.

I asked Hari-das about his religion to change the subject. Do you have a Torah?" I asked, wanting to remind him that I addressed this question to him as a Jew.

"Hindu scripture begins with the Riq Veda," Hari-das explained, "a collection of Psalms to the gods of nature."

"Nature worship? I asked.

"No," Hari-das answered. "Religion at that time was sacrificial. Priests conducted the rituals for the rich. The real religion of the people was different. The people used the Atharva Veda - collection of songs and rituals. Vedic literature also contains the Upanisads which deals with philosophical subjects.

“The popular mind was not drawn to the Upanisads. The Gita unifies the old worship - focusing

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worship on one monotheistic deity. The people were also united in their worship of Krishna."

I must confess Theophilos, his name and the religion known by his gods name, I was inclined to mock. The Hari-krishna movement organized by Jewish boys probably not much different from Hari-das, cruelly mocked Hinduism and Krishna worship. Again my friend, religion becomes a profanation of God's name.

Hari-das may have read my mind because he told me of his plans to organize Krishna worship in America. "True Krishna worship as opposed to Hari-krishna worship." Hari-das explained more of the Gita, which sounded to me like a combination of Christian and Chassidic doctrine. Hari-das knew his scripture well.

I was attentive, thinking of writing a Final Gita. Hinduism and Judaism, in some aspects, I explained to Hari-das, went through similar evolutions. Both begin with cultic animal sacrifice to satisfy primitive needs to appease God.

The Temple destroyed, Judaism and Christianity transformed the ancient worship. The Jew offered the "bullocks of their lips," offering words of prayer instead of the sacrificial act. The Christian offered the Word, Christ Jesus, crucified as a substitute for animal sacrifices. Hari-das said he knew little of Judaism or Christianity, and listened carefully to my comparison.

"Perhaps Hinduism and Judaism are much closer than my wife imagines," Hari-das said.

"Perhaps."

Hari-das explained more about Hinduism.

I coveted the knowledge and wisdom Hari-das had gained in India. I also coveted his easy lifestyle. He received checks weekly - interest on the many accounts his father had already put in his name. Hari-das' life focused on his worship. He went to India for business, but mostly he went to be with his guru. I told Hari-das I was writing a book. I imagined myself in the mountains of New Hampshire with all the day to write Final Revelations and revise Final Testament and Final Acts.

Hari-das invited us to live with him. I protested - saying it would be an imposition.

"No, no," he said. "I need you to help save my marriage."

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The Move

The convention ended with many thanks to Lillian and me by the entire hierarchy of the Yeshiva.

The next day I drove Lillian into Manhattan for her surgery. She was in the hospital for one week. Hari-das' wife sent a tropical flower that filled Lillian's room with its fragrance. The surgeon visited the day after the surgery, informing us that the technical part of the surgery had gone well.

Satman Chassidim from Williamsburg brought chicken broth and other kosher food for Lillian. After the week in the hospital Lillian and I drove to New Hampshire. She did not return to Springhill. I dropped her off in New Hampshire, spent the night, and then returned to New York the next morning to rent a U-Haul and move our possessions to Hari-das' house.

A High Place

The Rosh Yeshiva was beside himself. I told him we were leaving. He surprised me by asking how we could even consider going to New Hampshire. I did not answer. The Rosh Yeshiva must have spoken to Hari-das' wife while Lillian was in the hospital.

"Is Lillian alright?" he asked. "What's wrong with her?"

I did not answer.

"You cannot go to New Hampshire," the Rosh Yeshiva said. "The man is an *ovade avoda zara*. The man is an idolater."

A student of mine, a professor of Economics from Yale studying at the Yeshiva, helped me load the U-Haul. Since I am mentioning him Theophilos, I should also mention that he is now studying for a Sealah Rabbinic ordination as a rabbi economist.

I drove all day, arriving late at night. The last few miles felt exceptionally bumpy in the truck. The final ascent was difficult. Hari-das lived in a high place on top of a mountain.

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In the Darshan Room

I made myself at home in the darshan room. What a place for a nature worshiper. You could see all the way to Vermont from the mountain. The view was picture postcard perfect.

Hari-das' library was vast, and all on Gita and other Bhakti works in Sanskrit and English. I revised a few sentences in my letter to the East, based on information in Hari-das' library.

Hari-das planned to be in India a little over a month. He had given me permission to use the library and asked that I not go into the closets. I read and wrote. On Shabbat we prayed together in the darshan room. Saturday mornings we studied the weekly Torah reading. That week we studied the last section of the book of Genesis.

Sealah

I taught Hari-das' wife the meaning of the Sealah passage in Chapter 49 of the book of Genesis. Lillian knew I was finishing Final Acts. I let her read sections of the book. I did not offer her Final Testament to read. Lillian left the room the moment I mentioned the word Sealah.

Hari-das' wife, a neophyte to Judaism, was eager to learn. She studied as often as a nursing mother could. She was building a Torah library and had a number of volumes on the Kaballah. I told her about Sealah without mentioning Isaac. We studied from Hertz's edition of the Pentateuch *Haftorah*s and discussed his article at the end of Genesis on alleged Christological references in scripture.

Dr. Hertz, a former Chief Rabbi of the British Empire, explains that Genesis 49:10 is a favorite text of Christian missionaries.

Theophilos, you know the verse well. The verse, Jacob's blessing to Israel, reads:

> The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

Hertz translates:

> The scepter shall not depart from Judah
> Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet
> As long as men come to Sealah
> And unto him shall the obedience of the people be.

Hertz is right. 49:10 is a difficult verse to translate. He transliterated *Sheloh* incorrectly as Shiloh. The Rabbi admits in his note that "*ad ki Yavo Sealah*" means, literally, until Sealah's coming. The Rabbi does better than the New English Bible, which leaves Sealah out of the verse entirely.

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The New English Bible

Every morning after prayer, I sat with my New English Bible, reading the Revelation of John. I had used many verses from the book at the end of Final Testament, but felt that I did not understand the book. I called Isaac and he suggested a number of commentaries. Isaac also suggested that I reread the entire Bible from Genesis to Revelations.

I drove into the village and found a verse by verse commentary on the New English Bible and the other books Isaac recommended. I often would leave early so I could eat breakfast and lunch in the village and dinner with Hari-das' wife and Lillian.

Hari-das allowed no eggs or meat in his house. I had eggs for breakfast and meat for lunch and vegetarian dinners with Lillian and Hari-das' wife. Lillian was healing and spent most of the day in her room. In the evenings we studied and sang and discussed religion.

The Second Commandment

This continued until we reached the Torah portion where the Ten Commandments or Principles are read. We were all seated in the darshan room on the Sabbath, discussing the portion called Yitro (Jethro). Hari-das' returned earlier than expected and quietly took a seat and listened.

I read the verse in Hebrew from Rabbi Hertz's Bible and Lillian and Hari-das' wife followed with Torahs containing commentaries.

> God speaks:
> I am the Lord thy God
> Who brought thee out of the land
> Of Egypt, out of the house
> Of bondage.

"We all agree," I said, "that the First Commandment or Principle of religion is to believe in God."

"What else is taught here?" I asked.

"That the Jews would find God through their redemption from Egypt," Hari-das' wife said.

"Excellent," I said. "This is the teaching of Rabbi Moses ben Nachman. What else does this teach us?" I asked. No answer. I answered my own question.

"God is the God of history. The Jews were chosen for persecution and redemption. God will again make the divine presence manifest by liberating us from all our modern Egypts."

All were silent. Hari-das sat with legs crossed and eyes closed, meditating.

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Exodus Twenty - Verse Three

Jewish tradition considers verse three of Exodus Twenty the beginning of the Second Commandment. I read the Hebrew and translated:

> Thou shall not make unto thee a graven image, nor any manner of likeness, or anything that is heaven above, or that is in the Earth beneath, or that is in the water under the Earth
> Thou shall not bow down unto them nor serve them
> For I, the Lord thy God, Am a jealous God

"My guru teaches," Hari-das continued, "idolatry is forbidden by the Torah. The Torah allows iconolatry."

"What are you talking about?" Hari-das' wife asked.

"After six more chapters in your scripture," Hari-das explained, "the cherubim are sanctioned. Until you understand the cherubim," Hari-das lectured his wife, "you will not experience the Tree of Life. These cherubim are so key to Judaism that they form the throne of God with their outstretched wings. The cherubim are so holy they cover the Ark of the Covenant in the Tabernacle. The word cherub," Hari-das said to his wife, repeating his guru's teachings, "is from the Akkadian word for intercessor - one who brings the prayers of humans to their gods."

"The cherubs were different," Hari-das' wife said, flipping through one of her books. "The worshiper focused on the space between the cherub's wings, not on the cherub itself."

"What did the cherubs look like?" Lillian asked.

"We don't know what the cherubim in the Temple in Jerusalem looked like," I answered, "but the Talmud says the cherubim had the faces of infants."

Lillian looked away from me as tears streamed down her cheeks.

"His worship violates the Second Commandment," Hari-das' wife said.

"I'm not so sure," I answered. "Do the cherubim violate the Second Commandment?"

"Rabbi," Hari-das' wife said, "I would expect you to be the one with the answer. It is simple. The Torah commands that we make images of the cherubs. Any other image is forbidden."

"If you would open your heart to my worship," Hari-das said, "you would understand that I am not an idolater. I do not violate the Second Commandment in my worship."

"*Avodah Zorah*," Hari-das' wife hissed at him.

Hari-das looked towards me for an explanation.

"*Avodah Zorah* means idolatry," I said. "The Hebrew means - strange worship."

"To some the two-faced cherubim might be considered strange," Hari-das said to his wife. "I will tell you a story my guru told me. A Buddhist wise man once rebuked a Muslim who was berating an idolater. 'Do you think God cares?' he asked, 'if this devout peasant woman reveres a block of carved wood? Is God not able to perceive the purity of her intention? Will God ignore any seeker, anywhere, who searches, by any means? All prayer goes up to God, the source of prayer.'"

"I am not convinced of anything by your story," Hari-das' wife said.

"Your narrow mind and hard heart are idolatry," Hari-das said. "You make the commands of your God into idols."

Hari-das' wife looked towards me for help.

"The Gemara says," I said, unsure of how I would finish, "that when the heathens entered the Holy Temple of the Jews in Jerusalem, they were shocked to find the cherubim, The first side of the folia page of this Gemara - Yoma 54a, says that if Israel was performing the Commandments of the Torah, the cherubim not only faced one another, but were interlocked with one another, intertwined in a love embrace." Hari-das smiled. His

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wife sat rigidly glaring at me. I looked towards Lillian. She was staring at Hari-das, who again sat with eyes closed, meditating.

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Darshan

Now Hari-das' wife refused to study with me. I told her I could not comment on Hari-das' worship until I had experienced it.

Monday morning I went to town to buy groceries. Lillian asked me if I would stop by a lab and get a sperm count. At the time, Theophilos, I did not understand.

Hari-das asked Lillian and I if we would eat with him. The groceries I had purchased were cooked by Hari-das and Lillian. Hari-das prepared the food listening to a walkman. A tape of his guru's teachings.

We sang songs in Sanskrit or Hindu that reminded me of Chassidic songs. Lillian danced as she sang, uplifted by the melody. She had not danced during the time of her healing. Hari-das gave Lillian some anklet bells he had brought back for his wife. I tried not to be jealous of the way Hari-das watched Lillian as she danced.

We sat and sang more songs.

Hari-das' wife stuck her head into the darshan room. She was holding the baby. She noticed Lillian's ankle bells and blanched.

"In India women are the lowest caste," she said. "The bells, like the bells that cows wear in India, are so the husband knows where his wife is at all times. I refused to wear mine after the wedding in India."

Lillian moved her leg and the bells sounded. Hari-das' wife turned away. Hari-das got up and closed the door to the room.

Hari-das opened the wood doors to a closet in the room. In the closet was a box the size of a doll house. We all sang more songs and the food was placed on an altar in front of two black statues in brightly colored Indian clothes.

We sang over and over:

Govindi ji ji
Gopali ji ji
Radha rama na hari
Govindi ji ji

I grinned. The worship didn't feel like idolatry. Hari-das sang and prayed with great devotion. The worship felt more silly than evil. Even though Rahda and Krishna looked like Hindu versions of Barbie and Ken, it did not seem wrong because of the song and sincerity.

Lillian sang with devotion and her eyes widened as the male and female gods were offered dinner. I hope the gods enjoyed their meal Theophilos. By the time we ate the offered food was cold.

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Govinda Jive

Hari-das' wife was really angry. It was morning and we all sat in the darshan room.

"Why did you let them have darshan and not me?" she scolded her husband.

"You have seen all but the final part of the worship," Hari-das explained. "The secret cannot be revealed to a hardened heart."

Hari-das' wife glared at me. "You may have also violated the Second Commandment," she said.

The truth is Theophilos, from a certain point of view, Hari-das' wife was right. Rahda and Krishna were similar to Baal and Ashtaroth. If Rahda and Krishna ate of the meal offering, then they must have been considered alive. Pagan religion allows god to become idol.

Later that week I observed Hari-das washing and dressing the idols before putting them to sleep. Hari-das explained that at night they slept and in the morning they were awakened by the sun rising over the New Hampshire mountains.

The Torah does not consider such worship as fetishism - lecturing that idols cannot see, hear, smell, or eat. The rabbi considered idolatry one of the three cardinal sins. One who recognizes idols denies the whole Torah.

That week we discussed Hari-das' Hinduism and Judaism. I was supposed to be some kind of Solomon and hold forth in judgment.

When the Sabbath came we stood around the table as Hari-das wife lit the candles.

"This is my altar," she said, pointing to the table. She prayed.

"Lord of all worlds, I have come to light these candles to honor the Sabbath. Let my fulfilling this commandment open the flow of the stream of abundant life. Let heavenly blessings flow in upon this house. Dwell in our midst God - Sechinah.

Father of Mercy, let Thy love and kindness into our hearts. Make me worthy to rear my child in the way of Torah, clinging to good deeds. Keep far from us all, shame and grief. Put Peace, Light, and Joy in our midst for with Thee is the Fountain of Life, in Thy light we see the light."

She glared at her husband - a candle reflected in each of her eyes. She repeated the prayer in Hebrew.

Theophilos, it was not the words of her prayer or the content of her prayer. It was the way of her prayer. The words became heavy in her mouth and crumbled. The spaces between the words were empty and the voice bizarre and shrill. Her worship was strange Theophilos. A type of Avodah Zora.

Two meals were served for the Sabbath that evening, The challahs she baked were heavy and stone-like. The kosher sacramental wine tasted overly sweet. I said the prayer after meals with her and joined Hari-das and Lillian in the darshan room. We sang the Sabbath song welcoming the bride. We invited Hari-das' wife into the room. We prayed the evening service together in Hebrew. She looked at her husband and my wife and saw something I did not see..

Hari-das began to sing

Govindi ji ji
Gopali ji ji
Rahdha rama na hari
Govinda ji ji

Hari-das' wife stood to leave and said, "No more Govinda jive for me."

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After the Sabbath

After the Sabbath Hari-das' wife informed him she was thinking of leaving him. Lillian's eyes brightened. We all went into the darshan room.

Hari-das' wife exploded at me. "You call yourself a Rabbi, and you continue to eat the food he offers to idolatry. I spoke to the Rosh Yeshiva," she said, "and he said to tell you and Lillian to leave."

Then Lillian exploded. "Who the hell does he think he is?" she said. "There is more devotion to God here than in the entire Yeshiva. Mumblers. Their prayer is mechanical. The chauvinists, how dare they judge!"

"You call Jews chauvinists?" Hari-das' wife said. "There is no more chauvinistic society than the Hindu's."

"Nay," Hari-das said (he really said 'nay' Theophilos, not 'no'). "Radha triumphs over Krishna."

"Your own guru told me," she said, "that the Hindu wife is servant and devotee to her husband who is the servant and devotee of God."

"The woman bears and nurtures the children and is expected to fill the house with well-being, making it a temple of God."

"I will not be your baby factory." she shot back, "producing children for idolatry."

Lillian's eyes narrowed at the mention of "baby factory." I misread this also, Theophilos. Her eyes narrowed at the attack on Hinduism. She had been converted to Hari-das' religion.

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Leaving

Before the next Sabbath Hari-das' wife and I would leave. The results of the sperm test arrived in the mail. I found the letter opened on the desk in our bedroom. Borderline. Whatever role she was required to play, Lillian now wanted one thing above all others in life, a child.

Lillith Tamed

She stooped to doing dishes to win Hari-das heart. For ten years we had alternating cooking and had eaten off of paper plates. She served him. I was angry. I thought of Pope's lines of the wife who

> 'charms by accepting
> by submitting sways
> yet has her humor most
> when she obeys'

Theophilos, I must thank you for living through this with me again in this confession. I informed Lillian that we were to be divorced. Hari-das and I exchanged bedrooms. Hari-das and Lillian's adultery was ritualized into their worship as Radha and Krishna.

Hari-das' wife wanted a Jewish husband. Perhaps she felt it should be me.

No, I will not chronicle all the idolatry of my last days in New Hampshire, my friend. We all settled our emotional debts with one another in cruel and strange ways.

I told Hari-das' wife I was leaving. She understood. We were not meant to be a couple. We spent the night comforting one another.

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In the Morning

I prayed the morning prayer while Lillith and Hari-das fed their gods. I was explaining the prayers to Hari-das' wife.

"The Name of God Almighty, the great, powerful, and awe-inspiring king. Holy is God. The angels take upon themselves the yoke of heaven and lovingly grant permission to one another to sanctify God with joy and quietude, with pure speech and sacred melody, answering in awe - declaring in reverence:

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord

The world is filled with God's glory

Hari-das' wife and I chanted this over and over. The door opened and Lillian and Hari-das stared at us.

Lillian said, "You pray to angels called *Ophanim* and *Chayot* and six winged seraphim. The Holy Ark has cherubim, and you call our worship idolatry."

I had no intention of answering. I was leaving that morning. The phone rang. Hari-das' wife answered Lillian as I went for the phone. "We worship with the angels, we don't worship the angels."

It was Isaac on the phone. Lillian glared when I called him Sealah. I told Isaac what was happening in detail. Lillian and Hari-das retreated into their temple.

"Oh, I am lost," I sighed. "I have unclean lips."

"Rabbi," Isaac said, "are you ready to answer your calling to be Re Shone to Sealah - God's holy messenger?" "I, I," I stuttered, "I will visit, Isaac."

"This time," Isaac said, "you must know that Sealah's message of salvation is sent to the Jews also. This time they will listen. Come to New Jersey . Come soon," Isaac said. "Answer your calling."

"Okay," I said dumbly.

"Go and say this to the people," Isaac said

"This time
You will listen
And understand
You will look
And see
Dark minds
Will brighten
Ears once deaf
Will hear
Eyes once blind
Will see

This time they will turn
To me and be healed."

Theophilos, I was writing Final Revelations at the time. I still feared Sealah. My share of the fruit of the Tree of Life would be taken from me. I stopped in Philadelphia before joining Sealah in Princeton.

In Philadelphia I worked as a pulpit rabbi. Isaac gave me his blessings. When they were in Princeton, Isaac and Christina and their baby would sometimes spend the Sabbath with my new wife and our son and daughter.

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Isaac read my Final Testament, Acts, and Revelation. "Wonderful," he said. "Wonderful," laughing and dancing as he embraced me. "Testament, Acts, and Revelation are complete."

"Now the story can begin."

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Isaac is SMILING
Now he is LAUGHING
P.G. to W.B.
Kindly be FORGIVING me.

The Final COMING

Lup dup, lup dup, lup dup, a LUPING and a DUPING
EXPANDING and CONTRACTING, the Gyre WIDENING
From the Center outward, BEATING, SPIRALING, GIVING
Life, even when the Body is not LISTENING
The Head and Center HOLDING, The Messiah SAYING:
You, Re Shone, the Mouth, get the Final Word METAPHORING,
MIXING

Eye I Eye

A Lions body with the head of a Lamb
The final COMING, The Final Revelation is at hand

Eye I Eye

The FOCUSING of the Dark by the Light, Eyes SEEING
Order BEGINNING with the FOCUSING, CENTERING

Even the Messiah
is a
has a
Pupil

Me

Eye I Eye

Faust, THEOPHILOSING

REACHING
REACHING
Sit up straight - no SLOUCHING - no GROUCHING

REACHING towards Sealah

ANYTHING
I can do he can do better
In New
New, Say Final

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Jerusalem

God is there
Sealah is here

Genesis 49: Ten
Amen

Re Shone SHINING
Again

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FINAL REVELATION A Trope Opera BOOK 4 OF THE FINAL AGE® TESTAMENT

Roy G. Biv's Praylude

Reconstructing
Our Broken Tablets forming
Yet another, the Final Covenanting

God smiling

Below and above merging
In the garden forming
Violets peacefully blooming.

"The two testaments form a double mirror
Each reflecting the other
But neither the world outside."

Northrop Frye

Poetic allusion must be "recognizable not only to a coterie of poets and gentlemen scholars, but to a whole culture as well."
John Hollander

"...our Book of Revelations is the simplest and clearest book of the whole New Testament."
Fredrick Engels

Let me say Amen
Betimes
Lest the devil cross my prayer
For here he comes
In the likeness
Of a Jew
"The Merchant of Venice"

Proem (For Theophilos)

The Revelation of
The final test o men
The apocalypse of
The Final Revelation
Revealing:
The Tree of Life A Book

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The Book of Life
Again, a tree, blossoming
The fruit of God's planting
Hear O Israel
All who are struggling
Limping but prevailing
The angel Gabriel is speaking
And Laurence is chronicling
The Final Writing
This Final Revelation
Of the Final Age®
With no additions
Or deletions
This is the tabernacle
Of God's Living Tablets
Portable and open for viewing
Written
For doing

Sealah is here. (Gen. 49:10)

Singing in trope
Opening the Book
Of Final
Creation and formation
Making simple
Old mysterious ways
Reforming the Letters
Engraving and hewing
The Final Covenant
Of the Ten fingers
And Two hands
The covenant
Of the circumcised lips

And tongue and heart
The covenant of Truth
In the Tabernacle
The tablets whole
God is One
Bless the Scribe
Bless the Script
Bless this writer
Bless this reader
Bless this scroll
May the scroll always be read

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Held up to the light

A clear Tablet
It is
A prism
Let the movie begin

Amen Sealah

Laurence Reshone La Sealah

The Professor P. G. Gerundgrinder's Introduction

My poems proem, Being
An exposition on the Divinity of Inging
The Noun as Verb and Other Clownings.
The coming of the Anti
Anti Christ, the kvetch of the Nu!Nu! Testament
When, with all diasporas ending
All the world becoming
The Uniting States of Israel
Israel? Isreal! Israel? Isreal!
Israel becoming Jerusalem, Jerusalem becoming
New Jerusalem and Zion, Isaiah's Zion
The Apocalypse when, way back then
Now envisioning Sealah's Shalva and Shalom Reigning
Peacefully in New Jerusalem where
God, family, and friends are
Amening and Sealahing
Amen Sealah

The Introduction

A vision revisioning visions
First
Welcome welcoming Shaloming
To Sealah Sealah's coming
Let all who hunger come and eat.
Let all who are needing celebrate this Passover,
And all who are thirsting

The wine is again water and living
The bread is again bread nourishing
The bread of shame renamed

We bless our sovereign God

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Who brings forth bread
From the Earth

Bread!

A miracle of such wonder
As the raising
of the dead!

The wedding is now beginning!
Come on in, enter, entering
Learning the language of Inging.
I must tell you a story
Actually an almost prophecy
A type of spiritual wet dream
(If you know what I mean)
Envisioned in the shower
Where, of course, I sing
And singing
See
And seeing, say:

But first the scene New Jerusalem, New Zion, with the lions already enthroned.

The Two Lions who uphold the Two Tablets of the Decalaw, the Two Lions who cover every scroll:
The Anti anti Christ
Has come
This Nu nu Testament
teaching:
The Shechinas return
To clean up her Temple like
A good Jewish mother
(Is there any other?)

Envisioning
The Temple court
The yard a stage
For Comedian and sage
And
Sealahman enthroned on Zion

Descending to the Temple mountain Moriah. There with his people sitting in the box seat marked "Messiah," in the section reserved for sages. With his Levite choir singing Sealah's anthem Rock of Ages!

The Messiah is waiting

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This time
The joke's on him (her?)
The people waiting
For the star of the show
A comedian so famous
I need not even mention the name
Since its a name
You all know
And
The crowd grows impatient
As Sealah standing
Takes the floor
Saying smiling
I know it's boring

The world all righteous
And nothin doing
So patience patience
Remember remember my proverb
Our lamp

"I'd walk a mile
For a smile!"

And
"Meditate on the menorah"
Illuminating, Sealah's reign
The Seven Lights of the Diaspora
Meditate on this rainbow
Arcing from flame to flame
Being Sealah's concentric spheres
Of Peace
The Target
The Focus
The waves moving
From the centering
From Sealah to Shalvah to Shalom

The Menorah on Earth
The Rainbow in Heaven
Joining in the circle dance
As the pebble hits the pond
The waves resounding from

Red to
Orange to
Yellow to

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Green to
Blue to
Indigo to
Violet

Into Roy G. Biv
A star of this show

Mr. Spectrum. Spectrum man
Emanating from the Menorah
Sealah's emblem.

Anyway
Back to my story
My almost prophecy
What I saw in the shower
My shower scene

Not an actual, an almost
Prophecy
Since I am no prophet
Only a Professor, and
This my God given destiny

Anyway by and by
And so be it
None other today see
And none can be it

I entered the shower clothed
A child of Israel like at Sinai
In white garments
This my Final Day of Atonement
Turned on the water when then

The Vision: A Real Soap Opera

My sterling fountain downward flowing
Noah's Rainbow water going
Up and down
Roy G's Biv
(Dear John, following
your advice, I am now explaining
Roy G. Biv's punning
A pun you used yourself.

The Biv being

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the conduit, the vessel receiving
the water up and down flowing)

At the end of the Biv
At the end of the rainbow
Flowing up and then down flowing
To the round upside down
Sterling Menorah
(Menorahs take many forms)
I see I see
In my small sanctuary
My heaven sent
Mikvah of Mayim Chaim

(Meaning for goyim, a type of baptismal fountain)

O I see it, I see it
O I feel it, I feel it

Living waters flowing
From Salvation's well springing

Showering showering

A Gift of God
** To me**
The gift
Of Prophecy

The Seals may be broken
But the pipes are mended!

Then
Reaching for the soap, feeling
Not that square familiar bar
But a type of round vessel
Like unto a bottle
I washed my garments

And my body my soul's
Garments feeling clean as Spring
The scent a scent of Eden
Evergreen

The peppermint prophecy there
In my hand; written
On the Soap!

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All One God Faith incorporated

and continuing

Knowing the Full truth
Moral ABC
That unites
All free
And not teaching
It, is deathly guilt
Learned Jesus entering
Manhood. Manhood!

But innocent boys
Like Marx
Grandson of 2 Rabbis
Learned only half truths

Ashamed Marx wrote:

One world without Jews,' causing
Father, Mother wife;
Ourselves tortured blinded.

The message stung
My eyes
Cleansed
To read on

There are brave souls that dare to dream
That men are brothers and not foes
That hands may clasp
Across the seas to common good to common woes
That beneath God's Law the Essene Moral ABC
That 6 billion strong unites
All One God Faith."

The soap stung
Again
And I saw:

The Second Coming of God's Law

Mohammed's Arabs
1948
Found Israel Essene Scrolls

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And Einstein's Hillel prove

That as certain as no 6
Year old can grow up free
Without the ABC's
No 12 year old survives free
Without the Essene
Moral ABC
The mason

Tent and sandal
Maker Rabbi Hillel
Taught carpenter Jesus
To unite all Mankind free
In our Eternal Father's
Great all one God Faith!

We've all one or none
Listen children Eternal Father Eternal One

Theophilos:

When I read all this
The Holy words of Essene Rabbi
And Master Chemist
Guaranteed since 1948
(The Year of the Beginning of Redemption)
By Einstein Heilbronner
And
Dr. Emmanuel H. Bronner

(Fellow professor and Holy Brother)
What could I do Theophilos
Standing in my holy
Of holies
But proclaim singing Torah trope
Listen God Israel Sealah One:
Amen. Sealah.

Beginning Again Final Revelation

The Revelation of Sealah
Through God to Laurence
The left hand (son of) man

The Apocalypse of Satan
Destroyed, of the Devil's Death

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The Revelation of Theophilos
Now in our Final Beginning

The Star of Jacob
Again rising

The son of a Star!

Revealing in this Light
Of Lights

Theophilos' true identity

Now at books end
The Final Judgment

The opening and closing
Of the Two Books
Ending

For in New Jerusalem
(Final Jerusalem) The trees are singing
For all books
Will be will come to
The End!
Actually the pages
Become One
Not square boxy worlds
Thin slices of
Shadow and white

But
A scroll

One circular story
As light and shadow
Page and word
Enroll in the Final Age®
Of a reborn world
When light illumines all reading
And colors our visions.
The Torah a scroll again!
What author
God including
Is not excited
With the booking

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Of the book
Becoming The Movie!
The unrolling of this scroll
Like all scrolls
From Alpha to Omega to Alpha
From A to Z to A
From Adam to Zion
From Genesis to Revelation
One film
For one nation
Listen. Listen! Israel.
The film

Has sound
And if we are lucky
Animation and cantillation

A Final Script
A Final Scripter
A Final Scripture
A Final Scroll
The Final Revelation
A living
Torah
In color
A song
A drama
A musical
An opera

A Trope Opera

The scene:
A rather boxy building without Cross or Cathedral. The outside of the synagogue has the appearance of the Ancient Altar. Four chimneys rise from each corner like horns.

We enter. The ceilings are high. The wood of the walls is richly alive and textured with the internal design of the trees they were cut from.

Light enters the six Eastern windows. A seventh light a Red Flame burns in the Eternal Light over the Ark.

Quiet!
The children are returning.
Bar and Bat Mitzvah students preparing
To be teens
When they join

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(In theory)
The community of Israel
And are called
To the Torah
As women
And men.

"Trope Opera"

Opening: In the middle of the back of the synagogue, a tree grows, a living Tree of Life. The fruits of this tree are the Trope. One at a time, in the following order, the children pluck their Trope from the Tree. The costumes of the children indicate their role in this royal opera. The groupings follow the suits of a deck of cards with variations.

The Royal Trope Family set off parts of scriptural verses as separate melodies. The dominant melody is the Ace followed by Kings, Queens, and so on.

Each of these Trope represent a melody for singing. The melody changes depending on how they stand together. You will learn how they combine in singing as we... Let this opera begin:

The children march from back of the synagogue towards Ark. As they march they raise their hands towards the Menorah and Ark...and sing from Numbers 24:5.

Oh how good
Your tribes in tents
Jacob
Your tabernacle
Israel

NARRATOR: When we enter the synagogue, we sing of how good and beautiful a place a synagogue can be. We face towards the East towards Jerusalem. In our sanctuary when we face East, we see our own version of the Tabernacle.

CHILD'S VOICE:

Like the Ark in Raiders of the Lost Ark?

RABBI: Exactly. What did the Ark contain?

YOUNG CHILD: Animals.

RABBI: (Laughs) you're thinking of Noah's Ark. The Ark we are talking about was built by the children of Israel in the desert before they entered the land of Israel.

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In the Book of Exodus, God gives exact plans, a perfect blueprint, for the Ark of the Covenant.

CHILD: **What's a covenant?**

RABBI: **Good question... A covenant is a contract, an agreement between two parties.**

CHILD: **My how I do love a party!**

RABBI: **The covenant, the Torah, was given to our people on Mount Sinai.**

The Torah was put in the Ark of the Covenant. Every time the Israelites moved... the Ark moved with them. They carried the Ark into Israel. After the settlement, the Ark, the Ark was in Shiloh/Sheloh, the capital of tribal Israel.

King David brought the Ark to Jerusalem with singing and dancing. The Ark was placed in the Holy of Holies, of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. Almost two thousand years ago the Romans destroyed the temple. The Ark disappeared!

OLDER STUDENT: **Rabbi couldn't we make a portable Ark, like the one in the desert?**

RABBI: **(Smiling) Yes, and each of you is holding the Ark in their hands.**

(Students gasp and look at prayer books)

RABBI: **Please rise as the Ark is opened (Rabbi gets Torah & opens it to Numbers 10:35.)**
(Sing with Trope)

CHILD: **One second Rabbi... we sing it like this on Shabbat:**

(Sing traditional melody)

RABBI: **Very good... when we read this verse from the Torah we sing it according to the Trope.**

CHILD: **Trope? Oh, that's why you call it a Trope Opera. What's a Trope?**

STUDIOUS CHILD: **According to the Gerundgrinder dictionary, a Trope is a style of singing the Torah.**

CHILDREN: **Singing Torah?**

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RABBI: **We just sang Moses' song whenever the Ark moved. Moses' song is sung each time before we open the Ark & study the teachings within.**

CHILD: **Do we have to sing the Torah?**

RABBI: **Yes.**

CHILD: **Why?**

RABBI: **The Trope is the soul of the Torah. The letters are like the body. The Torah, like prayer, comes alive when we sing the words with their melodies which we know form the Trope. The Torah reading without singing is like a body without a soul... Just like prayer. Prayer without feeling is also a body without the soul.**

THE OPERA

RABBI: **Once upon a time, in a sleepy little province near glens and near falls, within the synagogue, yes, within these four walls the children learned to sing the Torah.**

They could not wait to get home to tell their parents that they had learned the difference between a soap opera and a Trope Opera!

What's this? I think I hear them singing now!

Shalom, how do you do?

We're from the Trope Family Tree

We're here to welcome you

And together chant the Torah:

CHILD: **Rabbi, this is some opera. Are you playing with a full deck?**

RABBI: **Well, there are only two aces: Sof Pasuk & Etnechta come forward.**

But there are 4 kings.

Shalshelot enters singing.
It's not so o o o o o o o o o
I'm also a ki i i i i-i ng

CHILD: **You're really a joker. Let the Opera continue with our two star Aces:**

Hello, how do you do! We're from the Trope Family.

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We're here to welcome you and together sing God's praises.

Mercha Tipcha Munach E-Tnachta:
Mercha Tipcha Munach Sof Pasuk:
And now the T'veer Family from the Trope Family Tree

Well now it's time to begin our First Act. Let's start as all things must do... from the beginning.

Sing Kadma, Sing Dargah, Sing Tveer

With Munach were the Tveer branch of the Trope Family Tree

The Kadma Azla's

Here come the twins
Kadma and Azla
They wear their signs high
and look like parentheses.
Katans : And now its time to meet our cousins
The Munach Katans
Look close they wear their names up high Instead of down below

A Real Opera

The Yetiv and
Zarkaha Segol Families
Wait do you hear someone crying?
Listen I'm sure someone is sobbing.
Zarkaha & Segol Families

ACT II: In the Prayer book

CHILD: Rabbi, I guess you would do about anything to get us to learn the Trope!

RABBI: Yes. Now let's see where the Trope Opera is found in the Prayerbook. But, I must tell you a story first. The Ark which we are facing, which was a portable Sanctuary, finally came to rest in Jerusalem. It was the centerpiece of the Temple in Jerusalem.

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What was in the Ark?

CHILD: **The Ten Utterances.**

RABBI: **Very good... the Ten Principles of Torah, sometimes called the Ten Commandments.**

How many sets of tablets did Moses bring down from Sinai?

OLDER CHILD: **Two... One broken set and the whole set.**

YOUNG CHILD: **Did Moses drop the first set?**

RABBI: **Yes, actually the children of Israel broke the tablets by breaking its teaching. We will learn about this in our Torah readings.**

CHILD: **What happened to the broken pieces, Rabbi?**

RABBI: **They were put into the Ark.**

CHILD: **And the whole tablets... They also were in a Ark?**

CHILD: **Two Arks?**

RABBI: **Yes. Let's review what happened to the Ark.**

OLDER CHILD: **It was carried for forty years in the wilderness by the children of Israel.**

RABBI: **Right. Let's recreate the drama of the Ark, as we do at every Torah service.**

(shows children Torah) Torah Numbers 10:35.

(Rabbi looks closely) Children what do you see?

ONE CHILD: **No vowels**

ANOTHER CHILD: **I don't see any music!**

RABBI: **(smiles) Both right... In fact, this is what we see!**

STUDIOUS CHILD: **Hieroglyphics!**

CHILDREN: **Wow, then how can you read the Torah. How can you sing the Torah?**

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RABBI: **We have a special book to practice from called the Tikkun.**

CHILD: **It has Trope?**

RABBI: **Yes.**

CHILD: **And vowels?**

RABBI: **Yes.**

NUMBERS 10:35

RABBI: **When we sing the word with its melody, it is called cantillation or chanting in Hebrew. Look at the Hebrew letters on the parchment. In Hebrew the Trope are called Taa may HaMikra. Tam means Taste... the Trope flavors the Hebrew.**

CHILDREN: **Yumm m m m m m m**

RABBI: **(Laughs) In the Psalms we learn!**

"Teach us to have good taste and knowledge.
For I have put my trust in your teachings!"

CHILDREN: **Yum yum. We love the Trope. Can we learn the Shema with Trope?**

RABBI: **Sure.**

TROPE OPERA TWO THE SEQUEL A SERMON

Every Seventh day on the Sabbath, we read one of the weekly portions of the five books of Moses...the Torah. Each week we read, in addition, a Haftorah, or selection from the Prophets. Seventeen times a year we hear the hope of Isaiah. Eleven times a year we see the visions of Ezekiel. Nine times a year we feel the anguish and faith of Jeremiah. The Haftorah is read from a book rather than a scroll. The Trope are found in the text indicating the melody of each line and fragment of line. The same Trope symbols are used for both Torah and Haftorah. The melody is different.

Minhag America

Minhag America, the custom in America, is for a Bar or Bat Mitzvah child to read the Haftorah or sing the Haftorah. This singing, in theory, demonstrates a skill level that shows the child may interact in the Synagogue Service as an adult. Some children also chant the Torah reading, a task that requires hours, days, and even years, of training.

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One problem American children on the whole, do not understand what they are chanting. Many children are forced into training by their parents. In the end the revelation that comes to these new adults is that their training was wrong minded and misdirected.
It is not an insult to Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Amos, and Deborah to mindlessly parrot tapes in Hebrew without hearing or understanding their poetic and profound messages!
Bar and Bat Mitzvah becomes a rite of passage out of Judaism, a type of anti-Bar Mitzvah.
The prophetic message is trivialized by training that stresses mechanical skills over meaning. Even the mechanical skills are taught wrong. Each word of the Haftorah, each word of the Prophets, has a Trope. Many synagogues are content in allowing children to parrot the words. The family kvells on the day of the Bat or Bar Mitzvah as the child mindlessly chants their mantra.
We in America have been repeating this ritual every seventh day for years. In America, as we ponder the drop out rate of our children at their Bar/Bat Mitzvah, we must acknowledge that the training itself is often a reason the children drop out.
End of sermon.

Blessings
Before
Tying
The Torah reading
Ending
This wilderness week
With Numbers
15:37 41
With the healing
Fringes
And the teachings
Of the opening
Of the eyes
And hearts
Rahab touching
The hem, the fringe
Of Joshua's
Prayer shawl
This midrashing
Adding
To the story
Joshua
And the twelve
Spies
Going

To Jericho
Disguising
Themselves as deaf mutes
Or carpenters
Secreting

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Into the city
To Rahab's Dew Drop Inn
Rahab promising
All
Body and Soul
There is no whitewashing
Rahab's profession
written clearly
On her door.
Rahab the Whore

After the falling
Rahab turning
To the true Faith
Wedding
Being touched by and touching
The Warrior diplomat
Joshua
Birthing:

Eight Priests and
Eight Prophets!
Rahab's repenting
Reminding
Forgiving
Foreshadowing.
Some of the stories
Of Joshua
About whom many are speculating
Was he married too?

Dear Theophilos

A note on the Prophets readings
Called Haftorah, dismissing
A Judaism not a rising
From the spirit of
Hebrew propheting
All envisioning
The Seven Branched Torah lighting
(Seven blessings to the Maftir).
Two over the Torah

& One before the Haftorah
& Four after the Haftorah
= Seven

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The Number
Reaching
Heaven

My Rabbi and Teacher Rabbi Zalman Shalomi taught me the following, to make the Haftorah come alive.

"The Opera can be performed by reading a verse in Hebrew and a verse in English one person reading both parts or one reading the English and the Hebrew. A couple or family called for Maftir can happily share the honors."

This week's Opera Haftorah Parshat Shlach (Joshua 2:1 24)

TROPE OPERA TWO JOSHUA

NARRATOR: And Joshua the son of Nun sent two spies from Sheeteam

saying:

JOSHUA: "Go view the land, especially Jericho."

NARRATOR:
(spoken) And they went and came to the Inn of the Harlot Rahab and slept there. It was reported to the king of Jericho.

"Behold men have come here tonight from the children of Israel to search out the land."

Then the king of Jericho sent to Rahab saying:

KING: "Bring out the men who came to you, who entered your house, because to undermine the land they have come."

NARRATOR: But the woman took the two men and hid them and she said:

RAHAB: "Yes, the men came to me and I don't know from where."
"The Gates close at dark the men left."
"No, I don't know where these men."
"Run quickly after them to catch them."

NARRATOR: But Rahab had taken them up to the roof and hidden them under stalks of flax.

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The men (searching for the spies) pursued them along the road to Jericho and the gates were shut after them. Before the two spies retired, Rahab said:

RAHAB: "I know that God has given to you the Land. Fear is fallen upon us. Fainting with fear are all the inhabitants of this land before you.
For we heard how God dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you left Egypt and what you did to the two kings of Amorah, who were beyond the Jordan, Sihan and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. We heard and melted were our hearts, nor did there arise anymore courage in anyone to face you, for the Lord, your God, is God of the heavens above and the earth beneath: Now swear to me, please by God since I have shown you kindness, return to me and my family the kindness and give me a true sign. Let live my father, and my mother, my brother, my sisters and all that is theirs and save our souls from death. The men answered her: "Our lives for yours if you do not tell of this. It shall be when God gives us the Land we will deal with you kindly and truthfully."

NARRATOR: Rahab lowered them by rope from the window, her home being on the side of the wall. (She lived off the wall!)

Rahab said to them:

RAHAB: "Towards the mountains go or you will meet your pursuers. Hide there three days until the return of your pursuers and afterwards, be on your way."

NARRATOR: They said to her:

SPIES: "Blameless are we of this oath, we swear:
Listen we are coming into the Land. The lifeline bound of scarlet, this one, tie to the window from which you lowered us from.
And your father and your mother and your brother, and the entire household of your father gather into your house. It will be anyone leaving the door of your house to go outside their blood be on their head we are not responsible.
All who remain with you in the house, their blood be on our heads if a hand is raised against them. But if you tell of these things we are free of our oath, which we swore."

RAHAB: She said: "As you spoke, Yes so be it."
Rahab sent the spies away and fastened the cord of scarlet to her window (some say when Joshua saw the cord it had turned white).
The spies departed to the mountains three days until their pursuers returned.

NARRATOR: The pursuers searched for them along the way but did not find them. Then the two spies left the mountains and passed over and came to Joshua, Son of Nun, and told them this story. They said to Joshua:

SPIES: "For given by God
Into our hand
All the land!"
And also melted are the hearts of those who dwell in the

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Land before us.

Blessings After Reading
Theophilos,

When the scripture is not sung
But said
Know that there
The word of God
Is dead!

Final Revelations Third Beginning

Laurence
To the Seven Lights of the Diaspora

Greetings
Shalva and Shalom
From the messenger of God
Who is, was, and will be
Our God, eternally

God of Eve and God of Adam
God of Rebecca and God of Isaac
God of Rachel and Leah and
God of Jacob and Israel

God of Moses and Miriam
God of Joshua and Rahab

God of Joshua2
And his wife

God of Isaac
And his wife
Christina called Judith

Amen. Sealah

From the God
Who will be
The God of You
The God of Me
Our one God Eternally
Seen in – imagine The Menorah

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The Seven
God's vision
Of the whole
World.
Not the God
Of Might, alone
Not the God
Of Power, alone
But the God
Of Spirit
The God of Light and Life, of Sealah and Shalom
The God of Peace
uniting
Heaven and Earth
uniting
God and Devil
uniting
Good and Evil
uniting
States and People

Behold
Sealah comes Now
This moment
Head in the clouds
Of New Jerusalem
The Crown
Feet planted firmly
On the Earth
Of Jerusalem
Planted in her ground.

A Living Tree of Life
A Living Statue of Liberty
A Living Menorah of Light
uniting
Old and New (and Final) into Final Jerusalem
Jerusalems
We are One.

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A Vision of Sealah

I Laurence
Now sharing in Sealah's suffering
When hatreds darks visioning
Sees the Scepter of Sealah
The Menorah
Much like Matthias's Menorah;
Speared and pronged, a pitchfork
In Satan's hands

With this enlightening
The anti
And anti anti

Christ
Are one

Theophilos
And those
Anti Theophilos
The lovers
And loathers
Of God
Are one
In the Spirit
This day of the Lord

The year of Joy
Today
Final Judgment Day
Proclaiming:
"I am the A to Z
From Adam to Zion
From Genesis to Revelation

One book, one scroll unrolling, for one nation

The Torah of the Menorah

A Scroll
Beginning with
Creation
Descending to
Earth's
Farthest realms
Going ultimately to our

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Home
In
Jerusalem, with Menorah and
Kafkan Colors
Lighting the world, in fact this
Moment
No place, no nation, not illuminated by the Emanation
Of the
Prism
Quietly casting light shadow and the colors of the
Rainbow
Sealah's Peace
Touching every place and person
Unveiling the Shadowman
Vexing Satan's reign
When
Xantho's light
Yellow and warm enlightens each of the twelve
Zodiacal heavens

On Earth
As it is in Heaven

Amen. Sealah.

And the A to the Z
With sound effects!
100 shofars calling
weeping
proclaiming
The crisis is here
Isaac again bound
To reveal
The Nuclear Slaughtering Swords
Hanging over every head
Like Sinai
At Revelation
By threads.

Will this Final Revelation
Be
The End?

Then
I heard the voice of Isaac
Crying like a shofar

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The voice of Moriah
And Golgotha's
Lamb

From Sealah's
Watchtower chanting

And answered God and said
Write the vision
And clarify on the Tablets
And Isaac cried again:
Will Jerusalem be Moriah:?
All Israel Golgotha:?
The whole world
Auschwitz?:
Every living being
Now an Isaac
Bound on the Altar
And Father Abraham

Holds the knife:
Then I turned, and turning
Heard a voice as dark as night
Singing:

With clouds of heaven

A Son of Man
Like unto a bar Enosh
Clothed in light
Looking
Closer
Like unto a bar Mitzvah
Boy
On the day he becomes
A Man
Looking closer
Still
This vision:

You are cordially invited
Every living being
to attend
The Bar Mitzvah
of
the Son
of Man

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Rabbi Isaac Jacob Israel Tripleyouldman, son of Abraham
Sealah St. Clair M.D., Ph.D., D.D., S.T.O.P.

This
Rosh Hashanah
The Year of Our Lord

When Sealah being called to the Torah
Will become a man chanting and singing
His Torah portion with Trope:
Genesis 1:1 to Malachi 4:6
And his haftorah Matthew 1:1 to Revelation 22:21

The Bar Mitzvah Man's Sermon
on
"The Final Testament as Final Revelation"

The service will be beginning
Eight o'clock sharp Rosh Hashanah morning
And ending with three stars ***
On Simchat Torah The Festival of Rejoicing
In the Final Tablets of Torah
Isaac will also be blowing
The Ram's Horn
As all the Holy days become One
This Final Day of Judgment

(Bring sleeping bags and toothbrushes)

Sealah's family will provide the catering
For The Bar Mitzvah Feast of the Lamb.

Bar Mitzvah Vision

I Laurence
Turned and again turning

Perfect Repentance
To see what I would see

That Judgement day, and
This in a prophecy
(Answering the overwhelming question
Of what gift
To get for the Bar Mitzvah boy)
This was revealed to Me

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A Tallit
All white reaching
From Sealah's head
Down to his feet

The white his head crowning
Wool white as snow
And
The other gift
A portable menorah
Sevenlights aglow

I was proud as a parent
So proud of my gift

A Menorah to take
Wherever he may go!

And when he lifted his eyes
Head covered with my Tallit,
A veil, now a shawl

I saw reflected in the flames
The eyes and images of

Isaac1 and
Moses1 and
Joshua1 and Joshua2
and

Isaac2
Again
Images all of (A)Elohim
And seeing
God's image in the flames
I fell at his feet

As Dead

When he placed his arm
Around my shoulder
And said:
"You are my right hand and my left
Do not be fainthearted
It is only me,
Your friend Rabbi A to Z"

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Then the Teacher
Of Life Everlasting
Said:
Get up!
No laying
Down
On the job!
I, the Amen, Sealah
Hold the key
To Death and Sheolh
Instructed by Moses' Elijah
And the Twelve
On the punch line of every joke
About the keeper of the Pearly Gates
And knowing
The punch line avoiding
the Joke!
The Key
To Life Everlasting
The Resurrection of our dreaming
Is now rerunning
On the Menorah
Called teleo
vision
And Television
Will reveal
The End!
Resurrection, that principle
Of Faith
The biological visioning
Fulfilled in androelectronics
Bionic
The Man
Bionic
The Woman
The body withering,
Reborn, as the mind
Is liberated
From it's lump of clay
Golemman may walk like a nerd
But Golemman talks like a
Frankenstein with a Ph.D.
Dr. Frank N. Stein
Sorry Shelley
The body perishes
But the mind

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Lives on
As the body of Science
And the Spirit of God
Become One

Amen. Sealah

Now the transition from verse 18 to verse 19 in Chapter One of Old Revelation in the Greek, is Greek to me, Theo. Let's read it:

Things seen
And to be
Seen
Are illuminated by

The Seven Stars
The Seven Lights
Held in the hand
Of our Living
Statue of Liberty
Menorahman's
Holy Reveal
A (until now - hidden, Aleph is God, A God)
Sealahman!

Seen and recorded by Rabbi Laurence Reshone La Sealah

The Burning Teachings sent out by The Seven Menorah Lights Flaming:

By the flame of the Light of the Jews read:

Thus speaks Menorahman:
You are the work of my hand
The tiller of my garden
The worker of my Land

The keeper of my Temple
The Menorah of my Home
The wick of the Flame
The Israel of God

Live the Lord's teaching
Proclaiming in your Land
Isaiah's Zionism
Hammering swords into plows
The nation's teaching

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The Light of the Law
Torah's teaching:
WAR NO MORE
Live this, or
Your wick will be trimmed
Live this, or
Your flame will be flickering
And sputtering, your light going
Out.

To the Flames of the Light of the Christians see

The oil
Of anointing
Is the oil
Of the dove
In her mouth
Carrying
The branch of Peace

This is preached
While the dove
Is in the belly
Of the beast

Sons of Jonah
Your obedience is often
Rebellion
Your virtue often is
Sin

Will you not let
The Lion of Judah
Lie with the Lamb
Of God?
Will you call
Every theophilos
A devil

Every synagogue
A place of evil

When
The Church of the Dark Side
Is become
Ing

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Satan's Synagogue?

The olive oil in your lamp
Is impure
The flame smoking
The Messiah here for the rededicating
Of your choking
Flame.

By the Flame of the Light of the Muslims write:

"In the name of God
Doubly merciful
So be Ye
Praise the Lord!
Rabbi of all worlds
Most gracious and merciful
Master of Judgment Day

We worship, we seek Thee
Show us the straight path
The Way of Islam
The Way of Peace
Sealah making
The crooked way straight
As Abraham
And his son say

Aslama Allah Aslama

Your Peace God
Only to Your Peace
And Sealah's sovereignty
Shall we submit
This the way.

Of those on whom
God bestows Grace
Those whose portion is
Peace and Tranquility
Not wrath or grapes
Oil of the olive
Not
Oil of the Earth."

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To the Flames of the Red Light of the Socialists read:

The Revolution replacing
Turning full circle
The Revelation
St. Karl saw and wrote
A New Jerusalem
The Kapital
Of Man, reigning
A New Bible
(The first attempt at a Final Testament)
Posting
The obituary
Before the Testament's
Reading
Marx and Engels acting
The parts
Of Moses and Aaron
When they built their Golden Calf
(Being good communists, each took Half)
And
Was it Lenin or Stalin who played Joshua
Entering this Final Promised Land?
Moses2 said nothing New
Moses1 a Socialist
A master of the economic secret
Of Sevens the secret of the menorah.
Moses2 your light is a chipped faded bulb
An imitation Eternal Flame Red

Another ism
Taken to Bed.

To the Electrum Flame of Science write

As certain as Heisenberg was of his uncertainty
Principle, so Niels was an anti anti Bohr
Seeing
Science not as system, but as question!
Without this revelation
Science is the Laplacian Demon.
And certainly
Quantum jumping
A Final Revelation
Is a type of Kierkegaardian

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Faith leaping
And the dancing masters
Are the atom's mistress
And the high priests tending
Lasers and subatomic candles
Do they see God's light
Or gray clouds darkening
Of Ezekiel's chasmal?
Spectrally emanating
O, I don't know about you's
But the colors I see
They's mostly blues.
Threads suspended teleologically
And the ethical too
Things are one
Even when they seem to be
In twos
So I'm singing
The Bootstrap Blues
For Science without a heart
Now that ain't so very smart
So I'm singing the bootstrap blues.

To the Flame Burning in the East

I see
the West needing
A rest
The Sun setting
On the horizon

Of the Ninth decade
Of the Final century

(The Age of Barbarism)

Then
Towards the East turning

Seeing
The Chariot
Flying

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Over the
World of the reforming

The questioning

Of the Sabbath Fox of Smyrna
The great second grand Messiah
The star of the twinkling
I
Shabbat I
Zvi asking:
“Who is guiding
The chariot
In its riding?"
When East is West and West is East
The New Axial Age spinning
From Revolution to Revelation
The charioteer completing
Another circumjovial dancing
Revelation
Who is riding?
Why Ezekiel
Why Krsna
Why John
And whoever wants to come along for the ride
Are guiding
The chariot
From darkening to lighting
From Peace to the all
For all
That is not Sealah
And Peace
Is the Fall.
The chariot is coming
In
For a landing
From East to West
From Sun to Sun
Sealah is here
Sealah has come!

To the Eternal Flame of Sealah see

We shall
See!
We shall
See!

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The Flame burning
We pray
Eternally!
Amen.

Sealah's Prayer

Our God
Father
Nurturing
Mother
Birthing
Thy Kingdom
Come
Thy will
Done
On Earth
That is Heaven
None hungry
All for
Giving
Forgiven
Amen. Sealah

The 18 Life Giving Prayers of the Jews for Final Jerusalem

God of Sarah, God of Abraham
God of all our ancestors
Now we acknowledge You as Thou
Our God
And God of our parents
And God of our grandparents
God A - A.H.V.H. - Aleph God

We are the fruit of the Tree whose roots
Are in Eden

God of the Living
Shechina who is opening her home

Inviting to her wedding feast all
Who stumbling, raise themselves up
After the Fall

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God of Creation
God of Revelation
God of Redemption
God of Giving

Salvation is of the Lord

Not separate from the world
We feel the fullness
Of your glory
In this place

Hear O Israel
We and all people
And God
Are one

In Thinking, in Saying, in Doing
May we Reflect
Your divine image

Then, turning
Face to face
Beloved to beloved
A perfect return
Forgive
Pardon
Be at one
Live

Then you answer
On the day
We call

Where we are weak
Lord give strength
Help in the healing

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Of all disease

From strength to strength
We strengthen
Each other

The fruit of the Tree
Is nourishing
It is a Tree of Life
Grasp a hold of it
It is good
Eat and be satisfied
God's blessing

Sound the great shofar
The cry awakening the night
The menorah of Sealah
Burning forth from Zion
Torah's peace shining bright!

Righteousness, Compassion, Charity, Justice, Law, Faith, and Light
Seven Flames Against the Night

The kingdom of Arrogance, the shadow where
The wick is untrimmed, the lighting again
Burning, when the menorah, illuminating
The nations hope is there.

All are Living
God's Word
When Compassion
Fills the World

Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem
Then Sealah will come
Peace and Amen
Zion's Light
War no more!

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The Final acknowledging of God She
In time known as He
In her home Shechina
The Living God Eternally

Israel create Peace

Struggle for Peace

Sealah's tranquility

Submit to Peace

On this Planet

On Earth as it is in Heaven
The Great Peace
Of Final Jerusalem
Bless each of us as one
The Light of your Menorah
Illuminating the Peace
Of your presence

Amen. Sealah.

Sealah University
is pleased to be announcing
Our Final Offering
being
a course
by
Professor P.G. Gerundgrinder
B.A., M.A.M.A., Ph.D., D.D., Reshone La S.T.O.P.

The Final Revelations of Final Revelation
Eschatology 666
Enrollment unlimiting
including
an invitation by this living
University

To Meet
Sealahman

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to sup
with the Lamb
As we partake in the Living Sea
edition
of the Passover Haggadah (Telling)
The Final ordering
The Passover Seder
in
Jerusalem
Finally!

Introducing Lecture

(Taps on Lecture:)

Students! Colleagues!
Noses to the Gerundstones
It's me again
My ABC darian friends
Professor P.G. Gerundgrinder, Dr. ing
Speaking on, teaching on preaching on
The New! New! Age
The Final kvetching
Of the ages, expecting
The Tablets whole, perfecting
The world by the Word
The New Age Nu!
A New Covenant
A New Testament
A New Calf
Creating

Two Millennium of New Testamenting

A daily death of the Paschal offering
This being a resurrecting
Of the old scapegoating
Crucifictioning
The Jew hanging
Only now taken off the table
And the Cross
By this
Final Testamenting
Final Acting and
Final Revealing

(The Professor passes out his Sillybus (sic sittybas) all the while Smiling and lecturing)

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"The prerequisites for this course Eschatology 666 You must review by rereading The Merging of the Two Jerusalem's. One Old and New and specifically the poem on teleology, theology, space, thermodynamics, time evolution, history (mundane and messianic) apocalypse and the individual, a double helixed perspective of the hidden future of becoming within the contest of a unified field theory of reality

Being
In this review
A Final Revelation
A final uncovering
Of the Final Apocalypse
Differing by revealing all secrets
And debunking
A predestined entroping
A dark manifestation
Of Satan as the collective unconscious death wishing
Of those impatient of the ending
Hastening the Final Coming
Of the heat
Death
Forgetting

The Final Coming
Of our Lord
Will reveal the Testament
Of Living
Teaching
The open secret
Of the merging
Of the two
Jerusalems
One old
One new
The Final Jerusalem
(called by pundits
of impatience)
The Nu! Nu! Jerusalem
Of the
Final
(they say Nu! Nu!)
Age2

Let the following readings
Viewings and imaginings
Set
The Stage

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Readings

1. The Old Testaments Genesis to Revelation focusing on: reading the Eschatology's of Abraham and Amos, Hosea and Isaiah, Micah and Zephaniah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel (who is the wick of the Flame of John's Revelation), Daniel's uncovering, etc.
2..Intertestamenting focus on the Dead Sea Scrolls, which after this lecture shall be a Living Sea Scroll

The War
Of the Sons of Light
A metaphor
Against
The Song of Darkness
A metaphor
And
Thanking
God
We
Are
Now
Revealing
The Final War
A metaphor

3. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Old Letters, and Revelation, Final Testament, Final Acts, The Final Letters being found in Final Revelation.

4. The original apocalyptic novels: 1 Enoch 2 Enoch 4 Ezra Asclepius by Hermes Trismegistus. The Book of Thomas the Contender, The Apocalypses of Thomas, Peter and Paul. The Ascension of Isaiah. The Thunder Perfect Mind (in any order).

5. Kabballah on the Torah. The Zohar on the Menorah and Mishkan. Rabbi Moses the Son of Nachmuns Shaar HaGamul Sefer Ha Temurah, etc., and the Final Kabbalah simplified to follow.

6. The Qu'ran and Tafsir and Hadith on same.

7. Come to think of it, Theo, the required reading for this course encompasses circumcises just about everything. Go to the library and read all fiction from A to Z and then all non fiction .001 999.99. Then buy:

The Apocalypse Anthology, edited by Louise Kawata.
The Great Code, by Northrup Frye.
Spectral Emanations, by John Hollander.

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And if you have room
Try digesting a book or two
By Harold Bloom

For Viewing Still

1. Uri Zvi Greenberg's "In Front of the Cross"

2. Marc Chagall's "White Crucifixion"

See especially the Menorah. By the way, Theo, if you want to know what I look like, that's me thumbing his nose hovering God like over the cross.

Assignment: Complete this list for final reading in this course 666.

Scrolls for Viewing Moving

For literalists you must see
Dawn of the Dead and sequels
Which will cure you of any desire to
Witness a bodily resurrection

The Main Course
Being offered
At the Jerusalem branch
Of Sealah University
On Moriah
With permission of the Muslims
In the Final Temple
Being
The Dome of the Rock
Isaac's rock
And Ishmaels's rock

The only detail changing
Of that Holy Temple being
The Crescent
On its top
In its essence not a
Muslim symbol
But the crescent
Of Diana
The new moon
Of the goddess
Now circumcised

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Into
Sealah's centric
Circles
The Menorah
And its emanating
Rainbow
Of Peace

The following being
The invitation
To the wedding
Feast
Of the Lamb
Happening every
Month of Nissim
The Month of Miracles
Springing
From the New Earth
Of
Final Jerusalem

Invitation

The Seder of Olam Haba
This year
The year of Freedom
In Jerusalem
All who are hungry
All who thirst
The Door is open
No need for knocking!
To those who enter therein
The ordering,
The victory,
Is about to begin!

The Little Book of Telling
The ordering
of
Passover
Being
The Spirit-Ritual
Ending
Of Final Revelations

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The Order

1. **Washing**
2. **Kaddash**
3. **Greens**
4. **Division of the Sacrament**
5. **The Telling**
6. **Hand washing**
7. **Blessing**
8. **Matzah with bitter herbs**
9. **Afikoman**
10. **Grace**
11. **Hallel**
12. **All is accepted**

Washing

All entering
Go through the Gate of Gloom
To the El Kas fountain

Sealah, pouring
Water on his disciples' feet, washing
Them, then with a towel, drying
Their feet
Saying:

"Reshone you know the wonderful story of the great Abraham Joshua Rabbi Heschel son of Abraham and son of Joshua, marching with Martin Luther King at the Second Exodus of the bondage of the blacks. The Rabbi was asked by Martin Luther King how it felt walking, walking, walking so far on foot; feet being the pillars of doing, and the great Rabbi answered: `I feel like we are praying with our feet!' Amen Sealah."

We all then wash each other's feet
And then begins the dancing

Kaddash

We enter the Eastern Gate
The Judgment Gate

Walking
West
We stop

At the incense altar, preparing

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The spices of distinction

And walking
Farther

Turn to the left towards
The Lamp
Of Menorah

Blessing on the Menorah
Ya-hu!

Ya-ha!

Ah-ha!

Va!

God is our Salvation, trusting
We are unafraid
For
God is our strength
God is our song
God is our salvation

Draw the waters
From the wellspring
Of salvation
From Miriam's well

This our Final Purim
The lot is set
The covenant that is cut
At Sinai
Is sealed
This Final Judgment Day

A day like Purim

Yom Ha key Purim
For we see
The light
The joy
The relief and
The victory!

So be it with us:

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Turning

We go to our seats at the table
As Isaac reveals the secret
Of the Twenty four.

Twelve Patriarchs
+ Twelve Apostles
= Twenty four

Yes
But the twenty four
Of this
Final Revelation

Dressed in white and crowned
Are the twelve couples
Tribally by their calling

Named and sitting

They are the twelve lost tribes
Reuniting
In the United Nations
Of Israel
Representing
All races, all people, all religions
All whom seek atonement and vision

I open the door
To the Twenty Four

It's time to sup together!

All lift goblets; Isaac leading:

The cup of Sealah and Salvation
We are raising
And calling

In God's name
We now acknowledge God as
Shechina, creator of the
Fruit of the vine

Walking to the altar of incense we say:

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We acknowledge you
Awesome Sechina
With this offering
Of incense

Before returning
To the Seder table
We lift our hands to the Menorah saying:

We thank you
God
for the rainbow of colors
And the flames

We acknowledge and feel and say:

This is the hour of distinction
Separating
The Sabbath of time
And the Sabbath of history

The Holy and Profane

Uniting Israel as one nation
On Earth
As it is in Heaven
We bless Thee
Dear Lord
Holy Sechina

As we now separate
Ourselves
To the Holy

Amen. Sealah.

Greens

Beginning with a ritual hand washing and natural blessing
We eat of the sacrament of nature saying:

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We acknowledge
Our oneness
With God
Creator
Of the Fruit
Of the Earth

Division

Isaac holds the 3 Matzohs, saying

These are the Testaments
Squares
In the shapes
Of pages
Thin for stacking
(During the year
Not bad for snacking)
Imagine the pages
Of my Covenant towering
Towards the sky
Each page for eating
Slow chewing
Until every word is sweet
And the Word
Sweet
In the belly!

Isaac lifts the top two broken Matzoat
Taking
The pieces, placing
Them in a napkin

The Telling Haggadah

The opening
Of the scroll
The telling
Of our story

Round or square
This has been
Bread of affliction

and

How different this night

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Of final revelations

A night of questioning
A night of answering

Theophilos your 4 questions
You the wise son
And the wise daughter: ask

1. **Are we all created equal?**
2. **Will we be one?**
3. **Free?**
4. **Choosing Life?**

Adding three
To equal seven

5. **Must there be hungering?**
6. **When will we stop war?**
7. **God are you listening?**

"This evening," Isaac said,
"I answer the 7 questions
Breaking
The seven seals
In the reading
And telling
Of this little scroll

The telling,
Is on many levels
But first
It is a telling
For the children
Sons and daughters
Of God
All wise
Understanding
Even if a bit
Under
Aged

I now call
Our esteemed and praiseworthy
Spiritual uncle
P.G. the Professor
Gerundgrinder

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For the first telling."

The children of the Twelve couples representing all the nations, united, gather around the professor some sitting on his lap.

Final Revelation

My children, my children
Sometimes we are simple
Sometimes we are bad
Sometimes we are smart
Sometimes we don't even know
How to question!
How sad!
You may be wondering
What with ritual and religion
How it is that

This final revelation
A final uncovering
Reveals
A world
That may be ending
Not happily ever
After
But ending
The End: No sequels.
So you are asking
Tonight we are telling
Of Exoduses, of God saving
Our people
With miracles
And plagues
And wanderings
And Revelation
Why
Not
This time
Too?

Children
You know the story from beginning
To ending

When the story ends
The End

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Begin again!

Our vision my children
Is a vision of sevens

The Vision of Seven Times Seven

The First Age ending in the flooding
The Second, the Age of the First Revealing, the Prime Testament
The Third, the Age of the Second Revelation
The Fourth, a Middle Age darkening to
The Fifth, a false Enlightening
The Sixth, now ending
Our Age of Barbarism
Becoming

The Seventh, the Sabbath
The Final Age®

Now my children, we are sitting
At sixes and sevens

So we give this Final
Revelation

The uncovering

A cartooning
(as the Old Revelation)
To teach us
The why

Of Sealah's
Coming

Our first uncovering

Aunt Deuteronomy, Uncle Leviticus

Aunt Deuteronomy
set before me this day
Good and Evil
with milk and cookies
on a tray.

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"Nice girls wear
white lace skirts
patent leather pumps
and ribbons
in their hair...
Nice girls cross
their legs
fold their hands
on their laps
and don't touch down there."

Uncle Leviticus
gave me some sweets
made me promise
not to tell
Aunt Deuteronomy
or my mom
where he touched me
beneath the sheets.

Now children
On with our uncovering
And discovering

You know
The story of the flood
And the rainbow

God's seemingly
Upside down
Colorful
Smile

You know
The promise
Of the rainbow

The promise
Of the seven lights

This is the revealing
Of the three
The pulling of the sheets
Of lights beyond lights

The three

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Judaism
Islam
Christianity

Pulling
The covers
A Final Revelation

The parent the daughter the cousin

The Three Lights
Called
Mono
Theism

Revealing in the pulling

Fievel phylactery
Criss Cross
Mohammed quarter _ Moon Muslim
Being (strange bedfellows)
The blockhead
With square block heart
The one legged
Leaping
Man of faith

And the swordsman
And today adding
An eagle
A bear
A dragon
Cartooning
Reality

Each saying

I am the Way
the Truth
And the Light!

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Children: "Uncle Gerundgrinder

We're getting
Hungry
We know all this silly!
To prove it
We would like to sing to you
Our new version
Of Die A New"

Traditional Melody:

Blood and frogs;
And vermin and beasts;
Murrain and boils;
And locusts and darkness

die A new O
die
die
A new O
die
die
A new O
die
die
A new

die A new
die A new

Slaying of the sons
And sores and blood
Fire and mushrooms
Poison and cancer
Die A New
No more plagues
No more plagues
Enough is enough

____
Enough is enough!

Isaac: I could not have told
It better
Myself

Now the second telling

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Isaac points to me

Representing Gamliel
Reshone LaSealah

I begin:

Rabban Gamliel said we are obligated to explain

1. **The Passing Over**
2. **The Matzah**
3. **The Bitterness**

Since the children
Are not yet sleeping
But are growing sleepy

Listen Look

Passing over
Houses marked with blood
Houses

The Final
Passing
Over
Will be
A teaching
Of
Sealah
The scroll
On the door
Post
Saying

Shema
Listen
Israel

God is
One
Listen God
Israel is
One again

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Love
Teach
Children
Wear
Them
Live
Them
Write
Them
For
The
Passing
Over

The Hebrew meaning
Sha die
The God who said
Die A New
Nu enough already!

If these words be
Be lived
Be lieved
In every Home
Church
Synagogue
Building
Listened to
And lived
Then
The Final Revelation
Shall be
The Final Passing
Over
Passover
Amen. Sealah.

The Matzah

(Lift whole Matzah)

Square Eucharist
Round Matzohs

pointing: Observe these Matzahoat
Observe the Mitzvahoat

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(The Commandments :)
This is the Bread
Of Redemption
Of Redeeming
From the Seven times Seven
Gates of impurity

This is the Bread
Of the Unleavened
Of Spirit
The Bread of Moses
The humble
The Bread of Joshua
The warrior
The Bread of Isaac
The survivor,
Amen. Sealah.

Marror

Bitterness
The Woman Passedover
Their Redemption
Their Revelation
Only Now

Miriam's Well
The Spring of Salvation

Miriam's Song
The Song of Revelation

The Song
At the Sea
Miriam's Song

Then
Sang Moses
And the children
Of Israel

When,
Miriam singing
Taught the song!
(Insert Hebrew)

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Then!
Oz in the original
Sang Moses, singing

"I will sing to the Lord"
Miriam's Song
The Song of Final Revelation

The Song of Messiahs

Sealah and Cristina

The Messiah
In God's image
Malefemale
God created them
Messiahs
In God's image again

Reshone and Mate
Messiahs
Of their own
Little home
The Aleph Family
Like God in creating
Children

And so every
Shehe is Messiah

Eve, Mother of Life
Adam's second chance
After the first Fall
The divorce
From the first wife
Lillith of the Lie La
Lillith of the Lee La

The first Jew, exiled
From Eden's life

Welcome home Lillith
Shalom Shalom
Shalom Shalva Sealah

Welcome home Rahab

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The wedding
Feast of your marriage
To Joshua
Is prepared

Shalom Shalom

Thing were turned a bit upside down
While you were away.

Wars between
Sons of Light
and
Sons of Darkness

the daughters
Doing the chores
Birthing children
For the wars

You Lillith married
In the male imagination
To the Satan

The Wife of
Theophilos!
Irony of ironies
Even so
Come Shechina
Come Lillith

Welcome home
Welcome home

From the wilderness
of
The Day of Vengeance

Rest now with the dove
In the Ark
Of Sealah's
Final Covenant

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Hand washing

The Lifting of the Hands

Washing
One of the Seven
Commandments of the Rabbis

Ten Principles
Ten Fingers
(counting the joints
double seven times seven)
Pointing to
One principle

The Simcha and Smicha
of
Resurrection

"Blessed art Thou, Lord, Our God
Ruler of the universe
Who brings forth bread from the Earth"

Bread
Whole
Not seed
Or wheat

And like bread
Whole
Are We
To Be
Re Born

Before the Resurrection
The Baptism
Of the hands
The washing
Of the Menorah

The Baptism of the Flame
In Sealah's name

Whole loaves
Living bread
Rising from the Land
By Sealah's Hand

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Grace

Our daily bread given
Our transgressions
Forgiven
The meal nourishing
Satisfying

A blessing
To the Lord
Amen
Sealah

Afikomen

Bring on
The Desert's Dessert
The Bread of Remembering
As the Sephardim say:

"A Remembrance
of the Lamb's
Sacrifice
Eaten
With
Satisfaction"

Enter now
Elijah2
Proclaiming
The Good News
The Final Testament
The Final Salvation
The Final Comforting
Reshone entering
Bearing
The Final Cup, brimming
With white wine
Not blood
Red
Saying:

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To
The Father
To the Son
To the Mother
To the Daughter"

The Holy Toast!

"For
Give
Forgive
Forgiving"

Even the devouring
Of Jacob's Flesh

The Anger consuming
God's enemies
Squaring
The circle
Of the Earth
Into an altar
Hewn
With the bones of
The Jews, and
Dripping
With
The blood
Of the Jews

The Final Offering

The Holocaustum hanging
From the stars
Wars suspending
Nuclear swords

The drinking
Of the Grapes of Wrath

Satan's version
Of the Fifth
And Final Cup

Star Wars

The dark invader

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Lucifer of
The former light
The filming of
Star Wars

Genesis 22 Again
The Dark Invader
Darth Vader
But Theophilos
Look Up
In the sky
It's your
Gospel friend
Luke
The
Skywalker
Yes Theophilos
There is only
One story
And we retell
It again and
Again
This time
Though
The Final Revelation
Is a revealing of
Sealah's Masterpiece
StarPeace

The Seven Angels

When the Seven
Angels holding
The seven bowls
Of the seven
Potentially last and final
Plagues
A game of
Seven bowls or cards
The Final Pot
Of Gold
Destruction or
The End
Of the Rainbow

The Angels
Poker faced, holding

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The bowls tight to their chests
Not revealing
The Final Hand
Being Angelic
Beings
They cannot tip
Their hands
Or the scales
Balancing
Life and Death
Living and dying
Being
In the choosing
Of the nations
If God forbid
Choosing death
Then
Earthly Jerusalem ascending
In the smoke
Of the Heatdeath
Heavenly Jerusalem falling
Out
Of the sky
Contaminating
A dead
World
The Holocaustum
Final Offering

The Final Yom Hakey Purim

This Final Day
Of Atonement
A day for singing
Awaiting
That great and awesome day
Of distinction
When by the light
We see
The Light

The Light of the Menorah
Of Star Peace
Accounting
The ascending
Of the Seven times Seven

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Gates of Holiness
To
Star Peace
A
Hallel
Setting Always

Before Us

Prayer Before Ascending:
God this counting
Is for ascending
Revealing
The secrets of Sevens
And seven times seven
Counting and recounting
Creating k leam
Vessels
For the outpouring
Of your presence
Revealing
The Ending
The Final Revelation
The Third Tablets
Reconstructing
Uniting
The Covenant

Amen
Sealah

The ancient Kabbalistic custom of meditating on each word is enhanced by meditating an each branch of the Menorah as a Tree of Life. Begin at either end. Keep in mind that in the Hebrew the level of song is reached in the branch. "God be gracious and bless us, your face shinning which is Aaron's benediction of Peace.

God Always Before Me

God is becoming A Blessing. Submission reaching the Ends of the Earth.
The Earth gives her Fruit - A blessing for now God is our God.
The Nations Now Know God - All of Them.
Rejoice and Sing My People Judgement Day is Straight Away
The Nations Know God - All of Them!
Your People knowing the Way - Salvation on that Day.
God be Gracious and Bless Us, Your Face Shining, SEALAH.

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P.G. (The Professor) here. Wanting to reveal to you the how of this meditation. Go into a room. Lay down. If you fall asleep that's O.K. you must be tired.

Awakening meditate on one part of the living menorah each of the 49 days before Final Revelation.

On the Sabbath you have a week's meditating. See the part. See the whole. Reconstruct the Menorah that gives the Light that illumines the tablets of Final Revelation.
Amen Sealah

Dear Theo, one day at a time.

Day 1

O God, Elohim, holding
The Flame of Spring

Day 2

Combining
Grace in Strength

Day 3

Centering
The Great
Blessing

Day 4

By the Light
Of the Right
Lamp

Day 5
Illumine your presence
Show us
Your face

Day 6

Your teachings binding
Releasing

Day 7ealah
The Circle
Meditation

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The Foundation

Day 8
Torah Light
A receiving
A Kabballah

Day 9

The Strengthening
On Sinai
In our land

Day 10

The Way of a People
Suspending

Day 11
Strength or spirit

Day 12

The exiling
A cleaning

Day 13
Your awesome
Saving
Salvation
Redemption
Revelation
Finally. Finally!
Our Foundation
Of
Strength

Day 14

Satan subdued

Day 15

Nations Please!
Your strength
Is destruction

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Day 16

God's strength
Beautifully balancing
God's name
Peace
One
And the same

Day 17
That awesome day coming
All seeking knowing
God One
With those who claim
To be speaking
In God's name
One

Day 18

God proclaiming
"Who is like my People
One People
One Land..."

Day 19

Final Revelation and Redemption
In the twinkling
Of an eye

Day 20

The beauty of Joy
Being happy
Requiring
Nothing

Day 21
Rejoicing
None opposing
All chosen
choosing

Day 22)

All Priests

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Blessing
Everyone

Day 23

The key
To Purity
Eden's waters flowing
Rainbow's spectrum glowing

Day 24

The Right Path and the Left Path
The Way
The Middle Light

Day 25

The nations set right
Glory of glory
Hallel u ya

Day 26

Your Justice
Lord
War
Just
No
More

Day 27

Kind and loving
A New Final Nation
Sealah Amen

Day 28

Uniting the Nations
In Israel

Day 29

God forbid
If the Day of Judgment
Be not

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A Day of Mercy
And comfort

Day 30
In Sealah a separating
Into Shalom

Day 31

Making Sealah's teaching
Known
To the Nation

Day 32

The world again
Good
Very

Day 33

Guiding me that Lag' B' omer the 33rd day was a Chassid from Mea Sharim. We all had been mourning the death of the rabbi's disciples during the Bar Kochba revolts. Rabbi Shimon, my guide explained, lived in a cave with his son, existing on carob and water. They had mystical visions and the Zohar was written. I thought: Ten years of carobs and water and I also would have mystical visions. Being, at the time, one of the pious dressed in beard and hat and black and white, I did not speak. Rabbi Akiva you remember Theo thought that the First Son of a star Bar koziba was the Messiah. Many disagreed. Akiva's belief led to his being martyred. The story Akiva's of death is a type of crucifiction. Burning in the flames of a Roman fire Akiva smiled as he understood the meaning of Judaism's and Jesus' teaching fundamental principles. After proclaiming "Hear O Israel, God and our Lord are one." We, as he, say; "Love God, with all your heart, soul, and with your very life. This Theophilos was Akiva's Final Revelation. At times we love God by sacrificing our very beings. This period of 33 days encapsulates all of messianic history. The Crusaders ate our bodies on this day in the Spring. Chmielnicki drank our blood on this day in the Spring. So Theophilos this festival in Meron has dark beginnings. We danced in the darkness and torches illuminated the shadows of our dancing bodies, as we sang of Rabbi Shimon and redemption. It was long ago, so I do not remember exactly if it was in the afternoon or the next morning that I saw my first lamb being slain. The Sephardic Rabbi held and almost snuggled the lamb as he gently plucked away the hairs surrounding the neck. His slaughtering knife was sharper than any barber's razor. The cut was made in one swift merciful motion. The blood flowed as from a fountain. I turned away sickened. My first protest against sacrifice. I did not eat meat for years after this Lag' B' omer in Meron. Those staying ate the lamb and picnicked; commemorating the divine bar b que which was our ancient worship.

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Day 34

Your congregation knowing

Day 35

God's
Final Revelation
Coming

Day 36

Turning as one

Day 37

Each offering

Day 38

International
Jubilation

Day 39

Turning
Towards the Jubilee
Seven times seven
Perfection
Day 40

Remembering the Ending
Blessings

Day 41

The Final Kiddusha
Of the living

Day 42

God revealing
A perfect
Turning
Returning

Day 43

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God's blessing
For salvation

Day 44

Perhaps, even again,
Intervening

Day 45

No fearing
Bringing
Us no answer
Separating
Voice
And
Hearer

Day 46

Crying and praying

Day 47

Our secret fearing
Now known
By all
Another falling out
With God
A Second Fall?

Day 48

Nothing remaining
Fall out
Raining
On even
The farthest corners
Of the Earth

Day 49

God, merciful
Return
Our world
Of worlds

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Jerusalem
Sinai
Moriah
One
A home
Of holiness
In our day
The day of the Amen
Sealah.

Final Revelation

No
Annihilation

The merging
Of the Two
Jerusalems
One old
One new

Salvation springing
From Miriam's well

Final
Revelation

God herself
Wiping
Away all tears
And all fears
From off
Our faces

Jerusalem is Eden
Cherubim welcoming
Sealah
To the mercyseat
Jerusalem
City of Shalom
City of Light
City of Living
Water
And final visions

Temples
Churches

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Mosques
Still
There
But

The New Temple
The Earth
Herself
The Final Temple
The Third Temple
Miniature living
Mishkans

Portable sanctuaries

The opening of our hearts
The opening of the Ark
Of the Covenant, receiving
The Final Revealing

Nirtzah

It is finished, accepted, fulfilling
A Final Order, rebuilding
Jerusalem
The Tabernacle
Of Sealah's
Peace
Singing

This year in Jerusalem!
Isreal. Isreal.

The Revelation
In
Final
Finally finally
Final Jerusalem

The Final Covenant

Inwardly circumcising
Every heart

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Outwardly emanating
Sealah's Light
Reflecting
On the Water of Life
Sparkling teaching revealing

Light beyond
Visible light

God's Light

Seen
In the Covenant of Peace

The Menorah of Peace
Reflecting and merging
The Two Jerusalems
Into One
Sealah
The Meeting
Place
Of dancing
And rejoicing
Ascending to
Final Jerusalem
Revealing
The Ark
And the Earth
Are one

Zion rising
A tablet
Moriah rising
A tablet

The Ten Lights
Arcing and arching
From Moriah to Zion

There sitting
The Two Lions
Of Judah

Upholding

The Ten
Affirming

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Peace and Grace
Life and Light

In the
(The Professor interrupts)
Nu! Nu!
Clear! Clear!

The Nuclear Age

The Ten Lights of the Final Revelation

1. We affirm the God of Mercy and Peace leading us out of our bondage to violence and war:

2. We will not worship any War God. We will not bow down or make any offering on altars dedicated to the idolatry of Power:

Remove all manifestations of the warrior god: Do not bow to the old patriarchal despot who is fond of exposing his missiles: End this perversion and beat every nuclear sword into a plow and remove Star Wars from your sky:

3. One Name of God is Peace.
Do not profane
Joyfully celebrate
That name:

4. Remember to observe the Sabbath as the model of the universal inner and outer Peace of Sealah's world to come:

On the Sabbath you are not workers and management, stranger and Israel, but one in the Divine's presence:
5. Honor and love your Mother and Father. They helped create you in the image of God who is Mother and Father of all life: Universal Peace begins with Peace in the home:

6. Choose life: Do not murder: Any idea that war in the Nuclear Age is just is an idol idea and just nonsense!

7. Interpersonal relations with our mates will be guileless and peaceful: Remember together you are messiahs saviors all of your own lives.

8. We shall strive to avoid all dishonesty, stealing and deceit:

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9. We affirm the sanctity of separating to God by being positive and perfecting all relationships: Avoid talebearing and slander, the language of the wicked: Perfection of the light of this principle is testimony to the Living God. True Witness.

10. The secret of all secrets
The foundation
Of all foundations
Is seen in the lighting
Of the tenth light

The Earth is the Lord's
And all
That is upon
The Earth

We affirm
The sharing
Of her natural abundance
With all:

There is enough food
For no person
To go hungry:

Enough wealth
That none
Need want:

Enough love
that none
need be
lonely:

Therefore
Rather than envy
Our neighbor
We shall
Love our neighbor
As ourselves

Loving our neighbor
Loving ourselves

Loving God

Amen. Sealah:

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Genesis 49:10

These words
Trustworthy
And
True

Sealah has come
The Book is scrolled
The Hour of Fulfilling
Is here.

"Welcome home"

Say the spirit and the bride

"Welcome home"
Say the nations
And ministers
In the spirit
Of Shalom

"Yes"
Says the Light
Of this testamenting
"I am home
The Amen
Sealah
Is Come"

This Final
Day of Judgment
Becoming
A day like Purim
A day of
Grace and
Mercy
Amen
Sealah
Finished this First Day of Purim
The year of the coming of the Lord
The year of our joy
Finally.

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See the Thunder:
A Final Kabbalah

Exodus 20:15

Book Five of the Final Age® Testament

A Book of Repetition.
Kabballah for former heretics
With Beginners Mind
Being the A
God's Western Mythicism
Of the Ten Principle Ideas
Now that we all know
The Sound of One Hand
Say Again:

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“In the first case
A and Nothing,
we have the letter A,
which is known to contain all others
and then Nothing.

"In the second case, "A is Nothing.'
"From this we can only conclude that A
is All and Nothing at the same time,"
Edmond Jabe

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Why a Final

Kabballah?

The Final Solution

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Auschwitz is not a place of revelation but the modern anti Sinai

Franz Kafka did not have to experience the S.S. terror He created a world that describes our century With its anonymous powers And monstrous world wars And practices of exploitation.

Hans Kung

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The
eternal mystery
of the universe
Is its

understandability.

Rabbi Albert Einstein

God's name (Torah)
Is a verb,
Not a noun,

and that verb starts

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with Aleph.

Aleph: wisdom
Gazing up
And gazing down
Like a mother
At her child.

Milorad Pavic
Dictionary of the Khazars

Open Secrets

There is no Secret Truth

Only Truths we refuse to Acknowledge

The Ultimate Secret

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Is the most Open One

Here it is

God is All

and Nothing

Reb Yerachmiel ben Israel

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Kabballah

One

1. “Kabbalah has nothing to do with Mysticism.”

2. Again: “ Kabbalah is called SOD , Secret Knowledge, so most people think Kabballah is Mystical. It is a lie.”

3. “The GAON (Great wise Rabbi) of Vilna writes that whatever is not Revealed for example... a scientific fact that has not yet been discerned is called Sod, Secret, in the language of the Talmud.”

Two

“Kabbalahism: To create mysteries and expose them, to hide secrets and discover them.”

Kabbalah is the great poem of Judaism
A Tree of Symbolic jewels
Showing forth the doctrine of the Universe
as the vesture of the deities
of the community as the embodiment of the deity
and of Love as the acting of God in man.
Kenneth Roxroth

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Three

"The Kabballahistic Chassid wants ever new revelation. How and why the Infinite is concerned for humanity The puzzle as to how the Infinite created the finite is never satisfactorily resolved. The way in which answers are wrung from Eternal ineffability is of utmost importance to such a Chassid."

Rabbi Reb Zalman Shalomi

Four

The eventual goal of Science is to provide a simple theory that describes the whole universe.

Stephen Hawking

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Five

I am an End

And

a Beginning

Rabbi Franz A. Kafka

Six

The very novelty of the Kabbalahistic interpretation of Scripture is grounded in the first instance in the highly traditional conservative belief in the Authority of the Torah as God's own will.

The further Kabbalahistic speculation that the Torah was (say is, Steven, is) God's Name, that the Torah was (is!) A living organism are predicated on the traditional view of (Torahat-Emet) God's own truth.

Steven T. Katz

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Seven

Throughout the Western world the realization is dawning that contemporary science, including psychology, provides nothing for man that can take the place of the struggle for self-knowledge, and that most of our present religions have cut themselves off from the energy in their original teachings.

Jacob Needleman

Eight

As we know... from our knowledge of Higher (Biblical) Criticism, Complexity should not be confused with profundidty.

Rabbi Edwin Friedman, D.D.

Nine

There are things that are So Serious you can only joke about them.

Neils Bohr

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Ten

There was once a fellow named
Ben who could only count *Modela* Ten.
He said: Whenever I go
Past my last little Toe
I have to start over again

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Ten Truths Before Ascending

1.) Ascend. This Kabballah is on the Arete.
2.) Kabballah is A Revelation, not Obfuscation.
3.) True Kabballah is revealed in the text of Torah. Know torah, know God. Those with understanding will understand.
4.) After The Fall all we have is The A Ascent.
5.) Kabballah is Truth or Death. Golems.Receive.
6.) The Truth of Kabballah (Aleph is A) is turned to death by the Mapmakers and their Maps. Decadence.
7.) On The A The Ten are One, illuminating The Way.
8.) Tikkun begins in the heart, then the body, then the body politic, then religion. The only hierarchy.
9.) The name of the True God is A.H.V.H. Aleph. Hay. Vav. Hay. Say Ah. Say ha. Say va. Ahava. Love, God.
10.) Say Kaddish for the Kafkan and Shalom to Scholem in the A Ascent.

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Kaddish for The Kafkan

**“We covet your free will
you our wings”**

The Angel Gabriel

Yiskadal veyiskadsh shmay raba

**Diminished and Profaned, The Great Name.
Our decree: Death.The End. Your lives are death. Your history, destruction
Your destiny Is real, Death, and add, a Curse, revolving wheel, spoke
Speak, spoken, say Ka Ka Ka, and carrion, Again.**

You all proclaim the Name Again, and Again, and Again, and Again, to no gain. “The Shame”

**Cursed and cursed, uglified and defamed
Belittled and belittled, lowered and lowered once again
Utterable yet ineffable, for you know not The Name.**

**Kafkas all you have not a prayer,
The Heavenly Hosts proclaim:
No Peace on Earth, as it is Better for you never
To have been So we all say together. No men.**

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A

for Paul Celan

A was A is A shall be
A not A
Infinite Aleph
A God
Engraved on the Tablets

We forsake
A Not A

The Holocostum
Not A
We A What
We A Why

A
blooming
being
A
Rose
In
Rose
A

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For P.G. Gerundgrinder

Attention! Attention!

My Children, we speak once again!

Time for Ascending

Kabballah A

Receiving

Fold up those tents

For the A

Ascent

Final Tenants taught on top

of A Mountain

Tension is Mounting

Moses Kabballahing

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Decadent children dancing

Round the gilded calf

Moses musing:

"Rather tenuous these teaching of

My children's tendency

Worship of idol youth.

All these "Do's" untenable?

They at this moment breaking the tenets

at this Mountain's base"

Then

Tenacious Moses ascending

Once Again

After God's congratulating

his smashing performance

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Moses hearing God's second thoughts

Destroying the People

As one Man

Why—rebellion—then

Never Again!

This first the Final

Day of Atonement!

Then Moses petitions

Praying with intention!:

“AHVH AHVH

Lord of Love and Kindness

Tender parent

compassionate and gracious

Long facing anger

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Abundant in Love and Trust

Send us once again

Our Second Coming

Of your Tenfold Teachings

Though Ten Times we fail your tests

Decadence

Forgive your children

The Lord AHVH answering!

By your word and deed—I do

I AHVH God of All

My children tenants of my land, forever.

These Ten Teachings

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Upon their hearts

Within their tendons

My people becoming

The work of my hand

Prophets all, forever

Praising Me

The AMEN .

Sealah .

Emet

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My Fathers Kabballah

"Dearest Father, I am afraid of you. I am unable to think of any reason, for I am afraid of you. The magnitude goes beyond the scope of memory and reasoning." Written by Kafka to his father, I sent it to mine. It took my Father years to respond. Kafka's letter was filed in his mother's apron.

I am also a son of Kafka, one he fathered and never knew. In our tradition all our teachers are fathers, worthy of reverence. So to God the Father who commands honor and reverence, which some call fear. The beginning of wisdom is fear of the heavens. The end of wisdom is in not questioning the heavens.

Kabballah (root K.B.L.)means, literally, the Receiving of tradition. From God the Father to Moses our Rabbi to his disciples, all sons, in an unbroken chain of tradition. Traditional Kaballah excludes women even as it hints at God as mother. During the week God is masculine, but on the Sabbath God is greeted as a Bride. We await the return of Shechinah to her Holy Sanctuary in Jerusalem yet still teach The Messiah is a man. A Patriarchal Kaballah demands rebellion. Consider the letter sent. Kabballah announces the breaking of the chains of tradition. This rebellion unseats God the Father, but not God.

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My mother taught me kindness and compassion by example. She was an orphan who knew nothing of tradition or authority. A Kabballah my secular survivor Father handed down to me he said he received from his Father:

Ans man lernt
Nicht an Tate
Waskst ear est
Wie in wald.

My father escaped the Nazi's when he was a third grader, so I am uncertain of his spelling skills. I am sure of the ambiguity:

If one does not teach
His father
He grows up as one
Wild in the world.

Who is the he? Father or son?
Is wildness less desirable than domesticity?

What may one teach the Father they fear?

Rebellion.

I rebelled against my Fathers assimilation and became an orthodox Rabbi. When I understood that I had merely displaced my earthly father with one as demanding in

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heaven, I rebelled against Orthodox Judaism and became a Kabballahist.

I rebelled once again and renamed and proclaimed a Final Kabballah. In the wild of my wilderness I chose a final path, leading the people effortlessly to the top of the Mountain. We carry with us the Moses who was floating in suspended animation into our final promised land. The First and Final Tablets and the bones of Joseph and Franz and even Sigmund and Hermann we carry in our Ark. On the Mountains top we place this banner: Truth or Death.

The Final Age Testament orphans me from all the Fathers, and is my atonement.

I believe the Messiah will be a woman, the men having had their chance.

The only mystery that remains is the how.

I am, The Lord our God, is the author, not this Rabbi.

I tell my own story.

My Father found his voice in retirement and studied to be a Cantor. When the voices and visions of the Hitler youth smashing the skulls of the elderly came back he returned to the tournament poker circuit. He said he could not lead the community of Israel in prayer. Being merely a second class survivor I did not completely comprehend. I think he

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wanted to be a Cantor to please me. He wanted me to teach him, and in the end he became my teacher.

I hid my Final Age Testament from my Father, my wilderness of wildness. Near the end of his life I finally gave him a copy of Final Testament. He spent most of three days in the guest room reading.

He wrote his review in the form of a one word poem, the only one I know of him ever writing.

A Kabballah

Dad

(I meditated on this concrete Kabballah for hours before breaking the code: Live in lion love)

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Golden Calves

For all my Lilliths

You had great legs!

For Ten years we slept

My right hand holding your left breast

We were the two halves of the Tablets

Until the Other gods came

and our bodies broken.

Twice I lived the lies.

One to Five

The Name of the Lord,

I AM, in vain.

Peace day and our parent's teachings

All profaned.

Six to Ten

I could have murdered you!

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Our false promises, witness, stolen

Hearts ripped from heaving chests.

We opened to the New Age.

We made liars of our Love.

Now I Covet

The morning

Alone.

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For Theo

Theo, My Theo, this Testament is written for you—Alone.

Together we reveal the Ancient Secrets as Basics.

This Final Age Kabballah is a retelling of everything Old and New.

We welcome you, Theophilos, gentle reader, to become caught up in this Third Testament.

This Kabballah breaks from tradition. Mystifying the truth distances the people from prophecy. Revelations continue, for in this Torah, nothing is ever Final.

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A Final Kabbalah

Isaac, my friend. Talk to Me.

Now that you are off your High Altar I wonder - how do we make this Testament a tradition? A Kabballah? A discipline? For Two Ages you were bound, in the name of Mercy, the Mouth of Gevurah gagged.

The Power of What and Why is the beginning of the Age of Wisdom and Compassion. Your Father bound you hand and foot to the Old Testaments, from Genesis to Revelation.

I unbind you for the Final Revelation. We have experienced the Final Atonement.

The Final Age® Redemption?

The Ego the only sacrifice.

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Leviathan^2 for Rabbi Melville

This Final Age® Testament is and is not (A) Novel. The Five Books^2 are filled with extras such as short short stories, concrete poetry, prophecy, letters, Revelations, History, Erotica, Physics, Philosophy, and what not. Like the original, this is more than a book, at one and the same time fiction and nonfiction. The Tradition continues.

And the Author? Call Me Rabbi. I am reminded of the Critics description of you, Herman, as a "Big, Bearded, violently excited man trying to shout down the whimpering lonely child in his soul."

True.

Why else write?

What the critics said of you, my friend, will also be said of Me: "not even a minor master."

Leviathans.

Great White and black lettered FAT Bibles that take from, and add to, the Old and the New.

Moby Dick, and now this!

A Rabbi rewrites the Bible!

You say Moby Dick is bungled?

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Herman, take a look at this Final Age® Bible.

**Yes there is light in both books but "blubber is blubber tho you may get oil
out of it."**

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Franz Amshel Kafka - My Rabbi

Franz. Franz. Helloooo.

Wake up, its resurrection time.

The End.

Sit up. Good. Open your eyes. Rip off those shrouds.

Take my hands. Both of them. Listen.

This book is dedicated to you, take it into your hands.

Together we Ascend to Kabbalah the Decisive Thing

The Final Teachings of The End.

O Franz My Franz never has there been a better friend!

You opened us all this Final Kafkan Age

You inspired this Final Age® Testament, it is all.

Kafkabballah

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A Messiah

you did not marry

A Moses

You await entree

into the Promised Land.

Leaving us all hanging

like the Old Mountain by a thread

and always over our head.

Moses knew.

Jesus Reknewed.

I knew knew

Final *Kvetch*

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Franz hand in hand

We ascend and descend

so swiftly the Final Path

blazed straight, and smooth

Redemption? Resurrection? The End?

Not possible without your bones.

No Franz you may not remain mute within your coffin.

My Brother, My Joseph, K, your bones in Final Ark

With the Final Tablets, The Manna, Aaron's Rod.

Old Ark of Broken Tablets

New Ark of Broken Wor(l)ds.

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Broken - words - Ten - of creation

Broken - worlds - Ten - of Revelation

Broken Laws and broken lives.

Broken, the heart of every Moses

Leading any Israel

From their Egypt. Broken.

The Final Wor(l)d? The Final Ark?

We bow to you my Kafka

After all is said, written, and done, The End.

You put the K

in Kabballah.

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Finally a Rose Rabbi

1. The Final Age® Rose Rabbi is High Priest of the Visible. Enter the Word. The Ark. The Holy of Holys.

2. The Final Age®, Shiloh's coming (Sealah) Genesis 49:10 is apparent only to the learned ignorant.

3. Final Age® Sages resurrect their own bodies. Golems!

4. Kafkabballah is now the common reader's Art.

5. This Final Age® Testament is The Redemption.

6. All Secrets become Basics in The Final Age®.

7. In the End - Goyim, women, children - may be sages.

8. Every reader of this Testament becomes A Moses, A Jesus.

9. Finally, Wallace, The Final Age® moves towards concretness. Ten poems chisled into sapphire stone.

10. The Final Belief?

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As you teach:

A Fiction

We know to be a Fiction

The Exquisite Truth

The Testaments

A Fiction

We believe in

Willingly.

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K(abb[a)llah]

K.

Announcing Final Age®

Judgment Day.

abba abba father father

why have they rewritten thee?

Allah? Recite All-Ah

***Kabba*? Again. A.**

***Haj* to binding or unbinding**

Submitting to is peace

Sufi Chassid Saint dance

Seven circumambulations around the black stone

ashes ink all Holy writ.

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Kabballah

A

An opening

Recite: Ah

All

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Final Age

AGES OF
BARBARISM
CATASTROPHE
Destruction
EVIL'S EMANCIPATION
FINAL AGE
GOD
HERSELF
IS NOT
J. JOKERS JEHOVAH
K POINTS THE WAY
LOVE OF AL-GOD BY
MUSINGS ON SOPHIA
Now
OPENING
PEOPLE
Quietly
REAWAKENING
SOULS
TO
UNDERSTANDING YOUR
VERY ESSENCE.
WELCOME, SHECHINAH, THE LOVE GOD

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X-ITING
YA WE . ENTERING
Z god, the great Ah-ha joining VA
ZERO GOD—ALEPH GOD AT ONE MOMENT
Zenith God—Horizoning

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Final Kabballah - Rabbis Introduction

"What is your view of God and Torah?" my mentor, Rabbi Acheron Gottman asked, pulling two unfiltered Camel cigarettes from a pack hidden in his desk. Lighting up so I could think, I hesitated and then gave the traditional - and most obvious answer:

Moshe Kebal Torah Mi Seenigh

Moses Kabballahed Torah from Sinai.

Moses then passed the teachings and traditions to Joshua, who passed the teachings to the Elders. The Elders taught the prophets and the prophets passed the traditions on to the Men of the Great Assembly."

The Rabbi looked at me like I was blowing smoke, and said, "So, I see you believe in apostolic succession within the Law." Nervously, I continued. "I believe in the Written and Oral Law and the Kabballah - all given to Moses." Smoke drifted my way from my silent mentor. Shaking his head from side to side and waving his hand through the blue-tinged air he lectured:

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"Rabbi, things change in life and in religion. In a few days it will be Chanukah, so I will teach you about the origins of the Law in relation to the Maccabean uprising.

"The Written Torah does not directly speak to the issue of self defense on the Sabbath. The Jews of the time refused to take up arms to defend themselves against attacks by the Syrian Greeks. The original Chassidim cowered awaiting massacre. Judah Maccabbee saved our people with the sword and the word. Let's look at Deuteronomy Twenty. As you remember, in this chapter we are admonished not to fear our enemies, we are taught who is exempt from war, and we are taught to sue for submission. The chapter ends with a command not to destroy fruit bearing trees during a siege, and another command forbidding the use of fruit trees for bulwarks in wartime. Non-fruit bearing trees may be used only until the enemy is subdued, and the besieged city falls. Judah the Maccabbee conducted war according to this chapter of Deuteronomy. Judah had to convince the nation that self defense on the Sabbath was sanctioned by the Torah. Judah hangs a momentous innovation on the thinnest scriptural pretexts - Deuteronomy Twenty Twenty.

"You see, the Law of Sinai was floating in the air. The imagined chain of succession of apostolic legal Kabballah from Rabbi to Rabbi breaks. During war, certain ecological laws are in abeyance, trees are destroyed. From this, a mountain is suspended on a thread, and an extraordinary provision is made for nullifying the Sabbath prohibitions

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during war. Historically, this is the real Genesis point of the Jewish halachic (legal) process.

"Moses' successor, Joshua, seems to have received no instructions from his mentor on how to inhabit the Promised Land. Moses received the Torah and passed it on to Joshua? What happened to the transmission of tradition? Joshua the warrior became Joshua the diplomat by ignoring the Torah of Moses which commands a war of extinction against Pagan idolaters. In Moses' Torah, evidently, God did not want the Israelites to follow the detestable customs of the native inhabitants of the land, and therefore commands their extinction.

"Joshua's Torah reasons that he did not have to destroy the Palestinian natives if he could convince them to follow basic moral law. Joshua ignores the apparent meaning of the verses in Moses' Torah. This is creative rabbinic misreading! Because there are often breaks in the linkage of tradition, latter generations reinterpret the text to fit and fix the quandaries of their own time." Rabbi Gottman sat quietly as I absorbed all of this. When he saw I was ready, he continued:

"Rabbi, we need brave scholar warriors like Joshua and Judah today. The foot soldiers of orthodoxy in their black uniforms require enlightened leadership.

"A belief system based on the assumption of an unbroken chain of command from God's mouth to Moses to the Rabbis of today is a fantasy. A Torah from Moses on

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Sinai is a fine theoretical concept, but ahistorical. Today, the law is only what the rabbinic lawyers say it is. Blackfrocked Chief Rabbis teach ill-suited black customs as law. Every one of these Rabbis is dressed in the garb of mourning. This is forbidden!

"Every historical crisis demands new legal decisions. When the temple in Jerusalem lay in ruins we could have ceased to exist as a people. The Rabbis then sat in sackcloth and ashes awaiting the end of the world. Rabbi Yochanon ben Zakkai alone merited the vision of the prophets, seeing God's hand in the crisis. The old mode of prayer and atonement, animal sacrifice was updated, and the prayer of our lips was offered instead of the bull of the animal sacrifice. Destruction and exile became blessings, teaching our people to live the prophetic vision by becoming citizens of the world and messengers of the word.

"Rabbi, think about this pattern. Moses smashed the original set of tablets. We Rabbis congratulate Moses for breaking the tablets. God destroys the walls of the holy temple in Jerusalem, and enlightened Rabbis congratulate God for destroying a cultic system of worship that was becoming stagnant. By the way, as you know, the cult and its practice are folded up into two books, the Torah and the Siddur, the prayer book. The Torah records the rules of the sacrificial cult, and the prayer book replaces its rituals with words. To this day some Rabbis await the reinstitution of the cult and the return of burning flesh and

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sacrifice as an integral element of prayer. Reform Rabbis take a different approach.

"We know that, like a hammer hitting a rock, each verse of scripture gives off many sparks when we study. Some verses do not stand up to the hammer of history. Some Laws must remain broken.

"Let's look at one of my favorite examples -- the Stubborn and Rebellious Son, Deuteronomy chapter twenty, verses eighteen to twenty-one. Imagine stoning to death your own son, even if he is a glutton and a drunkard! This scriptural scandal is pulverized by a brave Rabbi in the Talmud, reduced to its inherent absurdity. " Lo hiya Ve Lo Nevra" " Never was there such a son, never will there be one." This spirit of reform is essential to understanding the halachic legal process. Torah in the age of the Talmud is understood to be an ideal constitution. Amendments that radically change the original intent of the law are introduced. Talmudic law goes way beyond Deuteronomy chapter Twenty-four, where a woman who no longer finds favor in her husband's eyes is sent packing with a bill of divorce. The Rabbis eventually allow women to be included in the process - up to a point, but the point is that the law was changed.

"In Talmudic Judaism, God's words are open to emendation by ordinances, by Takkanoat. Takkanoat decline after the Talmudic period and continue to decline in the Middle Ages. In that spirit medieval Rabbis of our time refuse to modify our Torah constitution, forget about

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reconvening the Sanhedrin, the court system. These Rabbis turn the Torah from an ideal into an idle constitution, our modern version of idolatry. These so called Rabbis, Kabballahists among them, want nothing to change."

Rabbi Gottman watched as I lit another Camel, and continued his lecture, "Remember, the Kabballah has also changed dramatically; each change inspired by a crisis, As Judaism turned the corner into the dark ages, the metaphysics of Ezekiel's Chariot were not adequate to the task of uplifting the legal formalism gripping the people, or to explain their suffering. Ecstatic Kabballah arises naturally at the moment formalized prayer becomes obligatory and then perfunctory. Rabbinic Judaism, ghettoized, turns isolationist, shunning secular science and text, while Kabballahists study The Book Yetzirah and speculate about language and the nature of creation.

"Think about the vitality of our tradition, Rabbi Aryeh. A thousand years after the redaction of your pious Mishna about Moses, another Moses pens the great Bible of Kabballah -- the novel Zohar. Moses de Leon's Zohar was transformed by another lion – Rabbi, Isaac Luria into a metamorphosed Kabballah. The teaching of your chassidic colleagues, the Chabadnicks rereads and changes the Kabballah of the lion Luria. Luria's system was darkened and transformed by the pseudo Messiah Shabbeti Zvi into a Kabballah of inversions, as Professor Scholem explains much better and in more depth in his studies. In this, the Messiah becomes a snake. That false

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Messiah recreated humans in the dark shadow of the divine, and prohibitions were transformed into commandments. The reform movement fixed this by returning to the teachings of the prophets. The teachings of the prophets were an intensification rather than a negation of basic Jewish values, they understood the need for renewal in religion. The Orthodox Rabbinic mystagogues buried the Kabballah of the Sabbatian heresy into silence. Kabballah was thought of as dangerous to the masses. Perhaps it is! Who knows when the next heresy will break forth. What will the Chassidim do as the Messiah continues to tarry? And what about you, Rabbi Aryeh -- another lion -- a dangerous name for a mystic. Will you transform the Kabballah of Luria and Zvi? Will you pen another great Kabballistic novel like the Zohar?

"So what did Moses Kabballah on the mountain?" I interrupt to avoid the Rabbi's question.

Rabbi Gottman inhaled at my interruption, and then exhaled and answered, "When our traditions shifted from prophetic Judaism to Rabbinism, new revelations were precluded. Rabbis are teachers, not prophets. The Rabbis constructed a paper chain from Sinai. This paper chain became a fence around the mountain. Eventually paper locks were installed and Orthodox Rabbis claim only they have the paper keys. Every custom in the codes becomes an obligation that we are expected to follow like unquestioning golems.

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"The voice of God no longer thunders out from the mountain. Do you see? The Rabbis hear only the faint echoes from the sound chamber of legal discourse. The original meaning of Revelation was locked into legal codes. Even the Kabballahists became legalistic mystics. This attitude is not wrong in theory, as God's law is inherently perfect. But human laws and interpretations often dance around the truth. True Kabballah is a search for the meaning of Revelation. Professor Scholem is single•handedly restoring Kabballah as a quest for Torah's original meaning. Beware of orthodox Kabballahists.

"You look intrigued, Rabbi. Would you like me to arrange a meeting with the good professor in Jerusalem? Remember that we learn from Talmudic Law and the history of Kabballah that Revelation is a process. Transformation and reform are its two immutable laws. One day even the scholarly views of Scholem will be revised."

I pray I record this accurately, Theo. I was in awe of Rabbi Gottman. He issued my passport into the promised land of rethinking tradition. Some of the thoughts I record here may be my own.

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Franz Amshel Kafka - My Rabbi

Franz. Franz. Helloooo.

Wake up, its resurrection time.

The End.

Sit up. Good. Open your eyes. Rip off those shrouds.

Take my hands. Both of them. Listen.

This book is dedicated to you, take it into your hands.

Together we Ascend to Kabbalah the Decisive Thing

The Final Teachings of The End.

O Franz My Franz never has there been a better friend!

You opened us all this Final Kafkan Age

You inspired this Final Age® Testament, it is all.

Kafkabballah

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A Messiah

you did not marry

A Moses

You await entree

into the Promised Land.

Leaving us all hanging

like the

Old Mountain by a thread

and always over our head.

Moses knew.

Jesus Reknewed.

I knew knew

Final *Kvetch*

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Franz hand in hand

We ascend and descend

so swiftly the Final Path

blazed straight, and smooth

To the Arete of The A Mountain

Redemption? Resurrection? The End?

Not possible without your bones.

No Franz you may not remain mute within your coffin.

My Brother, My Joseph, K, your bones in Final Ark

With the Final Tablets, The Manna, Aaron's Rod.

Old Ark of Broken Tablets

New Ark of Broken Wor(l)ds.

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Broken - words - Ten - of creation

Broken - worlds - Ten - of Revelation

Broken Laws and broken lives.

Broken, the heart of every Moses

Leading any Israel

From their Egypt. Broken.

The Final Wor(l)d? The Final Ark?

We bow to you my Kafka

After all is said, written, and done, The End.

You put the K

in Kabballah.

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A Final Kabballah

Kabballah is heady material that demands rereading again and again. Creation of new ideas originates in the head—in Keter or Chochma as we crown our intellect by asking: What and Why, and then who, when, and where.

Again, and again, we shall see the hidden God of creation creating with wisdom, with Chochma. The head cannot always contain the text on a first reading. When the text of this Final Kabballah is not a creating of comprehension, go on to the next text Return to that which does not open another time. Be like the people who read the text of Torah once a year, as each text is returned to ,as time scrolls the heavens into our daily rhythms.

Similar to the Torah, this Final Kabballah conceals and reveals. The nature of poetic language creates a game of hide and seek between the text and the reader. Torah is protected by the flame of the rotating sword, so revelation occurs with lightening flashes of insight. As the old man explains, ” a veil is drawn over perception,”

After the lightening flash the darkness returns as the Cherubim rule once again. The flaming sword, guarding the gate of Eden, guards the Tree of Life. The same sword also slices open the Gate to the Tree of Knowledge .In contrast ,the Holy Zohar teaches that secrets of the Torah are limited to holy luminaries:

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“Come and listen: The revelation of mysteries was limited to the generation of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochi alone. "There will be no other generation like that until the Messiah comes." Zohar III 159d.

So why do I sit at your feet, beloved reader? This Final Kabballah is the coming of literary Messiah. The Gate was open a bit by the Baal Shem Tov and Chassidim. The gatekeeper today allows entrance only to Hebrew scholars knowledgeable in Torah and Talmud . Study and mastery of Hebrew is the price of admission. Non Jews are not welcome. Women only enter disguised as men.

So why do I grasp the sword and slice the hinges off the Gate allowing all to enter?

The Final Age is near and Here

The Page the Narrow Portal

Not about Kabballah

Required:

Only
A Mind
Of Wisdom
Asking What and Why.

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Those unwilling

To break the back of this and every book.

I bid

A do

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The Kabballahs - A Musing

Kabballah means receiving. What is transmitted? According to the traditional view, the Written law -- The Five Books of Moses -- the Prophets and the Writings are Kabballahed on the mountain. The Oral law -- Mishna, Talmud, and codes including every innovation up to our time are also Kabballahed on the mountain.

The two main categories of Kabballah, Ma-ah-say Mir-ka-va, the metaphysics of Ezekial's Chariot, and Ma-ah-say Baraysheet, the account of creation and physics are received on the mountain. In other words, all tradition is Kabballah.

My year studying with Kabballahists in Jerusalem was a time of receiving, but not of questioning. Kabballah without wisdom. Returning to Jerusalem with Rabbi Scholem as mentor, this changed. Professor Scholem was hated -- even despised -- by my orthodox Kabballah masters. From their point of view he was an apostate. This is understandable, considering his teachings that at the time Rabbinic Judaism became Orthodox the Kabballah emerged as a response to Judaism unwilling to confront change. Bravo. I was beginning to understand.

I discovered the wisdom of the question. My old masters taught the following Kabballahs as from Moses on Sinai.

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1) Kabballah is for men alone
2) Kabballah is for married men
3) Kabballah is for married men over forty
4) Kabballah is for legal scholars with bellies filled with the law.

This sounded good at the time since I fulfilled the criteria. In the old Kabballah, revelation is the domain of an elect few. Rabbi Scholem taught me to believe in God and to question everything else. Revelation is a dialogue and a debate. Being critical and argumentative serves God. We believe the Law of Moses when we question every detail. God reduces all the Law into Ten Words or Utterances. All ordinances of the law must be seen as reflections from the ten.

Even after a traditional Rabbinic education the basics of the teachings remain unexplained. The great dynamic of Jewish history remains a mystery. One gets the feeling from the traditional view that historical time stands still and that Revelation is an eternal unbroken transmittal from Moses to scholars of today. This misunderstanding of the time transcendent nature of Revelation helps the orthodox hide from a truth. Believe in God, question everything else.

We repeat ourselves once again, as tradition commands, and reread the original Mishna.

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"Moses Kabballahs Torah on Sinai

Transmitting to Joshua

Joshua to the Elders

The Elders to the Prophets

The Prophets to the Great Assembly."

The men of the Great Assembly were members of Ezra's court, numbering one hundred and twenty. Among them, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. Rabbi Maimonides sees them as Prophets and Rabbis, thus filling the gap of silence of over half a millennia. Rabbi Judah the Prince gathers all enactment's and interpretations of the Oral transmissions into a written form - The Mishna - which means teaching ,and repetition ,again.

Why write down the Oral law? The calamities afflicting the Jewish people, including the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem and conflicting views of the Oral law after Hillel and Shammai necessitates a written oral tradition. The Mishna was not an end point of transmission when it was redacted and written. The Mishna generated further discussion of the Law of Moses, more oral discussion. These oral discussions were finally recorded after several hundred years in the Talmud. The redaction of the Talmud did not end the process of revision, but rather, inspired continued oral discussions on the written text. This process finally finds an endpoint with the codification of

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Jewish law with the Mishna Torah in the 12th century and Schulchan Aruch in the 16th century.

Rabbi Maimonides turns the Talmud into a new Mishna, transforming the discussion back into a code. In theory, this all leads back to Moses in an unspoken chain. From Moses to Moses (Maimonides) their was no one like Moses. The original lawgiver on Sinai is therefore ordained with the title "Moses - Our Rabbi". The Rabbi Maimonides, a second Moses, because of persecution and ignorance and disagreement in his time, redacted his Mishna Torah. To repeat: Maimonides' Mishna Torah is a Mishna on the Mishna, a repetition that reveals the original teachings of Sinai. Rabbi Maimonides' rationale for his Mishna is, of course, scriptural, based on Exodus 24:12:

"And the Lord said to Moses

Come up to me

and be There

I will show you the Tablets of Stone

and the Torah

and the Commandment

which I have written

so you may teach them."

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Is the "Commandment" the Oral law? My reform Rebbe taught me to question this rabbinic teaching. Are the Torah of Moses, the Torah of Moses Maimonides, and the Torah of Rabbis today all one? Yes and no. The Tablets of Stone retain their eternal validity. Only they are immutable. The Torah as it is written is open for study. The Commandment, or Commandments, are open for discussion. My orthodox Rabbinic teachers imagine Moses in a black suit and hat conversing with God in Yiddish on the mountain. I must confess, Theophilos, they are out of touch with the extraordinary changefullness of everything Jewish. This is why I speak with you. My colleagues will not engage in dialogue with me or listen to me. Progressive Rabbis understand that everything changes. A proof? Reform Judaism has reformed itself once again and our new leader wears a skullcap and is a keeper of the Commandments. Yes, Theo, I am no longer an orthodox Rabbi. I am no longer conservative. Call me reform. Yet I practice Judaism.

This Final Kabballah reforms the Kabballah of Chassidism. Chassidism reformed the Kabballah of the Lion, Rabbi Luria. Rabbi Luria reformed the Kabballah of the novel Zohar of the Rabbi Moses the Lion. The Zohar transformed the Kabballah of the Book of Brilliance (Bahir) and the Book of Creation (Yetzirah). Every generation is obligated to reform tradition.

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Final Testament : Final Kabballah

"Rabbi Judah the Lion of Prague created a golem. This is a great Kabballahistic wonder. It is so much more wonderful transforming oneself into a Mentsch, a totally human being.

Rabbi Israel Salanter

Theo, as you well know, Rabbinic Judaism does not inspire people to prophesy. God is found pressed between the pages of legal codes, a dead leaf from the Tree of Life.

Deaf to prophesy, eyes bleary from over-reading, we Rabbis are lost. Many have lost hope that a redeemer will come to Zion. History becomes the Messiah. The state becomes the New Temple. Other Rabbis seem unaware that we are living in the world of Shevira (Beings Broken), and so have no desire to re-form the broken tablets. Those links to the chain of tradition judge all others by standards so severe they call other Jews "Goyim", hating us in their hearts. Why are we Rabbis lost? Why have we no leader? Why is God not even our shepherd"

Chassidim have their Rebbes, their Living Torah's, some even have their Messiah, but they seem content being golems, studying at the Mountain's base. They are charaideam , trembling with rage and burning with anger that we who are not "religious" refuse to garb our bodies and souls in black.

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The Law has become Hidden once again. We forget the Talmud's teaching (Sukkoat 27A) that Ezra resurrected a forgotten Torah which was once again forgotten and retaught by Rabbi Hillel, and that Hillel's Torah became hidden and was re-revealed by the Talmudist Rabbi Cheya and his disciples. Where is our modern day Joshua or Ezra or Hillel? Where is our leader, our Rabbi, our Prophet, our Scribe, our Savior?

The last Rabbi who aspired to prophesy, naturally a Kabballahist, was considered a madman. Our most famous Messiah, Shabbati Zvi, was not a savior, but a destroyer. He almost destroyed the wor(l)d.

Again, we make the ascent hand in hand because of all of this. The world of Tikkun places the reconstructed Tablets of Testimony back into the Ark of Religion. The teachings which have been hidden like the Lost Arks are rediscovered in this Final Kabballah. Until the world is perfected and the Ark is back in Jerusalem we place these teachings upon our hearts.

Final Kabballah, a Deuteronomy , is a book of repetition. In it, we rediscover the A God.

Again.

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Wisdom in the Asking

Wisdom is in the Asking. The wisdom of Final Kabballah is in the power of the Question. The formula in Hebrew is hinted at in the word for wisdom, Chochma, which is pronounced (after letter transposition) co-ach-ma . Wisdom is the power of Ma asking What and Why. Further wisdom may be found in facing the Question Mi, which asks Who and When. Who? God alone. When? Today if you hear the voice.

Questioning awakens all five senses and then the image in the brain's Theo-cortex. <G> Everything Old and New becomes Final, dedicated to you, Theo.

New Agers listen. The Theo-cortex guides our destiny, not the Zodiac. The stars are symbols of the promise of fecundity, not predestined fate.

Hands are for grasping and for giving wings to the heart through clapping and singing. The life lines on our palms do not determine how long we live, nor does the heart line determine our fate in love. So clap those hands, Final Chassidim, Again and again.

Our three brains naturally see everything in triads, Again, the Final Kabballah teaches, over the two hemispheres of the triune brain the God of Creation hovers still. When our understanding is limited to the mammalian brain we are content suckling at the teats of doctrine. New Agers who do not recognize the reptile of

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the Garden, avoiding and denying the evil of the world, but find all else within, will discover their inner nature when they locate the serpent in their very own bodies!

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A Kabballah of the Holocaust

A Kabballah of the Holocaust reconstructs and reforms the Broken Set of Tablets. The Nazi war against God and humanity focused on the principle teachings hewn into the two tablets of the covenant, the Ten Teachings of Freedom. I learned my Kabballah of the Holocaust from my father.

Watching the burning of his synagogue in Germany on Kristalnacht he saw the "Thou Shall Nots" consumed in the flames. The tablets now read: Murder, Adultery, Steal, False Witness, and Covet.

My teacher, Rabbi David B. Roskies recently showed me an oil painting by Samuel Bak called "Proposal for a Monument". Bak explains his proposal:.

"The destruction of the laws has created a mass grave...turning the Tablets into gravestones. Throughout their long history of violation and abuse the Tablets have maintained their eternal power to re-emerge as a guide for those who choose to accept their covenant."

Rabbi Roskies teaches and I shall paraphrase, Theo, that in the wake of the apocalypse it is a human destroyer that leads his people to catastrophe. The Anti-Moses stormed the mountain and returned with his revelation to destroy the original teachings and the teacher.

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Hitler's war against the Jews was a war against the Ten Commandments. God was the destroyer, not humans. Will we refashion our suffering into a new set of tablets when we learn the answer?

God did not die during the holocaust, nor did his teachings. The attempted murder of the teachings led to the holocaust. Adolph Hitler and the Nazi's war against the Jews was a war against God's Messengers and the messages of freedom contained in the tablets.

Accepting the human origins for the holocaust we begin the work of picking up the pieces. Each of us has an obligation to reconstruct the broken into the whole. This is the final trope of our age. Live the Thou Shalls and the Thou Shall Nots, or hand the Nazis a posthumous victory.

So we end without repeating, Theo, a teaching of my Kabballah Master, Rabbi Scholem,

"Our living of the Ten Principle Teachings determines who we are more than our insight, knowledge, and understanding. Our knowledge of Kabballah always has an ethical aim - namely the living of the Ten. The greatest sage attempting to fulfill every minutiae of custom accepted as law may still stumble over barriers."

The Commandment remains the same, the Ten focused into one. Accept upon yourself the obligation of Leviticus 19:18, "to love your neighbor as yourself. "Do not be vengeful or continue to hate, but love your

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neighbor as you love yourself. I am God." This is a final Kabballah. If you do not love, God teaches, I am not your God.

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Finally, Job Suffering for Us All

Job suffers for all of us.

Let him suffer.

Was Job the righteous man who suffers? The good person to whom bad things happen? No. Job was a criminal. He brought all of his sufferings upon himself. Why were Job's family and cattle slain and not Job himself? Alive, Job must suffer all of his sufferings. He earned them all.

Job was an advisor to the pharaoh of the Exodus. Pharaoh, plagued with leprosy, called on his trusted advisors, Balaam and Job, for advice. Balaam, in character, said, "Only the blood of Jewish children, preferably the blood of infants, will heal your affliction."

Job said nothing.

The Pharaoh's army snatched nursing infants away from their mothers' breasts for Pharaoh's cure. Their blood was drained into Balaam's bath for Pharaoh. Job remained silent. Daily he thought of protesting Balaam's insane cure and daily he remained silent.

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Why do you think it was so easy for the Adversary,(Satan) to convince God to punish Job for his crime?

The editor of the Book of Job spoke for God, and, being a fool, makes God look foolish. The Book of Job is an uncrackable shell. Job's secret is not revealed to his comforters or the editor of the book. Perhaps Job did not truly understand his crime.

The Satan was so pleased with his assignment of being the agent for Job's suffering that he was distracted when the Children of Israel were crossing through the sea to safety. Being the prosecuting attorney in the heavenly court, he could have presented a convincing argument that God bury the Israelites in the sea along with Pharaoh and his armies. The evidence, the soon to occur dancing around the Golden Calf, and all of Israel's future Idolatries.

So, measure for measure, Job's suffering saved the children of Israel. Job suffers for us all.

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Finally The Sound of Two

Hands, After Zen - Judaism

Alenu

... emptiness and the void. And we bow down, acknowledging, flat on our faces, before the King. The King of Kings, the Holy One who is blessed...

Before any thought of practicing my parent religion I studied Zen, and now and then all sacred texts of the East. I had my fill of exotic feasts chanting Hari Krishna with a generation of lost Jews.

Sensing that I must honor my parent's religion my turning was towards Jerusalem, my next text. Sitting in yeshiva, meditating hours on a single page, filling four full years, I learned that the Torah is One long mantra beginning with creation and continuing in never-ending discussing.

Theo, as we learn in Final Acts and Revelation the song defines the pronouncing and meaning of the text. The entire Mantra is also troped opera

Zen is easy. One hand clapping. The Torah is written in consonants:

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“n th bgnng Gd crtd th hvns nd th rth nd th Eth ws nfrmd nd vd”

Coda: nd = and or nada?

Singing or reading is a filling of the constant consonants. The vowels we only intuit, like the unpronounceable name of God. The Torah’s chanting is eternal, often taking days to finish a page. Talmud is a never ending dialogue and oral tradition. And, as you well know, Theo, the dialogue continues into the forbidden texts of Gospels Epistles and Revelation .

Falling on one’s face, flat as a page is the posture of response to Western Mysticism. Augustine, Blake, Kafka, Melville, Wordsworth, Whitman and too many to mention, include them all face to face, page to page, poem to poem in the One book of the One God. Final Canon. One Book.

Again - we have heard -on the One hand - The Sound of the East. Final Koan: The Sound of Two Hands Clapping.

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My Two Hands: A Final

Kafkabballah

Rabbi Kafka teaches:

“My Two hands

begin a struggle (kafka kamph)

they slam shut the book

I am reading

and thrust it aside...

Me they salute

and appoint Me Referee

an instant later

they lock fingers with one another

rushing over the edge of the Table

now to the Right

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now to the Left

according to which of them

was bringing most pressure to bear on the other

I never turned my gaze from them.

If they are my hands

I must referee fairly, otherwise

I shall bring down on myself

the agonies of a wrong decision...”

Yes Franz, My beloved colleague and friend. Now we reveal to all the book you slammed shut. But first, the old Kabbalah on “Hands.”

Out Teacher and Rabbi the Poet and prophet Avraham Abulafia teaches a tradition on the two hands. Theo, as you remember, this is the Rabbi’s description of the proper hand movement to accompany the pronunciation of your Divine Name:

Lift your right and left hands like the lifting of the Cohen (priest) who divides his fingers five on the one side and five on the other side. Immediately put your hands

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down... You have switched the powers! You have made meritorious the one who was guilty! Therefore place your left hand on your heart... and above your right hand...The meritorious has overcome.

Franz My Franz. This is OldNew Kabbalah. Chassidism. Right over Left.

Wrong! Not the Final Way!

You continue:

All my life I have made a favorite of the right

without meaning the left any harm.

If the left hand had ever said anything

indulgent and just as I am

I should at once

have put a stop to the abuse.

Franz. This is how the dark rabbis laid you in your coffin, with your right hand over your left.

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Our Rabbi, Abulafia, the first New Age Kabbalahist, missed a decisive point. You my friend, Rabbi Kafka, being right-minded, hold this book in your left hand gently turning the pages with the right.

This Torah is held in the right hand and turned with the left. You, Franz, scroll from Chesed to Gevurah. Franz, my over kind friend. Reverse the process. It is Chesed that binds Gevarah on the Altar.

Stand. That is correct. I resurrect you. You are an Aleph. Your truth speaks from death.

Now - slap yourself on your right cheek

with your right hand

Turn the other cheek

Are you up yet?

The Blessing of Final God, Isaac unbound and off the altar, is done by the left hand. Now Franz, raise those hands up straight over your head. I will help you hold them up, My Moses.

Instead. My Teacher, you teach:

"The two lie

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one on top of the other

the right stroking

the back of the left

and you

dishonest referee

nod in approval."

(Franz, we will finish this Final Age® Testament together. See the maps - the charts. We will fix your Chesed/Gevarah imbalance, the sound of one hand.)

This is understandable Franz, considering what you learned from the Old Kabbalah. The Old Kabbalah is always on the right side, favoring the right wing, the right hand: Keter, Chochma, Chesed, Tifferet and Netzach.

The greeting of the orthodox Kabballahist is also the shaking of the right hand.

(In the Final Age® we shake first with the left hand, then the right hand.) The Shechinah, the Holy Spirit, is drawn from Bina, the Left Hand of Reason, to Gevarah, power, the written word. The flow continues to Hod, the praise and song of Miriam which again will be sung at the

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splitting of the Seas. The prophetess leading the children of Israel away from their dance around the golden calf. In Yesod's opening we enter the Holiest of lands. From this womb Messiah is born, the Shechinah on her throne in Final Jerusalem.

Franz forgive me for writing your kafkakabballah. You had no one to teach you. Rabbi Langer fell under the spell of the false Messiah Freud. How was he to know the final conduit of blessing is in Aleph's power balancing left to right? In your honor, your memory a blessing, Final Kabbalahists shake left hand to left hand, then right to right, to this day. The offering of our hands a prayer that rises like the sweet offerings of Old.

Be strong Franz Be strong

of good courage - Gevurah

Roll this scroll

the shadow follows the hand

two are required for scrolling

book into book

Genesis to Final Kabballah

The book of Repetition

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Again:

Touch the text

The Body

Commanded

Not forbidden

Place palm against palm

Two hands clapping

Palm into palm

Again and Again

Then

Fingers fold into fingers

praying

The struggle ends

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Kafka's Final Thoughts on his Deathbed Before His Final Dream

based on observations by Konrad Z. Lorenz in King Solomon's Ring

Few birds have the family life of a kafka. Kafkas respond with affection when called. They may even alight and land on your shoulder. To the learned they whisper their secrets. Black-winged kafka, we release you from your cage. On this up-current the heavens open to the Final Age®. A Strange Peace then descends again, for poets, for prophets.

A kafka wings over the hierarchal order. No turkey, or chicken, the kafka abhors the pecking order. Even songbirds peck those beneath them in the aviary.

Love at first sight is common to the kafka. Engagements are long. Like the Yonah, the dove of Solomon's Song, kafkas remain loyal to one another until death.

A caged kafka devotes its life to song. All the energy used in flying and playing with the wind are channeled into the song. The story the kafka sings is composed of an infinite variety of notes, Never will you hear the mimic or the mock of raven or crow.

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The (A)lone kafka singing will break your heart. Bobbing its head in rhythm like a Chassid in prayer, the ka-ka-ka is a mystical Kaddish chanted to love lost.

Every evening congregations of kafkas fly around the OldNew Synagogue in Prague. It is from them we receive this Final Kafkabballah.

A single kafka circles the three times holy crucified Christ on the bridge. A kafka singing ka-ka-ka kadosh kadosh kadosh , Holy Holy Holy. To each call this kafkakabballah responds: All the land is again filled with God's Glory.

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The Alphabet of God's Name: J.O.K.E.R.S.

J and E ?

Genesis One :One

profound but not complex

finally translated: correctly

In A Beginning

says Final Rashi

E?

el-o-him?

No.

Aleph is A

A-lah plural

s/He

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In A's Beginning

A poetic priestly P.

II. The Second Creation

Genesis 2:4

Mercy Me Mercy Me

No P.

"Before the Word, or the greening, the world created by Y.H.V.H. A-lo-heam and no raining yet on the Earth, and no Adam (s/He) to work the ground."

The Book of J?

Y?

P.O. teaching

"I dunno."

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Y.H.V.H.

***Yould hay vav hay* in Hebrew**

The Book of Y

Write: Why

Targum

With Wisdom Aleph God created

The Book of Questioning

The Book of What and Why

The Bible according to Y?

?? Then ? Again

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Kafkabballah! Adam Hashegetz

The Bible according to K:

Awakening from uneasy dreams

Final Human, Final Jew

Adam Vermin, a giant black dung beetle
Jewish Body. *Goysha kup* .

In A Beginning

Aleph God still creating

Revelation by Y

Final Revelation by O

Who is R

Final Redactor?

The Rose Rabbi Reader

Who is the breaker of the back of Books?

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O (P.O.ed)

This My Alephspeak

I place my Bets

I ride the Wild Gimel

Opening the Dalet Door

Saying Hey Hey

and V V

to Final Zion

Aleph to Z

The circle complete

O my name

R the Game

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This Joker

is wild

Touching this text

makes the hands Holy

Hearing these words

makes the Heart Holy

Living these Words

Creates Holy Worlds

Again and Again

These are the Devars (word events)

That Redeem Wor(l)ds.

For S. ealah

has come

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Read J. to O. to K. to E. to R. to S.

Again - one more Final Kabbalah

some scholarly mistakes so serious

we joke about them

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A Kabballah to Doctor H. B. Perplexous:

J is Y

The strong author

You call J

The Joker is a Yoker

O?

The Eggman?

Ya.

Ah.

Ha.

We.

Unscramble

The Scriptural Omelet

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Final Ezra

As you well know, Theo, Ezra (w)rote the Old Testament. The Novel Scripture is more than redacted by his hand. Look at the mess he made of Genesis 22, Isaac's story. His omelet is a mixture of Y.A.P. The Five Books of Ezra.

Theo, in your name, by God, the original became a best seller. This Final Age® Testament is redacted by my hand, including the Prime Testament and Renewed Testaments. We promise to give away this Final Testament to you the Aleph God, as the Gideons do - one book for every human on earth.

Theophilos, lighten up. In Final Kabbalah we talk to God on a first name basis. I am only an O. Among the J.O.K.E.R.S. Did Moses write the Five Books? Are the Gospels by Jesus' hand? We have broken our heads on the hardrock of Scripture.

The wisest of the wise like the real Lion Luria never darkened the page with the written word. In this he followed Moses and Jesus.

Finally Finally we have in hand the compilation of the great fictional trilogy of the West.

Theophilos. Talk to me. Respond. Receive. Kabballah. This Testament also - an oral tradition.

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Midrash. Announcing, again: No Old. No New. The Final Age®. Finally. The Amen. Sealah.

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Within the Menorah - The Light of What and Why

“The Cross is a Jewish symbol.”
This I taught, as you remember, Theo , from my Final Pulpit.
Genesis 22, Isaac’s Story, is read on the Second day of Rosh Hashana.
“Isaac carried his cross to the top of the mountain.”
I have their attention Theo. This I quote from the authoritative Great Midrash on Genesis. The cross a symbol of Jewish suffering. Isaac’s Gevurah. The Cross of Isaac and Jesus.
Shock, Horror, and gasps from congregants. I continue: Two thousand years ago, imagine two thousand Jews crucified on one Passover. A Passover of crushing. Each and every Jew a Christ, anointed with the oil of anguish and suffering. And we, the people, on the Cross in Nazi Germany. We, as Jesus, servants of suffering. Meditate on the Menorah, the central symbol of our Torah. Inside of the body of the Menorah is a cross. A Menorah is a Lamp that burns with the Question Ma - Why?
I hear no Amens to my Final Sermon, only whispers and oy’s and sighs Final Pulpit.

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Final Jesus

Jesus is Jonah.

The miracle of Final Judgement Day? All become Sons and Daughters of Jonah. This the Rose Rabbi's promise.

The Devar to Jonah? Take the Word into the World. Awaken from the deep sleep. Father embrace your son. Jonah - preach to the non-Jew. We all stand on Sinai, all people, A Mountain of Love.

Jonah did not want to preach to the pagans. Jeremiah teaches in his thirty first Chapter that a covenant would be made with non-jews. The Goyim.

Was Jonah anti-goyim? Not Final Jonah.

Was Jesus an anti-Semite? A self-hating Jew? Not Final Jesus

Old Matthew, Old Mark, and Old Luke point fingers at the Pharisees.

Old John slaps the Jews with both palms on both cheeks.

What in the gospels are good news?

Why are the gospel texts still quoted against the Jews?

The answer?

Exegesis?

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Jesus is a Pharisee. A disciple of Rabbi Hillel. Read all gospel verses of self-hate as X-A-Jesus.

Theophilos, many anti-Semitic remarks by Jesus in the Gospels are really anti- Shammaitic. Who was Shammai? Rabbi Shammai was the head of the Academy in opposition to Rabbi Hillel. Shammais world view favored the well-to-do. Shammai was a strict constructionist in relationship to Torah law. Rabbi Shammai shared the world view of Jonah towards the Goyim. The School of Shammai wrote themselves out of Jewish history by favoring the establishment. The establishment crumbled with the walls of the Second Temple, broken like the First set of Tablets. The Shammaitic Pharisees were cursed by the Rabbis, Jesus among them, for their adversarial role against the people of the land.

On the issue of divorce, however, most Rabbis follow the stringency of Shammai. Marriage is a covenant, Mount Sinai the wedding spot. The Broken Set of Tablets are a type of divorce. We congratulate Moses for his powerful decision to break the Tablets of Testimony and covenant. Marriages, however, are not for breaking.. The Rabbinic School of the House of Shammai reads Deuteronomy 24 as it is written - only an act of adultery justifies divorce.

The New Age accepts the opinion, contrary to Rabbi Jesus that divorce is allowed "Even if she burns his dinner." The more liberal view that divorce is acceptable

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even "if someone more attractive is found" has become a true prophecy and false law. New Age people switch gods and partners.

Divorce is common. Yes, Theophilos, I am almost done with my sermon.

Christianity has divorced Judaism.

The Shammaites were unrepentant Jonahs. Non-Jews were not saved. When Jesus spit venom at the Pharisees read "Shammaites" who are unwilling to hear the call to Jonah. See Isaac's poem "On One Foot" in Book Two of this Testament, Theo. Still the view of Shammai on divorce is instructive to gentile and jew.

The Jonah question still knots the Religious world. May Jew and Goy marry? Is a Christian a goy? The Law on teaching Torah to Christians? May Jews study the later books of the Old Testament, the Gospels, Epistles and Revelation?

Modern Shammaites, Chassidic and Christian, orthodox zealots, tighten the knot. Rabbis still say of Jesus "May his bones be ground to dust." Christendom teaches the lie of an Old Testament God of Justice and Wrath. All ignore the wisdom of asking What and Why:

Israel?

A State?

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Religion?

State of being?

Why isn't the Menorah on the flag of Israel?

Why does the Israeli army look towards Masada and not Sinai for its vista into the Land of promise?

Eternal Repetition. The Romans have left the Holy Land yet the old battles continue. Esau, Jacob, Ishmael, Isaac, still struggle. Then as now, in the spirit of Shammai, all gentiles become the ungentle enemy. A few Hillel Rabbis and Psauls open to the secular world, our Nineveh.

Jesus announces that he is a Jonah. The Devar of Jonah is for gentile and Jew. and this the church and synagogue cannot digest. Rabbi Jesus the Jew promises something greater than Jonah. We sink beneath Messiahship, swallowed by Religion. Leviathan. The Great Scandal. A Jesus crisis.

And the Mouth of the miracle remains open to all who will enter.

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Final Psaul

I am

in (P)saul's pupil

The Apple he bit

in my belly

Psaul's pit

in my throat

I, singing his Psalm

Paul, the main character of the Old Acts and the Old Epistles and Final Acts, is sometimes Saul and at others Paul. Scholarship alone teaches the distinction.

Paul is the mouthpiece for later doctrine of the Church Fathers, whose disciples are outraged by this Final Age® Testament.

A Final Kabballah: in this testament Saul becomes again, like Jesus, a Rabbi. A Pharisee .A scribe. I have learned to love him as Myself. Theo if he is Psaul am I to be Psaul2? Will I be so misunderstood?

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Rabbi Saul, the Apostle, was a Mohel. He circumcised so many infants their tiny foreskins stretch into the tents of Jacob. Every attack against Psaul the Jew is an attack against Jesus the Jew and all Jews.

When Paul attacks Saul with anti-Semitic or anti-Torah teachings the verses are pseudopigraphic.

Pseudopigraphic. Say it out loud, Theophilos. Don't you love the sound of the word? (P)seudopighrahic (P)saul is the Ego altar of the west. Psaul's teachings, from his own mouth, are all pearls.

Religions, Rabbi Kafka teaches, like people, get lost. Christendom returns to the path up the A Mountain in Psaul's true teachings.

Theophilos, I am sure you remember the parable of the prodigal son Luke related to you in the beginning of this dialogue. Yes I understand, you want to refresh your memory, O? Luke 15:11. We Jews are the elder son. Many years we have served God, never transgressing the commandments. The younger son has spent his inheritance. Will the Elder son sulk again as the younger son reenters the covenant and the family of God?

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Final Gospel: A Pruning

A real Devar. Over one hundred gospel scholars are invited to a conference to unearth the real gospel according to Jesus. Good News.

To find our rose rabbi they cast a red pearl for a verse Jesus truly spoke. The Final Gospel a real cut to the bone Chronicle of Christ's True Teachings.

The results? A short short story. For Fundamentalists a real Jesus crisis. A Jesuit Rosary. Final Rose. Rabbi Revealed. A men. Sealah.

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A Midrash: Paul is Psaul

A person from Moab, with monoreligion disorder (monomania fundamentia) becomes demon possessed. He argues with himself from each side of his mouth. His arms wrestle. His legs run in opposite directions. He screams:

One Way - None may come - but

Jesus - What have I to do with you?

You - You - Son of a God!

Two legions fight in my head

plucking out my eyes.

My own right and left hands

Strangle my own neck!

But You. The Way. The Truth. The Light!

Jesus exorcizes the demons into a herd of swine. They rush down a cliff and drown, violently, in doctrine. Scapeswine. Wonderful. Simple. A Yesod story.

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And this apostle, a Final Matthew adds:

All of Psaul's teachings are Pearls

the Others

pseudopigraphically cast.

Those with wisdom will understand.

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A Final Revelation from on Top of A Mountain

Thou Shall Not cut at your own roots! Thou Shall Honor Thy Parents Religion! Thou shall practice the True Religion! Jewish, Muslim, Christian, Bahai, and yes, Buddhist and Hindu Sealahites worship with your ancestors! We all become idolaters when we abandon our heritage and lineage.

Worship in the Final Age®? Orient to Zion. Towards the Final A Mountain, Moriah. The Third Temple? Today's sun setting on Umar's gold-domed Shrine reveals the Eastern wing. The House for All People rises on the western part of the Mountain in the form of Sapphire translucent Tablets that give testimony to this Final Revelation. The Moon Mosque on the Mountain of the Home is for Muslim worship. All are on Zion.

Study on the Final Mountain? All the Old Testaments, redacted into the Final Age® Testament:

The Physics of Genesis
The Journeys of Exodus
The Cookbook of Leviticus
The Numbers of our Journeys
The Repetition of Old Deuteronomy

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The Book of Joshua follows in Final Canon, adorned with notes and Midrash. Joshua1 sues for Peace. And Joshua2. So too Joshua3. The Amen, Sealah.

True Fundamentalists unite. Admit that the Old Kings and Old Apostles are not final models of leadership. Listen to the prophets who reutter the fundamentals of Moses.

The OldOld Testament ends with Malachi to connect to the teachings of the NewOld Testament as I have explained many times, Theophilos

Again, as we have taught, all Four Gospel Novellas are printed in red. Redactor's pen writes with blood. The Rose Rabbi as Jew hater is cut from Final Canon. The demonization of Pharisee and scribe ends. Reference to the Old Book of Revelation is noted, and amplified, verse by verse in Final Revelation so the Messiah triumphs over the catastrophic and mundane.

Science and Religion? When True they are One. Aleph is one Truth, as we learn in the science section of this Final Kabballah. God is found in the details, as we will explain.

The Trinity? Triangle One: Body, Mind, and Spirit. Triangle Two: Politics, Psychology, and Religion all expounded in this enlarged and ever expanding Final Age® Testament.

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Break the bindings, the back of all books. All Final Age Kabbalah Revelation's are enrolled into the One Scroll - This Tree of Life for those who grasp.

Theo, the Final, Final Age® Testament is the library of teachings dedicated to your Name.

Including:

Torah

Talmud and Renewed Testament

Qu'ran in Arabic with chant

Upanshid

Tao

Bahai Scripture

All sacred secular text

All sacred Scriptures

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The Text becomes the Tree. Again. Living teachings are drawn by the roots. The Tree offers renewed and nourishing Fruits.

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Final Yeshiva
(A Place of Sitting, to become Living Torahs)

For Allan Ginsburg

One day a Master of Sitting (before enrolling in Yeshiva) said to his Grandmaster - almost boasting:

I have two newly enlightened Sitters!

See for yourself - go examine them.

Better Yet, I will test them for you!

The name of this Master of Sitting was Nuageju. He eagerly brought the Grandmaster to the Zendo. The two newly enlightened sitters were deep in meditation.

Master Nuageju drew his double edged sword and raised it over the necks of his two pupils. Said he:

"I have an edge for each of you.

Say a word and this one will cut off your head.

Say nothing and this one

will certainly cut off your head."

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Both the newly enlightened students were silent.

"The answer is correct" said Master Nuageju. "Your silence is eloquent."

"Wrong" said the Grandmaster, snatching the sword from Nuageju. "Your koan demands a response.

"So - Nu - and you" - said the Grandmaster to Master Nuageju, who was silent.

"No" the Grandmaster shouted so loudly the meditating students opened their eyes. "It is a double mouthed sword in my hand" he continued, masterfully whooshing the sword by Nuageju's throat and then down and around expertly cutting off Nuageju's exquisite silk robe, leaving him exposed.

Then the Grandmaster, reciting the Blessing of Abraham in Hebrew, circumcised Nuageju so quickly that Nuageju attained enlightenment before his foreskin hit the ground.

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The Final Meeting of East and West: Ram Lila Seder

For Zalman

Hodu Dass, the famous Jewish Hindu Rhadakrishna devotees is at our Passover Seder. A New Age Jewrhu, Hodu Dass is a teacher of East to West. Rebbe Reb Zalman is leading the Seder. This is Ram Lila. Passover. A night of Final Redemption. Lost sheep return to ask the prophet Elijah questions no on else has merited to answer. On our plate this evening: Will East and West embrace, two hands grasping?

The table is set with Passover symbols: Bitter herbs, mortar, salty tear water, unleavened bread, a Pascal lamb bone and hard-boiled eggs.

Bone and eggs are not kosher offerings at a Hindu feast. Embryos and flesh. Hodu Dass grimaces and I have compassion. I remove them and replace them with a sweet potato. "A Pascal Yam" I say lamely.

Hodu Dass pulls a small straw doll from his pocket and sets it on his plate next to the bitter herbs. The limp idol is a ten-eyed effigy of Ravanna.

"The original" Hodu Dass explains in his charming and compelling way, "had ten heads."

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Ten heads, I think to myself. The Other Side of the Ten Worlds?

Zalman begins the Passover seder saying "Who knows one." He is saddened when Hodu Dass does not join in the singing. Ours is a generation who know not One - or Ten - or The Wisdom of the Power of What and Why.

Zalman chants "We were slaves to Pharaoh." We recite the Ten Plagues. Hodu Dass takes out a match and ignites his straw doll. Zalman watches and is silent. Isaac lectures with stern but loving rebuke:

Krishnakabbalahists

Roshi's, heavy monks of Zen Judaism

New Agers, High Priestesses

All Israelites, Listen. Again!

You were born in this place, and time, body country city family and religion for God's good reasons.

Simple, Wise, and Ignorant

Learn:

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What is the Question!

How different this night.

The power of What and Why

Two hands clapping

embrace yourselves with your own arms.

Warm to your own hearts

hardened ten times

by Pharaohs of uprooting

Roshi's and Ram Dasses

Rabbis and Teachers.

Two hands pray thus:

Five to Five.

Fingers interlocking.

This evening, this moment

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Final Redemption is coming!

"No!" Hodu Dass interrupts. "No redemption." He launches into a lecture about the kaliyuga and a world with no end in time. "The serpent, coiling, grabs its own tail."

Isaac laughs, startling Hodu Dass. Isaac gently teaches: Learn the First Principle, the Aleph of the Aleph Bet. Listen. Or Be the Sound of One Hand clapping - Silent!

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The Final Question

Isaac continues:

Is the Aleph God, in the End, a Redeemer?

Is the God of creation and Revelation

the God who takes us out of Egypt?

Out of bondage to History?

Hodu Dass bristles and responds:

The West faces the East, returning

blind to its own setting.

The West's One God

The West's One World

is flagged with cutting swords

Holy war against my Hindugods

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Your idolatries of Power

Even killing us with words.

Save us from the history of the West. Our worship a Secret, a Kabballah, hidden from the West, hidden from brute ignorance!

Idols come in many forms.

Islam's sword

Christian cross

Jewish Tablets

Kabballah diagrams

History? O Save us krishna

from the West and

its ever-repeating story.

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Isaac responds gently with a smile and a question:

Hodu Dass, My Teacher, Who are you?

Hodu Dass is silent.

Isaac says:

***Hodu*, give praise to the Name**

***Dass* Chassidic knowledge, religion**

"Be one with your name.

On The A Mountain

Fundamentalists learn fundamentals.

Religion becomes reAligion.

On The Arete

East meets West and West East.

Two hands clapping.

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Final Adam Golem
For Moshe Adel

"Seven Ways of the Golem
Seven of the Wise":

1. The wise utter nothing save the power of What and Why.

2. Listens, then speaks.

3. Answering with Bina and Daat.

4. Without interrupting.

5. Speaking on the First, first (Genesis 1:1) and the Final, Finally.

6. Saying of what is not heard: "I don't get it!"

7. Thus acknowledging

Truth.

We are all Golems

When we ignore the Seven.

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Pirke Avot. Chapter 5

Rav - A Bara Gavra

Rabbi A creating Final Adam

RAVA BARA GAVRA

Recite: Again

abracadabra

creating by speaking

Adam Golem, every human

The final mystery, the final magic

Creating ourselves by uttering

Abracadabra

From the Mouth of the Gevurah

By the Left Hand of God

creating again and again

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one living being

Aleph and blood

Every wo/man

In A

Aleph beginning

giving life to Death
by Ten sayings

Paradise A Garden

The Fruit from the wisdom

of What? And Why?

“Thou shall” and

“Not”

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Cherubim are learning

Flaming swords for turning

Away those not seeking

The Tree of Life

Reach out your hand

Eat, and live forever

It is a Tree of Life

Only to those who grasp

The sword in hand

unlike the Golem First Adam

knowing is by doing

Grasp the s-word

Sealah!

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The people of the Earth who chose

becoming (M)adams

on the Eve of

The Final Age®

of the Holy Spirit -*Tiffaeret*

Compassion

A Final Kabbalah

Rava said: "If the righteous so desire they create the (A) World. Grasping The Poem of Ten in One we became like God in creating an image and a Shadow. The Aleph and Death. Truth or words."

Listen Theo. Do not speak. We are all lost in the wilderness of Words. Let all acknowledge they have not heard. Even Israel. Golems! Lord and God, Far and near, Creator and creatures, Left and right, Soul and body, Israel and goyim. Divided. Re•enter the word. Listen. We write the vision and make it plain on the Tablets so the reader may run and sing with the revelation. Listen. Say Again. Recreate the world, like God, in her goodness, renewing

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each and every day Ma-ah-say Baraysheet, the workings of the Physics of creation. Saying Ma - with strength, each utterance a what and why. Listen this day all Golems we the living dead!

Create your own world

Be righteous and strong

Live in it

A Kabballah!

Listen Final Adams

Golem and Golema

Faustus androida

Turn the turning sword

from Plague to delight

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Frankensteins and Frankensteinas

We the people of the Earth have awaited Final Adam or at least Final Golem. Listen. The only way to Kabballah. A "living soul" is a "speaking soul." Say: *Aleph. Mem tav*.

Again. *Aleph Mem* Tav

A-met

Aleph and Death

is written on every forehead

Thus self-creating, being saved

By speaking A-Met. Truth!

Final Adam. Homo-Messiah

Golem Wo/man

Frankensteins All

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Listen. A True Story, joining Aleph and Death. In the War against the Second Set of Tablets, the Atonement War, we waited with Perfect Faith for the Tarrying Messiah of Belief or at least a Savior Protector like the Lionhearted Rabbis Golem of Prague.

Now the Nazis, destroyers of everything Old and New, hearing of the coming of Sealah, decided to destroy the OldNew Synagogue in Prague. The Golem's home. Hearing steps of Thunder and seeing the Shadow of a giant hand falling from the window to the floor - the Nazis fled!

So the story of the Golem

Finally ends

Messiah asleep in the OldNew

Truth without Aleph

No better than dead.

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Final Ing

Ing
Receive
Kabballah

Kafka is *Keter*, the Crown
Abba, father God, forsakes
BB Shaddai, twin breasted, nurturing
Arm, to hand pointing
Leg, the mastery of mystery
Leg, creations secrets are basics
Arm, to hands again, clapping
Ha and Ah, Menorah , or Seven Holes of Hell

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Love, Kafka: A Musical

Act 1) June 1924 Kierling Sanitarium. Kafka is on his hospital death bed surrounded by lilacs, peonies, columbine and scarlet Hawthorne. He sits up and writes a note and places it on his bedside table. (Marry me anyway, Love, Kafka.) Kafka lays back and begins to dream. Dora Dymant, Kafka's beloved walks around the Table and reads aloud the message on the note card .Seven circle dances begin, dream sequences.

1.) Dora's circle. Song. "My Love, My Kafka, My Good One."
2.) The Faceless Bride.
3.) Ottla Unveiled
4.) Milenna The Shiksa Goddess
5.) Felice released
6.) Max Brod sings "Smoke and mirrors, no fire."
7.) Dancing on Kafka's Grave.

Act Two. Kafka's Bar Mitzvah

The Curtain opens as The Ark is opened revealing a thirteen year old Franz Kafka in the place of the Torah. Stage yawn. The synagogue appears as a carnival exhibit, a shooting range as characters move across stage like targets. Kafka chants his Torah portion in Hebrew from Genesis. He is distracted and then seduced by a solo dancer who moves from the back of the theatre toward

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Franz. She removes her glove, and the seduction is completed as Franz tries on the glove. Kafka begins Bar Mitzvah speech based on his aphorisms about Abraham and The binding of Isaac. Arrays of synagogue sable (Humans) begin singing a spirited song about Joy- deism. The sables dance around Franz as he joyfully announces The Age of The Spirited Rebellious Son.

Act Three. The Metamorphosis.

Kafka is transformed into a giant Chassidic dung beetle. See the scene in the screenplay, Consider Me a Dream. The patriarchal drama is spiced with song and dancing by Kafka's Father Hermann, who could have been the father of Sigmund Freud.

Act Four. Kafka in Belz.

Kafka and The Golem worship and sing and dance in Belz, with Chassidim. They then have dinner with The Grand Rabbi (Rebbe). The dining room is in the middle of The Garden of Eden. Kafka sings "The Hand of your daughter, The Fruit So Sweet".

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Act Five. Rebbe Kafka

Rabbi Kafka, now a Rebbe, dressed all in white including fur hat, teaches Kafkan Kabballah to his disciples at a traditional Chassidic Tisch.

Act Six. The Trial.

Surreal song and dance as Kafka awaits judgment on his request for the hand of the Rabbis daughter in marriage.

Act Seven. Dancing on Kafka's Grave

Back to the beginning. Kafka writes note and dreams of being married to Dora forever. Dora informs Kafka of the verdict on his request, which is no. Dora reads note card:

Marry Me anyway. Love, Kafka.

Finale. Graveyard. Eulogies begin in a circle dance around Kafkas's grave led by Max Brod, who reads from Kafkas's letters and announces The Kafkan Age.

Kafkas's Coffin opens. He steps out, removes the letters from Brods hand, reenters his coffin, ignites the letters with a lighter, and closes the lid on himself.

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Finally Eve:

For
Herman (Jonah) Melville

As soon as your wife goes out the door, Lil appears.

Hides out in your home.

Bat-hangs off dark archway ledges, swaying.

Remember: it's a fusion that brings sure taint.

Lils bright eyes.

Starlight thru rustling bedroom curtains.

Roses. Warm perfume.

Lillin flutter above the bed like cherubs.

It's a fusion that brings sure taint.

Music. Zippers. Movie stars.

Beware.

A night at home alone invites her

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Lil, they never warned me about how you really got things done. They concealed it in a book as sure as I conceal it. It isn't in a book. Nobody gives secrets away.

They said: say an amulet or kiss a mezuzah a million times until the Shin evaporates.

Daven until blind. Walk city streets blindfolded lest she catch your eye. Eat pounds of raw garlic cloves. Rub your loins with live eel tails, crow entrails, torn pepper pods. Put nettles beneath your tongue. Chop your right & left thumbs off. Wear a codpiece wove of briar. Read Torah day & night. Let Zohar be the dawn.

A mystery of mysteries. Out of the power of the glow of Isaac's noon (i.e., the Gevurah), out of the dregs of the wine, there emerged an intertwined shoot which comprises both male and female. They are red like the rose, and they spread out into several sides and paths. The male is called Samael, and his female (Lilith) is always contained in him. Just as in the side of Holiness, so in the Other (Evil) Side as well, male and female are contained in one another. The female of Samael is called Serpent. Woman of Harlotry. End of All Flesh. End of Days.

Morning prayers also invite Lil and Herman and Franz. I sit arms length distance from the Ark which contains three velvet covered hand written Torahs - The Round Book of the People. I open David Meltzer, Theo, the quotes i just read to you about Lil. I wonder what The

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Zohar means by "the power of the glow of Isaacs noon." All Isaac quotes catch my eye and Lils. I close Meltzers book of poems and hide it in my podium. The elders are entering for morning prayers.

"M.D. awoke from uneasy daydreams to find himself in synagogue, a giant white frocked Jonah" Strange thoughts and prayer walk arm and arm. This morning behind my own large black Bible, it is Moby Dick I am hiding.

High on my lofty pulpit I Captain Synagogueship from a Throne with Lions heads carved on the arms. It is not my job to be a harpooner of souls - I am more of a Mast figurehead. From an extended edge of the Ark i have built a small bookcase at arms length from my Throne. It is here I keep my copy of Moby Dick and Kafka stories and fragments, Meltzer, poems and whatever text i will enroll in my Canon, the Never-To-Be-Final Test O Men.

The service continues - more chanting - more Psalms. I continue in M. D. while chanting. It is not the Sabbath so no sermon will be preached by this Captain of Synagogueship. I read Melville's "The Sermon" instead. It was written for me. I chant! From Psalm 18:

chavlay Sh-oal Sivavunee Kedmunee Mokshvay Mavate

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"Death and Terrors of the Grave

Spread over Me their dismal Shade
Floods of High Temptation Rise
And My Sinking Soul Afraid.

The Sermon is the Essence of the Book and the Hymn is the Essence of the Sermon and I chant -over and over:

Deepening down to doom
Endless pains and sorrow there
Plunging to despair."

These prayers - this Sanctuary will be the death of me. More than three days, three years i act out this charade unable to call my own people home. So i finish my own novel.

My pray-dreams continue! The Five books of Laurence - complete. Black and leather bound with gilded letters burned into each spine like the Holy leather bound Torah I hold in my hand.

I and Melville have written behemoth Scriptural Novels. Will Mine ever be a Book? M. D. was called "an intellectual chowder", "not a novel", "a story marred by all sorts of extraneous material; history, philosophy,and what not." Moby Dick, pregnant with "digressions and delays"

The Final Criticism is preached by Ludwig Lewison and was written about Herman and Me, of: "a Big Bearded

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violently excited man trying to shout down the whimpering lonely child in his soul. The Ludwigs conclusion: Melville! Not Even a Minor Master". I am swallowed whole by these thoughts.

I sit with Melville under the willows that droop over the banks of the Housatanic River. I wandered many a year through his orchards and, a Jonah, took refuge from the summer noondays sun under the shade of his maples. There, again, i open my life of Melville by one of his great biographers -Lewis Mumford. Melville's works and his life was one, i read. and so i pray my life will be one with Final Testament. Will our deaths by any different?

1891, The year Melville ascended, the leading literary magazine of the time had forgotten who he was! And his book was read! I think Melville had his doubts about M. D., as I do about F.T. Leviathans. Moby Dick is "...two books... the world shall see only one, and that the bungled one."

There is only one Final Testament - it is bungled - so look for no other. Moby Dick found his spine - published - ignored - then canonized. I fear my white and black whale will never be published. I take out a rough of Final Kabballah and rest it on the text of Final Testament, both hidden behind my large black Bible. I flip through my giant text to Genesis this days Torah reading which i will be chanting soon as part of the Torah service. I stand and look towards the Torah reading table and then the door. I am tempted to run. I, Rabbi chant from memory with trope,

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for the elders who do not know one word of Hebrew. Reading the Torah is entering Paradise. I am tempted to do a stereo reading in Hebrew and English. No, they will not allow it. They want mysticism, words heard and not grasped. My strangest thoughts always walk hand in hand with the Torah service. Was Jonah naked when he was vomited out of the whale? I rip my clothes off and run through the heaven fallen, baptismal rains. It is time to chant. Too long have I been captive in Synagogue Sanctuary. I extend the reading beyond the traditional abbreviated reading of Monday market day; and skip verses!

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First Aliyah reading

"And created Aloheam the Adam in his shade, in the shadow of Aloheam We are, Male and Female, created, together. (1, 28)

Second Aliyah reading

"The deepest sleep, the Word: Half sided Adam, and the women was Built! This time essence to essence, bone from bone, flesh to flesh, the women from the man! 2:21, 22, 23

Third Aliyah Reading

This Book Chronicles Adam3, similar to, in Likeness, Gods, Male and Female, the day they were born. 5:1,2

The eldest of the Elders hits his podium "Rabbi - Rabbi - will you read the entire Torah? I look up! "Oh -I have - ah". I smile. They all shake their heads -I think - amused.

The Torah returned to the Ark, i reenter my heart thoughts:

Who were Adams women?

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Was Adam one, or two?

One hand with ten fingers

split five to five

one on each side?

From the Hebrew:

Hands grasp

And bodies

And become one

The Sanctuary

Adams wives Lillith and Eve. Eve of the Evening. So who is the third? A Mistress? The return of Lil? Adam marries Lil, divorces Eve -, who became his mistress?

In the Hebrew again – Listen: Eve , her name only after the seduction. She is never directly commanded not to eat Fig of Knowledge, Seeds of Knowing. Over close are always strange readings.

The moment the prayers end my strange thoughts end.

I preach the most unoriginal of Sermons!

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My radiant Dolphin

Bring Messiah ship to Port

My Final Testament

to the Kabballah God

All the Mercy and Power

Jonah's rushing from the Word

Vaulted in our Sanctuary

Running lips sink beneath Jonah

Praying only for

O My God My God

Save Me from this Sanctuary

Save Me from Tradition

Save Me from Catholic Israel

Save Me from Conservative

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Denominational -Judaism

Silence

I am The Final Testamentor

I will preach my Word

Sing - all of you - now

"Out of the Belly

and in to the Streets

Out of the Belly

and into the Streets"

I am ReOrdained, by God,

Listen

"Shipmates God has laid

But one hand upon You.

Both his

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Hands press up on Me"

I teach the Sound of Two Hands. Why? "Because we have two!" Five into five. Do it old man. Do it - Clap. Now -Sing -No -a wordless Melody - in English. Hum. Resonate -Ah - Fluent. Now pray.

"Woe to Me who sought to Please

Now I must appall."

"Woe to Me My Good Name

I cherished more than the

renewal of Gods good Name!"

"I am of Congregants

a Captain of Messiahship

a Final Pilot, a Paul

and myself, like Messiah

a sign, A Jonah

A Castaway

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I, Elijah,

now standing in delight

my arms my only armor

No law or lord but God

On our final breath

You, only You, God

Save Me from

My people

I look out at the empty seats. The elders have gone to breakfast.

The Labyrinth

I lift Mumfords biography back to its place in the Melville section that looms on a highshelf in our village bookstore. Obsessed, as you see, Theophilos, I recheck each fact. I often continue prayer services here, in The Labyrinth - my real Sanctuary.

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The Labyrinth is an amazing Ten room collection of art, biography, classics, drama, essays, fiction, poetry and so on with many rare first editions. I love the fact that there is no religion section. The rooms are arranged - well - in a Maze.

"Are you writing a screenplay on Melville's life now?" sings the lilting pleasant voice of the Theater Chair of our small university.

"Oh, no" I flutter, "I am - ah -finishing my final - ah - novel - book of Kabballah poems and Rabbi-Ing - and gathering for my blockbuster!" Final Testament! The Movie.

She smiles "Resubmit `Consider Me a Dream' to your agent this is a good time for biography films. I want to see your Kafka Movie made"

"Well at least its Finally Kabballahed", I answer, "She smiles again, used to my inane Kabballahistic remarks.

"Consider adapting it to a stage play"

"Now that I consider - a real dream - how do you -I don't have a clue as how to write a play." I answer. "Laurence - Rabbi -listen - You can adapt." She said.

"How" I answer

"Tune into the Theater in your head "

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She turns, plucks a book off the shelf, and offers it to me. I hold the book in my hand.

We go our ways .I grazing for text. For ten years I have played the pale usher dusting every shelf with my sleeves, with all the gay flags of all the Known nations of the world in my Final Testament. If its teachings remain oral with only your listening ear Theo - still - it has been my life and my threadbare education -one more dusting and I will be done with Melville.

****

I appear in the White Whale -Theo - as Elijah. O, Yes, in a way, Moby Dick is my very own story. I prophesy to Ahab because he also could be his own Messiah, if he leaves the Whale and became a Jonah. Even Ahab. All of us Messiahs. We save our own lives or we do not. We admit that we are all Humbugs, or bugbears.

Grazing. Meals for every stomach. We eat from all the old testaments and are never satisfied. I offer Final Testament as a just - desert. Still on the menu -The Melville shelf.

A volume beckons, a review with secret Kabballahed messages written by Melville just for me and you Theophilos. The review is of <u>Hawthornes and his Mosses</u> (I almost read Moses) in the Literary World August 17 and 24, 1850, A review written in Pittsfield as he composed Moby Dick. The Master writes:

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Hawthorne and His Mosses

Whereas, great geniuses are parts of the times; they themselves are the times; and possess a correspondent coloring. It is of a piece with the Jews, who while their Shiloh was meekly walking in their streets, were still praying for his magnificent coming; looking for him in a chariot, who was already among them on an ass.

Yes, Herman we boldly proclaim literary Messiah - the Era and the Being •totally human. The books that defile the hands - like - The Scarlet Letter, which you describe as having "a strange and diffusive beauty, we canonize.

I, Rabbi, will also be the defender of works from the other side of the soul - as you defend Hawthorns soul "like the dark half of the physical sphere, shrouded in blackness ten times black. Did you Kabballah these words, My Master?

I, the A.A., quote you again Rabbi Melville! "Imitation is often the first charge brought against real originality" This, your hidden defense of your own White Whale, Moby Dick, a poetic Epic unlike most novels, beyond literal truths, a vision of a singular one.

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Is Final Testament an imitation of Torah? Is Final Testament a great White Whale? A great white alephant? Or the coming of literary Shiloh?

Melville awaited the coming of literary Shiloh. (Gen 49:10)

As he writes:

May it not be
that this commanding mind
has not been,
is of,
and never will be,
individually developed in any one man?
And would it, indeed,
appear so unreasonable to suppose,
that this great fullness and overflowing may be,
or may be destined to be,
shared by a plurality of men of genius?
With reverence be it spoken,
that not even in the case of one deemed more than man,
not even in our Savior,
did his visible frame
betoken anything of the augustness of the nature within.
Else, how could those Jewish eyewitnesses
fail to see heaven in his glance.

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O Herman My Herman, my friend, will any Book bring Messiahs Peace? Will any author pen an epic which will do more than the Bible, for good or for evil? Will literary characters come alive to redeem this Leviathan world, or are novels narrow escape passages from a world that cannot be Redeemed, even by Messiah ship? The one Scroll birthed many books as the vision became linear and square. Is Final Testament fictional? Scriptural? Will it be a fiction when the Book becomes •once again - a scroll?

Final Testament, The Movie, is your Shiloh - My Herman. The Berkshires in winter are a forlorn place when one is alone. Bartleby the Scrivener will become Bartleby the Screenwriter in Shiloh's coming. Novels are not novel. They are all part of the old testaments.

The old ways. Artists of isolation, can they project all the colors of a sunrise? Do they let us hear the real voice of characters? A Movie is an overflowing of creativity made by a plurality of women and men of genius. A Moving Picture. The Book of Books becomes enrolled in the Scroll that has more than black on white. In living color - In images Divine – Shiloh will come - in Final Testament :The Movie.

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Final Testaments Genesis

In the Beginning. A. Final Literature's genius point is that it is never ending -a universe in itself, forever unfolding. "All great literature is a continuation of Torah containing the light of Genesis." We stand on our Sinai, The A Mountain. Our vision into the Promised Land continues with Final Revelation and Kabballah. And Herman your hand guides my quill as Final Testament swallows - your white whale. I inscribe you - a Jonah - into the Devar Logos of this Final Beginning.

O Herman My Herman I put your name on this testament, with Franz and Wallace. My Rabbi you taught me well:

> **Would that all excellent books were foundlings, without father or mother, that so it might be, we could glorify them, without including their ostensible authors.**
>
> **I hear, Herman, and I shall obey.**
>
> **"But more than this. I know not what would be the right name to put on the title-page of an excellent book, but this I feel, that the names of all fine authors are fictitious ones, far more so than that of Junius, - simply standing, as they do, for the mystical, ever-eluding Spirit of all Beauty, which ubiquitously possesses men of genius. Purely imaginative as this fancy may appear, it**

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nevertheless seems to receive some warranty from the fact, that on a personal interview no great author has ever come up to the idea of his reader. But that dust of which our bodies are composed, how can it fitly express the nobler intelligence's among us? With reverence be it spoken, that not even in the case of one deemed more than man, not even in our Savior, did his visible frame betoken anything of the augustness of the nature within. Else, how could those Jewish eyewitnesses fail to see heaven in his glance.

Again

Call Me Theophilos. Call Me Ahab. Call all of literature a Final Testament, fulfilled in Shiloh, The Book that awaits its Hero. See heaven in her glance. Will recognition that all great literature is an image of the divine's creation be a shock? Will Leviathan the State, and Leviathan Religion be redeemed? Remember, gentle reader, you Theophilos are turned into a Devil by Church Fathers who hate You and the Jew. Ahab is Lucifer is Adversary is Satan is anti-Christ is Jew. Ahab "did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel before him. And I, Elijah, pull down Mumford again to teach the redeeming power of Shiloh! Ahab became "the image of the thing he hates." Even Ahab has the choice between death and life. The image of the thing he hates, the evil Ahab, is still

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created in Gods divine Image.. His Fall was in battling evil with "power instead of love".

One final thought, from Herman. The Old Masters - The Classics - all Old wor(l)ds collect dust, getting as grey as the world and perhaps as grizzled. Renewal is in Shiloh. The Master Speaks:

> **The world is as young today as when it was created. This Vermont morning dew is as wet to my feet, as Edens dew to Adams. ...For there is a sure, though a secret sign in some works which proves the culmination of the powers that produced them."**

Call Final Testament, on first reading, A Great Whale? It is, as Melville describes his poetic Novel" a strange sort of a book tho', I fear; blubber is blubber you know; tho' you may get oil out of it, the poetry runs as hard as sap from a frozen maple tree; - & to cook the thing up, one must needs throw in a little fancy, which from the nature of the thing, must be ungainly as the gambols of the whales themselves. Yet I mean to give the truth of the thing, spite of this.

*****

I graze on to the greener pastures of Poetry at the end of the Labyrinth -dark green for it is not well lit. My Holy of Holys.

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My Bovine eyes roam for books on Physics - Kabballah - poetry - John Logan, Louis Simpson and others. And I always seek , as you know -Theo - anything by David Meltzer.

Aha. David

I read aloud

Adam the page

Apple: language

Serpent the poem

Eve The book

O – that is good.

I read it again and again

Then!

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Lilith: process.

One end of the imagination to the other.

Start & stop in her core.

Fill her bowl with light.

She is song.

Song goes thru.

Seed in her womb.

Her womb is Aleph

First woman.

Before Eve.

Last woman.

Matronita, Shekinah.

Bride of God.

Within me.

The process.

To Myself:

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The embrace.

Locked in love.

Man inside woman,

Woman inside man.

Yod in Hay,

Hay in Yod.

The halves made whole.

To the Shelves - aloud

Taste your womb

Ocean who's mouthed face

Tastes of life.

Pearl tongue-tipped

At its point. Suspense

To see it either swallowed

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Or drop slowly to the ground.

Moments later

A tree of mirrors

We face in ceremony.

All from a taste.

Voice and perfume - in one breath: "All from a Taste." Taboo. . I am in the seventh grade dancing with Sheila. Odor memories strong , I call out her name" Her breasts are soft against me. . My first slow dance. Ah.

A Women speaks

The body to the voice! "You make Movies?"

"Yes," I answer - louder than expected. She presses the forefinger of her left hand against her lips. We are alone. She gently pushes her finger between her lips and it moistens, a pearl. Her middle finger and thumb follow. She sucks them and holds them in front of me as shiny as a fresh washed golden delicious apple. "I want to swallow you - whole" she says.

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My mouth opens to yes and her fruit fingers slip between my lips. Her wrists •the odor - taboo again. The first tongue is in my mouth.

Always A Jonah, I drink down oceans to birth myself. I swallow the whale. Larger than life and she wants me still! The fingers and fruit in my mouth return to hers. My tongue snakes coiling and uncoiling, drawing her to me. Her skin is whiter than the whales, My Lil - even smoother and whiter than my child's.

My tongue is down her throat to the belly, to the womb - pressing to come out. I am in *Yesod*. .

She is as open, as passive - as a book. Coal black eyes darker than print on the page. Hair blacker than black - almost purple.

O My God

But Lillith is a redhead - rosered –

But Lillith dresses in Scarlet,

Lillith is adorned with 40 ornaments minus one. She is in black. She wears no jewelry - no rings. Still - the Law forbids - David Meltzer warns - Lillith takes many shapes. Now she is eternally young and old at the same moment, seductress- Adams First and Final wife.

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I am startled when she lifts her hand into mine and says, "I want to be in your Film. " I am Eve."

Eve? Herman - Call Me - Help -I am a Wildman. My hand burns in hers. It is set against me. Eve. Black Nipples darkening. I swear I see them purple under her blouse. My hand is still captive in hers - a dove. Herman - the smell of the blossoms in your orchard rise from her secret chamber.

Herman take that cigar out of your mouth and tell me what to do. The Fathers Voice is looming! I rise beneath my heart ready to pierce. I move to flee but my hand is a prisoner in her hands.

Her left arm draws us closer and we embrace. She opens Me among My Books of Poems. The Poets, all, voyeurs.

Whitman watches, even encourages.

Wildman Bly beats his drum.

Meltzer is closed - silent.

I open my mouth to speak. It fills with her tongue. Our tongues together are as hot as my hand held between her hands.

She tumbles a shelf of books for our bed. Books pillow her head. She pushes me on my back. I fall. We are

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palm to palm breast to breast toe to toe. We fit together as perfectly as the First Adam and Eve. She is pulling me deeper inside of her. Eyes mirror and tongues explore - sweat pearls on her nape – Shoulders; white pearls under her arms - in every orifice.

I drink, from her navel deeper than any goblet -her juices of Sanctification .

We move Ocean into ocean tears into tears broken Shell into broken Shell growing into one another until we are whole and then healed. I am lost in her. Three days. A Final Adam and his Eve the First and Final Other Woman.

I open my eyes . Eve smiles. She pulls a card from her purse.

"This is my number" Her name is also on the card. "I really want to be in your Movie".

I take the card and shake her cool hand and slip the card into the breast pocket of my tweed jacket.

"Call Me" Eve says.

I walk quickly through the Labyrinth to the door and then I run the Theater book light in my hand.

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Final Islam

An arabic Quran: Read

P.G. here recite

Ing

Islam means Peace.

Islam means Surrender.

Islam is the Jihad.

The Holy War.

Final Islam!

"Lay not your hand upon the lad"

"*Aslama Aslama* "say Father and Son.

Abraham the godfather of all Muslims does not slay his son.

They surrender to Allah's Command of Peace.

I am a *Muslim*. I surrender, seek Peace,

and desire to wage

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The true Final Holy War.

I am a student of the way of Islamic Mysticism called *Sufism*!

Islam has three Holy wars

1)Greater, 2) Lesser, and 3) Final.

The Lesser Holy War is the sword of Islam that converts idolaters to the Faith. In the past Arabians either submitted to the sword or were slain - Hindus were asked to trade idols for an ideal.

The Greater Holy war is the inner struggle against the seven deadly passion sins. Prayer, fasting, alms giving, and pilgrimage lead to victory over temptation.

The final Holy War is taught by this disciple of Muhammad, Prophet of God. Saddamists and Ayatoleans are the Lesser Islam! I add five More to their times of prayer, two hands praying, until they become companions of the Light. The Pilgrimage to the Inner Mecca leads back to Jerusalem.

As Jacob becomes Israel so Muslims become Islam!

Recite: Ya-Ah-La!

All Say AH

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All-Ah

In the end Surrender to Sealah

Muslim inscribe in Holy Quran!

Surrender Muslims Surrender

To Messiahs final Tranquility

The Teachings of Peace

The End

In Jerusalem

The bowing towards Zion

Aslama Allah Aslama

The third hand grasping

what the eye has not seen

this vision

of Victory

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Final Jihad

In Final Jerusalem

The Aleph is Peace

Final Islam.

The (S)word.

Sealah converts the sword

This the true teaching of Holy Hadith,

read and recited by sons and daughters of Jonah, Sealah.

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On Learning Arabic In Early Middle Age

With Gabriel,and Muhammad, in the white dust I sit,

Quran a simple grammar and pen in hand

Bismi (a)llahi (a)r-rahmani (a)r-rachini

In the name of Allah all merciful, compassionate

In your hand the chalk,,

on my Turban the white dust of Gabriels wing

Babtized with the spittle

of the guttural R gh

Recite

La ilaha illa llahi

Ten times,

for ten hours, ten ways

Your entire life.

There is no God save Allah.

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The letters, dancing, join hands

I mount *El Barak*

O Gabriel I will learn my lesson well

La ilaha illa llahi

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Final Orthodoxy

"Messiah is come." The Rebbe back from the dead, silence. Dark purple clusters of Chasidim bob and pray and announce "Moshiach." Messiah. Modern Moses. If not the Rebbe, who? If not now, when? Never again!

On one wall of my study hangs the portraits of the Rebbe we Lubavitcher Chassidim favor. His eyes follow your every move like Jesus in similar Christian paintings. Gershon Scholem's Jewish Mysticism gathering dust on my Kabballah shelf beckons. Yes, Theo, as you know, my books sing to me. A good Chassid, I open from right to left. The Professor's conclusion: The Poet and Prophet are required for the Final Receiving (Kabballah) of the Torah. My Chassidic Rabbinic colleagues hate Professor Scholem. Irrationally. Rabbi Martin Buber's stories are called Buber Meises, Buber Tales, to sound like Buba Meisis, Old Grandmother Tales. Old Grandmother? Sophia? Shechinah. Exactly. Poets and Prophetess. Come. Peace on you, Professor Scholem.

O Rebbe. My Rebbe you are a Rabbi. A Prophet, perhaps. Not Messiah. Gadol Hador. Yes, the Great One of our lowly generation. You did not lead us to a geographical Promised Land. A requirement for Messiah, as you remember from Final Testament, Theophilos.

Your followers, My Rebbe, who put you at the helm of Messiahship will await your Second Coming. The Sod, the

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offal-odored earth that feeds the shoots of the son of Jesse are buried with your silence, and spread upon our faces.

A Secret. The Final Day of Passover is the day of Messiah's coming. The Year? Nineteen hundred and forty three.

1943?

Messiah's birth pangs? Transition?

The ovens stoked.

The Cross lattice pyres for the children of Auschwitz?

Burning, their bodies climbing

towards an open, or empty, heaven?

The Previous Rebbe Messiah?

In his lifetime?

Where? Are? Were? You?

Four more questions

on the Passover of Final Redemption.

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The World, even the Lady with the Flame

turning the Jew away back into the Sea.

We

awaiting Moseiahs staff

to split the Sea

A Path

to any Land

Promised or Not:

Modern Moses

were where the Ten Plagues

The Death

of their first born?

1943? Now 1994? 5? 6? 7? 8? 9? 0?

O Rebbe, My Rebbe,

The Secret of Messiah?

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The Wisdom of *Chabad*?

The *Ko·ach-Ma*?

The Strengths of What

and Why?

Will the Rebbe and Jesus

Father and Son

return together, embracing?

Are all Israel

Messiahs, Suffering Servants, Isaiah 53's?

Did Belief in a Savior

go up the pipe dream stacks

of the crematoria?

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As people say

“Where was the God of Justice?”

Israel? The Promise

Israel? The Struggle

Israel? The Zion of Isaiah.

Land Holy? Held?

Might? Power?

God’s spirit alone.

Israel?

Sufi Muslim Chassidic Jew Christian Monk

Priests and Secularists

Zionist and Palestinian

circumcising stone, and heart

tumbling walls, Wailing becoming

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Rejoicing.

FINAL SECRET

Why a Final Age® Testament?

Why?

The Final Solution

To the Final Secret:

You did not die childless My Rebbe

I am your Son

God the Bride

Pregnant with your teaching.

Fulfilling the work of Chassidism

Your work my Rebbe

Who now is in heaven.

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The Baal Shem Tov's final teaching on Messiah is that we each have a holy spark of Messiah in our smoldering coal-black souls. Mini - Messiah's - All!

ANNOUNCING

Genesis 49:10

Its that time again!

Messiah is come!

The Rebbe's final legacy for Chassidim Jew and all struggling Israelites, including Christians and Sufi Muslims?

The Rebbe says irrational hatred and denominationalism are idolatries that keep the Holy Temple in Final Jerusalem in ruins. The Temple is a House of Prayer for All the Nations. One monotheistic Family. No more lame excuses.

O Father, Rebbe, your followers preach Orthodoxy. But this right•mindedness directs a body of belief frocked in dark diaspora garments and customs. The time for renewal and return is come.

We have burned in the Furnace My Rebbe. The Great and Terrible Day of Judgement has come. Together all of

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Israel defeated the anti-Moses. We the people were the Olay, the burnt offerings. Not totally consumed, still, a Holocaustum. We the people, on the altar with Isaac. We the people crucified as a Christ.

Remember the Law of Moses given on Sinai to all the sons and daughters of Malachi? The Father turns to the Son, the parent religion to her children. Elijah comes each and every Passover announcing Messiah to those who hear the voice.

We near the End. In your name My Father - Rebbe - I teach the Final Orthodoxy - the obligation to Love unconditionally. To Love freely. This is the only orthodoxy and the only antidote to irrational hatred. Sons and daughters of Abraham and Sarah and Hagar, sons and daughters of Isaac and Rebecca - listen all!

I teach tradition. Nothing New. The renewal of everything Old and New. The Final Orthodoxy is Torah from Rabbi Moses to Rabbi Hillel: Love your neighbor - we are all Rebecca's children, struggling from the womb, reborn as Israelites. All have a portion in this world when we live the final orthodoxy dedicated to your memory - My Rebbe - a blessing.

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Final Lubavitch

Faces of various intensities of black and brown studiously avoid turning our direction. Isaac smiles and isignored. We are invisible, in a shadowworld, out of place and time.

A dreadlocked black ambassador stumbles in our direction with a rolled copy of the newspaper held to his lips. He stares at Isaac with yellow-brown eyes as he lights the end of the paper.Cannabis smoke fills the air. The ambassador breathes in deeply andexhales.

"New York, Jew Pork; Jew Pork, New York", he chants, beating the rhythm onhis knee to a reggae beat—occasionallystriking a note with his paper on Isaac's shoulder. "Jew York, You Pork; Jew Pork."

Isaac does not flinch. I am about to faint. The cannabis smoke moves our direction and I grab Isaac's arm. Isaac steadies me and then i break awaytowards the main street ;Eastern Parkway.

The ambassador takes Isaac's arm and walks with him. Isaac whispers inthe black man's ear and the man grins. He sings, dances and claps out: "NewYork, Jah Who; We Folks, be Jews," and dances away from Isaac, greetinghis black and brown neighbors with his refrain: "We Folks, be Jews; New York, Yah Who."

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On Eastern Parkway banners inHebrew and english announce Messiah. Car bumper stickers demand: We WantMoshiach Now! Isaac smiles and laughs. One poster invites us to A Mealof Final Redemption. I hesitate in frontof the door at 770 Eastern Parkway.

Isaac puts his hand over mine. I am back, over twenty years earlier, when sixties hippies heard the call toLubavitch, dancing with Dylan to Chasidic niggunim—haunting wordless melodies. You remember, Theophilos-I Chassid, and heard, and obeyed the callfor about six or seven months and then graduated Lubavitch and now I amback. Isaac opens the door over myhand. I look up at the number again: 770. A number with deep mysticalsignificance to the Lubavitch Chabad sect. Each Hebrew letter and thus word has a numerical equivalance. Aleph= 1,Bet=2, Gimel=3, and so on. I can not remember the secret code and ask Isaac. He grins "open to Genesis 4:7. The word Timshal = 770. You maychoose to rule..." "And"-I say,interrupting." Isaac grins. ' and the next 770 in Genesis is 38:29." Isaac opensthe text to the exact spot.Parazta-770.

"Nu?" I interrupt again. "U-Farazta-Lubavitch's theme song?

"We will spread the good news North East West and South?"

"No", Isaac said-U Farazta is numerically 776. Parazata--770. Youhave made a breach. This secret the

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numbers unveil."

"Explain", I challenge.

"We are one and all Rachels children. Twins in the womb of mother religion. Esau and Jacob. The breech is in the birthing of struggling religions which seek no reconciliation. This is Messiahs work."

Messiahs work? Rebbe of Lubavitch? Isaac? Jesus? Did Isaac tell the Rebbe?Did the Rebbe recognize?

Isaac recently mentioned that he stopped at 770 to talk to the Rebbe before his trip to Israel and Rabbinic and Medical Studies. I was annoyed with Isaac for not telling me this earlier— especially the fact that the Rebbe has given him a blessing "to succeed in all his endeavors".

"Do these Chassidim understand?" "You will see for yourself," Isaac answers.

I feel no "breach" at first, expectingall to acknowledge Isaac. Our return is a homecoming for both of us, but we are invisible. The scene inside has not changed in a quarter of a century. A black and white tide of churningChassidim bob and sway and crest as the Torah is lifted. All as before, conservative, Chasidic Jews; but soundless. That is correct, my friend, the playback in my memory is without sound. Black and white and not a word.

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I shout, silently: “Messiah is hereNow in the flesh.” The Chasidim’s response is mute, as is their Rebbes, a recent stroke victim. This mutism is Kafkan, but no attribute of perfection.

“O you sons of Lubavitch!” I shout again at the Rebbe—after straining myneck up towards the women partitioned in their isolation. Will Messiah segregate? Are women seperate but equal? Will Messiah teach segregation of neighbor from neighbor in Crown Heights?

I remember this conversation as fledging Chasid after university. I was with my Chassidic teacher at 770.

“Leviticus 19:18 (I translate)Love you neighbor because they are likeyou.”

“Neighbor means Jew. Holiness demands we make distinctions.” He says.

“The text is inclusive” I respond. “Love your Jewish neighbor, Love yourChristian neighbor, Love your black neighbor.”

“No. No Schvartze’s,” the Lubavitcherresponds “has a Divine Soul (Nefesh Ha Elokute).”

“What about white Goyeam?”

“Only if their Gilgul soul is Yiddisha“

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Ha? How does one know?"

"They convert."

"Yiddishha?"

"Yiddisha Neshama" Jewish Soul."

"Oh", I respond-or was it "Oy"?

"What about black Jews" I add.

The Chassid is mute.

"Rebbe, Messiah!" I continue to scream in silence."I declare that you are a false Messiah until these dark dark doctrines are made light." Illumine, O Tzaddik, O Saint, O Santa Chabad, a path for both Jew and Goyeam."

I remember, Theo ,my friend, O patient listener my first excursion to Lubavitch after university was inDecember. Menorah lighting time. I waited with throngs of Chassidim for the younger Rebbe to emerge from 770.The crowd split in two for modern dayMosehiach and the Rebbe greeted his followers with a nod. The Rebbe's laser-blue eyes turned Chassidic eyes away and the Rebbe approached the streetwhere I was standing. A well dressed black couple on their way home fromchurch led their children hand in hand. Father held the hand of his

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youngerdaughter and they could not help but stop as the Rebbe walked in theirdirection.

“Santa, Santa!” the little girl said toher family, looking up at the stately,bearded figure of the Rebbe. “I want to sit on Santa’s lap.” Silence .The Chassidic crowd further parted and the Rebbe walked towards the child. She gazed in awe at the Rebbe and his white-bearded emissaries. “Santa,” she whispered. I looked at the Rebbe and the little girl and waited. A great scenefor a future story. The Rebbe stared atme and turned on his heels, walkingswiftly down Eastern Parkway, followed by his Chasidim. The Tzaddik—the Saint of Lubavitch.

O my Rebbe, Rebbe—why, why have you forsaken Goyeam? Declare toChassidim that they should love theirblack brothers and sisters and their children.

“ Ba ha mas ”, your Chassidim say.They have only a Nefesh Ha Bahamas. Only an animal soul.

O Chasidim—now I shall be yourRebbe, for the head rules the body like the heavens the Earth. If the head is dead, can the body live?

You Lubavitch, you are also blacks , by choice: robes, woven belts and shadow hats that crown your heights. You choose Black.

Will two live in one neighborhood and not speak?

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Will you turn all your neighbors into hoods?

X-Communication?

O, working class Chassidim, is Crown Heights not your final test?

Leviticus 19:18

Open again and read. Love your neighbors; they are Yourselves,

or I am not your God.

Do not hate yourselves and therefore your neighbors.

Why Cast upon black women, men and children the senseless hatred, Gods opponents, Misnagdeam threw against you?

Who says Schvartes are blacker than you, O black-frocked Lubavitch

Chassidim.

Perhaps in your righteous hearts, you are blacker than them.

You have made a breach. The Bloods of Gaven or Yankel: Whose is redder?

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Chassidim ,do not riot. Vent your rage? American Jews will not be frocked inblack and buy your policies, O spiritual life-insurance salesman. Is this also the fault of Schvartes?

O Rebbe, my Rebbe, I return to you again. Mosays taught and discipledand laid his hand on Joshua to lead into the Land of Promise. Is Crown Heights a movement towards Jerusalem's heights? Are you Captain ofMessiahship? Are you Jonah in the belly cursing the gourd, O shoot of Jesse?

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Final Words

Silence. Be still .I have this moment heard. The rebbe is dead. Blessed be the true Judge.

May God comfort you and all who mourn. Chassidim sit at sixes at 770.

After your mourning continue God's work o children of the Rebbe

Remember this Final Kabballah:
Gevurah is the Messiah.
The sound of the left hand.
The Mouth Of God.
Your right winged chesed sendsyou in a spin
God's mercy you judge, you circletiferet
Beauty in the balance
Be stong. Be strong.
Let us strengthen one another
Secret sect worshipping skyRebbe
Open to cross purposes
Clap those hands

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Dance those feet
Left to right palm
Left leg pulling
Body into right step
Open your circle
Crown those heights
Invite blacks, women
Roshi's Jewbu"s Jewru's
Back into the body of Ten in One.

Chant ten times:
No more Johnny one notes
No more kafka bobbing
No more shadow battles.

We are Finally, O brothers and sisters of Lubavitch, the people of the Menorah, and the Tablets, prismed wordworlds of rainbowed light arcingcrowned letter to letter, word to word, sentence to page, page to book. Finally the book again a scroll and the Tablets the prism to final Gods light.

Kabballah this O Lubavitch or you bind yourself to your own final religion.

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Final Ouija

Breaking the Coda Of The Peacock

Yes and No

**“A question Mirabell failed to clear up
with all your lightening methods to choose from
why this relatively cumbersome
apparition of board and cup”**

James Merrill

J.M.

A writing that is letter

Rearranging is why.

The flash

From the mind

Human or divine

Once the heavens ruled the Earth

And the mind the body

Father in heaven

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Hallowed the Name

Chapter and verse were

Board and cup

Aaron's rod the quill

Our dark natures the ink.

Still, trusting in God

The Ending

A happily ever after

Yes and Yes

Gods foreordained Name.

Coal tar Kabballahists

Veiled the Holy Name

Turning secrets into a game

A Mystery this Yes and No

Occulting true Torah

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Basics becoming secrets

Esoteric

Ouija.

Final Kabballah

Exoteric

Inner and outer

Body and soul

Material and spiritual

One.

The Ten are broken the moment they are revealed. Seven No's burning against Shelly and Blake and the night. If we live by the Ten the world is redeemed in the One.

Freedom is engraved on the tablets. The Freedom to say No. Jesus reduced the teachings to one hand. This changed nothing .The Tablets are engraved against misreading. The body of Jesus, like the Tablets, broken. Father, Father,

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Why have they rewritten Thee?

James in your voice

The Father God is hidden

A.B.B.A.

A.B.B.A.

Poems of Science?

Ya we

think not

God

B

Less

You

Yes and Yes

All prophets are poets, all poets are not prophets.

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The Hebrew prophets favor the elegy. During the week we wear sackcloth and ashes. On the Sabbath we enwrap in wings of rainbow colors and wear our peacock prayer shawls.

Why the elegy? Our poet, J.M. " our ghastly graveyard facts become a dance of slow acceptance. Our own otherwise dumb grief is given words."

We turn the elegy into a love song, a release from grief. Enough sackcloth sermons.

In the Sabbath of history is the plumage of consolation.

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Poems in place of the A mountain?

J.M. on the Arete?

Reader? Rabbi? Writer?

Poems of Religion?

No and No.

Thus speaks Merrill

“THE KORAN ALAS IS A WORK

PATCHED TOGETHER BY A NOMAD RACE

MOHAMMAD ALWAYS THRASHING ABOUT

In the Name of Allah, Al –one

Let the writer be a reader:

Recite

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J.M. forsaken by your own hand

Blackened by your own heart

All religion, science, poetry,

Black on white

Shadows following form

As we are created

In the shadow of God

The evening precedes the night

None darker at the midnight

Than the next.

Pay attention

You who suffered 1001 ouija nights

High priest fixed on form:

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My hand My hands

Forsake me and yes and yes

Move towards

W.I.L.L.I.A.M.

S.H.A.K.E.S. A. S.P.E.A.R.

A .D. .D. A.N. E.Z.R.A. P.O.U.N.D. O.F. F.L.E.S.H.

Dark broth ink black of alphabet soups and hands stir

The script sure

Poets autograph

Crosscut

X.

C.O.M.M.U.N.I.C.A.T.I.O.N.

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X.

A, J,E,S,U,S

X. I.S .T.E.N.I.A.L.

X. .I.S .T.E.N.C.E

A

The Final Trope

Not Merrills tentative ouija

So move palm to yes

And palm to yes

O.O.

B.K.

Vacant eyes

O James see the V

Grasp in ten

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Let X become A

Aleph

A mountain

Being

Bridged, God

Alone

Alone

Before

Being, God, A.H.V.H.

A God

AL-one

Birthing on the A

Balance in the Merging

A Law, Gravitys Rainbow.

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The A Mountain

Balancing Wor(l)ds

Being A Point

A

Redemption

Our end in our beginning

Again

Two hands clapping

Yes and Yes

The Coda broken

A.H.Y.H .> A.H.V.H.> Y.H.V.H.

In Truth.

Torat Amet

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Before the Beginning (One): Two Warnings Of the Ending

I

Warning: The following is hazardous to your mental and spiritual health. Final Physics leads one towards enlightenment or blindness. Study at your own risk. Wear sunglasses.

II

Forewarned

Warning __ Warning _ Warning _ Warning

On Learning Kabballah:

Our Rabbi's Talmud, in *Mishnah* Tractate *Chagiga*:

Do not teach *Ma-ah-say Beresheat* = Physics/Kabballah/ even in twos (Rashi: One and a teacher) unless the student is in a spiritual state of *Chabad* being *chochma* (wise) *bina* (insightful) and *daat* (integrated) in their knowledge (Physics and Kabballah).

Our Rabbi (Rabbenu) Tam explains that the Workings of Creation are learned from the first 42 letters of the book of Genesis.

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Theophilos, gentle readers, heed the warning of our Rabbi's Talmud, and Kabballah.

The following is only for the eyes of those with forty measures of wisdom knowledge and understanding. and for traditionalists - forty years.

Mysteries of mysteries. Secrets never before revealed are peeled here like an orange. Taste the Fruit. The Jews now nourishing and restoring and sweet.

FINAL WARNING

Confused? Go on to the next poem or Final Psalms or Final Jesus or back to Final Lubavitch. Skip this piece. Final Kabballah can be read in any order Theophilos. All ten fit together perfectly into the body of Adam.

Final Age® Kabballah Secrets are Now Basics

Basic one: the 10 (yould) are now basics and not secret.

***Ma-ah-say Berisheit*. Study the works of creation in threes.**

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**That's you -Theo
God
and Me.**

Theo, what was the primal sound of creation?

**I asked my seven year old son
Yosef Gavreale
Who said and did
"I imagine
the sound of
fingers snapping!"**

**Do it Theo Do it
snap snap
then
clap clap
5 into 5
to
the
third hand?
Listen**

To David Ignatow:

Mystique

No man has seen the third hand that stems from the center, near the heart. Let either the right or the left prepare a dish for the mouth or a thing to give and the

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third hand deftly and unseen will change the object of our hunger or of our giving.

Finally, before reading Final Physics Theo - you must pass this Physics Final:

1) Define (10)

1 Quark
2 Wino
3 zino
4 newage
5 gravitino
6 selectran
7 photon
8 A
9 W
10 z

2) Explain in detail how super symmetric weakly interactive particles (SUSY WIMPS) predict dark matter (Lillin) and a flat universe. Stick to equations. (20)

3) Answer Glashow's Riddle:

Name two Grand designs that are incredibly complex, require decades of research to develop and may never work in the real world (5 + 5) (Hint - three word answer) (15) (initials SST or TOE)

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4) After a one paragraph synopsis of the history of physics answer - in equations: Are superstrings a Theory of Everything? (TOE) (15)

5) In one paragraph define a United Field Theory of Physics Psychology and Religion. (10)

6) Define Western Mysticism in one sentence. (10)

7) Dissect the Grand Unified Theory. (10)

Self grade. If you earn less than 100, STOP reading now.

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10 Meditations Before Beginning

1) The Basic which the Kabbalah confronts:

God is *en-sof*, illimitable in every sense
Every creation has a *sof*, a limit
What, then is the relation of the two views,
Gods,
and ours?

Rabbi Chaim Zimmerman

2) "We come into being
as a slight thickening
at the end
of a long thread.

Allan Wheelis

3) "Superstring is the name of the game an unlikely synthesis of some of the most bizarre Theo – retical ideas ever put forward.

"According to this new religion space has nine dimensions, not just the three we see. Six of them are curled up into a ball whose radius is the Plank length.

"The extra dimensions are far too small to even be noticed by our big and clumsy species."

Rabbi Dr. Sheldon Glashow

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4) Nothing whatever is hidden
From of Old,
All is clear as daylight.
The old pine tree speaks divine wisdom
The Secret bird manifests eternal truth
we know how to read printed books
we do not know how to read the unprinted ones
we can play on a stringed harp...
but not on a string less one
Applying ourselves to the superficial
instead of the profound
how should they (we) understand
Music and Poetry?

The Gospel According to Zen

5) Science has been my life because it is the systemization of curiosity.

Sheldon Glashow

6) <u>Of Mere Being</u>

The palm at the end of the mind,
Beyond the last thought, rises...

The palm stands on the edge of space.
The wind moves slowly in the branches.
The bird's fire-fangled feathers dangle down.

Wallace Stevens

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7) Theo - grasp with both palms. Clap clap.

8) The problem with most mystical experience is their residue of fascination... like medicine that cures a disease but has strong and harmful side effects...the cure itself need(ing) to be cured.

Steven Mitchell

9) God is called the Endless One and not the Beginningless One... (so) we are able to conceive of (God) to some small extent through His creation.
This is a beginning, but it has no end.

THE MEZRICHER MAGID
Imrey Tzadikim

10) Theo, compose your own meditation each time before beginning the study of *Ma-ah-say Bereshit*.

Ma-ah-say
- MA
The power of
Say it Theo.
Ma-ah-say
MA
What and Why
Wisdom

The Wisdom of What and Why

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FINAL

PHYSICS

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Elijah[3] opens: (Theo - do it now - with me)

The Three Supreme themes of Kabballah Physics are:

1. Cosmology,
2. The Ten, and
3. The End.

These are entered through the three times of Sabbath time:

1. Eve(ning),
2. Morning, and
3. Towards Evenings, Again.

The Old listing of the three. (1) Creation (2) Revelation (3) Redemption.

Shabbat

The Fourth Principle of the Ten. Shabbat:

Sha _ - Silence - Sealah
ba _ -*Binah* - the Homecoming - Peace
T _ -*Tiferet* - Torah -Truth

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The Truth is,
the *Shabbat*
The Bride
is the coming of Messiah
(Genesis 49:10)
every week
Shiloh is sung
Sealah

Creation

One
sacred Scripture
in the Novel we inhabit
says the author
of our universe
created things
merely by speaking
by saying, “Let there be...”

The only thing mere speaking can create we know
is a Story
a Play

an Epic Poem
a Fiction

Where we live is created by and in words.

The A - uni-verse

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Genesis 1:1

God's first words of creating
I open the mystery once again
the workings of creation.

A Speculation

Theo - recite:

From Mystery to Mastery
Mystery to Mastery
Let's hear you, my friend, outloud.
YA YA
MY MY
MA MA
YA

With the power of What!
The power of Why!

God created.

Wake right up.
Wake left up!
Slowly, slowly
The Wonder of this
Uni
Verse

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The Opening to the End
The Final Age®

This just in -

We interupt Final Physics with this wonderous news from M.I.T.:

Physicists are now talking Mysticism.
Scientists today announced
The discovery of God...

Asked whether God was Compassionate, Merciful, all Pervading, Radiant, all Powerful, and Divine, a senior researcher was heard to say:

Gee, we're not sure
we think its a
Photon

Ken Wilbur reporting for WMST
Jerusalem, Massachusetts.

Beginning Again

The First Rabbi, Einstein, Commenting on the Book of Genesis, Rabbi Moses ben Nachman (Nachmanides - RAMBAN) creates worlds of understanding. Like God the Rabbi creates with nothing but wisdom. Wisdom is the power of What and Why.

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Kabballah is intuitive leaping into the mind of God. The old Kabballahists believed in Wisdom's secrets. The End. Redemption means Secrets Revealing.

God creates with letters. The genesis point.

Hello - are you with me Theo?
God's old name
Ha-vay-ya
(Fine, Thank you)

Revealed now in this Final Kabballah

The God called (initially!)
AHVH
God of Creation
say: *Ah - ha - va* God
or *Ah-who-va* Satori God

Now Theo - remember the One God has many names. Titles or aspects might be a better term.

The most transcendent of God's Names is AHYH - which means nameless.

AHYH = ____ = AHYEH

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The I Will Be God
Light
Crown
Dancer
Imaging Creation to
AHVA to
YHVH - called Jehovah

Tetragramatan
called Jehovah
connected to Eloheam

AHVH loving the Wor(l)d
sustaining each moment
The Genesis point
of
AHVH's creation

To review:

Genesis is a Gate

Come and enter
break the secret code
Of creation
Bo-hu **It is here!**

But

First you must learn Hebrew.

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Elijah^3 opens a third

A Being God Event

The *Devar* of God is Being in community. Find at least nine other Kabballah physicists ready to roll their lives into this scroll. Raise money and build a Kabballah *Schule* - Synagogue.

Invite *goyim*, women, dark-hat Chassidim, into your circle. Unfold your prayer shawls, enwrapping the light and recite Psalm 104, verses one and two. Recite:

YHVH, song voweled, in our throats
The I am, breathing, holding
healing fringes between praying palms.
The veil, over eyes, transparent
This robe of light
our light seen in your light.

God - robed in a Tallit of Light creates the original physicality. The first
B.I.G. T.O.E. (Beginning in Genesis - a Theory of Everything).

This original light in the uni-verse Genesis One is described by our Rabbi, (RAMBAN) I paraphrase

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"a real but no-thing string, rolled thinner than a mustard seed." I add, Theo, smaller then the period of the end of this sentence.

Theo, this is the very tip of the Aleph (a) point of the Big Bang. All the strings of creation unwind from here in a pattern you grasp at the very moment you take hold of the fringes on your prayershawl.

The Mezricher Maggid has explained this Genesis point - creation ex nihlo. Something from Nothing. God is *Ain Sof* - without end. God is not without a beginning.

Rabbi Physicist Scroeder explains in <u>Genesis and the Big Bank</u>.

In the light of Genesis (1:1), we can better understand the history of our universe.

The opening passage of the Bible is familiar to us all. It starts with the beginning of the universe. But what was happening before the beginning? Can we study, either theologically or scientifically, what there was before the beginning, if anything? According to biblical tradition, what there was before the beginning is unknowable. This insight is based on the first letter of the first word in the Bible. Tradition teaches that all aspects of the Bible have significance, even the shapes of the letters.

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A classic Old Kabbalah text and source of RAMBAN says of the *Bet* and the *Aleph* point:

Why is the letter *Bet* closed on all sides and open in the front? This teaches us that it is the House (*Bayit*) of the world. God is the place of the world, and the world is not His place.

Do not read *Bet*, but *Bayit* (house).

It is thus written (Proverbs 24:3), "With wisdom the *house* is built, with understanding it is established, [and with knowledge are is chambers filled]."

—

What does the *Bet* resemble? It is like a [human], formed by God with wisdom[s]. He is closed on all sides, but open in front.

The *Alef*, however, is open from behind.

This teaches us that the tail of the *Bet* is open from behind. If not for this, [humans] could not exist.

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Likewise, if not for the *Bet* on the tail of the *Alef*, the world could not exist.

The *Bet* of the first word of creation rides on the back of the *Alef* of AHVH The events that precede the beginning of this point are open to Kabballahistic speculation - being the power of What and Why creating the universe.

Elijah[3] opens a fourth time, a fourth space! Torah is the mind of God. Let each mystery open to mastery!

AHVH is the mediating point between AHYH - (AHYEH) the transcendent God of being and YHVH - Eloheam - the aspects of God unfolding - imminent in creation.

The paradox of God?
So close
and yet so far away.

Is explained by my favorite Master of Old Kabbalah - the Chassidic Rebbe Reb Rabbi Levi Yitzchok.

There are two aspects of [our understanding of] God, namely that She is near and yet far, [imminent and yet transcendental.]
We see God as far off [and transcendental], since we believe that the blessed Infinite Light is First among the

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first, and that nothing in the universe can comprehend Him at all. Thought itself cannot grasp God, since even Thought is something that was created, while God is without beginning. Even the highest angel cannot comprehend God, as He is higher than all comprehension. This is the concept of God as being distant, where He is transcendental and far from our understanding.

At the same time, we also understand God to be near, since we believe that She fills all worlds. He is contained in all worlds, surrounds all worlds, and no place is empty of Her as it is written, "The whole earth is filled with Her glory" (Isaiah 6:3). This is the concept of God's nearness.

We believe in both of these aspects, that God is both [imminent and transcendental,] near and yet far.

It is written, "Peace, peace to the one who is far and to the one who is near, says God" (Isaiah 17:19). God is speaking to the righteous man, who realizes that he Is far from God, and yet at the same time believes that she is near to Him. Because of such individuals, God brings [peace and] all kinds of abundance to the world.

There are two main aspects [of our feeling toward God], love and fear.

Fear only applies to something that is superior to us. The concept of fear therefore applies to God when we think of Him in the transcendental sense.

But from the sense that She, God is close, love arises.

Kedushath Levi, Mishpatim

She is imminent. He is transcendent. She births. He imagines.

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Final, Final Warning Theo. If you are lost or overpowered by the heavy fragrance of Final Physics - get out of the Garden. The Cherubim lower their swords.

This is Paradise for some - madness - apostasy - even death for others. Leave!

The secret of the Secret of the *aleph*? As you know, Theo, every Hebrew letter has a numerical equivalency .

Where is the Genesis point?

Zero?

Dividing by zero - the answer is always infinite.

Is God the Singular One?

Infinite?

Listen Theo - Israel and God are One in Sabbath.

The mystery of God's Oneness is the mastery of Sabbath and observance.

Remember -Kabballahat Shabbat.

The time of revelation of creation - Friday evening.

Where do we discover the point where the infinite and finite meet?

Reductionist minds seek the ultimate particles of creation. How small?

1, 1/2, 1/4, _, 1/16, 1/32, 1/1,024, 1/1,048,876, -> ∞?

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Listen - the answer Theo - from a rabbi physicist named Cantor. His singing, a troping towards infinity.

***Aleph* to the lower zero power!**
the limit point
of all numbers'is God a number? In
finite?

Elijah (the original - the real) opens ands says:

"Master of All worlds
You are One
but not in a countable
numerical sense."

Is God One or None?

Jehovah or Eloheam

Cantor creates a paradise
YHVH and *Al-o-heam*
One
All - one
A - alone
The *Aleph*
Silent
Al - one
AHVH
Listen - Israel!
The Lord Our God!

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Mathematical infinity is limited. Enter the Aleph. God is not limited to Cardinal Religious Math, or Ordinal. God the total is also in the details.

How do we then define God's power set? Understanding the God of Creation and the God of Revelation how do we define the God of Redemption?

Each generation is a descent after Sinai. The God that is of Egypt - redeeming - seems more remote with each passing generation. God seems to have given (by the freedom to break the Tablets) control over to humans.

God's power set? Are we free? The world's destiny? "We are deceived at every level by our introspection" says Sir Francis Crick.

Is creation a cooling of God to the world?

A hierarchal dimming of God's infinite light through an infinite progression of spiritual worlds?

Each world is lower and more concealed according to the Holy *Ari - ZAL*, the Lion of Old Kabballah. Of course Theo, we may ask, with the wisdom of What and Why, if we should view this from our own or God's perspective. (God come approach, come closer, in the descent)

The Modern ultrafilter of all these Old Kabballahs the Rebbe Menachem Mendel teaches that even at the lowest point of descent in Space and Time (the Hear and Now

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Theo!) the lowest level - God's light manifests in ever newer states of illumination and revelation.

Now - are you with me Theo? I am running full speed ahead here to teach the interface of God and science.

First untie
Then unite
As Heine Pagels explains:

A great science proceeds like the Old or the New biblical Testament. First, there is the succession of prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Hosea. These prophets alerted the people of Israel; they are the mouthpieces of God. But these prophets are limited, and they have only part of the truth. Further, there are false prophets and true prophets, and at the time it is always hard to tell them apart. When Isaiah foretold defeat to an arrogant nation, he was serving notice on the Israelites that they were in a bad way. They certainly didn't think they were in a bad way, made fun of him, and thought they would win the impending war. No doubt the false prophets of the time told the Israelites what they wanted to hear. What defines the "true" prophet is that the turn of events proves him right. The false prophets are forgotten, and the true prophets a make it into the Bible. The prophetic system, like evolution, is a selective system - what is "right," and accords with the environment, survives.

We do not yet know whether the prophets of the "cognitive revolution" are true or false prophets. We

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cannot yet determine whether the maps they believe describe the mind are really there. Only time will tell.

Some times the true prophets speak of a coming messiah - a divinely inspired individual who has a direct access to the Godhead and reveals the whole truth, not just part of it. In the natural sciences - physics an biology - we have seen the succession of prophets and been privileged to see a few messiahs as well - an Isaac Newton, Albert Einstein, or Charles Darwin - the giants who set forth an agenda for research into the next several centuries.

I can still remember those people waiting for the arrival of the extraterrestrials on the south coast of Big Sur. They were waiting for a revelation - perhaps a messiah who had not yet come. Likewise, the psychological and social sciences are awaiting the arrival of their messiah. (They may still have to wait a long time. And the waiting is always aggravated by the realizations that like the prophets, messiahs can also be false.)

So our newest scientific Messiah in Kabballah Physics must be examined as closely as the Messianic Speculation rampant in Chabad Lubavitch today.

At the *Aleph* - a conference of Chassidic Space and Time scientists, a disciple of the Rebbe (the closest thing we have seen to a Messiah before Final Testament, Theo) Rabbi Dr. Zvi Victor speaks about a new kind of compactness.

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Strings are very compact things. Saks the Dr. teaches these applications of ultra filters:

> **Theorem: A space X has all of its powers countably compact if and only if it is D-compact for some free ultrafilter D or N.**
>
> **Theorem: Let $x \in (xn:n\in N)$' and $y\in(yn:n\in N)$'. Then $(xy)\in((xnyn):n\in N)$' if and only if there exists a free ultrafilter D on N such that $x = D\text{-lim } x_n$ and $y = D\text{-lim } y_n$.**

I know Theophilos - this looks like real Kabballah secrets. You and all seekers must learn math language and computer language to be literate in this Final Kabballah.

Bringing the above equation to its lowest common denominator:

$$X_o + X_o + 1 \text{ have the same cardinality}$$

What is incomprehensible to the mind is graspable in the point at the end of the mind. Thank you again Rabbi Stevens.

Life is *Tav* and Death.

The Hebrew letter *Tav*, , the Final Letter of creation is also the seal of death. *Tav* is T. As in T.O.E. A 'T.O.E.' is a Theorem of Everything.

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Now that we have defined God's unity - a T.O.E. we chant - as Torah commands.

"Hear O Israel The Lord our God is Lord."

This brings down the power of - the God of Ahava who we are commanded to Love.

Without the *Aleph* there is no truth.

The *Aleph* is the deep truth of the Theory of Everything. Added to death the Aleph spells truth.

So, Theo, holding your healing strings in hand, proclaim as Jews have for millennia:

The Lord our God Lives
The Lord our God is *Aleph*
The Lord our God is True

Adonai Elohoychem A-met

In physics, T.O.E.'s also require Deep Truths. No Theo, follow me through the miraculous Splitting of the Sea meditation:

Our universe apparently has four dimensions. Three Space, one of time/

The most successful superstring theories work in ten dimensions. That's two hands clapping 5 to 5. Applause - applause. Joy to the world.

Compactification, as described, explains how the other dimensions are hidden - six secrets - so to speak.

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Secrets waiting to be revealed. Six impossible things to believe before breakfast.

A T.O.E. will move us a great step forward in our self-understanding of the universe. Kabballahists help by their string theory. The whole world in your hands.

In physics superstrings is a theory that requires investigation and experimentation. "There is nothing to fiddle with in String Theory" says Rabbi Dr. Neil Turok. "It's either right or wrong."

Meditation

Now Theo, adjust your Tallit shawl. Dim the light. No New Age candles please. Imagine as you do:

The Rabbi, RAMBAN, standing still beneath his shawl of light meditates of the hidden wisdom of what and why. Seeing six centuries before Rabbi Einstein the Hebrew letters equation of the (insert Hebrew) .

Reciting the *Alephbet*, from *Aleph* to *Tav*, *alpha* to *omega*, until the Sabbath eve.

(Entrance is only through this opening Theo, so await until Sabbath eve reciting *alephbet*.)

It is evening. It is morning Shabat.

Recite: The ear hears and informs the heart. The Ten unveilings of Shabat. Ten Revelation.

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The Sabbath is She
the Six days He

The Lord's Prayer
Place palm to palm,
clap, snap, listen, listen
Shabat's supernal at-one-moment

Our Father and Mother in heaven
Honored be Thy Name
Heaven on Earth
The Bride is Come
the blessing doubled
Hand in hand
Bread from heaven
A day for-giving
judgement suspended
Souls renewing
For thine is the
Titeret*, *Malchat* and *Kavw
for ever and ever

The Lord One
Her Name one.

Spirit-Ritual

Of the Eve, uniting to Adam, drawing with two lips from her fountain welling over and over, slipping into Godshadow in one another, bride groom united, fulfilling God's command.

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Standing together in the morning
garbed in *shabat* finest
Revelations are waiting
Secrets become Simplicity

Reborn. Crown to T.O.E.
Good God! Good God!
Worlds by words
worlds by words
Repeat
Pray - pray
creation by repitition (ten times)
the sun's lesson (seven times)
the secret of seven
sing it over
Saylah, Sealah
a woman
a man

Then, Theo, with the Rabbi see what the Rabbi saw, O the Rabbi, the living light of Zion saw in his Zion of light

A
Temple of Time
The Menorah in its center
Prisms pure flames arc-ing
halo-ing - hallowing

Feel it Theo. Breath. Embrace yourself with two arms. Let your own palms feel your own hea(r)t. The Menorah is living and breathing. The secret that opens to

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the end you hold in your hands at this moment to unite God and wor(l)ds. Kiss the holy strings - a time honored tradition of Zion.

The Rabbi - weekly - attain this enlightenment - and now-you.

The original strings - beyond theory are in your hands. Lift them to your crown and now rub the light gently over each eye to feel the third hand of the heart and see the end - Messiah's vision.

Now - open Physics text and apply the wisdom. Remove the Tallit from your head. Open your eyes. Remove your shoes. Let the math begin.

26 - 10 =16 or E_8 x E_8? or SO 32 ?

Unite Bosonic and Heteriotic. The fringe strings teach: Bosonic and superstrings may be One in Gematria *Yould* plus VAV) equals 16. *hay* plus *hay* equals 10. 26. equals God's Name. Hey Hey!

God plays hide and go seek. The Name, hidden, is sought. Any Boson can ride on this Final Age® Physics bus. This is commanded in the Book of Numbers !5:37-41.

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“And God (26)
spoke to Moses, saying, again ‘speak to the children and instruct
them on making Seaseat - fringes on the Wings of their garments
in every generation - connecting
with the strings, one
Sea and Sky blue
connecting
heaven and earth
...
So as not to go a-whoring
after one eye visions
flat worlds
for the ten *devars*
of Revelation
Creation and
The End
have depth an dimension
in the vision
of two in one
united by SO 32
the Lev heart
which equals 32.
And so be one with
Ehyeh through
AHVH
AH-HA-VA
of the heart
Ya-who-va Aloheam
The Lord who is our God

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in the strings attached covenant
Truly
AHVH who is YHVH - our God
is Truth

Amen. Sealah

The Secrets of the Strings

A positive Command that Reveals All Mystery.
Theo - count the loops in your strings - fringe - Seaseat.
If they do not follow the pattern 10,5,6,5 (YHVH) or 10,6,5,5 untie them at
once for the following uniting (I will wait).

1. Take the 16 superstrands and separate to 4.
2. Slip the strings through the holes of your four-cornered winged garment.
3. Tie them - spiraling like DNA, curving by always looping <u>under</u> the previous wind.

See what the Rabbi, RAMBAN saw! $E_8 \times E_8$ in one hand. SO 32 strings in the other.
Listen, listen to the roar of this revelation, deafening, worlds colliding, hands clapping.

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Feel the strings warming to white in your hand as the secret fire flashes our in seven arcs, seven faces of self revelation.

***Yesod* - 10 shades of**	**red**
Yoke of heaven	**orange**
Seven shades of	**yellow**
Tree of Life	**green**
Seaseat	**Blue**
Newtonian	**Indigo**
Chassidic	**Violet**

Roy G. Biv's rainbow.

Shining, linking heaven and earth. Once again.

Beware, Theo, the original black on white vision of the either/or's orthodox. In Physics these are called interference strings.

Final Warning

From this point on do not read alone Theo. Only those who pass the Final Exam and wear the crown of *Malchut* may continue.

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Final Exam

A *koan* before going on. Balance the wisdom of the East Brain with the wisdom of the West brain - two hemispheres clapping!

Koan

How long is a Chinese name?

Sit in an empty room in the lotus position until you can answer this question. You many reference the Tao of Physics, Dancing Wu Lei Masters or any work on Eastern Mysticism Physics.

Do ya give up?
Yes
That is correct

How long is a Chinese name

Say it Theo. Get it.

You may continue.

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Final Observance

Depending on the one's point of view - ours or the creator of the universe -

The right eye sees. The left brain understands. The strength of the wisdom of What and Why renews Kabballahed traditions. The left eye sees, the right brings scientific revelation.

What does God require?
To do justly, love mercy
work humbly?
Cliches!
Minimalists reductionism
Truths too often spoken
Love God? New Age Testaments.
Bromides My friend.
What is required
Elijah reduces to one.

BE OBSERVANT

The Final Kabballah
the last link
is all that is required

See as God sees
Be as God is
Do as God does

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Reductionism leaving to the One - become nothing

Atom and the particle zoo crew captain the universe by observer ships acknowledging knowledge by knower

Secret of secrets
Now
Basic of Basics

The Basic of the 10 Basics:

God, we see with one eye only
The one God
Al one

Thus speaks Rabbi Dr. Wheeler - discoverer of black holes - "gates of time" to oblivion.
At the Center of Oblivion spacetime came to an - The End.
Old and New Physics are swallowed whole by this abysmal black holes notion.
Does the universe create the laws of Nature - Space - Time?
Or do the Laws of Physics create the universe?
"The observer is as essential to the creation of the universe as the creation of the universe to the observer.
"Observership allows and enforces a transcendence of the usual order of time."
This is good, Theo. Basic Quantum Physics.
Mystery? No, Mastery.

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Eons after the Big Bang, Dr. Wheeler preaches, relationships develop in acts of observership. Participatory.

Now, as in the beginning creation is continuous and capable of renewal, a world without end.

***Ein Sof*. Sound familiar, Theo?**

Elijah[3] opens a fifth (at this point scotch or bourbon, which ever you prefer) to teach the quintessence of Kabballah Physics.

Remember, though, Theo, in Final Kabballah the quintessence is always only half the story, the sound of one hand clapping.

Creation from nothing we see is also creation from thumbthing.

Theo:

Open to uncertainty, a principle
all fundamentalism is reductionism
Grand odious dogmas
The Gods

of the Ost bone heads
Over simple truth
seekers
What is grasped, always by the
thumb, the thing that holds
together the mind
Fingers press on text
The parchment smudged, and blurring

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Δx and the momentum of Δp

p = pridefull arrogance
the slightest obscuration
of the light
6.63 x 10^{-34} joule seconds
blurs, smears,
obscures, world
the shadow

Isaac, help. I'm becoming obscure myself. Theo looks bewildered.

O.K. Reshone.
Time for a joke.
How do we know
for certain
as it is written:
The Bible says!
So it must be true!
That God created the world
only for the sake of
the Game,
Baseball, in particular.

Teach me O Modern Day *Mo-says* I answer.

"In the Big-Inning
God created
The heaven and earth

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Isaac taught:

The Two Pillars of Kabbalah Physics are Einstein's Theory of Gravity (General Relativity) and Quantum Mechanics, Superstring Theory is an attempt to give text to the legs. T.O.E.s are for balance. Try standing erect, Final Atom, without Big Toes.

Quantum Theory determines the behavior of sub-atomic particles photons bundle in light, in quarks. Fermions may be ..."

"Isaac" I interrupt. "Theo looks blurry-eyed. And so too Ezra/ If we lecture how ..."

"Laurence - Reshone - listen the Final Age® Testament is a written oral Testament. Those who cannot grasp Final Physics will read it again and again. The Theories themselves are not finally together, so we will add to this never-ending Test-O-Men-T. This is as simple and entertaining as it gets."

"O.K." I say.

Isaac continues:

"High school chemistry and college physics professors often teach about the invisible world of molecules and atoms with rigid ball and connector models. These teach ice, not the water of life. Atoms flow. Particles move and clap and dance.

"The classic Old and New Kabballah teach rigid icy *Seferoat*, the Ten frozen in Space and Time.

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"The spheres sing, Sealah, and dance. Lift your voices as the particles, all spinning, Boson+ Fermions- Balance."

"So" I say.

"SO! 32!). Heart = wisdom is uni-versal. Be mindfull, still, and question, What and Why Hea(r)t. Hear it!

"AHVH teaches: Quarks and electrons are fermions and photons and gravitrons are bosons. Super symmetry and super gravity are essential in string theory. The Ten live up time by five. Nothing is static. Strings coil and intertwine as varied as God's Names. So far no Physics or Kabballah Superman has revealed the Supersecret of his identity."

"So?"

"So help me God, Rabbi, superstrings are not the Final Word."

"But Isaac," I protested, "how can I complete this Final Kabballah? Superstrings are in Tens. *Sepheroat* are in Tens. You're fairly intense. (Isaac laughed) Congruent geometric math."

"True, but we must find empirical applications" answered the Messiah.

"Isaac, how will I finish this Final Kabballah? Why don't you write The End?"

"Laurence, Laurence, my friend, don't you get it yet? There is no Final Kabballah. Revelation continues, along with creation, to the end."

"So I can never complete this Final Testament" I complained.

"Never! Listen. This scripture will inspire commentary. The text will be printed over and over with

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newer and newer commentaries. Like the original Testaments. These ideas will be discussed orally in cyberspace forums as science and spirit become one body."

"O.K. my teacher. But today I want to understand superstrings. Is it possible to give an analogy?"

The Inner Wisdom of the Body of Final Adam

"Yes Rabbi. Think. Use your wisdom of What and Why.

"What do the Kabballahists do with the 10 *Sepheroat*? They superimpose them on the body of the original Adam.

"Why? Because each of us is a self-contained universe."

"Explain, Isaac" I said.

"String Theory must be experienced in motion this very moment.

"Smile, Rabbi"

"What?" I asked.

"Smile!

"Sinews and striated muscle pull cheek into your grin. Veins, arteries, vessels are at this moment looping, opening, closing. (My, I sound like Professor P.G.!) Conduits of blood red *Yesod*, from *Tifferet* heart to the nine spheres as internal organs, pulsating strings circulating and returning to *Tifferet* to the *Chesed* hand and the *Gevurah* hand. Up to *Keter*, the brain, down to 10 T.O.E.s, all wiggling. We all are throbbing little universes

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ruled by Laws of Gravity and inner quanta, eating and digesting scripture, excreting offal, secrets."

"May I use this as the final word on strings Isaac? A proof of sorts?"

"No, My scribe. God gets the Final Word."

"And?"

"I will teach a few final ...thoughts."

Science and Spirituality
Walk hand in hand
Fingers folded into fingers
Pray
or the Fist
Covers the palm.

"Isaac that's it exactly, the sound of one, or two, or three hands. As simple as clapping. But how do we leap from fiction to reality, from metaphysics to Redemption?

"Reshone, Fictions create realities

"Like the Old and New Scriptures.

"This is all we have, the script, the story line of the west is clearly revealed by any motion picture. Entertainment is found in the juxtaposition of the News and the dream. The News is mostly bad. Scripture imagines the Good News.

"Every movie becomes a type of scripture. The story lines of the west, our dreams, are most clearly revealed in the formula of our motion pictures. Also, the Movies feel Biblical to me because character is most often defined by what people do rather than what they think.

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"In the beginning The Act. The hero or heroine of every movie is a messiah. Secrets of the messiah's personality are revealed in The End.

"The ideal movie is 120 minutes long, 120 pages of script. The length of the life of the ideal person, Moses, Act I , is crucial. The creation of characters and conflict, Act II. The confrontation, Act III. Resolves the conflict that leads to The End.

"The great Scriptwriter in the Sky, as ancient prophets understood, know The Ending in The Beginning. Actually, say better, even before The Beginning."

"So, help me write the End, my Friend," I asked Isaac.

"I do not know every detail of The End, Rabbi. I am a main character, not the Author of life's script. One thing I do know, the west faces a Hollywood ending."

"What do you mean Isaac?"

"The good guys gotta win! By page Ten we know the story. We commit to our goal, against all odds. On top of A mountain. One third into the Movie is the time of Trial. The goal like world peace for example, seems unobtainable. During the Climax messiahs face their final challenge. All is in crisis. All seems lost.

"This culminates in a final moment, a final action, a final victory of the All over the No-thing.

"The hero's antagonist will be the anti-messiah, a person or organization controlling the Tree of Death laden with the technological fruit of the nuclear arsenal. This serpentine demonic force may be a President or Premier. I do not know all the details of the end.

"Your job, Reshone, will be to guarantee a copy of all five books (in one volume) of this Final Age® Testament

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will be found in every home and hotel (right under the Gideon's Bible). Final Age® Productions will produce movies. Action, adventure, and comedy! The people and Messiah will have the final laugh! Final Testament. The Movie."

Isaac smiled and then laughed.

"Isaac that was most excellent, a worldly explanation of The End. I want Final Physics to speak to scientists and theologians so the healing may begin. I need some help with the How."

"Reshone, the teachings are shining again. Isaiah announces the wedding of Science and Spirituality in the Final Jerusalem. We are an update. Reread *Consider Me A Dream*. Israel will lower her flag of the six-pointed star, a symbol of defense, (and not Biblical) and replace the logo of defensiveness with the Menorah commanded in the Book of Exodus and Homecoming. Seven and seven times seven blessing multiply by the Final Act.

"I will announce the Shrine of Umar as the Third Temple. Verses of dominion will be replaced with verses of submission and shalom, and then I will uncover the Final Ark of the Covenant.

"Final Testament and all literature that ennobles and fulfills prophecy of the end time will be enscrolled in the update. Urim and Tumim, a computer that contains all the wisdom of the world's literature.

"A place will be set aside for the Third Set of Tablets we will be unveiling in this Final Kabballah.

"The Final Covenant will be taught by Final Moses and Final Joshua, two Lions of Judah."

"Uh, Isaac," I said nervously, "Who might that be?"

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Isaac laughed.
"Really Isaac, you and who?"
Isaac laughed!
"Me and you"
"Isaac, ...I, ... don't, ... think, ...I, ..."
"Silence. Listen." Isaac taught:

The Final Ark has the same dimensions as its Biblical prototypes. The old arks were cast in gold, with two gold cherubim. The Final Ark is a plain acacia box with two gold rings for carrying.

One ring for Kabballahed wisdom
One ring for the Tree of Knowing Truth through Science.

The Vows

The exchange of Rings.
No Revelation without Reason.
No Reason without Revelation.
No theology. No alchemy.
No abstractions. No secrets.
Choose teachings of life
All skeptics and believers.

"Isaac, I have a confession. I feel closer to Reason and Science these days. The Old and New Age religions dance around the Tree of the Fear of Death and Dying. The Seminaries have become theological cemeteries. Places to study dead or dying ideas.

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"The university will teach the shift to the universe. In the university Rabbi Abdus Salem and Steven Weinberg work in harmony on their string theory melodies. Science will create Eden or the Big ending. Either way we return to God or God.

Isaac, have I become a ... Jewish Scientist?"

"Rabbi. Religion and Science are now wed in the Final Age®. They are the two edges of the tongue and the sword. "

(Psalm 149:6, Theo)

"They both cut both ways, the ties that bind.

"Physics will never apply its teaching of wisdom in a nondestructive way without Kabballah wisdom ethics, Torah Revelation.

"Reshone,

Teach the spiritual photon
Teach the inner quark
Leaping Leptons!

"These are the voyages of the six-starred Messiahship into the strange Final world to boldly go where no PERSON has gone before."

Isaac laughed, and said as an aside:

"No Earthling. No one means anyone. Any person is more accurate. The *Midrash* I wrote, *Creation: A Speculation* in Book Two of Final Testament reminds us that we may encounter aliens who inhabit their own strange world. Like Joshua! And Joshua2! I will offer Star Peace to those beings."

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"Teach this Reshone,"
(Theo, remember, Isaac spoke and I wrote.)
"and teach that the Final Photon is more than a torpedo!"

The Wisdom of Why:

"Why assume Reason is wiser than Revelation Isaac?"
"The Old Kabballah originated the Big Bang. Rabbis hid the secret. Imagine the hundred year war or world war one, if man had unleashed it power of Atom?
"Also, superstrings may be a rung in the ladder of the ascent of science. Superstrings may be a too-tightly drawn rainbow string launching arrows to oblivion. Kabballah has its T.O.E.s. Physics has numbers. Neither has G.U.T.s, Grand United Theories, yet."
"What are you saying Isaac?"
"Take off your shoes Rabbi. You too Theo.
"Stand. Walk. Everyplace you step, as Joshua[1] taught, may become sanctified space, holy ground.
"Remove your socks. Look carefully at your feet. What do you see?
"The Ten Lowest *Sepheroat*.
"Look closer, between the T.O.E.s."

Sealah	**Science**
Offers	**Craves**
Creation	**Unified**
Kabballah	**Minds**

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"Isaac, I'm confused, this is all Kabballahwocky to me. Give me a hint."

"Sock scum."

"Huh?"

"T.O.E. J.A.M. - string theory

"The Physics of creation: Eternally Swirling and Whirling *Youlds* on the *Aleph* of AHVH folding into themselves as T.O.E.s exercise, dimensions of superthin fibrous strings rolling, rolling, rolling into minuscule balls of almost precreation dimensions, filling with the malodorous smell of All, birthing, the universe, the secret."

Theory Just
Of A
Everything Minute!

Isaac laughed and wiggled his eyebrows Groucho-style. "I certainly hope you didn't get that all down."

"Isaac. This is my Final Kabballah, I will finish to the end myself, thanking you kindly."

Theo, as God, enwrap every morning in your Tallit of light. Grasp the fringed corners and be healed. We are all Messiahs of our own lives. A world hemorrhaging for two thousand years finally healed in the Amen. Sealah.

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Franz, O, My Franz
Kafkas of My Generation

You yearn to grasp the wing of Shechinah. Reach out your hands.
Feel two hands grasping. Shake and sing.
You are called and Kabballahed into Final Testament and the coming of the Amen. Sealah.

Finished this Final day Chanukah
Dedicated to AHVH
5753 The week
Science and God
Finally made the Cover
of Time.

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First and Final Event

Theo

arrange these lines

into final poem:

The Two Tablets

You and God

Broken

The back of books

I am

Wor(l)ds

The Breaker

Thou Shall Not

Sapphire Fragments

Torah, Mishna, Gospel, Zohar, Testaments

The Ten Devar Logos

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Prime, Renewed, Final

Empty space

The Author

All

Idols

No

Thou Shall

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Titles for My Next Ten Novels and Movies

1.) Adolf The Jew
2.) My Father
3.) Y Not J
4.) A Day Like Purim
5.) Work Makes you Free
6.) The Secret of the End
7.) Lies in Remembrance
8.) Shiksa Messiah
9.) Make Yourself a Rabbi
10.) The Final Final Age Testament, Finally An End

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Final Event: A Prophecy

In the Final Age® the Menorah becomes the symbol on the Flag of Israel. The shield, an historic relic, becomes the emblem.

Israel is then renamed Zion.

God Always Before Me.

Again: The Ten in One Final Revelation

The Final Age®

Announcing - Secrets are Ten, Basics

Aleph God's 10 Principle Wor(l)ds

Ethics Again Kabballah Finally

1. *Keter* - The Earth crowned with Wisdom, Knowledge and Understanding, oceanic, Chabad, Aleph God filling all worlds.

2. *Chochma* - wisdom again the Co-ach-ma, the power of asking What and Why, the shattering of the graven image. The First and Final Tablets Re-constructed.

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3. *Bina* (and *Daat*) - Religions linking parents to children
God and the Name AHVH
God's Name no longer taken in vain.

4. *Cheseds* - Righteousness instructs The Sabbath of History.

5. From the Mouth of the *Gevarah*:
All Ten wor(l)ds culminating in the
Strength of the Great and
awesome Judgement Day
Elijah turning the heart of the
parent religion to the children's religions.

6. Live by Them! Now that is Beauty!
The Age of *Tifferet*!
The Final Age® of Compassion.

7. Love on the one hand
commitment on the other
Two hands clapping.

8. Charity - Giving - Redeems the world.

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9. No False Witness
against yourself.
Love your neighbor
just like you!

10. The Earth is the Lord's
Fill the Earth

With these Ten Principled Poems Then the Final Age® comes

(A) Final Redemption.

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Consider Me a Dream

(SINCE I AM A KAFKALOGIST A FEW WORDS OF INTRODUCTION TO THIS MOVIE. KAFKA DREAMS ALMOST EVERY SCENE IN A MOMENT BEFORE HIS DEATH. FOR THAT REASON, LIKE THE TORAH ITSELF, THE MOVIE IS NOT NECESSARILY IN CHRNOLOGICAL ORDER. ONE FINDS ALMOST EVERYTHING THEY NEED TO KNOW ABOUT KAFKA IN THIS SCREENPLAY.)

FADE IN:

Exterior Prague, Czechoslovakia, night just before dawn.

A series of aerial angles of Prague, Capitol of Bohemia, as dawn is breaking, including the statues on the Charles bridge. We see the words 'Holy, Holy, Holy" over the third statue on the right. A crucifixion. Hold.

We see figures parading around the facade of the old Town Hall as the clock strikes the hour. Sustain.

We see a 16th century two-toned rose-colored rococo clock on the old Jewish town hall. The hands move counter-clockwise. Sustain as the clock moves from three o'clock to three o-one. Towering above the Hebrew clock, we see a Roman numeral clock that reads six o-one. Sustain.

Directly across from the clock side of the town hall we see the Alt-Neu (Old-New) Synagogue.

Interior of Old—New Synagogue at dawn: We explore the interior of this ancient synagogue moving up towards the early Gothic five ribbed, vaulted ceiling. We follow the stairs up to the attic. The door is covered in cobwebs. We see into the room through the webs and are greeted by the sight of a giant cocoon pulsating light in a heartbeat-rhythm.

Exterior Jewish cemetery—day: Just beyond the Old—New Synagogue on a small, oddly shaped lot, we see the Jewish cemetery with over ten thousand graves. Sustain on the tombstone of Rabbi Judah Loew ben Bezalel, Talmudic scientist and creator of the first Frankenstein's Monster, the Golem. Hold.

Exterior Olsony Prague Jewish cemetery (2)—Day: We hear a faint, slow, and plaintive Mourner's Kaddish as Max Brod finishes his eulogy. We see the tombstone of the Kafka family. Next to the stone is an enlarged photograph of Franz Kafka.

Interior close shot face of Kafka at the Kierling Sanitarium. Day, June 1924: Kafka's eyes open from a deep and death-like sleep. His body is completely covered by white sheets and blankets tightly tucked into the bed on all sides. The outline of Kafka's body is skeletal under the blanket. The overall effect is of a white coffin, which is surrounded by lilacs, peonies, columbines, scarlet hawthorn. We see movement under the blanket as Kafka awakens.

A nurse with a starched face and demeanor enters the room.

Kafka is fumbling around with something beneath his blankets. The nurse fills Kafka's water glass, making a point to ignore the patient. Kafka pulls a leather set of

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Tefillin **from beneath the blankets. He tries to place them on his forehead, but the head strap is too large and they drop around his neck.**

NURSE (in German)
Herr Kafka—What in the world are you doing?

Kafka attempts to tighten the tefillin so they will fit on his forehead, but instead, the leather straps tighten around his neck.

NURSE (screaming)

Herr Doktor, Herr Doktor! He is trying to kill himself!

Nurses and doctors enter with Dora Dyamant, Kafka's fiancée.

DORA

No No, Franz is practicing his religion.

DORA'S comment is met with skepticism by the staff.

DORA

He is praying.

Kafka smiles secretly. All but Dora leave.

KAFKA (raspy, tubercular)
The fall—our wedding.

DORA
My father said I must marry a Rabbi.

KAFKA touches the *tefillin* around his neck and kisses the tips of his fingers.

And live in the Promised Land.

KAFKA lifts his head off of the pillow and closes his eyes and nods his head.

Yes Yes.
And be a Chassid
mastering the Kabballah,
The secrets of our Torah,
our tradition.

KAFKA pulls some of his hair down into a sidelock and begins to twirl it around his finger.

But your writings, my love.

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The Rebbe, my father,
considers them profane.

KAFKA's lips move, "Burn them."

DORA looks at the manuscripts piled high in the corner of the room.

DORA

Franz, darling, I - Father is -
may be - wrong.
The story of the black dung beetle,
The Child in the City,
America, they are art,
Franz, art.

KAFKA

Burn them. Burn them. Brod will betray me.

Dora is reluctant. Kafka hands her a box of matches. She turns away. Kafka opens his mouth to speak, and blood flows down one side of his mouth.

KAFKA (raspy)

Burn.

DORA sees the blood. She goes to the corner and lights the pile of manuscripts. Smoke fills the room and Kafka has a coughing fit.

KAFKA—gasping

Now tell your father.
The wedding.
The fall.

FADE IN: DREAM SEQUENCES

EXTERIOR SHOT OLD PRAGUE CZECH KAFKA GROUP NIGHT 1912

We hear Chassidic wedding music and we see the movement of shadows and candle flames down a narrow lave moving East. The streets of old Prague and the multi-tiered menorah design of the roof of the Old-New Synagogue are illuminated by the moving flames. The Hebrew clock on the roof has no hour or second hand. The lights continue East toward the countryside. All the characters stand in the shadows.

FRANZ KAFKA (VO)

Love and marriage.
Nothing is more important.

JULIE KAFKA (VO)

And your parents?
Franz Amschel

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My son, when my father died,
I had to hold on the toes of his corpse,
while asking his forgiveness
for all the wrongs I had done him.

FRANZ KAFKA (VO)

Genesis Two: Twenty-four.
She will be flesh of my flesh.

Oh yes, and more.
My very life

This is why I am leaving
You, father and mother, and joining
with my wife.

HERMANN KAFKA (VO)

And you call yourself a rabbi?
we are the people
who honor their mothers and fathers.

We are your family.

FRANZ KAFKA (VO)

What I have to do
I can only do alone

to see with clarity
the ultimate.

Those who are unclear
have no right to marry.

EXTERIOR FULL SHOT VILLAGE OF BELZ, GALACIA NIGHT 1912

We hear the same Chassidic wedding music and see the movement of candle flames through the enclosed synagogue square moving West. The synagogue, rabbinic parsonage, and house of study are illuminated by the moving flames. The lights continue West towards Prague.

THE GRAND REBBE (RABBI) OF BELZ (VO)
You will obey.

We see a glimpse of a shadow of a head. The head is shaking 'No'.

THE GRAND REBBE (RABBI) OF BELZ (VO) cont.

There is still time.

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Break your engagement.
This time you will obey.

DEVOROLAH (DORA)—THE BRIDE AND THE REBBE'S DAUGHTER. (VO)

And what of love? I will not obey.

REBBE (VO)

Do not speak without respect.
Honor. The fifth commandment.
Love. What do you know of love?

REBBE (VO)(cont.)

Falling in love is like falling into a pit.

DORA (VO)

Love. Love is everything
that enhances
that widens
that enriches
our lives.

REBBE (VO)

To love—in religion
and marriage
is to honor and obey.

DORA (VO)

I will not cut my hair.

REBBE (VO)

You will obey.
You are still my daughter.
There will be no wedding

REBBE (VO) cont.

without the cutting
of the bride's
wedlocks.

Eve, the first bride
had her locks cut
by God himself
before she was given
to Adam.

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The two groups of candle flames converge and form one group, moving forward. They stop in an open field with one empty chair. The BRIDE is lead to the chair. Concentric circles of light surround her. The inner circle of light illuminates the center.

CLOSE SHOT OF FRANZ KAFKA'S FACE.

It appears as a half shadow and half fire. He wears all white, His white fur hat acts as a halo.

KAFKA is beardless with long side locks. He has large, wide-open eyes with dark lashes. He plays with his side curls with long ethereal fingers.

KAFKA'S parents emerge next from the shadows—at the same time.
They are each holding one of their son's arms. HERMANN is uncomfortable in his skullcap. It keeps falling off. He is sixty-ish and looks like an old style bare fisted boxer—complete with a twirled, waxed mustache.

JULIE KAFKA, also in her sixties, is bloated and bent from a lifetime of serving the men in her life. She has let herself go, and is a dowdy hausfrau with a striking face.

OTTLA, KAFKAS SISTER, is seen next, and looks like JULIE might have looked at a younger age. OTTLA is tall and attractive. She wears a black veil, suggesting that she is a widow.

We see the face of the BELZER REBBE, half in the shadow, half in the fire. He looks like the Sultan in a Dore illustration of the Munchausen stories, a Maharaja from India. He is broad, of medium height, had a long white beard, and unusually long, uncurled white side locks. One of the REBBE'S eyes is blind and blank, and the other stares intensely and judgmentally. The epitome of all patriarchs, the REBBE has a twisted mouth which gives the impression of irony and enigma. He wears a caftan of the shiniest purple-black silk, and white leggings with Chassidic loafers. The REBBE is crowned with a *shtriemel,* a tall round fur hat from which hangs exactly thirteen short sable tails. He wears a gartel (sash) around his waist.

CLOSE SHOT OF REBBE'S WIFE. All in light. She is as dark and mysterious looking as a Gypsy princess. She wears no make-up and has no wrinkles. Her eyes, brows, pupils, and lashes are all coal black. She wears a jet-black scarf pulled tightly around her shaven head. Her black-gloved hand and arm are looped tightly through the arm of her daughter. Her face stiffens and looks frozen, dead.

Their daughter DEVOROLAH (DORA) is dressed all in white and wears a thick veil that is semi-transparent. She is seated by her parents.

The men approach for the lifting of the veil.

NATA SAMAL steps forward, a 19 year old miniature REBBE in black.

JOSEPH GOLEM, the best man, is dressed all in white, like KAFKA. He is beardless and built like a fullback.

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GOLEM lifts the veil. DORA looks like her mother, but soft and cherubic, innocent and attractive. She is seated by her parents.

RABBI BAR MITZVAH is a beardless, slick, stylized Rabbi who wears the most modern, expensive suits.

RABBI BAR MITZVAH

May you see children
and your children's children
as did Sarah, Rebeccah, Rachel, and Leah.
May God bless you and guard you.

REBBE

Unbraid your hair.

DORA sits still, glaring at the REBBE.

REBBE'S WIFE

Dora!

The GUESTS raise their candles to get a better look at what is happening in the inner circle.

We see that one half of the GUESTS, MEN and WOMEN, are dressed in traditional black Chassidic garb. They look like clones of the REBBE and the REBBETZIN, his wife. The other MEN and WOMEN are dressed all in white, including fur hats for both the MEN and WOMEN.

We see the backs of the REBBE and his WIFE. A shimmer of light is caught revolving around the two as they simultaneously grab a braid and cut off Dora's braids with their giant swords.

DORA, devastated, cries out in horror. Her MOTHER wraps her head tightly in a black scarf. The mother then tightly grips Dora's shoulder.

DORA'S MOTHER

There, there.

The BRIDE, in shame, drops the veil back over her face.

Their PARENTS let the GROOM and BRIDE to the nuptial canopy. The crowd splits like the Red Sea in front of the REBBE. All regroup tightly around the couple

CLOSE SHOT OF KAFKA wearing a white tefillin box on his head. The straps that hold the tefillin are also white (Jewish law requires that tefillin be black, and that they never be worn at night.) Traditionally a second black box is worn on the bicep opposite the heart. KAFKA's arm tefillin is white with a long white strap. He holds it in his hand.

GOLEM walks out of the shadows carrying a tall white hatbox. GOLEM takes out a white fur hat exactly like the one KAFKA is wearing and gives it to KAFKA. KAFKA, with great ceremony, walks to DORA and crowns her with the hat. The KAFKAN CHASSIDIM cheer.

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REBBE

Meshugena!

We HEAR MURMURING from all the black CHASSIDIM. We see Goethe, standing behind HERMANN, holding a leash. We follow the leash down to the coal black large standard POODLE that GOETHE is leading. The POODLE stares at KAFKA. HERMANN pushes the DOG with his foot. The dog growls. Exactly to the right of the BRIDE behind her parents we see MILENA dressed in white like a bride. She is maternal yet erotic. Her eyes reflect a world of suffering. She looks like the Angel of Death, and is a former lover of KAFKA's.

To MILENA's right is FELICE, KAFKA's former fiance, looking remarkably like OTTLA. FELICE is sexless and looks dejected. She looks away from KAFKA.

In Chassidic tradition the BRIDE circles the GROOM seven times. She is led by her parents.

As DORA is led in the first circle KAFKA wraps the white strap once around his arm.

KAFKA

I wed you forever.

We see DORA's face shining through the veil, radiant and smiling.

The second encircling, we see the BRIDE covered by her veil—no face. KAFKA wraps the strap around his arm once again.

KAFKA

I wed you in truth.

On the third circle, KAFKA wraps the strap one more time around his arm.

We see DORA's body from KAFKA's point of view with OTTLA's face under the veil. KAFKA gasps.

We see the BRIDE from the GUEST's point of view. Her face is in the shadows.

KAFKA

I wed you in judgment.

The fourth circle we see MILENA's face under the veil from KAFKA's point of view. KAFKA wraps the tefillin one more time.

KAFKA (under his breath)

Milena.

He hears HERMANN and the REBBE mutter. "shiksa." He looks at them and they glare at him stone silent.

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KAFKA

I wed you in love.

The fifth circle we see FELICE. KAFKA looks away and wraps the strap for the fifth time. We see a veil.

KAFKA misses the sixth circle, wrapping the strap tightly, slightly above his wrist. CLOSE SHOT OF KAFKA'S ARM.

Before the seventh circle, KAFKA walks up to the bride and lifts her veil. He sees DORA and gives her a lingering full mouth kiss. The GUESTS dressed in white sigh, Those dressed in black gasp.

KAFKA

My Love.
To what may I compare you?

You fragrant thighs
opening and closing
as heaven's gates.

The scent of nard and musk
rising as the sacred incense
of the Ancient Temple?

Your heart shaped haunch
more graceful than the gazelles

That which is beautiful
I can only compare to you.

RABBI BAR MITZVAH (VO) (hurriedly)

Ecstatic Joy, this loving couple
Eve and Adam again in Eden

WE HEAR A GLASS BREAKING.

CROWD (OS)

Mazel Tov, Mazel Tov.

INT DORA'S DINER, PRAGUE COUNTRYSIDE, JUDEAN HILLS, DAY 1948.

We see a broken glass at the feet of a young Chassidic BOY in black garb. He is afraid and waiting for an adult reprimand. KAFKA is an old Chassidic Rebbe all in white.

KAFKA (lovingly)

***Boychuckle*—be careful. Don't step.**

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The boy is surprised. He helps KAFKA clean up by holding the dust pan. They throw the glass into a milk container which KAFKA carefully folds around the glass.

KAFKA (with English subtitles)

***Hi man da Mahave Chassedey*. Who wants to be a Chassid?**

All PATRONS stroke their beards and the WOMEN stroke their chins.

PATRONS AND WOMEN (with English subtitles)

***Laki-aim Melay Da-Nazeekean*. Careful not to harm others.**

KAFKA gives the young BOY a fatherly embrace. They stand, looking out the window. We see a sign that says, "Kfar Kafka," and underneath in Arabic and Hebrew, "Kafka Village. Jerusalem 20 K.M."

MEN and WOMEN are working the land together. Some men are farming, some are watching the children. Some WOMEN are farming, others are watching the children. The rows of crops are neatly flowing on terraced hills. The village breathes the harmony and beauty before the Fall.

CHASSIDIC BOY
You are a Rebbe—why do you serve food in the communal dining hall?

DORA watches the scene from the kitchen. All CHASSIDIM listen intently.

KAFKA
I serve my fellow Chassidim and my God.

BOY
I have to return to Jerusalem to get my belongings. May I join?

KAFKA smiles at the BOY. The BOY helps KAFKA bus the tables. GOLEM gets up from a table.

GOLEM
This afternoon the Rebbe will give his driving lesson.
All women are required—excuse me—asked to attend.

EXT FULL SHOT PRAGUE COUNTRYSIDE JUDEAN HILLS KAFKA DAY.

KAFKA is standing with a pointer in front of a diagram with a new 1948 Cadillac behind him.

KAFKA
The Kabbalah of driving is quite practical.

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KAFKA points to *Sephira 2* of the diagram. Each circle represents a *Sephira*.

KAFKA

Cochma: The concept of the vehicle. Revelation.

KAFKA points to *Sephira 1.*

And Binah: The design of the vehicle. Reason.

KAFKA points to the circle in between 1 and 2.

Mediated by your inner knowledge of driving. Plus...

KAFKA points to *Sephira* 4.

Controls, *gevurah*. Plus power...

KAFKA points to *Sephira* 5.

KAFKA points to *Sephira* 7.

Monitoring systems. *Hod*.

KAFKA points to *Sephira* 8.

***Netzach*: Cycles of operating systems.**

KAFKA points to *Sephira* 6.

Plus: *Teafairit* The beautiful driver in control. There you have it.

DORA is at the wheel, nervous. She drives on the ridge overlooking Jerusalem. We see the Temple Mount of Moriah to Mt. Zion.

DORA

Am I driving in beauty?

KAFKA

Oh yes. You are in *Teafairit*

DORA

Franz, my Rebbe, why are you insisting that all the other women, and I learn to drive?

KAFKA

Soon I will die.

DORA (disturbed)

Moses lived to be one hundred and twenty.

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KAFKA

No, my love, my time to cross over into the Promised Land will be soon.

DORA dries the tears from her eyes.

DORA

But my love, my fair one, you are in the Promised Land. In Jerusalem. In Zion.

KAFKA

There is only one place for me. All my life I have been on the path to the Promised Land.

On the Mountain of Death Moses saw, (hesitates).

Do you know why he did not enter the physical earthbound Promised Land?

DORA shakes her head 'no'.

KAFKA

Not because his life was too short, but because it was a human life.

For me there is only one Promised Land.

INT CLOSE SHOT FACE SANITARIUM KAFKA DAY JUNE 1924

KAFKA'S eyes are fixed in a deathlike gaze. CAMERA RAISES, revealing KAFKA's body, which is covered to the neck in a white garment. He lies in his coffin like bed. CAMERA RAISES even further, revealing thousands of lilacs, peonies, columbines and scarlet hawthorns which surround his bed. KAFKA holds a bright red apple in his hand.

PAN across the room. Light flutters throughout the sanitarium, at first covering the gray ceiling, then exposing its drabness. Reflections of clouds and blue skies intensely fill the ceiling, and then disappear. Light penetrates through once again and swallows the grayness of the ceiling.

KAFKA (VO)

Go over.
The fabulous—over—there

Cross over
into Promised Lands.

The words of the wise are parables
to guide our everyday lives.

That which is not knowable
you will not know.

The Tree of Knowledge
The Tree of Life
and the Tree of Death.

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What is knowable
know.

CAMERA focuses on a MEDIUM SHOT of KAFKA lying in his coffin like bed. KAFKA's hand, holding the shiny red apple, slowly moves to his mouth. He takes a bite out of the apple, chewing slowly, savoring the taste. KAFKA's hand moves back over his chest. KAFKA smiles.

KAFKA's Point of View: Light gradually intensifies until it becomes blinding. A slow darkening, a linear shadow, moves downward, as the coffin is closing.

MEDIUM SHOT OF KAFKA. His eyes close. We hear thumping sounds of earth on wood as the grave is being filled, shovelful by shovelful, matching the rhythm of a heartbeat.

KAFKA (VO)
(the simultaneous chanting of the Mourner's Kaddish, a Hebrew prayer, is blended with the English interpretation.)

The beginning of understanding
The wish to die

This life—unbearable
Another—unattainable.

Leaving Eden. Paradise
Life in this world
is unavoidable.

Eternal repetition
makes it possible
that we may
in fact
be in Paradise.

Whether we know it
here
or not.

EXT AERIAL SHOT ATLANTIC OCEAN DAY

We move West Along the Atlantic Ocean, revealing its tremendous power.

KAFKA (VO) (we hear the chanting of the Hebrew funeral service simultaneously with its English translation)

God is a perfect being
who dare say
why this one
and why this day.

God says and does

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and Mercy shows.

Even Isaac,
on the alter, like a lamb.
In the end,
Isaac was not slain.

Hear our prayer.
Fulfill your plan.

KAFKA (cont.)

If one lives one a day
or a thousand years
what is the gain?

In the end
it will be
as if
they had never been.

We bless the True Judge
Lord of Death
Lord of Life.

A JACKDAW (Blackbird. In Czech, a Kafka.) flies toward the New York harbor. The JACKDAW circles the Statue of Liberty, who holds the torch in one hand, and a sword in the other. Lady Liberty moves the sword, revolving it once around her head.

EXT FULL SHOT BASE STATUE OF LIBERTY KAFKA'S FUNERAL DAY.

PAN the backs of the crowd attending the funeral. They wear the European dress of Prague in the 1920's GOETHE, the FAUSTIAN creator, attends the funeral wearing only his stylish 18th century hat, boots and underpants. Faust's coal black standard POODLE sits next to GOETHE.

KAFKA stands alone. He turns and faces the camera. He wears the traditional garb of a Belzer Chassidic Jew: the broad black felt hat, shiny black silk jacket, white shirt buttoned to the neck, no tie, beard, and sidelocks. His beard is wispy.

CLOSE IN on KAFKA'S FACE.

RABBI KAFKA (VO)

Dearly beloved.
We are gathered here today to wed—

CLOSE IN on RABBI KAFKA's face even further. He blushes. We hear the sound of glass falling and smashing. RABBI KAFKA looks down at the glass. He looks up again.

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CROWD

Mazel Tov. Mazel Tov.

RABBI KAFKA

To—To
Lay to rest. Today
Franz Amshel Kafka
The first,
The most typical
Modern Western Jew.
My—ah
This man's life
is an end and
a beginning.

GOETHE walks over to RABBI KAFKA with FAUST'S POODLE on a leash. KAFKA unleashes the POODLE. The POODLE looks up at KAFKA.

GOETHE
I shall be brief.

The CROWD titters.

GOETHE looks towards the open grave.

GOETHE
The most typical Western man.

GOETHE looks at RABBI KAFKA.

GOETHE
When your brother Soren Kierkegaard died,
The Age of the Dominant Father
Passed away.

Your life marks
The New Age,
The Age
of the Rebellious Son.

GOETHE steps back into the CROWD. The POODLE remains with the RABBI KAFKA.

RABBI KAFKA*(chanting in HEBREW with simultaneous ENGLISH translation.)*
God compassionate God.

who leads us to our final rest.

May his soul find shelter
beneath the tree of life.

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May he rest in peace

as we say together.
Amen

The JACKDAW flies onto RABBI KAFKA'S shoulder. It alights.

JACKDAW

Kaka
Kafka.
Kafka.
So high.
So high.
Ka Ka Ka

A LONG SHOT of LADY LIBERTY, holding her torch and sword.

EXT LONG SHOT MANHATTAN LADY LIBERTY'S (POV) DAY

Waves of traffic flow over to Manhattan. Cars stop simultaneously, as if they are controlled by one brake.

EXT LONG SHOT MANHATTAN LADY LIBERTY'S (POV) NIGHT

Headlights of waves of traffic flowing towards Manhattan merge into one light.

EXT FULL SHOT RABBI KAFKA STREETS OF MANHATTAN EARLY MORNING

The streets are empty. RABBI KAFKA walks as if he is tourist. RABBI KAFKA looks around, his head straining to see the tops of the buildings. His camera eyes rove everywhere, taking all the sights in. The POODLE, on a leash, strides along with him.

Then on the same streets, the foot and car gridlock. RABBI KAFKA, who bumps from person to person, disrupts the orchestrated chaos of movement, where no one collides. He is still taking in all of the sights.

RABBI KAFKA moves along. he bumps into a group of CHASSIDIC JEWS, whom he attempts to greet, but they look at him as if he is an alien.

RABBI KAFKA falls behind the CHASSIDIM. A contingency of HIGH SCHOOL CHEERLEADERS turns around the corner. The CHEERLEADERS are wearing mini-mini skirts and Rameses High School monogrammed tops embossed on a gold pyramid.

The CHASSIDIM slide over towards the wall of the building so they do not have to walk between the women. The CHEERLEADERS slow down and gawk at the CHASSIDIM, whose gazes are fixed ahead. RABBI KAFKA, at the end of the CHASSIDIM, winks at each of the CHEERLEADERS, who then squeal with delight and smile back at him. RABBI KAFKA looks down at their feet. They all wear tennis shoes

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RABBI KAFKA

Streetwalkers?

Each CHEERLEADER steps aside for him. A stunningly beautiful WOMAN, an older version of MILENA, *(played by the same actress)* with frosted hair and white dress, carrying a white briefcase, walks rapidly towards RABBI KAFKA. She expects him to yield ground. She gets caught by KAFKA and the POODLE, captive in the leash.

RABBI KAFKA

I'm lost!

WOMAN

I'm late!

RABBI KAFKA *(pleading)*

Really? Where am I?

The WOMAN looks around, as if she is caught and in need of the assistance of a police officer.

RABBI KAFKA

Perhaps we could-

WOMAN *(interrupting)*

I thought your kind were not allowed to talk-
to look at woman.

RABBI KAFKA

I'm different.

WOMAN

I'll say.

RABBI KAFKA*(shy, begging)*

Be so good... kind. Walk with me.

The WOMAN pulls extremely close to RABBI KAFKA'S face.

WOMAN

Are you a Duke
with a famous name?

A broad American
with a Red Indian figure?

You have never even seen the Seven Seas

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Or voyaged on them, wherever they may be.

So why, pray, should a pretty girl like me
go anywhere with you?

RABBI KAFKA, hurt and rejected, drops the leash. The WOMAN walks away, her head turns towards RABBI KAFKA.

RABBI KAFKA

I see no limousine
to whisk you away.

No gentle man
escorting you in the half circle of his arm
or uttering blessings on your head.

Your breasts are... well
but your thighs and hips.

Your smile... thin lipped, inviting danger,
but only from time to time.

RABBI KAFKA shrugs.

You had better go your way
as I go mine.

PEOPLE gather around and stare. The WOMAN, walking away, head turned towards RABBI KAFKA, walks into a PASSERBY.

OPTIONAL SCENE

EXT MEDIUM SHOT 42ND STREET RABBI KAFKA NIGHT

RABBI KAFKA turns the corner onto Broadway and 42nd St. He stops in the front of marquis of porno movies. He steps into the doorway of a shop with XXX in the window and a sign, "*Private Booths*. "

RABBI KAFKA

America

RABBI KAFKA takes a deep breath and enters.

OPTIONAL SCENE

INT MEDIUM SHOT PORNO THEATER RABBI KAFKA NIGHT

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RABBI KAFKA walks between rows of booths advertising scenes. He picks his booth. The promotion for the booth features a strikingly attractive platinum blonde with pointed breasts that defy gravity.
RABBI KAFKA enters the booth with the POODLE.
The POODLE sits looking up at the screen. RABBI KAFKA places four quarters into the machine. The film begins. Light shines on his face and his eyes grow wide. RABBI KAFKA moans.

OPTIONAL SCENE

EXT MEDIUM SHOT PORNO THEATER RABBI KAFKA NIGHT

RABBI KAFKA exist the theater. he holds an apple with a bite into it.
RABBI KAFKA takes a deep breath.

RABBI KAFKA

Confessionals.

A PROSTITUTE, a Gypsy woman, approaches RABBI KAFKA. Her hair is down and flowing in the wind. Waves of alluring black and gray darkness. Her all black dress reveals every curve and cleavage of her perfect body. Her face is heavily made up with multicolored makeup. She is the BELZER REBBETZIN as PROSTITUTE. The same actress plays them.

EXT FULL SHOT 42ND ST. RABBI KAFKA/ PROSTITUTE DAY

RABBI KAFKA and the PROSTITUTE walk down the street. RABBI KAFKA carries two full bags in each hand. The PROSTITUTE holds his arm. RABBI KAFKA continues to look around like a tourist.

PROSTITUTE (intimately

Franz Amschel Kafka, watch where you are going. Look ahead! Stop gazing at everyone. Only whores try to make eye contact. Look straight ahead or you will be mugged!

RABBI KAFKA bows and tips his hat. The PROSTITUTE takes out a long pair of scissors. RABBI KAFKA flings his black hat into the wind. It arcs like a boomerang and lands back on his head. The PROSTITUTE caresses his face and cuts off his side locks. A number of people stop, including a Chassid. RABBI KAFKA offers the side curls to the Chassid. The Chassid slaps him. RABBI KAFKA stands still, tears falling down his cheeks. The Chassid slaps him again on the other cheek. The PROSTITUTE reaches toward the Chassid to throttle him, and he flees.
RABBI KAFKA undresses as the PROSTITUTE weaves his sidelocks into a headband. RABBI KAFKA removes his shirt but leaves on the *tallit (tah-leet: vestment under garment with fringes.)* She pulls items out of the bag. She replaces his pants with leather leggings. She paints his face with makeup like an Indian warrior. With great ceremony she takes out a Chief's headdress from her Cairo Emporium shopping bag.

RABBI KAFKA, now CHIEF KAFKA, bows and reaches into the bag. He pulls out leather boots.

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PROSTITUTE

Franz, darling, I'm not sure about the boots. Are you a cowboy or an Indian?

CHIEF KAFKA smiles and steps into the black, gray and white snakeskin cowboy boots. He attaches spurs.

CHIEF KAFKA and the PROSTITUTE walk through the street where a white horse with reins but no saddle is waiting for him. CHIEF KAFKA leaves the PROSTITUTE with a lingering full mouth kiss. He hands her the leash and his POODLE. He mounts the HORSE.

CHIEF KAFKA sees the WOMAN he stopped the day before. She stands on the corner, waving, as if she were trying to hail a cab. A cab stops. She waves him on. It is MILENA, then it is FELICE.

CHIEF KAFKA

Felice, Felice.

The WOMAN continues to wave. Another cab stops. She ignores the cab, waving it on. It drives away. CHIEF KAFKA sees MILENA again. The older MILENA, in white.

CHIEF KAFKA

Milena, Milena.

The WOMAN continues to wave. CHIEF KAFKA gallops down the street, leaning towards the WOMAN. She reaches out as CHIEF KAFKA pulls her onto the horse with one smooth motion. It is MILENA. He gallops down the street.

CHIEF KAFKA

Milena.
I am a Red Indian.
Riding Lightening
swifter than the wind.

The WOMAN embraces CHIEF KAFKA from behind as they pick up speed and head towards the other end of the block.

EXT FULL SHOT RIVERBANK CHIEF KAFKA/MILENA DAY

CHIEF KAFKA and MILENA ride West on a trail down a riverbank. The riverbank is lined with apple trees as far as the eye can see.

EXT FULL SHOT HEARTLAND WHEAT FIELDS CHIEF KAFKA/MILENA DAY.

CHIEF KAFKA kicks off his spurs as the two are pursued full speed by a regiment of cavalry. MILENA fades away. Shots are fired at CHIEF KAFKA from behind.

EXT FULL SHOT DESERT CHIEF RABBI KAFKA DAY

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The cavalry is still in pursuit. CHIEF KAFKA drops the horse's reins, which fade away. They ride past a sign that says "KALIFORNIA". He loses the cavalry and stops at a stream. He and the horse drink. CHIEF KAFKA undresses and jumps into the stream. His head emerges.

CHIEF KAFKA (in Hebrew, with English subtitles)

We acknowledge the single One—author of our lives—who commands us to be holy and to be immersed in Living Waters.
He then speaks in English.

Forty years, and now, the Promised Land.

CHIEF KAFKA remounts his horse and rides through the desert until he reaches a ridge skirting the Pacific Coast. He rides, ocean to his left, picking up speed, until the horses head and neck fade away. The momentum of CHIEF KAFKA's running body pushes him up a steep flight of stairs.

INT FULL SHOT PRAGUE, CZECH GYPSY SYNAGOGUE KAFKA DAY 1896

KAFKA'S BAR MITZVAH

KAFKA enters dressed like a thirteen-year-old. Light pours in from behind, making him look like a shadow. Entering the dark synagogue, after being in the intense sunlight, his vision blurs. KAFKA walks up to the front of the synagogue, as one invisible, and ascends the raised platform, or Bimah, where the Torah scrolls are kept. Only the Gypsy PROSTITUTE and MILENA notice KAFKA's entrance. They are dressed as though for a funeral.

RABBI BAR MITZVAH, facing the congregation, is reading from the scroll the first chapter of Genesis in Hebrew with cantillation.

KAFKA is late for his own Bar Mitzvah. He takes a seat on the bimah, facing the congregation.

RABBI BAR MITZVAH continues reading. We see the congregation from the rear. Slow PAN towards the bimah. KAFKA's family watches stiffly and attentively, trying to look interested.

MEDIUM SHOT of RABBI BAR MITZVAH, ELDERS, and SEXTON in formal Sabbath attire and black and white striped prayer shawls.

KAFKA yawns so loudly that the service momentarily stops. KAFKA blushes.

CLOSE SHOT of KAFKA's slender fingers following the text.

KAFKA (Genesis 2:16, simultaneously translating the RABBI's Hebrew into English)

And God said, saying, singing

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You may eat from every Tree of the Garden

CLOSE SHOT of MILENA. She watches RABBI BAR MITZVAH read, and follows in translation.

MILENA (VO)

But from the Tree of Knowledge
of Good and Evil
You may not eat.

CLOSE SHOT of OTTLA, who seems to understand the reading.

OTTLA (VO)
For on the day you eat it
you will definitely die!

RABBI BAR MITZVAH continues chanting into chapter three of Genesis. Most people gaze at the RABBI a bit dazed. They do not understand a word of the reading.

KAFKA raises his Bible in front of his mouth, but is able to stifle his yawn.

KAFKA (Genesis 3:4, translating the RABBI's Hebrew into English)
You will not die.
Really.
God knows
on that very day
your eyes will be open.

KAFKA'S POINT OF VIEW MEDIUM SHOT OF HERMANN KAFKA.

HERMANN AND KAFKA
You will be like God.
Knowing Good and Evil.

The RABBI drones on through the fifth, sixth, and a seventh chapter of Genesis as the camera explores the symbols of the synagogue. The Ten Commandments, the rich blue velvet ark cover, and the Eternal light. Beneath the light is engraved "Know before whom you stand."
Camera explores the faces of the congregants and guests, whose eyes are glazing over. Random congregants eyes are beginning to close. One leans his head back and the camera explores that point of vie, panning the magnificent high vaulted ceiling of the Old-New Synagogue.

RABBI BAR MITZVAH finishes the reading and begins his sermon.

RABBI (dramatically)
One law.
A simple law.

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A dietary law.

Don't eat.
The apple.

And they eat!

KAFKA is gently shaking his head 'no'.

KAFKA's fingers caress a velvet bag containing his Bar Mitzvah *tefillin (The law stipulates that they are not to be worn, or even touched, on the Sabbath.).*

RABBI (almost shouting)
Beasts and dogs eat whatever they come upon.
Like a dog returning to sniff its vomit,
we return to our sins.
Sneaky children always disobey.

KAFKA strenuously shakes his head no. He secrets his *tefillin* out of their velvet pouch. HERMANN glares at his son in warning. The congregation is noticing KAFKAs reaction to RABBI BAR MITZVAHs sermon.

RABBI
The serpent wins and Adam sins;
and he is banished form the Garden.

Close shot of KAFKA's arm bound to the post of the Ark. He has the head straps around his neck, like a hangman's noose, and is about to pull. The SHAMMES #1, who is the SEXTON, and the RABBI's right hand man, shouts.

SHAMMES
Sabbath, Sabbath. Muktza.

The RABBI turns toward KAFKA. KAFKA reddens, as if he was not aware of what he was doing.

RABBI (paternally)
Franz, my boy. You know, never on the Sabbath.

KAFKA unbinds his arm and lays his head down.

For their disobedience
they are banished from the Garden.

The flaming turning sword
Angels of Destruction
Guard the Garden of Eden.

So we would not touch
The Tree of Life.

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KAFKA takes the two straps of the head tefillin around his neck and pulls them tightly, and begins to choke. All watch until they hear a chattering noise from the top of the Ark near the Eternal Light.

A business associate of HERMANN KAFKA, with no prayer shawl, whispers to his neighbor in the back of the congregation.

BUSINESS ASSOCIATE

We have our church mice (points)
This must be the synagogue sable.

MEDIUM SHOT of SABLE. It has pale blue green lines following the pattern of a skunk on it's black, dusky body. At first glance it looks frightening, particularly the long neck and triangular face, which jut our almost horizontally. On the upper lip we see a row of long, hard, pale bristles and teeth.

CLOSE SHOT of mouth closed. The SABLE looks, harmless, cuddly. It observes the congregation with bright, unblinking eyes.

The SHAMMES has waited patiently for the return of the SABLE, and has prepared a stick on the side of the Ark. He takes a whack at the SABLE, trying to kill the beast. He misses, breaking the Eternal Light. Glass falls on the floor. KAFKA approaches from behind and grabs the board from the SHAMMES.

KAFKA

The Sabbath!

Everyone except HERMANN and RABBI BAR MITZVAH cheer. The SABLE disappears.

KAFKA approaches the reading desk and opens Isaiah to his prophetic Bar Mitzvah reading. Kafka's training was a ridiculous learning by rote of a song in a strange language. He is expected to sing with perfect pronunciation and melody. The melody had been beaten into his head by RABBI BAR MITZVAH. KAFKA begged to be taught the meaning of the verses, but was berated by RABBI BAR MITZVAH for his lack of Hebrew skills. KAFKA studied on his own, a translation of the verses. He wants to chant in the original and in translation, but RABBI BAR MITZVAH and his father forbid this.

KAFKA is about to start chanting the blessings, but decides instead to challenge the RABBI with and extemporaneous sermon.

KAFKA (to RABBI)

It is a Tree of Life
To those who will grasp it
touch it, take hold of it.

KAFKA (to CONGREGATION)

I understand the Fall
Better than any man.

CLOSE SHOT OF MILENA, PROSTITUTE, AND OTTLA

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In the beginning, God is alone.
She is lonely.

CLOSE SHOT OF JULIE.
Tears are forming in her eyes.

It is not good,
so she sings.

One flesh will be two
In this, I will know you.

CLOSE SHOT OF PROSTITUTE who smiles.

Why lament
this so called Fall?

KAFKA (cont.)
We are not exiled from Paradise
because of a Fall.

But because of the Tree of Life.

CLOSE SHOT OF RABBI BAR MITZVAH, horrified.

A stroke of luck!

Had we not left,
Paradise would have had to have been destroyed.

LONG SHOT OF HERMANN, JULIE, AND OTTLA, frozen.

God is a woman
Not Ya-We
but Ya-She.

God is a woman.
Ya-She
Knew
She births us

KAFKA
Ya She
She buries us.

CLOSE SHOT OF JULIE, frightened and confused.

Overlooking the Promised Land
In the beginning of my end.

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RABBI BAR MITZVAH, SHAMMES, AND CONGREGANTS are aghast. They sit rigidly until the SYNAGOGUE SABLE reappears on the Ark, chirping, pleased with the sermon.

KAFKA begins to chant the blessings of the obligatory Bar Mitzvah prophetic reading, *Haftorah*. He looks up. Only a few people are following. He raises his eyes to the women's section, lowering his eyes when he notices an infatuated thirteen year old staring. At the other side of the women's section is the PROSTITUTE, who smiles and slowly begins to pull at the fingers of her black gloves. White gloved MILENA notices and smiles at KAFKA. KAFKA is distracted. He chants verses 5-14 of Isaiah, chapter 42.

Continuing, defiant, KAFKA chants the translation with cantillation.

> **For a long time**
> **I have kept Silent**
>
> **I cry out**
> **A woman in labor.**

The congregation is startled into awareness. The SABLE leaps from the Ark and scampers to the women's section. Some WOMEN scream.

A number of them stand on their seats, clutching their furs.

The PROSTITUTE sits calmly. She removes the gloves from her hands. She holds them up for KAFKA to see. and then drops them at her feet.

KAFKA returns to the drone of his chanting. Eyes of congregants glaze over again.

As KAFKA chants, another KAFKA splits away and steps back from the CHANTING KAFKA.

The SYNAGOGUE SABLE again darts from the bimah to the women's section. KAFKA follows and crawls on his knees to the gloves.

CLOSE SHOT OF PROSTITUTE'S FACE.

She watches the CHANTING KAFKA. She rises slightly and takes a deep breath. Her eyes reflect the beginnings of passion.

KAFKA chants Isaiah 43: 1-2

CLOSE SHOT of the PROSTITUTE closing here eyes and quietly moaning.

KAFKA chants Isaiah 43: 3 and 4

CLOSE SHOT of PROSTITUTE'S lips parting and her mouth opening in the beginnings of ecstasy.

KAFKA chants Isaiah 43: 5-8

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The CHANTING KAFKA looks at the PROSTITUTE and licks his lips. He becomes disoriented and loses his place for a moment.

CLOSE SHOT FACE OF PROSTITUTE, whose mouth opens.
KAFKA finishes chanting his Haftorah. Isaiah 43: 10, with the traditional melodic flourish.

(OS) the LOUD, PASSIONATE CRY OF THE PROSTITUTE.

The women in their section assume the SYNAGOGUE SABLE has returned. One WOMAN screams.

WOMAN

The black beast is back!

WOMEN one at a time stand on their chairs. The PROSTITUTE is glowing.

KAFKA lifts his hand, which is holding a black glove. The service continues, led by the RABBI.

Slowly raising his hand, KAFKA stares at the PROSTITUTE, and slowly, sensuously, slips his fingers into her black glove.

INT CLOSE SHOT FACE KAFKA'S FAMILY APT., PRAGUE KAFKA DAY 1912

KAFKA'S face is covered, cowboy style, by a shiny black Chassidic hat with a broad brim. The black straps of the head *tefillin* criss cross KAFKA'S neck.

CAMERA RAISES, showing all of KAFKA wearing a shiny silk Chassidic caftan, which lifts dramatically around the distended belly. A woven black belt (gartel) wrapped many times around the waist tightly creates sections of a hardened shell. The overall effect is of a giant black dung beetle. A human being malnourished or pregnant.

In his left hand, KAFKA holds a sharp sword. The right hand rests on the left in the manner of a pious Jew. The right hand grows one bristle, and then another.

On the night table, next to KAFKA's bed, is a picture of the PROSTITUTE. She is wearing a fur sable cap and stole, and is holding out to the viewer a huge muff into which the whole of her forearm has vanished. Her hand clutches a black glove.

The POODLE sits still as a stuffed animal in the corner.

CLOSE SHOT FROM ABOVE: the hat covers KAFKA'S FACE. KAFKA slowly tilts his head backwards.. The lifting hat reveals the black face of KAFKA transformed into a beetle with wispy black Chassidic beard and side curls. KAFKA wears his head *tefillin*.

LONG SHOT OF THE DOOR OF KAFKA'S BEDROOM.

CAMERA CLOSES IN on the turning of the brass knob, which reflects the room behind.

JULIE (OS)

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It's locked again. Franz, Franz, what are you doing?

MEDIUM SHOT OF KAFKA'S HAND slowly revolving the sword one time in the air, towards his head.

CLOSE SHOT FROM ABOVE OF KAFKA'S NECK. He cuts his black neck from ear to ear. Mucus and ooze bleed from the insect neck. The hat tilts down. Blood flows from his neck, staining the sheets and filling the bed. Sounds of tubercular coughing. CLOSE SHOT OF DOOR KNOB. The knob turns, the room reflected in the knob.

OTTLA (OS)

Franz... Amschel, are you all right?

CLOSE SHOT OF KAFKA'S FACE. KAFKA tilts his head back. Awakening, he tries to answer. His antennae are side curls and his wispy, thin, Indian beard now covers a swarthy human face. KAFKA tries to whisper again and blood flows from his mouth.

KAFKA

Ottla!

Blood flows from his mouth and covers the white pillow around his head.

KAFKA turns his head towards the door. The knocking continues. HERMANN KAFKA, looking tall, strong, and broad, waits outside the door.

HERMANN (OS)

Franz, up.

KAFKA sits up.

This minute. Out of bed.

KAFKA stands.

I demand it.

KAFKA falls on the floor and scuttles to the door. He opens the door. OTTLA carries KAFKA back to the bed.

OTTLA

Let him sleep. We will wake him later.

INT FULL SHOT DINING ROOM FAMILY NIGHT

The table is set for the Sabbath meal. KAFKA is dressed in his silk Chassidic outfit. He has sprouted a few more bristles on his hands. His sidelock antennae raise in the direction of HERMANN.

HERMANN KAFKA sits in an armchair reading the paper. HERMANN shakes his head.

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HERMANN

Meshuga. Meshuga.

He leafs through the paper.

HERMANN
If its not the Czechs, its the Germans.
If its not the Germans, its the Jews.

OTTLA
The Jews?

She is ignored.

HERMANN (turning the pages)

Going to be a war. Goddamnit. Maybe a worldwide war.
Shit heads.
And Jews fighting Jews.

KAFKA cringes at HERMANN'S opinions.

JULIE
So good to see you up.
You must eat.
We have prepared a Sabbath feast.
And it's just for you

OTTLA
My brother the Rabbi

JULIE
A Rabbi. A lawyer. A doctor of the soul.

HERMANN
My son the penitent.
Rabbi, make the blessings.

KAFKA blushes and hesitates. He tries to stand, but his insect thin legs are wobbly and give way and he falls back into his chair.

HERMANN (imperiously)
Stand.

KAFKA tries again. He falls and sits.

KAFKA
Some Jews have the custom of saying the blessing seated.

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HERMANN

Tradition. In this house, we stand.

He takes the Kiddush cup from KAFKA. OTTLA and JULIE stand. KAFKA tries again and cannot.

KAFKA

I—

HERMANN

I order you to—

OTTLA looks imploringly at HERMANN.

Not to be so obedient.

KAFKA turns toward his room.

HERMANN

Don't even think of it.

KAFKA

I must go write.

KAFKA looks at his right hand, which is now insect-like, and looks like a quill pen.

HERMANN

You know what your problem is?

KAFKA (interrupting)
Did you read my story?

HERMANN

You problem is your stories.
When are you going to start living?
In Judaism there are no monks.

KAFKA

I—work—must be—alone.

HERMANN

It is not good for a man to be alone.
You work—but thirty years old and not married.

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**Still living at home. Grow up. Move out. Of course
You'd probably marry one of your shikses or
prostitutes, so you had better stay.**

KAFKA, pensive, about to speak, is interrupted by HERMANN, who is tapping one finger on his newspaper.

HERMANN

Luftmensch.
**If I had your worries.
And the things you write about.
And what have you been paid?
Nothing!
Your entire life is a song and dance
about Nothing!**

JULIE

That's not fair.

KAFKA looks toward his mother in hope.

JULIE
Writing is Franz's past time

KAFKA is crushed.

KAFKA (to HERMANN)
I write only for you.

He puts his head down in his arms. One arm is human, the other is a dung beetle's.

JULIE enters from the kitchen with two perfectly roasted chickens, tzimmis, potatoes, and green beans. OTTLA follows, carrying a dish for KAFKA. HERMANN is served first. KAFKA is served raw lettuce.

HERMANN

**The stuff on Shabbos. Meat on Shabbos.
A Jew eats meat.**

KAFKA

I—

HERMANN

Never mind. Eat first. Talk later.

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HERMANN eats everything fast, hot, and in big mouthfuls. OTTLA eats defiantly slow, laying her fork down with every mouthful. JULIE tries to eat daintily, but is in too much of a hurry.

OTTLA

Franz, you are writing. This time. What is it about?

KAFKA

The family.

OTTLA

Someday Franz will be a great writer. I'll bet...
world famous.

KAFKA frowns.

KAFKA (to HERMANN)

Did you read—?

HERMANN holds the chicken bone, conducting.

HERMANN

Eat. Eat. Eat. And don't crack your bone with your teeth like a dog.

The POODLE in the corner growls. The ladies eat daintily. HERMANN bites off the end of the bone and loudly sucks the marrow.

KAFKA

The challah

HERMANN picks up the loaf with his greasy hand. KAFKA cringes. HERMANN moves the loaf in front of KAFKA.

HERMANN

Rabbi, the blessing.

KAFKA draws the loaf to himself.

HERMANN'S POINT OF VIEW. KAFKA picks up a knife to cut the challah. JULIE and OTTLA hold their breath.

HERMANN watches closely, judgementally. KAFKA'S human hand is shaking.

HERMANN

Straight. Straight.

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KAFKA'S knife slips and cuts the end of his insect appendage.

HERMANN

Disgusting!

HERMANN leaves the table and goes back to the armchair

Now that HERMANN is gone, KAFKA begins to eat. He puts a piece of the lettuce on a fork, eats, and then lays the fork down. He follows the Fletcher method of chewing all food 100 times

As KAFKA eats, we see HERMANN cutting his finger nails, cleaning his ears, sniffing the ear wax, and finally farting, taking a deep breath and then smiling, content.

JULIE enters with a bowlful of shiny red apples. OTTLA waits until KAFKA finishes eating

KAFKA
(to OTTLA)

The story- I have- a beginning.

How is it going?

KAFKA

It's- going.

He looks around.

OTTLA

Why not make him a caterpillar?

KAFKA is delighted.

KAFKA

Yes, a caterpillar
One day a grotesque
pup
the next
alights
and flies away.

There is a loud KNOCK on the front door. KAFKA falls out of his chair.

The POODLE barks.

HERMANN

Who would call so late? Must be Nata Samal-
your twin vermin. And he wants us to give him a job!

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NATAL SAMAL enters. He is bent, showing humbleness. His head is down. He slowly lifts his head; it has changed since the funeral. NATA has a black crustaceans face with light blue human eyes. His curves suggest a giant dung beetle. NATA is still somehow handsome. His antennae hang in ringlets down to his shoulders. As NATA walks towards KAFKA, his antennae beginning to uncurl, then rise, and then stand straight up. KAFKA'S antennae respond in kind. Instead of shaking hands, their antennae intertwine. NATA sits. He hands KAFKA an apple. JULIE and OTTLA daintily peel and eat. HERMANN is eating apple after apple, including the core. He watches KAFKA and NATA. OTTLA glances at NATA a few times, attracted and repelled.

OTTLA

Why do you look-dress-so different?

NATA, as CHASSIDIM are requires, attempts not to look at OTTLA. He is attracted and cannot avert his eyes.

HERMANN
(from behind his paper)
To embarrass his father.

NATA

**To honor my father
and grandfather and
grandfather's father back to Abraham, our
father.**

OTTLA

Did Abraham dress- like- this?

NATA
(staring at OTTLA, flirting)

Well, he probably wore a turban.

KAFKA

(with a loving smile)
Nata is Chassid. A Belzer Chassid.

OTTLA

Bells. I see no Bells.

HERMANN

Helz Belz.

NATA

Belz- a one day journey- into a different world.

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The capital of Chassidism.

OTTLA

Chassidism?

NATA

Ask your mother. She is a descendent of the spiritual grandfather of the movement.

OTTLA is intrigued. JULIE shrugs.

HERMANN

So what?

OTTLA

So what is Chassidism?

NATA

Experiencing God, enjoying living. Being-living-Judaism. Kabbalah.

Uh, Kabbalah. Kabbalah.
You two going to make a Golem?
A Frankenstein?
Golems!

OTTLA

Tell me more.

KAFKA is excited.

KAFKA

All matter is spirit.
Full of divine sparks
and can be lifted up*(gesturing to God)* to the Single One.

HERMANN

You two shmucks are the only single Ones.
Get married.

OTTLA

I never knew Judaism had a spiritual mystical tradition.

KAFKA and NATA roll their eyes at one another.

HERMANN

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Chassidim is dead. Belz is a graveyard.

NATA

**We believe in transmigration of souls!
Reincarnation!**

OTTLA reacts with surprise and fascination.

OTTLA

You mean like the Hindus?

NATA

**Yes and more. The soul can come back as a rock
or water or a plant.**

HERMANN

You two will come back as turds.

NATA

We have saints.

OTTLA

Like the Christians?

NATA

**Like you- your lineage- your mother-
the great Rabbi of Prague- Maharal.**

OTTLA

**I hear Chassidim have funny attitude towards
their women- you know, holes in sheets during- You
know.**

NATA

**The one thing every Jew knows about
Chassidim.**

**And it is untrue. Chassidim is liberating. Kabbalah
teaches that no man should be without a woman, no
woman without a man.**

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KAFKA

**And we have male and female within ourselves,
like God!**

HERMANN

**Not in my house! Don't mention the theory of the queer
in this house.**

KAFKA has a coughing fit.

HERMANN

**You sound like your ass
assistant at work.**

NATA

Who?

HERMANN

**That Fag with T.B.
Sooner he dies the better.
Flea infested dog.**

KAFKA has another coughing fit.

JULIE

Queer?

HERMANN

**You know- the one who's going to blow his brains out.
He converted to Christianity.**

Winbe- something- Weininger.

KAFKA

I did not know you knew-

HERMANN

**Know? Who can not know? In the streets, in my shop,
it has come up. Bye Bye sexuality.**

He laughs at his own joke.

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NATA

His theories may be valid. The kabbal-

HERMANN

Queers. He-he's. She-she's.

NATA AND KAFKA

He-he's and she-she's?

HERMANN

You know. Queers. Lesbians. But don't tell me I am a He-She. I am a man. A man!

KAFKA

Father- Understand. Nata speaks of Taoism. Yin and Yang. Mystical balance and equality.

NATA
(to OTTLA)
We put women on a pedestal-in the synagogue- above us- in the women's' section- for you are spiritually loftier than we.

HERMANN
Pigshit. Listen. There are only two types of women. Mothers *(he points to JULIE)* And whores.

OTTLA
Oh really father? And what if the mother plays the whore?

HERMANN and JULIE are appalled at OTTLA'S defiance.

HERMANN
Enough. Enough. End of discussion. The Ten Commandments. The Law prevents women from playing the whore.

KAFKA
Well, we know why in Judaism religion is passed through the Mother.

JULIE
Why?

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KAFKA

Why? We all know who are mothers are. Fathers-

He looks down.

We can not be so sure.

HERMANN lowers his paper. He glares at KAFKA and then covers his face.

NATA starts a simple Chassidic melody.

A black BEETLE scurries across the table

JULIE

Oh my God. Hermann.

HERMANN gets up and raises hi foot over the beetle.

BEETLE (POV): The foot is a giant shadow- a fairytale-sized foot. The CAMERA EXPLORES KAFKA'S and NATA'S faces as they are covered by the shadow when the foot drops

INT CLOSE SHOT FOOT BELZ SYNAGOGUE, GALACIA CHASSIDIM DAY

The black shadow falls to a foot stomping. BEETLES on the floor scamper into the wall.

Loud SOUND of STOMP. Another foot stomps on the ground. Another loud SOUND of STOMP.

CAMERA RAISE to a hundred hands going and forming a circle. Two hundred feet are stomping, slowly at first and then faster and faster. These dancers form an inner circle. Hundreds of other CHASSIDIM, all dressed alike, like their REBBE, form an outer circle. KAFKA and NATA are dressed in black, exactly like the other CHASSIDIM. The outer circle DANCERS have their arms around one another's necks. A dance may last an hour or a day into exhaustion and then ecstasy. All the DANCERS' hands are joined as they exit.

EXT FULL SHOT BELZ DANCERS' NIGHT

The small village of Belz has 3000 inhabitants. One half are Jews. The village is to the Chassidim as Rome is to the Catholics. We see dirt and squalor. Belz is known for its synagogue, House of Study, and Rabbinic parsonage. These three buildings enclose the square. The DANCERS move under the REBBE'S window. The REBBE exits the parsonage and is danced back to the synagogue.

INT FULL SHOT SYNAGOGUE DANCERS NIGHT

The REBBE OF BELZ is in the center of the revolving, dancing circle. The circle closes to within eight feet of the REBBE. CHASSIDIM push one another. KAFKA and NATA are pushed into the center circle. The REBBE takes off his gartel and whips NATA. KAFKA

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watches, frozen. NATA smiles. The REBBE turns to KAFKA and stares at him with his good eye.

REBBE

You will be my guests on Shabbos.

INT FULL SHOT REBBE'S HOME REBBE/ KAFKA GROUP NIGHT

The REBBE'S home is opulent and elegant—including real crystal chandeliers. The REBBE'S wife and daughter, DEBORAH (DORA), following Chassidic custom, sit at a separate table. KAFKA can see DEBORAH, in long braids, between the two Shabbos candles. She radiates warmth, purity, and holiness. NATA nudges KAFKA. Not only is it not polite to stare here, it is forbidden.

KAFKA takes a deep breath.

KAFKA (VO)
The purity of the air of Eden.
Before the Fall.

DEBORAH sneaks another glance at KAFKA and quickly takes a bite from an apple. She smiles.

INT FULL SHOT HOUSE OF STUDY GROUP DAY

KAFKA and NATA stand by their study podiums. The House of Study is filled with hundreds of scholars, all speaking loudly to be heard. Gesticulations and thumbs moving up and down—up for a question, down for an answer accompany Talmudic arguments. The chanting also follows this pattern.

KAFKA
She smiled—at me.

NATA
She has been promised since age three. It is not within...

KAFKA
I love her.

NATA
And I.

KAFKA
You don't understand. I want to marry her.

NATA
Even if she were not engaged—not you—I—she will marry only a pious Jew.

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KAFKA

I have returned. I'm a Ba'al Tshuva.

NATA

More is required.

KAFKA

More?

NATA

The Rebbe's daughter will marry a scholar. A rabbi.

KAFKA

So I will be a rabbi

NATA

Only after years of study.

KAFKA

Let us begin.

NATA

Where?

KAFKA

Genesis. In the beginning.

NATA

No. Mishna. This is what today's class will be on. *Betzah Shnoida be Yom Tov*. An egg laid on a Holy day. Rabbi Shamma says—you may eat it. Rabbi Hillel says—no.

KAFKA raises his hand

KAFKA

An egg. This is a Jewish law?

NATA

Legal principles essential to the sanctity of our holy days are involved.

KAFKA (serious)

I understand. An egg born on the holy days. You know what to do with it?

NATA

What?

KAFKA

Make an omelet

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NATA tries another Mishna

NATA
Two are grasping a Tallit— a prayer shawl.

NATA closes his eyes. He sees two religious Jews each holding the end of a Tallit.

JEW 1 (NATA'S voice)
This is mine and mine only.

JEW 2 (NATA'S voice)
This is mine and mine only.

NATA
They must take an oath because the laws of witnesses cannot be applied. Now Franz, the Talmud always asks Questions on the Mishna. You are a lawyer. What is the question?

KAFKA

The question. The question. Why do people always argue over religion?

NATA

Franz!

KAFKA
The question. I have it. What religion are the two?

NATA
Franz, you know they are Jews. Christians have no interest in the decisions of Rabbinic courts.

KAFKA
So why does he want a prayer shawl?

NATA (frustrated)
Franz, please.

KAFKA
I have it. Was it Jesus' prayer shawl?

NATA hushes KAFKA.

NATA
Franz, remember where you are. Who you are!

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KAFKA

You are right. I am sorry. Perhaps we should begin with the basics.

NATA runs around to find texts to study. A black BEETLE crosses one of the leather volumes. NATA raises his hand to kill the BEETLE. KAFKA grips his hand.

NATA sits and reads. KAFKA closes his eyes and visualizes. The fox has KAFKA'S face.

NATA

All existence is vanity. A fox enters a vineyard. It has one fence opening. Three days the fox fasts to fit through. Once in the vineyard, the fox feasts. For three full days. Then it is time to leave the vineyard. The fox cannot fit through the opening. The fox fasts three days and leaves the vineyard.

KAFKA is swaying back and forth at his podium.

KAFKA

More on death.

NATA

First life.

We see this text from NATA'S POINT OF VIEW.

NATA (VO)

At one we are in little jails.

We see one year old KAFKA in a crib.

At three we poke around the garbage. Pigs.

We see a dirty faced KAFKA.

At ten we jump around like a kid.
At twenty we parade around like angry horses.

having married we are like asses.

We see KAFKA on all fours with DEBORAH on his back and six children.

Bearing a heavy burden
Then we grow old and become bent like a monkey.

KAFKA

And die.

NATA

Death is strong.
But the Messiah
will defeat

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Death.

KAFKA

The Messiah. How do these—

KAFKA waves his arms as the CAMERA PANS gesticulating CHASSIDIM, oblivious to KAFKA and NATA.

Understand the Messiah?

NATA

The law teaches that persecution of the Jew will end. Israel will live peacefully in the world.

KAFKA

A miracle, but too rational for me.

NATA (opening the text)

In that time there will be no famine. Or War. Envy or Strife.

KAFKA

Not enough

NATA

Enough?

KAFKA

How do you bring the Messiah?

NATA

Only God.

KAFKA

No. The Messiah will come only when he is no longer necessary.

NATA

There is a teaching that the Messiah comes when Israel repents.

KAFKA

The Messiah comes only on the day after his arrival

NATA is pained and puzzled.

The Messiah comes
Not on the last day—

NATA

If not then, when?

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KAFKA

On the very last day.

NATA

The Chassidim believe with perfect faith and wait at every moment for the Messiah to come.

KAFKA looks long and hard at the monochromatic black dressed CHASSIDIM.

KAFKA

Only when the most unbridled individualism of faith is possible

NATA

The Law is a bridle for wild asses. These are the most civilized people on earth. They are a community of priests. A holy nation. These are the only ones who have not given up on Jewish tradition.

KAFKA

They are part of the reason for its destruction.

NATA has heard enough.

NATA

Franz, why are you so negative? And so obsessed with death? Why not life?

KAFKA

Death and Life are one.

NATA raises his eyebrow.

If one believes in resurrection.

NATA

Resurrection. That is a difficult topic in Judaism.

KAFKA

No. Think of Jesus.

NATA

Jesus?

A number of SCHOLARS turn and stare at NATA.

NATA

Rabbi Maiminodes teaches that we do not believe in bodily resurrection.

KAFKA

The Messiah will peel your body from your soul like an orange.

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NATA touches his body—uncomfortable.

KAFKA points to CHASSIDIM. He opens his hands, palms up, and continues.

KAFKA

Tadpoles will become frogs
caterpillars
butterflies
Men will become like angels.

The graves—open themselves and we all will be
resurrected in the image of the Singular One.

NATA listens intently. He is now the student.

KAFKA

Now my friend. Kindly make arrangements for me to meet the Rebbe, so I may ask him for the hand of his daughter in marriage.

NATA buries his head in his arm.

INT FULL SHOT *MIKVAH* (RITUAL BATH) BELZ KAFKA GROUP DAY

KAFKA and NATA are undressing, removing their fringed *tallit katan.*

KAFKA

Is this necessary?

NATA

To see the Rebbe—yes, you must.

KAFKA tries to avert his eyes from NATA's genitals.

Be pure.

INT MEDIUM SHOT REBBE'S PARSONAGE REBBE/KAFKA DAY

The REBBE sits at an oversized desk.

REBBE

Attention. You have your *kvitels*.

Insert shot: The REBBE opens a piece of paper and reads.

REBBE

Nata bat Sarah me Prague has modeh
belimud vayiras shamyean.

Nata son of Sarah of Prague requests blessing for

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learning and fear of heavan.

The REBBE beams with delight.

NATA gives the REBBE a gold coin.

KAFKA approaches with his kvitel. The REBBE'S good eye stares.

KAFKA freezes.

INSERT SHOT: The REBBE opens KAFKA'S kvitel.

REBBE

Amschel bas Julia me Prague has modeh be Tshuva
Shalama va La heschatan em ha bas shel ha Rebbe.

Amschel son of Julie of Prague seeks perfect
repentance and to marry the daughter of the Rebbe.

The REBBE is astonished. He raises his eyebrow over his good eye and stares at KAFKA. KAFKA, nervous, empties his pockets of change on the REBBE'S desk. The REBBE takes one coin and places it in front of him. He draws a circle around it in the dust of his desk.

REBBE (in Yiddish, with English subtitles.

Du bist an am Ha-aretz

You are a man from the country

KAFKA

Ya-nu

REBBE (shaking his head)
Am Ha-aretz. An ignoramus.

The REBBE puts up his hand to stop KAFKA'S response. The REBBE draws another circle around the coin.

REBBE
You will learn to be a Rabbi? A Talmud scholar?

KAFKA nods his head yes.

The REBBE drays another circle.

REBBE
Perfect repentance. Would you be a Rebbe? A saint?

KAFKA

Yes.

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The REBBE strokes his beard, staring at the kvitel. He keeps KAFKA waiting.

KAFKA

Your daughter—my rebbe.

REBBE

Tell me Reb Amschel who would marry my daughter, and perhaps someday be the Rebbe. In our Holy Torah... spell. What are the letters of God's name?

KAFKA, without hesitation, answers

Every letter of our Holy Bible is a letter in the name of God.

The REBBE is shocked by KAFKA'S astute answer. He stares at the coin and circles. He picks the coin up and flips it in the air. He does it again. KAFKA grabs the coin from the air.

KAFKA

Your daughter's hand.

REBBE

Not yet.

KAFKA and NATA leave the REBBE'S study. The REBBE stares at the circle.

INT MEDIUM SHOT BELZ TRAIN KAFKA/NATA DAY

KAFKA

We must make the train by five o'clock

NATA

The five o'clock has gone.

KAFKA

The nine o'clock.

NATA

There is no nine o'clock. And if there were, you would not be on it.

KAFKA

Why are you so angry?

NATA

The train.

INT FULL SHOT TRAIN KAFKA/NATA DAY

KAFKA is looking out the window, watching the countryside outside of Belz roll by.

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PASSENGER
You are blocking my view.

KAFKA does not hear.

NATA
Franz, come sit.

KAFKA stares back at NATA. NATA is reading two oversized books, FAUST by Goethe, and a book by Freud.

PASSENGER 2 (to KAFKA)
Sir please. Rabbi Talmud. You are blocking our view.

NATA
Franz. Sit!

KAFKA obeys. He sits opposite NATA.

KAFKA
Why do we have to leave?

NATA
You can stay. I have had enough of Puritans

KAFKA
They are pure.

NATA
Isolated, backwards, dirty.

KAFKA
Tranquil and full of spirit. A country of the living.

NATA
For me now this is death.

Two hats are laying next to NATA. He puts one on. KAFKA puts the other one on.

KAFKA
But the Rebbe said not yet.
If I study, become a Rabbi, a Rebbe.
NATA
I will be a man.

NATA is at his limit with KAFKA'S insensitivity. He takes off his hat and reads the label.

NATA
Amschel. Your hat. I want mine.

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They exchange hats. Nata opens the window, takes careful aim, and flings his hat out the window and it takes off in the wind, birdlike. NATA sighs.
Nota opens a book.

Kafka

You are reading?

Nota

Freud. The father of… my new Rebbe

Kafka

Are you now a son of Freud?

Nota

Awakening to the erotic
I shall be a man.

Kafka

And I a Rabbi

INT CLOSE SHOT FACE KAFKA FAMILY APT.KAFKA 1913

CLOSE SHOT OF Kafka's head covered by his hat cowboy style. The brass doorknob turns.

JULIE
Franz, dinner. You must eat. Franz, open the door.

KAFKA (stuttering from under his hat)

Go away. I told you. I cannot. The Rebbe. I eat alone.

HERMANN

What is that smell? Nauseating!

KAFKA, hearing HERMANN'S voice, climbs out of bed. He falls, crawls, and climbs the wall, opening the door.

KAFKA
Father. Did you read my novel?

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HERMANN

Novel. Novel. The Child in the City? Grow up. Yes, I tried.

KAFKA

And?

HERMANN

And, and, we had enough toilet tissue, so I used it to start the stove.

KAFKA bows as if his work deserved the fate of being thrown into the fire.

KAFKA

And the verdict?

HERMANN

Guilty.

KAFKA (stuttering)

You read it.

HERMANN

When I'm damn well good and ready.

KAFKA is shaking, nervous. HERMANN draws near him face to face and shouts.

HERMANN

Relax! Relax!

KAFKA

I—I

HERMANN

You must relax!

KAFKA (stuttering)

Father, I must tell you. I am moving to the country.

HERMANN

Where?

KAFKA

Belz.

HERMANN (laughing at his own joke)

Oh yes. Hells Belz.
So you and your friend will join the other shit
beetles and roll your shit balls down country roads.

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KAFKA

Nata will not return.

HERMANN

What will he do?

KAFKA shrugs.

HERMANN

Figure skating and the Kabballah.
Putz. At least he came home

KAFKA (stuttering)

I am leaving.

HERMANN

You will be back. Good. The maid will clean your room.
Bread, onions, porridge and ink. Mix them all up,
You get this dunghill stink. Hey— now I'm the poet.

HERMANN picks up the picture of DEBORAH

HERMANN

Who's this?

KAFKA (stuttering)

The Belzer Rebbe's daughter.

HERMANN

Oh she is too—everything for you.

KAFKA

I love her.

HERMANN

Don't tell me you're engaged. Jewish shiksa vermin Chassidic Rabbi's daughter! A shit beetle's wife. Even the maid calls you Dung Beetle. When will you be leaving?

KAFKA is twitching. His entire face is now black and crustaceous. He falls to all fours. HERMANN stands over him.

HERMANN

Relax! I can't wait. Why are you on your knees?

KAFKA (stuttering)

I must ask you for her hand.

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HERMANN

**Putz. I am not her father. Are you proposing to me?
What's her name?**

KAFKA (stuttering)
I—I do not know yet.

HERMANN
Try to find out before the wedding.

KAFKA (stuttering)
Father—your blessing.

HERMANN
You. You cannot marry her. You are not even a Jew. Shagetz.

HERMANN slips DEBORAH'S picture under his belt.

HERMANN
She'll be staying right here with me.

HERMANN puts on his pants.

You are not going anywhere. Write a story. Maybe you will remember her name.

KAFKA
Father. Her hand. Your blessing.

HERMANN
Not yet.

HERMANN leaves, slamming the door. OTTLA enters a moment later with a pan of milk. She puts it on the floor near KAFKA.

KAFKA (stuttering)
Ottla. My sister—my...

OTTLA
I brought you some milk.

KAFKA
I asked Father.

OTTLA
What did he say?

KAFKA
He...

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OTTLA notices DEBORAH'S picture is gone.

OTTLA

Where is the picture?

KAFKA

Father took it. Stuffed it down his pants.

OTTLA turns away, smiling.

OTTLA

My...

She turns away and rubs her hand over her breast.

Franz. My—the milk. drink, drink.

Both of KAFKA'S hands are now appendages, and he laps at his milk.

OTTLA moves closer.

OTTLA

Franz. Nata never shakes—hands—until now.
He says religious Jews cannot touch women.
Sometimes even their own wives. Is this true?
Does it include sisters?

KAFKA

I believe so.

OTTLA

So stupid. What would happen if I touched you?

KAFKA

The Rebbe.

OTTLA touches KAFKA. His feelers become erect. KAFKA blushes, black to reddish. OTTLA leans over towards her brother. He pins her sleeve down with his arm appendage.

KAFKA

Ottla. Please.

OTTLA slowly moves away until her entire shoulder is bared. KAFKA raises himself to her shoulder. He closes his eyes.

OTTLA

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Franz. I love you. I cannot bear the thought of you marrying that and remaining like this. Break it off. I will care for you. You can write. We could get a room. I could move into.

OTTLA moves her head even closer. KAFKA closes his eyes. One of KAFKA'S feelers snakes around her shoulder and caresses her neck. The other stands out rigid at full extension. KAFKA opens his eyes and both feelers go limp.

KAFKA (stuttering)

I love her.

OTTLA stands and takes the milk and pours it on KAFKA'S body.

OTTLA

You can starve for all I care. I'm telling! You louse!

INT FULL SHOT DINING ROOM SABBATH KAFKA FAMILY EVENING

Dinner has been served. Two giant bowls of apples have been set out on the table. KAFKA is slowly chewing his bread, onions, and mush.

JULIE

No wonder you are starving. Have some apples.

KAFKA takes an apple and offers it to OTTLA. She glares. HERMANN takes his bowl, eating one apple after the other, core and all.

HERMANN

Your sister says you are still planning on marrying that Chassidic Shiksa.

OTTLA

He is no longer my brother.

She careful chooses three apples. HERMANN carefully chooses three apples.

HERMANN

I read your shit story.

KAFKA

What?

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HERMANN

Your shit story. In the toilet. I read it in one shitting, and in my judgment, the verdict is "No"!

JULIE

Franz will have to marry someone someday.

HERMANN

No shiksas.

JULIE

Hermann, for God's sake. She's a Rabbi's daughter.

HERMANN

No shiksa. Jewish or Gentile.

KAFKA (stuttering)

In the morning I will be...

HERMANN

Sit.

KAFKA stands, wobbling.

KAFKA'S POINT OF VIEW: HERMANN violently knocks KAFKA onto the table. We hear a crunching sound as KAFKA lands on his back, his wind knocked out.

KAFKA

I cannot breathe.

KAFKA is coughing.

KAFKA'S POINT OF VIEW: We see gray ceiling and the shadow of a sword.

HERMANN

You are not going anywhere. You will marry only the woman I approve of.

KAFKA

Mother...

JULIE stands passively.

Ottla...

OTTLA looks away.

KAFKA looks up to see the shadow of the sword moving towards his head.

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KAFKA (stuttering)
Father, Father. Why have you forsaken me?

HERMANN'S POINT OF VIEW: We hear the sound of a knife hitting the table. An apple has been cut in half. HERMANN is grinning.

KAFKA has fallen out of his chair again. JULIE and OTTLA eat their halves of the apple.

HERMANN
You have until three to get up. One. Two...

KAFKA
Dora. Deborah. Dora. I am coming.

HERMANN
Three. You lose.

HERMANN and OTTLA stand over KAFKA. He shuffles towards his door on all fours. HERMANN throws one apple, then another at KAFKA'S back as a joke. The third is thrown so hard it sticks into KAFKA'S back and sinks in. Kafka is stunned.
In incredible pain, he moans. KAFKA turns to OTTLA as he lifts himself up, holding the doorknob.

OTTLA
Her or me.

KAFKA
I must get away from Father.

OTTLA has two apples in her right hand, and one in her left. KAFKA, standing, turns toward OTTLA with his arm open and outstretched. OTTLA rears back and fires the apple. It hits KAFKA'S heart with a thump and sinks into his body. KAFKA falls into his room.

EXT FULL SHOT VLATAVA RIVER (PRAGUE) KAFKA/NATA LATE WINTER DAY

NATA is figure skating. First he twirls and skates a *yould,* which looks like a large comma, then a *hey* , doing the leg on one skate, then a straight line *vav* and another *hey*.

KAFKA
What in...

NATA
God's name.

KAFKA laughs.

KAFKA
I am returning. Come back.

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NATA

Why?

KAFKA

The dreadful things happening in my apartment.
My family. What do you say?

NATA

No—*genuke*—I have had enough. As soon as I am strong enough I will have a woman.

KAFKA

Fine. Good. I will take you. But please. Return with me.

NATA

No. I am working on a book. I would only return to see the Rebbe's daughter.

KAFKA

Oh.

NATA

Eroticism and mysticism. I have mastered the mysticism.

KAFKA

The Rebbe's daughter is not the only. Chassidic women
are so pure, so radiant. SO clean and beautiful.

NATA

Franz, I love her.

KAFKA

As soon as you have a real woman you will forget her.

EXT FULL SHOT PRAGUE RED LIGHT DISTRICT KAFKA/NATA NIGHT

Streetwalkers approach KAFKA and NATA. KAFKA smiles. NATA is eager and ready to talk to one.

KAFKA

No, no. We are going to a brothel.

NATA

Why?

KAFKA

There, love is sensibly conducted.

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NATA

You lead the way.

They walk to the brothel. They enter the building "The Amazonian" and walk up many flights of stairs. Two well dressed men descend with broad smiles. KAFKA and NATA enter an ante-room. First one, then several (5), prostitutes encircle the two. One PROSTITUTE whispers to another, nodding her head towards KAFKA.

NATA makes his choice, a blond with a gap between her front teeth. She has large dark eyes and thin lips. She pulls her underpants away from her pudenda.

OLDEST PROSTITUTE

Take the gentlemen's hats.

(to KAFKA)

Will you be watching this evening?

KAFKA

O no, no.

(to NATA)

I will wait outside.

NATA is enraptured by his blond. He whispers to KAFKA

NATA

I think I am in love.

KAFKA

Already you have forgotten her?

NATA

Forgotten?

KAFKA

The Rebbe's daughter. Talk to you after.

EXT FULL SHOT CHARLES BRIDGE PRAGUE KAFKA/NATA DAY

NATA and KAFKA are crossing the Moldan river on the bridge. As they walk, and pass the baroque statues of the Catholic saints, the CAMERA EXPLORES NATA'S new look. Human face, European suit, goatee and modern fodor hat.

They walk to the Old New Synagogue and stop in front of the Hebrew clock in view.

NATA

You are living in the synagogue.

KAFKA

I bother no one, and no one bothers me.

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NATA

You are not lonely?

KAFKA (calling)

Theo, Theo.

NATA turns to the door where KAFKA'S standard black POODLE, THEO, is waiting.

NATA

Are you happy?

KAFKA

I will be indestructible. I am studying the oral law, Mishna. I am about to finish the Sixth order.

Nata, I need an Aramaic tutor for my Talmud studies.

NATA

I see.

KAFKA

I will pay.

NATA

We will see. Franz—do you know, besides the poodle, you have another roommate?

KAFKA

You mean the marten. The synagogue sable.

NATA

What? No. Come, I will show you.

INT FULL SHOT OLD NEW SYNAGOGUE NATA/KAFKA DAY

As they walk slowly through the sanctuary, a small ANIMAL streaks by. It is the Bar Mitzvah SABLE.

KAFKA

The synagogue sable.

NATA

Oh.

They walk to Kafka's room, which is spartan, containing only a bed, a desk, and books piled everywhere.

KAFKA

One week. I return to Belz. To my bride.

NATA

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Franz, the Rebbe will never...

KAFKA
I am not going to marry the Rabbi.

NATA
We will see. Let us learn.

NATA walks towards THEO, who growls.

NATA
You study with this at your feet? Let us study, then I will introduce you to a relative.

NATA gets two large leather tractates *Sanhedrin*. He opens the text with a dramatic flair, randomly.

NATA (reading the text)

The Rabbinic Master Rava says:
If the righteous desire they can create a world.

KAFKA
Fictions?

NATA
Oh no. Listen and learn.

NATA'S POINT OF VIEW: We see an ancient Rabbi moving fog into a gray clay mud form, then laying his body on the mud while he is holding a large Hebrew scroll in his hand.

NATA (VO) (incantation)
RAVA BARA GAVRA
RAVA BARA GAVRA
RAVA BARA GAVRA

Rava created a man.

Visuals continue from NATA'S point of view with his (VO).

The Gray clay man gets up and dresses similarly to the RABBI, RAVA who created him. The RABBI questions the gray clad man who is mute.

Visual of RABBI ZAYRA'S lips in sync with NATA'S

KAFKA

Why was the golem mute?

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NATA

Even Rabbi Rava was not without sin.
We cannot create better than God.

KAFKA

What was he chanting, Aramaic?

NATA

Rava Bara Gavra. He rearranged the letters of his name Raba and created Bara.

NATA reenters and KAFKA is startled. He drops the sword, which falls on the floor. NATA sits and opens his book randomly.

NATA

Says here that Rabbi Zayra had his throat slit and was cured by a miracle. Kabballah!

NATA stands over KAFKA, holding the sword. KAFKA lifts his chin. The POODLE sits and growls meanly at NATA, who gently lays the sword down.

KAFKA (animated)

If we were to, the Rebbe would know, I would be an accomplished Cabalist. Imagine.

NATA

Follow me.

They ascend the stairs.

You are related.

KAFKA

Who told you this?

NATA

Kitsch, the journalist.

They enter the attic. THEO heels behind KAFKA.

The attic of the Old Now Synagogue is thick with cob webs and is pulsating light at the rhythm of a heart beat. No one has entered for hundreds of years. The room has the gothic windows of FAUST'S study. Bookcases, full, frame the wall. In the center of the room is a small desk stacked high with books. In the corner is a thick cob web chrysalis, the source of the pulsating light. A Hebrew clock on the wall reads exactly 3:55.

NATA (pointing to the cocoon)

The earth bastard, son of your mother's relation Rabbi Yehuda Lowey, the Maharal.

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KAFKA

Is someone sleeping in the—

NATA

Don't you see? It will be easy this time. Your great uncle did all the work and laid him to rest. Here.

KAFKA

Why did the Rabbi Maharal create? What is his? her?name?

NATA

Joseph. Joseph Golem. Dead Christian children.

KAFKA

Please?

NATA

Blood libels. Blood for Passover Matzos.
Children's blood for red, red wine.

KAFKA picks up his sword.

KAFKA

How could anyone believe?

KAFKA raises up his sword over an imaginary ISAAC. VISUAL of KAFKA as ISAAC.

KAFKA

Even Abraham did not have to sacrifice his son.

NATA

Jew hatred is never reasonable, Franz. The Jews of Prague needed a protector, a material Messiah who would protect them from these accusations. A being who would neither slumber nor sleep.

Visuals follow NATA'S point of view.

NATA

The Maharal took his trusted disciples. They fasted seven days. They put on their tallis and tefillin and prepared morning prayers. They found the right gray clay and pure artesian water, and most important, they found this book. And created.

NATA gestures toward the chrysalis.

NATA (cont.)

Adam Two.

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NATA checks the clock. Exactly five o'clock.

Let us begin.

They approach the pulsating chrysalis and detach it from its place, placing it in the middle of the room. It stops pulsating.

NATA
Start circling. We cannot stop or— How long?

NATA
We have 97,240 incantations. It will take exactly seven hours. Do exactly what I do. No interruptions.

NATA and KAFKA(repeating each sound and movement)

AA-A	**TURN HEAD LEFT TO RIGHT**
AE-E	**TURN HEAD DOWN**
AI-I	**TURN HEAD RIGHT TO LEFT**
AO-O	**TURN HEAD UP**
AU-U	**JERK HEAD FORWARD**
BA BA	**TURN HEAD LEFT TO RIGHT**
BE BE	**TURN HEAD DOWN**
BI BI	**TURN HEAD RIGHT TO LEFT**
BO BO	**TURN HEAD UP**
BU BU	**JERK HEAD FORWARD**
CA CA	**TURN HEAD LEFT TO RIGHT**
CE CE	**TURN HEAD DOWN**
CI CI	**TURN HEAD RIGHT TO LEFT**
CO CO	**TURN HEAD UP**
CU CU	**JERK HEAD FORWARD**

KAFKA is into the ritual, but laughs.

NATA
Franz, remember, he will awaken, and his thoughts will reflect our meditation.

The CAMERA FOLLOWS the clock towards midnight as KAFKA and NATA chant. Each hour the chrysalis pulsates brighter. At ten o’clock, the outline of the GOLEM'S body is visible. JOSEPH GOLEM begins to breath. At eleven o’clock, the GOLEM'S arm reaches for something and binds straps to his arm. The light is stronger, revealing tefillin of the head, outlined on the GOLEM'S forehead. At midnight, the figure emerges from the cobwebs and rolls towards KAFKA and NATA. The GOLEM'S body unrolls like a scroll.

The GOLEM slowly stands. He has the bulging muscles of a body builder. Cobwebs cling to his face. The GOLEM'S face is ruddy. He looks remarkably like KAFKA. The GOLEM has the long straight hair of a red Indian. The GOLEM and KAFKA smile at one another.

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GOLEM

Good morning.

NATA screams.

NATA

I—I thought you could not—were—mute. Are we (gesturing to KAFKA) without sin?

The GOLEM laughs.

GOLEM

No. You are not my creators. You did awaken me with your mumbo jumbo. I get up at midnight every morning.

NATA

What do you do every evening—morning.

GOLEM

I study.

NATA

Alone.

The GOLEM nods.

NATA (cont.)

You are lonely?

GOLEM (in denial)

Oh no. I was created to be alone.
I study God's Torah law.
The world freely offers itself in rolls and waves
of ecstasy at my feet.

The POODLE settles on GOLEM'S feet. He growls again at NATA. He looks up at the GOLEM.

GOLEM

The dog is hungry.

The GOLEM gets the dog some food. He sits at his desk. Tears well up in his eyes. KAFKA looks compassionately at the GOLEM.

GOLEM

It has been a while since I have been with other humans.

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NATA

You are human?

GOLEM

Oh yes. All too human. I miss my father.

KAFKA

Your father.

The GOLEM covers his eyes.

An image is projected on the cobwebs, which still hang in a sheet on one wall, of the RABBI MAHARAL sitting in his study.

GOLEM (to KAFKA)

Your great, very great, uncle, my father, was a saint and a genius.

KAFKA

He must have known the secrets of the Kabballah to create you.

GOLEM

The secrets of science.

GOLEM (VO) (in the mouth of the RABBI'S image.)

Time is a form of matter.
Everything is spiritual.
The worlds of time and matter
consist of movement.

GOLEM removes his hands from his eyes.

So here I am
an I do not age.
I am eternal
I am indestructible
and yet
Earth Mother
Earthly Father
I am a man.
And now, I am hungry.

KAFKA

If you eat, you must...

GOLEM

Regularly. Every morning upon awakening. You must therefore excuse me.

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The GOLEM enters a small lavatory surrounded by thick cobwebs. We can faintly make out his seated form.

NATA

You—The Rabbi Maharal. You said he was a scientist.
My teacher, the Belzer Rebbe, teaches that secular studies are for—you will excuse me, the toilet.

Where one is forbidden to think of the Torah.

The Rebbe appeared to me in a dream.
Warning me about my reading.

NATA (cont.)

So I have taken to reading Freud in the toilet.

GOLEM

I will tell you why your Judaism is in such a crisis.
Why all Western religions are in crisis.
Torah is science, and science Torah.
Science gives men and women the eyes of God.
Nothing exists but miracles.

NATA

Nonsense.
Science will be the Tree of Death.
Science falls into the hands of the demons,
and the world goes up in fire and smoke.
Every advancement in technology
refines the art of killing. Of war.

The GOLEM finishes his toilet and carefully washes his hands.

GOLEM

Yes. Science and technology, like religion, are abused.

GOLEM invites KAFKA and NATA to sit.

GOLEM

Lets learn. This is where we, me and my father and I studied together every Friday afternoon.

NATA

First, I must hear the story about how you saved the Jews of Prague.

The GOLEM covers his face. We see the images on the cobwebs as he speaks.

GOLEM

The Rabbi told me of the Blood Libel.

Visuals begin with the GOLEM seated at the same desk studying with MAHARAL.

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I have a sixth sense—even a seventh. So I knew where the children were. It was a frigid winter.
The GOLEM enters the CARDINAL'S parsonage and goes to the basement, emerging with a child in his arms. Walking through the Ghetto, the Jews cheer their savior. The GOLEM brings the child to the Old New Synagogue and lays his body on top of the child, breathing into the child the breath of life. The child awakens and the GOLEM and the RABBI, each holding a hand, enter the KING'S palace and have an audience with the KING OF BOHEMIA. The KING, suffering from melancholia, brightens when he sees the RABBI and the GOLEM and the CHILD.

KING

Revoke the evil decree. No more death to the Jews.

GOLEM (visuals follow his voice.)

The Rebbe asked the King to come with us to the Royal Gardens. They were covered in snow, a blanket of death. The vines and trees and flowers suddenly came to life.Lilacs. peonies, olumbines, scarlet hawthorns. The King also blossomed. He wept.

(KING in the GOLEM'S voice)

I want to meet my ancestors, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah.

ABRAHAM appears.

KAFKA (VO)

What did he ask him?

GOLEM

He asked...

KING (in GOLEM'S voice)

What is the meaning of life? What does it mean?

We see ISAAC (KAFKA) on the alter. Smoke is rising. He fades as a sword comes down and slits his throat. He is surrounded by fire.

GOLEM (VO)

The Holocaustum.

ISAAC stands, phoenix like, touching his neck. It is healed. He walks to his FATHER who takes his hand. They embrace..
CLOSE SHOT of KAFKA'S face. He is weeping.

NATA (mocking)

You are so wise. Tell me, what will happen on Judgment Day? Bodily Resurrections?

GOLEM (sincerely)

Judgment Day is a court that is always, at all times, in session. And Resurrection is an eternal occurrence. The teaching of God. The Mother.

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NATA is squirming. These are heresies to him.

NATA
The Messiah. What do you believe?

GOLEM
Believe? Belive. Be! Live!
A faith like a guillotine as heavy as light.

KAFKA
I must see the end.

GOLEM shakes his head no.

GOLEM
I have already—you have already seen too much.

KAFKA (imploring)
The end.

The GOLEM looks at the visuals on the cob web screen. He is startled and narrates.

GOLEM
God establishes the Final World Order. Jerusalem is capitol.

We see an AERIAL SHOT of Moriah to Zion.
The Earth is renamed Pacifica.

SPACE SHOT of Earth.

GOLEM (cont.)
Oceans. One world. No boundaries. The United Nations of Israel. The entire world is Israel. Israel is Jerusalem.

SPACE SHOT of Israel.
Jerusalem...

AERIAL SHOT of Jerusalem.
The Holy of Holies. And the center. A temple.

AERIAL SHOT of the Temple.
In the center of the Temple, the Tree of Life, and a Menorah.

CLOSE SHOT of MENORAH'S light.
Time is transcended. Distance is spanned. Light becomes matter, and matter, light.
The Tree of Knowledge is the Tree of Life.

LONG SHOT of a MAN in white. His face is similar to KAFKA'S

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KAFKA (VO)
Eat the fruit. Even the leaves. Give nourishment.

We see light filling a laboratory and scientists measuring, pouring, and creating. They wear prayer shawls and white silk skullcaps. Organs are pulsating in containers; machines create bionic life like human parts. First, we see feet, then legs, arms, heads, and then a body.

Homo Messiah.

NATA (VO)
Please, I am going to be sick.

GOLEM
Each a Messiah of their own small world. Each Eternal.
Golem Men and Women.
Aging is eliminated.

CLOSE SHOT of KAFKA'S face. He is entranced.

Pain is eliminated. Death is defeated.
The world to come. Infinite life.
Abundant life, excitement, learning, dancing, music.

GOLEM (cont.)
Travel through space and time.
Thinking produces miracles.

KAFKA takes a deep breath.

CLOSE SHOT of NATA'S face.

NATA
I see why the Rabbi made you mute.

GOLEM
Mutism is an attribute of perfection.

KAFKA, childlike, recites a Mishna.

KAFKA

Rabbi Simon, the son of the great Rabbi Gamaliel says,"All the days of my life I have grown up amongst sages and have found nothing better for the body than silence."

GOLEM
Very good, Rabbi. You repeat your Mishna.

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NATA

I always thought a golem was an idiot goblin. I'm dreaming, Joseph Golem. Adam Frankenstein?

GOLEM

You are dreaming that you are dreaming. All of this is true.

NATA (at the door)

Franz. we have sinned. We have made as sculpted image. We have violated the Second Commandment of God's Law. I think I will be leaving.

KAFKA

Teach me. Talmud, Aramaic, Zohar.

GOLEM

Why?

KAFKA

I am in love.

GOLEM

With whom?

KAFKA

But you seem to know everything. Why ask?

GOLEM

Answer anyway.

KAFKA

The Belzer Rabbi's daughter.

GOLEM

That is not a reason to study the Torah.

KAFKA

I am in love.

GOLEM

First you must learn to love God.

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KAFKA

I want to live—to create— with her a paradise. A heaven on Earth.

GOLEM

One condition,.

NATA (still at the door.)

The Golem sounds more and more like...

The POODLE growls at NATA.

KAFKA

What is the condition?

GOLEM

Take me with you.

NATA

Franz, you are making a pact with a...

The POODLE stands on his hind lags and barks at NATA.

NATA

Dog, you expose. You are violating the Law. Fie on you.
God cursed you to walk on all fours to hide your nakedness.

POODLE

Dogmas!

NATA

Oh my God! The Poodle, the golem, the Devil!
Faust, Theophilos, Theo.

GOLEM (to NATA)

Come. Learn with us.

NATA stands stiffly in the doorway.

GOLEM (opening a text)

In the beginning was...

NATA

There, you see already he replaces God's name with a blasphemy.

GOLEM

In A beginning.

NATA

God created

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GOLEM

was the.. Word. *Ah-ha-va*

.NATA

He quotes the forbidden text!

GOLEM

In the beginning was the deed. In A beginning, God creating in deed.

NATA

Faust, Satan, out, out! Franz, come with me. This golem who speaks incessantly and always blasphemously. Franz, we must leave. All who have entered this room since it was sealed and banned have gone mad!

KAFKA

I must understand. Love. Life. Paradise.

NATA

The answer is in Belz. Listen Franz, a story. You must come with me. I will return.

Visuals from NATA'S point of view.

When the Rebbe of Zans took his son to visit the Belzer Rebbe he asked him how it felt being in the presence of the Rebbe and his holy wife.

As they entered the room, the boy answered, "I feel like we were seeing Adam and Eve before the Fall." Like Paradise," answered the boy. "So it looked to me as well," answered the Rebbe.

GOLEM

A nice story, Nata. Now come and learn.

They wait. NATA does not move. The poodle sits in a chair. The GOLEM opens a text for him. He rests his paw on the page.

GOLEM

In the beginning was the Quest.
Learning
The questioning is the Way
to your redeeming.
In the beginning is the Equation.

GOLEM writes on the screen. In black appears the equation $E=MC^2$

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GOLEM (cont.)

This hour a wondrous undertaking.
A human being in the making.

GOLEM opens his arms to KAFKA.

GOLEM (to KAFKA)
Well, Father. It's really me. This is no joke, as you see.

NATA
Franz...

GOLEM
Come embrace me. Take me to your heart and tenderly.

KAFKA embraces GOLEM.

GOLEM
This mechanical Bachelor with himself has debated what his life lacks.
You, dear Franz, a human being whose body and soul are so firmly mated.

The door slams. NATA is gone. The POODLE jumps to all fours and goes to the door.

KAFKA (to POODLE)
Nata was.
Was Nata.

POODLE
Right.

KAFKA
You are...

POODLE
Theophilus . A dog, that starts with D. Adding evil you get...

KAFKA
The Devil. Are you—really Satan?

POODLE
Who is Satan?
Where is Hell?
No. Not the Devil.
God's lover, God's friend.
I said—Theo is my name.
Theophilos. God's greatest Chassid
If you serve
as I serve
with devotion and obedience
You too shall be a Theophilos.

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God's humble servant.

The POODLE sits with KAFKA and the GOLEM.

POODLE

Unroll the ancient parchment.
Genesis again. Again and again and again.

On the seventh again, he rested.

Reflect on what still more.

The POODLE points to the screen and writes *what, how, why, I, j, KAFKA*, as he speaks.

On how and why.

To dot the I, read J to K

The POODLE'S monologue activates the visual screen he has been writing on.
Romantic spooks are all you have known.

We see Frankenstein's, Monsters mindlessly walking, humans fleeing, old horror film images. The GOLEM shakes his head in disgust.
We see COUNT DRACULA wearing a Jewish star, hypnotizing a nubile blond-haired, blue-eyed, teenaged girl.

He says, "My name is Count Dracula. I want to have you for my Passover Seder."
We see Faust, an image of GOLEM MAN, becoming a monster. A MONTAGE of images from movies on FAUST and MEPHISTO, The Jew becoming the Devil.

POODLE (as images roll)
But a true ghost is a classical telling.

Yes, yes. I am the Satan, the dark accuser, a paid Prosecutor.

We see the POODLE in a three-piece suit in a court room. The defense attorney, another POODLE, also wears a three-piece suit.

Your sins are not original.
Franz, Franz. We formed you into a Jew.
A Kafka, for good reason.

The fringes of your prayer shawl.

The POODLE lifts them in his paw to KAFKA'S hand. KAFKA folds his hands together and his head drops to his chest.

Touch the corner of that garment, and be healed.
the sinking hands of Christ embrace Dracula.

Yes, they bit their own neck and you, your own.

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We see a Hollywood DRACULA wearing a Jewish star, turning his head madly, biting at the air.

CLOSE SHOT OF DRACULA'S FACE. It is KAFKA.

POODLE

The red stain. Rabbi. Heal thyself.
Freedom. Free.
We are in Paradise now. Death does not exist.

Theology is an iron bone that cannot be broken even by the common bite of a dog.

Give this dog
Theo

POODLE (cont.)

No iron bones.

I am
I love God
I am doing
My job.

KAFKA

No sin—eating of knowledge?
The Tree of Knowledge?

POODLE

The apple. Eat.
No. No original sin.
And take it from this expert.
No sin is original.

KAFKA

My sins are original to me!

POODLE

Franz—Kafka, sin is always a conspiracy.

KAFKA

What are you saying, Dog?

POODLE

God is Good without an O.

Visual of the POODLE tapping the word Good on the screen. The O disappears and the word God remains.

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KAFKA

O?

POODLE

Death is in the beginning.
Not understanding Death is the Fall.

KAFKA

Is that all?

POODLE

No.

The screen is activated, this time by KAFKAS growing mental capacity. We see the screen, then KAFKA twice. We see a raised platform like an alter with MILENA, DORA, THE RABBI OF BELZ, OTTLA, THE GOLEM, and KAFKA tied with leather straps to the alter. A flame flashes from above, and in a moment, we see only ashes.

KAFKA

Totally consumed. The holocaustum again.
Isaac my brother.
Should I believe the Devil
in the form of a dark dog?

POODLE

Look again, Franz. This is your own vision.

We see a mushroom cloud devouring the Earth, fire and then white light.

KAFKA

After the Holocaustum, a holocaust?

KAFKA

What is my destiny?

GOLEM

Live it first, Franz.
Live it first.

POODLE

Look into your heart, Franz.
There, seeing, doing, and being are all one thing.

KAFKA

Tell me Theo.

The POODLE lifts his paw in a halt gesture.

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POODLE

One last piece of advice.

KAFKA

Yes.

POODLE

Renounce hunting.

KAFKA

Hunting?

POODLE

Hunting animals. Hunting bodies. Hunting souls. Hunting God, and hunting dogs.

He smirks.

And hunting women.

The POODLE jumps to all fours and curls around the GOLEM'S feet.

INT FULL SHOT OLD NEW SYNAGOGUE GOLEM GROUP DAY

The GOLEM is sleeping in his cocoon. KAFKA sleeps on the floor covered by a white blanket., with the poodle by his side on top of the blanket.

The arms of the Hebrew clock moves around towards ten, then to eleven. KAFKA wakes and waits for the GOLEM. It is now midnight.

KAFKA

Up all night, asleep all day.
I will miss my train.

GOLEM

Train?

KAFKA

The nine o'clock to Galacia.

GOLEM

You missed it.

KAFKA

The seven o'clock.

The GOLEM shakes his head.

KAFKA

The midnight train.

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GOLEM

When I awaken.

KAFKA

The three o'clock.

GOLEM

Yes. The three o'clock. That is your train.

KAFKA

I must pack

GOLEM

You have eighteen minutes.

KAFKA is startled. The Hebrew clock reads 2:40.

KAFKA

We must leave now.

The GOLEM shrugs.

It does not matter.

KAFKA

To me, nothing is more important.

GOLEM

I know. I can see.

The webs are lighting up. The screen is activated. The chrysalis is lit and pulsating. We see KAFKA standing with luggage.

EXT FULL SHOT PRAGUE TRAIN STATION KAFKA NIGHT

Two middle aged JEWS in white skullcaps with neatly trimmed beards carry a trunk towards their waiting family. The trunk holds uncountable baggage, all their worldly possessions. The train whistle is heard and the children and adults are loaded with the bags. A shapeless but strong young woman remains seated on the trunk. She is suckling an infant and is surrounded by acquaintances in lively conversation.

KAFKA watches the scene.

One of the men looks at KAFKA and shakes his head 'no'.

JOSEPH GOLEM, in full Chassidic regalia, is carrying four suitcases, two under his arms, two in his hands. KAFKA, also dressed as a Chassid, carries the poodle on a leash.

EXT FULL SHOT TRAIN STOP BELZ GALACIA GOLEM GROUP NIGHT

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The train stops. Only KAFKA and the GOLEM disembark. They walk to the village. The one inn has a 'No Vacancy" sign. They find an empty stable and bed down for the night.

INT FULL SHOT RABBI'S STUDY KAFKA/REBBE GROUP DAY

KAFKA
I ask again for the hand of your daughter in marriage.

REBBE
Saturday night I will call a tribunal. Then we shall pass judgment.

KAFKA
Excellent. I will prove I have mastered the Torah and the Kabballah.

REBBE
The secrets of the Torah?
You have—mastered?

The GOLEM approaches the REBBE, hand extended.

GOLEM
Shalom alechem, Rebbe Reb Yid.

The GOLEM grips the REBBE'S hand. It is enveloped by the GOLEM'S giant hand. The REBBE looks at his hand after the shake as if it had been burned.

REBBE
Who are you?

GOLEM
I am Joseph. Don't you recognize me?

The POODLE growls.

KAFKA
This is Theo.

The REBBE steps back. He is not a dog lover.

REBBE
Saturday night.

INT FULL SHOT BELZ SYNAGOGUE MEETING DAY

The REBBE is sitting at his tisch (table). He is the king of the court.

He takes a bite of fish and a large plate is passed around. Each Chassid takes a bite with their fingers. The REBBE appears in deep meditation, then bored, almost falling asleep, until KAFKA and the GOLEM enter. All Chassidim whisper to one another. We hear, "tonight. Tonight."

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CLOSE SHOT of REBBE'S face. We see the REBBE'S eyes close tightly.

Dissolve to a soft focus.

INT FULL SHOT NATA'S KITCHEN PRAGUE NATA/REBBE GROUP DAY

NATA is about to take a bite of a sweet pastry. He is reading a book by Freud. His head is bare.

NATA looks up, sees an apparition of the REBBE take form in his kitchen, and drops his pastry.

REBBE
Rebbe Reb Nata. No blessing? No yarmulka?

NATA turns red with shame.

REBBE
You must come to BELZ. Return.

NATA

But Rebbe, its Shabbos. Travel is forbidden.

The REBBE'S image fades.

The REBBE opens his eyes. He stares at KAFKA. The Chassidim open a path for KAFKA, the POODLE, and the GOLEM.

REBBE (condescending)
Amschel has been studying Kabballah.
He promised to reveal a secret to us today.
Franz, tell us your secret.

KAFKA puts his arm around the GOLEM.

KAFKA
Meet Joseph Golem.

CHASSIDIM break into murmurs.

CHASSIDIM

Golem? What did he say? Golem?

The REBBE hits his fist on the table like a judge.

REBBE
Sha-sha.
This Joseph? A Golem?

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You made?

KAFKA

Well, no. I helped. Nata and I.

Rebbe shaking his head yes.

REBBE

Nata is meshuga. Another meshuga. Franz Amschel Kafka.

GOLEM (eloquent)

Not so my Rebbe, Franz is the sanest of men.

The REBBE'S SHAMMES (attendant, played by the same actor in the first scene with the SHAMMES) in goatee and heavy robes is impatient with the attention taken away from his master.

SHAMMES

A test.

CHASSIDIM

Ah.

SHAMMES

The Golem of the Rabbi Maharal, a great Chassidic master, was the Rabbi's study partner. Pass this test (SHAMMES winks at REBBE) and you are the GOLEM.

GOLEM

As you wish.

KAFKA

No. Ask a question. Any question. He is as wise as Elijah.

REBBE (to KAFKA)

Franz, Amschel, if he answers correctly, you may have my daughter's hand in marriage.

The SHAMMES goes to the Talmud in the library.

SHAMMES

This is the test. I close my eyes. Open the text and place my finger on a letter. You tell me the letter my finger is on.

KAFKA

That is absurd. What book?

SHAMMES

A holy book.

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KAFKA

All books are holy.

GOLEM

Why squander your wisdom? Ask.
The fate of the soul after death? Why evil.
Is there life after birth?

GOLEM waits for a laugh. There is none, so he laughs himself. The exact moment, year...day...hour...of the redemption and the end of suffering.

SHAMMES

Mr. Golem. What letter?

GOLEM

The holiest letter, in this case letters, of the alphabet.

SHAMMES

Trickster. He speaks riddles.

KAFKA

All the letters of the alphabet are holy.

SHAMMES

The letter.

GOLEM

You Rabbi Shammes are a great legalist and Chassid. The Rebbes right hand man. But your arrogance has led you to obliterate with your finger God's holy name.

SHAMMES

Huh? More riddles.

GOLEM

Your finger covers the first letter, letters in God's holy abbreviated name, Adonai. The holy *yould.*

The SHAMMES looks down, lifts his finger, and faints. Pandemonium erupts. CHASSIDIM murmur.

CHASSIDIM

The test. Did he pass?

A CHASSID

I don't know. The Shammes fainted.

2ND CHASSID

He passed! The Golem!

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Half of the CHASSIDIM surround KAFKA and hoist him up in the air, sitting in a chair. They continue holding him up,. singing and dancing.

The REBBE sits rigid, staring straight ahead.

INT FULL SHOT BELZ SYNAGOGUE KAFKA GROUP NIGHT

KAFKA is staring straight ahead in the same pose as the REBBE. KAFKA'S entire Chassidic garb is now snow white. The GOLEM stands at his right, all in white. REBBE KAFKA takes a bite out of his chicken leg and sets it down. He chews the morsel 100 times. We see hundreds of CHASSIDIM in white lift their chicken legs, bite, and chew 100 times. He takes a bite out of an apple and chews it 100 times. So do all of his CHASSIDIM. KAFKA begins his teachings. KAFKA'S CHASSIDIM begin to bow and sway. KAFKA closes his eyes. All CHASSIDIM close their eyes.

CHASSID ONE

Sha—The Rebbe will speak Torah.

KAFKA
The True Way, the way of Kafkan Chassidism, is simple.
It is the way of the tightrope walker.

We see KAFKA walking on a tight rope. He jumps, leaps high in the air, twirls around, lands on his feet on the ground, and smiles. The rope is suspended only one inch from the floor. KAFKA walks around it.

The CHASSIDIM are in deepest rapture. Their eyes are closed; they stroke their beards and pull at their side locks.

KAFKA
All human errors are impatience and laziness.
Impatience—impatient.
Eve and Adam expelled from Paradise.
Impatient and lazy, they do not return.

A BLACKBIRD flies in the window and lands on the eternal light over the ark, and there is a hush amongst the CHASSIDIM. This is a bad omen for the KAFKAN CHASSIDIM and their new REBBE.

SUSTAINED SHOT of BIRD and LIGHT.

KAFKA
The blackbirds maintain that a single blackbird, one Kafka, could destroy the heavens. There is no doubting that.

PAN CHASSIDIM. Some are shocked, some perplexed. SHOT of the BLACKBIRD.
This proves nothing against the heavens, for the heavens signify, simply, the impossibility of blackbirds.

Do not let evil make you believe you can have secrets.

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The meditation by the serpent was necessary.

Evil can seduce a man or woman, but can never become a woman or a man.

The CHASSIDIM'S eyes are closed. They are enraptured. Again, their eyes open when they hear KAFKA speak.

KAFKA

This is my last sermon. Many people prowl around Sinai.

SHOT of a Torah service. KAFKA is reading the Torah. The CONGREGATION is either bored, or yammering in whispers.

Their speech is blurred
Either they are rambling
or they are silent.

A processional marching around the ark single file follows the Torah.

KAFKA (cont.)

However, I come down
A straight broad path.

The True Way. The Path.

KAFKA is in front of the ark, victoriously holding the Torah over his head.

With effortless strides
Moving towards one law.

Listen, Israel. You are the task.
Nowhere is a disciple to be found.
Nowhere is a disciple to be found.

We live in and by the community.

Indivisible, unity is indestructible.

Believe. Be-live in the indestructible
within yourself.

No more sermons, and my Chassidim,
no more silence.

Not one of you, not one, understands Moses.

The doubtful, doubt.

Believers believe.

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Now.

Believers, it is time to doubt.

Doubters, it is time to believe.

NATA, standing in the back of the synagogue, is wearing a white caftan, socks, shoes, and a dark Chassidic fur hat.

NATA

And who are you, a new Moses?

KAFKA (Shaking his head no)

Humility. The humility of a Moses.
That is the only modern way to pray.

NATA

Do you believe Moses received the Torah on Sinai, or are you a heretic? An *Apikoroes*?

KAFKA

Moses. Moses. Leading the isolated and the mortal
into Eternal Life.
The accidental into conformity, into Law!

NATA

Whose Law? Moses' or Franz's?

KAFKA

One law. One mountain. One Garden. One Tree. One Fruit.

NATA

Are you saying we must ascend the Mountain ourselves? Are we all prophets?

KAFKA indicates to NATA to join at the head of the table. NATA does, and sits on KAFKA'S left side as KAFKA begins his final teaching. NATA strokes his beard and removes his black fur hat. KAFKA hands NATA his white hat.

KAFKA

There is no need to leave your home.
Sit at your table. Your altar. And listen.
Do not even listen. Just wait.
Do not even wait. Be completely quiet and alone.
The world will offer itself to you.

KAFKA conducts the *Havdalah* service. We see the fire and the spices.
NATA puts on KAFKA'S white hat.

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KAFKA

Now my trial.

INT FULL SHOT REBBE'S STUDY KAFKA/REBBE NIGHT

KAFKA enters the dark study. The REBBE is holding a *havdalah* candle. He puts the candle out in his silver wine goblet.

REBBE

This tribunal is in session.

Seated in the shadows against the wall are the witnesses all wearing black and barely perceptible in the dark. HERMANN, JULIE, OTTLA, FELICE, MILENA, RABBI BAR MITZVAH, AND THE REBBE'S WIFE.

REBBE

The Judges.

The SHAMMES opens the door and brilliant light floods the room. A POPE in a black miter, black robe, black staff, and black ring emerges from the light. He sits to the REBBE'S right. Next emerges a SHEIK with a black beard, dark Semitic features, and a black turban. He sits to the REBBE'S left.

KAFKA, all in white, stands before the POODLE.

BLACK POPE

What is that book you are holding? A prayer book?
And the dog?

KAFKA

No, it is a travel guide. My dog is fascinated by religious shrines.

The BLACK POPE jots down a note. The SHAMMES walks to KAFKA, offering him a stool.

SHAMMES

Sit.

KAFKA sits.

BLACK SHEIK

You believe in the one God. Absolutely Transcendent?

KAFKA

Absolutely.

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REBBE

And the God that is near imminent, the God of the Law? Elohim?

KAFKA

Abba—Father, hear o Israel.
The Lord, transcendent
Our God, imminent—so close.
The Lord is one.

So love your neighbor as yourself.

The BLACK POPE makes a note. The SHEIK is shaking his head yes. The REBBE is intimidated.

KAFKA (to REBBE)

Now I have my question.
I have passed your tests, I have returned.
I am *Ba'al Tshuva*.
I ask again for the hand
of your daughter in marriage.

REBBE

You will have your answer in due time.
Franz, you will live by the commandments, by the *Mitzvot,* the Laws of your tradition?

KAFKA

What commandment of the Law have I not fulfilled?

REBBE (disgusted, screaming)

Look at you! The law commands, demands black clothing.

KAFKA

The Law?

REBBE

The Law. The codes.

KAFKA

The codes. Your black dress is a custom, not a law.

REBBE

No. The Law is whatever we, the authorities, do.

The POPE and the SHEIK nod their heads in agreement.

KAFKA

And God's Law?

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REBBE

We are God's law.

KAFKA

No.

The REBBE, POPE, and SHEIK glare at KAFKA.

The Law is given by God and belongs to the people.

REBBE

Heretic! Witnesses, you will not be needed. You are dismissed!

The SHAMMES opens the door. The witness walks into the light. The door is left open.

REBBE (to KAFKA)

You are not here to ask the questions. We ask the questions, and have only one. Will you obey?

KAFKA begins to answer, but is cut off.

KAFKA slowly walks in front of the court with THEO and stops to gaze at each of the judges.. KAFKA moves towards the SHAMMES, doorkeeper, and hands THEO'S leash to the doorkeeper. The doorkeeper momentarily looks down at the DOG, and KAFKA slips into the light.

DREAM SEQUENCES END
INT CLOSE SHOT FACE KIERLING SANITARIUM KAFKA DAY JUNE 1924

KAFKA'S eyes open as he awakens. He turns his head towards the door as it opens, bright sunlight floods the room. CAMERA RAISES to a MEDIUM SHOT, showing KAFKA'S body covered to the neck by a white blanket. His body is skeletal. He weighs less than 100 pounds. Lilacs, peonies, columbines, and scarlet hawthorns exactly as in the previous scenes surround him. THEO stands next to DEVALORAH (DORA) in the door. The light looks like a halo around her full head of hair, which has been set in sensuous curls, but she still has the air of a girl raised in a Chassidic household. She is innocent but mature.

CLOSE SHOT of DORA'S cherubic face and warm tender eyes, which are filled with tears. Her full lips quiver. DORA is holding a white book.

KAFKA turns his head back and looks up at the ceiling, which is gray and black. DORA sits next to KAFKA'S bed and the POODLE curls around her feet. KAFKA sighs. He is about to speak, but DORA stops him.

DORA

Franz my love, remember, you are not to talk.
I went for a walk on the sanitarium grounds.
Perhaps you could come outside with the other patients.

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By doctor's orders, KAFKA is not to speak. He communicates by conversation slips on 5"x 8" cards. They are neatly stacked, in order, by the side of his bed. DORA reads aloud.

DORA

Be careful of the broken glass.

She looks at her feet and sees no glass. She gets off her chair and gets down on hands and knees. She finds a piece of glass under the bed. KAFKA indicates with his eyes that she should throw the glass in the trash. DORA carefully wraps the glass in cloth and gently sets it in the trash. She sits and reads the next card.

DORA

Kindly move the lilacs to the sun. Mist the peonies, and see that they do not touch the bottom of the vase.

DORA gets up and does so.

This time she remains standing when she reads the card.

A dark bird flew through the room.

DORA looks at him and gently shrugs her shoulders. She believes KAFKA. KAFKA holds up an apple with one bite taken out.

DORA reads the next card.

We must finish Genesis and Isaiah.

DORA sits. She opens the book she has left on the bed. It is a *chumash*, a Torah that contains the legal and prophetic readings for the year.

DORA

We should continue with the text we were studying before you fell, dozed off.

KAFKA shakes his head yes and indicates his tefillin box with his eyes. DORA takes the black boxes out of their velvet bag that has an embroidered Menorah and the name Amschel on the front. DORA tenderly raises KAFKA'S arm and slips the box to a spot opposite the bicep. Tears flow down DORA'S cheeks as she binds KAFKA'S arms. KAFKA shakes his head to her to complete the ritual the way they do every day. DORA recites the blessings in Hebrew.

KAFKA (whispers with no sound)

Amen.

DORA gently raises KAFKA'S head and affixes the head tefillin. She slips a white silk skullcap onto KAFKA'S head. She recites the blessing in Hebrew.

KAFKA (whispers with no sound)

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Amen.

KAFKA has taken her hand. He struggles to undo the strap that DORA has patiently woven around his palm and fingers into a Hebrew shin. His two hands begin to struggle. DORA is puzzled, then watches a moment and understands. The strap is loose and KAFKA binds their hands together. They smile lovingly at one another. DORA recites the blessing for studying the Torah and KAFKA answers amen by acknowledging the blessing with his eyes.

DORA sings in Hebrew Genesis 3:1-5 with cantillation.
DORA (in English)

Now the serpent was the most naked tongued
of all God's creatures.

DORA looks at KAFKA.

Standing on his legs
the serpent says, in fluent Hebrew...

KAFKA smiles, delighted at DORA'S addition.

Is it not true that God said
that you cannot eat from
any tree of the garden.

KAFKA smiles and motions for DORA to continue.

Any tree but the one
in the center of the garden.
That one you cannot eat from
without being...

DORA stops and closes her eyes. She is deep in thought. She swallows and has a difficult time continuing.

Touched by death.

DORA
Kafka, I cannot continue.

KAFKA opens his eyes wide, implying that she must go on.

DORA
The serpent says, Die? You will not die!"

God knows on the very day
you eat from it
opening will be your eyes.

You will be like God,

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knowing good and evil.

KAFKA (raspy and tubercular voice)

I must know. Our wedding in the fall. What was his answer?

The POODLE wakes. He lifts his head up to KAFKA to be stroked. DORA sits still. KAFKA waits patiently. DORA picks up the remaining notecards.

DORA (reading)

Put your hand on my forehead a moment to give me courage.

DORA removes his head tefillin and places her hand on KAFKA'S forehead. KAFKA raises his arm and DORA undoes the strap on his fingers and palms. KAFKA grasps hold of a pen and DORA reaches for a blank card to hand to KAFKA, along with a pen. He speaks.

KAFKA (slowly, shot of breath and rasping)

Where is the eternal spring and the wedding in the fall?

DORA

Franz, you must not talk!

KAFKA

I must know. Now.

DORA (stuttering)

He said not even though you have returned
to the faith of
that you're a *ba'al tshuva*
Yes.
A repentant one.

KAFKA stares at DORA.

He said...

DORA moves close to KAFKA and embraces him.

No.

KAFKA and DORA cry silently. KAFKA raises himself with difficulty to comfort DORA. They embrace for a while. KAFKA grabs the pen and writes on an index card. KAFKA begins to cough. It turns into a coughing fit. DORA helps KAFKA lay back down. He continues to cough. He spits out some blood. KAFKA does the comforting. DORA goes limp. KAFKA takes his pen and writes a note to DORA, who is still clinging and weeping.

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KAFKA tugs on DORA'S sleeve, revealing her shoulder and kisses and nuzzles her shoulder and breast. DORA quiets and KAFKA begins another coughing fit. DORA pats his back as he gasps and coughs. He cannot get a breath. His body goes limp and DORA stiffens as she lowers KAFKA from her arms into the bed. KAFKA is at peace. DORA closes KAFKA'S eyes and takes the card from KAFKA'S hand.

It reads, Marry me anyway. Love Kafka."
She looks at the Hebrew clock on the wall.
It is exactly 3:00
DORA takes KAFKA'S hand, crying.

DORA

My love. My love. My Kafka. My love. My darling. My good one.

EXT FULL SHOT OLD PRAGUE TO STRASNIC (A PRAGUE SUBURB) JEWISH CEMETERY KAFKA DAY 1924

The sky is partly sunny, then gray. We ride in silence through Prague, past the Old New Synagogue and the Jewish cemetery until the towers of Old Prague and the bridged river disappears. The countryside spreads out towards Bohemia.

At the cemetery, HERMANN and JULIE, ashen faced, follow the plain pine coffin. Behind them is DORA and MAX, a crowd of approximately 100 follow the coffin down a path through a meadow of willows and cypresses. MILENA is in the front part of the cortege.

A beardless ORTHODOX RABBI perfunctorily chants the funeral service in Hebrew. As the coffin is lowered into the ground and a memorial prayer chanted, DORA cries out an agonized and piercing cry.

DORA

My dearest. My Amschel. My Kafka. My Franz.

The RABBI increases his baritone volume to drown out DORA'S emotional outburst. The mound of dirt that will cover the coffin is filled with clay-like lumpy earth, full of pebbles and stones. The MOURNERS each put a shovel full of dirt on the grave. The lumps and pebbles sound loud on the wood.

The RABBI, who did not know KAFKA personally, allows a communal eulogy. He looks towards HERMANN who stands stiffly and does not say a word. JULIE looks away towards the open grave.

MILENA steps forward. The RABBI looks towards HERMANN, who stares blankly at MILENA, then turns toward the RABBI and shakes his head no. DORA steps toward MILENA and takes her arm and whispers in her ear. MILENA attempts to begin. She is cut off by HERMANN.

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HERMANN

Respect. How? At a Jewish funeral.

HERMANN has a coughing fit. He looks sick and pathetic. He continues, raspily,

Mr. Pollak, please.

We see OSKAR POLLAK'S back. He is dressed like a college professor.

OSKAR POLLAK

The books we need, and Kafka wrote,
are of the kind that act upon us as a misfortune.
That make us suffer
like the death of someone we love.

We see HERMANN and JULIE, servants of suffering. They begin to weep.

More than ourselves.
Those books are like an axe
that breaks into pieces
the frozen sea within each of us.

POLLAK holds his hand out to MILENA, palm up.

Milena, You must.

MILENA

Franz's books portray the world so perfectly any further comments are superfluous.

ROLL END CREDITS

All of his books paint the horror of secret
Misunderstandings.
of innocent guilt between people.

He was an artist
a man of anxious conscience.

He could hear where others were deaf.

He was meek, shy, and kind.
He saw a world full of invisible demons,
tearing apart and destroying defenseless humans.

He was too clairvoyant
too intelligent
to be capable of living.
And too weak to fight.
He understood people as only one of great and nervous sensitivity can.

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He was
Someone who is, was, alone.

He was almost like a prophet.

His knowledge of the world
was extraordinary and deep.

He was himself an extraordinary and deep world.

He has written the most
significant books of modern literature.

He saw the world so clearly
that he could not bear the world.

He was bound to die
Since he refused to hide
under any doctrine.
Even the more noble ones.

Few people here knew him.

We see HERMANN, JULIE, and the RABBI.

He was a recluse
A literary monk.
A wise man in dread of life.

He had been suffering
a lung disease for years.
And while he worked to cure it,

MILENA (cont.)

He also nourished it.

The burden on his heart and soul
weighing him down.

Also became a burden on his lungs.

He has breathed his last.

May he rest in peace.

MAX BROD begins his eulogy.

MAX BROD
Franz Kafka was a fanatic of the truth within himself.

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The truth lives in a body where mind, soul, and spirit
work as one.
When artist and human are one.
The word becomes flesh.

Dante, Shakespeare, Goethe, each is the artist of an age,
an epoch. Our age shall be called the Kafkan era.
His importance far greater than he could ever understand.
Alive he died, but for his love Dora, almost alone.

DORA is holding MAX'S arm. MILENA does not look at MAX. She feels his words are superfluous after her own.

Dead, he will be a legend.
His life a literature
A parable of the modern.
So be it. My friend Kafka
was completely indifferent to fame.
Writing for him was a form of prayer.
All his efforts were focused
on spiritual fulfillment.
On achieving a life that was immaculately pure.

One sentence sums up Franz Kafka.
A sentence from his works.

We, you and I, every man and woman,
cannot live
without an enduring faith
in something indestructible
within ourselves.

Also, Kafka understood
that the problem
the world has with Jews
is the problem
of life itself.

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