

SEFER YETZIRAH 1.6



משנה ו': עשר ספירות בלי מה צפייתן כמראה הבזק
ותכליתן אין להם קץ ודברו בהן ברצוא ושוב ולמאמרו כסופה
ירדופו ולפני כסאו הם משתחויים:

1.6: Ten sefirot of nothingness. Their vision is like the “appearance of lightning.” Their limit has no end, and His Word in them is “running and returning.” They rush to His saying like a whirlwind, and before His throne they prostrate themselves.

(Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan translation)

1.6: Ten sefirot/declarations of constraint. Observed like a flash in a mirror, their purpose has no end. And the words and things of IT are in them, running and returning, and to ITS utterances they rush like a whirlwind, and before ITS throne they bow. [And behold, “Whatever you see are but parts of the ways of the Holy One (Genesis Rabbah XII:1 & Job 26:14).”]
(Doc Benton translation)

Our world is in many respects a reflection of what arises in consciousness. If we are angry, we see anger in the world, and if we are happy, then we see happiness in the world. The world is a mirror for our thoughts and feelings. A few of us may be lucky enough to attain a high state of consciousness in which no thoughts at all are present and even the subject/object dichotomy has been transcended. This state of consciousness-without-an-object is absolute and cannot be transcended because there is nothing left to transcend.

However, when one returns from one's meditation to more familiar states of consciousness, the first thing to reappear is the separation of oneness into an observer and an observed, and that ripples across one's vision like a bolt of lightning. Then thoughts pick up, and we engage once again in that game of thought that leads us away from the center and then back to it again as our thoughts vanish once more into the observer.

Furthermore, whatever we turn our attention to, there our thoughts will run only to bow once again to the throne of awareness as they are observed. Over time one may even realize that there is no real “*running and returning*” since every observation is always inescapably bound with the observer. We may also realize that once we separate the universe into parts, we cannot perceive the whole, at least in the usual way of perception. As long as our minds insist upon separating the observed from the observer, there will always be something of the whole left out of each perception. Of course, the bottom line is that all of this separation is really just an illusion.

Below is the verse from *Ezekiel* that is the inspiration for this particular passage.

“And the living creatures ran and returned like the appearance of a flash of lightning.”
(Ezekiel 1:14)

Also, notice that at the very end I added a saying of Rav Huna from *Genesis Rabbah*. This line is not in the original text, but its meaning is in keeping with the message of the *Sefer Yetzirah*.

“And behold, “Whatever you see are but parts of the ways of the Holy One.””
(Genesis Rabbah XII:1 & Job 26:14)