

# SEFER YETZIRAH 1.8



**משנה ח':** עשר ספירות בלימה בלום פיך מלדבר ולבך  
מלהרהר ואם רץ פיך לדבר ולבך להרהר שוב למקום שלכך נאמר  
(יחזקאל א') והחיות רצוא ושוב ועל דבר זה נכרת ברית:

1.8: Ten sefirot of nothingness. Bridle your mouth from speaking and your heart from thinking. And if your heart runs, return to the place. It is therefore written, “The Chayot (living animals) running and returning. (Ezekiel 1:24)” Regarding this a covenant was made.  
(*Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan translation*)

1.8: Ten sefirot/declarations of constraint. Restrain your mouth from speaking and your heart from thinking, and if your mouth runs to words or your heart to reflections, return them to their place. Thus, it is said, “And the living beings (chayot) ran and returned (Ezekiel 1:14),” and upon this word a covenant was cut.  
(*Doc Benton translation*)

This passage gives ancient instructions on meditation. Furthermore, it is interesting that the author begins his work with such a topic. The message appears to be that in order to exert some control over your life and the circumstances that surround you, you must first be able to control your mind. Controlling the self is a prerequisite for engaging in the *Work of Creation*.

Thus, enter into silence, and restrain your mind from thinking. In *Biblical* Hebrew, by the way, the words for *mind* and *heart* are the same. Furthermore, as your thoughts begin to pick up and stray, simply return them to their place. That is, return to that silent place within you where all things are observed and understood.

Additionally, in *Ezekiel 1:27*, there is a marvelous verse containing the word *hashmal* that is usually translated as “amber.”

*“And I saw something like the color of amber, like the appearance of fire enclosed around it.”  
(Ezekiel 1:27)”*

However, in the *Talmud*, the word *hashmal* is seen as a contraction of two words, one meaning to speak and another meaning to be silent. Thus, some translate *hashmal* as the “*speaking silence*.” Hence, the first step in your meditative journey is to make your mind silent. This is reminiscent of *1 Kings 19:12*.

*“And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.”*  
*(1 Kings 19:12)*

Also, the word *Chayot* (חיות) from *Ezekiel's* vision is very interesting. This word is generally translated as “*living animals*,” but if we spell it as *Chai Ot* (חי אות), then it means “*living signs*” or “*signs of life*.” Furthermore, the word for “*living*” also means “*running*.” This is very telling, and it implies that the thoughts running to and fro in our brain are our signs of life. But to properly meditate, we have to slow down those thoughts and let them help return us back to the *Source of Life*.

In addition to this, note that a *covenant* is an agreement or contract between two parties, and in the *Sefer Yetzirah*, the basic pattern of creation is always the presence of two opposites coupled with a mechanism for communication between them. This communication is the *covenant* between the two opposites, and the *covenant* is also a regulatory mechanism that binds each side to certain agreements.

Furthermore, in the passage above, the *covenant* is that which joins thoughts and perceptions, the perceived world, to consciousness, the unperceived world. Of course, the ultimate enlightenment is to understand that there is no difference between the two worlds. The seen world and the unseen world are never ever separated from one another. When you can experience this, then all will be joined in unity. Until then, however, this statement will remain a meaningless mystery.