

**מפתחי חכמת אמת**

**KEYS TO THE WISDOM OF TRUTH**

והוא

**תורת סדר ההשתלשלות**

**THE ORDER OF DEVOLUTION OF THE CHAIN OF BEING**

פתח ומבוא להכנס בהיכלי חכמת האמת  
מבאר ומברר כל הכללים בבנירות ובלשון צה

מאת

הרב הגאון  
מוה"ר שאול בוימאן הי"ד זצ"ל

**RABBI SAUL BAUMANN**

**INTRODUCTION AND COMMENTARIES BY  
REB ZALMAN SCHACHTER-SHALOMI**

נדפס פעם ראשונה בווארשא תרצ"ז

## PREFACE

This project, to make available this beautiful Sefer, Shaul Baumann's *Sefer Miftachay Chokhmat Ha-Emet*, is still a work in process in many ways, but we believe that it is worth putting out as is in this format now. Not the least of the reasons is our desire to put Reb Zalman Schachter-Shalomi's amazing commentary into your hands.

Baumann's re-presentation of Lurianic Kabbalistic cosmogony and cosmology becomes the perfect occasion for Reb Zalman to update from his own deep understanding of contemporary scientific stories of the origins and process of the universe.

There are many to thank for their contributions to get this project to its current form. Not least is Seth Fishman who lovingly transcribed the tapes of Reb Zalman's lectures on Baumann. Not only did he transcribe them, but he also arranged them as commentary to Baumann rather than simply presenting them as lectures. This was a formidable job that remains a foundation of this project. The first series of lectures at Elat Chayyim was delivered to rabbis and rabbinic students. Reb Zalman, at that time, expressed his desire that the text be presented in Hebrew and English. At that time several participants in the course agreed to undertake a translation of the sefer. That was the first step.

Rabbi Miles Krassen, did the next layer of revised translation for the first 10 chapters and Rabbi Shaya Isenberg completely revised the translation of the 75 chapters that constitute the volume. Meanwhile, the Hebrew text was digitized.

Rabbi Victor Gross joined me in revising, annotating, and adding additional commentary to Reb Zalman's commentary where there is still work to do. We take seriously Reb Zalman's analogy of his commentary as Gemara to Baumann's Mishna. We invite comments, corrections and suggestions. Please email them to me at [sri@ufl.edu](mailto:sri@ufl.edu). Also, if you were part of the original translation team, please let us know so that we may give proper credit. (That list disappeared years ago during a computer replacement.)

Thanks to Michael Singer for his support of this project.

Blessings,  
Rabbi Shaya Isenberg

**מפתחי חכמת האמת  
והוא תורת סדר ההשתלשלות  
רבי שאול בוימאן ז"ל הי"ד  
Rabbi Saul Baumann**

**Keys to the Wisdom of Truth: The Order of Devolution of the Chain of Being**

Introduction and Commentaries: Reb Zalman Schachter-Shalomi

*Ha-yashan yitchadash v-ha-chadash yitkadesh*, “What is old will be renewed and what is new will be made holy.” Rabbi Abraham Kook, *Letters*, 164.

To renew Judaism, to make it work in our own era, we need to draw upon two things: the works and insights of those who have preceded us; and a deepened, present connection to God. It is with this notion in mind, I asked Dr. Shaya Isenberg to oversee the translation of, and to assemble a book containing a bi-lingual edition of *Sefer Miftachay Chochmat Ha-Emet*. The Hebrew text serves as Mishnah, the core text, and there is an on-going, emerging Gemara, a text spinning around the Mishnah, a continuing conversation building upon the work of Jewish Renewal.

*Sefer Miftachey Chochmat Ha-Emet* was written by a twenty-three year old genius named Saul Baumann, z"l. It was published in 1937 in Warsaw, Poland. Rabbi Baumann was subsequently martyred in the Holocaust, but, providentially, his work survived him. The book provides excellent help in honing in on an understanding of kabbalistic terminology and concepts. My commentaries were compiled from two sets of lectures I gave on this book, one at Elat Chayyim, A Center for Healing and Renewal (then) in Accord, New York and the other at the Germantown Jewish Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Additional commentary and references have been compiled by Reb Shaya and his team.

**JEWISH RENEWAL**

Jewish Renewal is the process of bringing the Jewish interfaces with God to the present. Judaism offers something to the world which the world needs, but an update is required.<sup>1</sup> For instance, Jews can ask themselves, “To what degree do the 613 scriptural commandments represent a current, vital connection with God for me? To what degree are the connecting channels filled with noise? Isn’t the God-connection obscured?” It is up to us to provide the update so that it will work in our own age. To fix this, we need to have internal programming that will enable us to process the historic differences effectively. At the same time, we don’t want to lose the value of what came before. Where shall we look for the resources to clean up the interface with God? Traditional Jewish law, *halakhah*, is one such resource, which we update with what I have called “the psycho-halakhic process or “Integral *Halakhah*.” Engaging in that

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<sup>1</sup> On these issues in general, see *Paradigm Shift: From the Jewish Renewal Teachings of Reb Zalman Schachter-Shalomi*, ed. by Ellen Singer (Jason Aronson: Northvale, N.J., 1993) and *Integral Halachah: Transcending and Including*, Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi and Rabbi Daniel Siegel, (ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal in cooperation with Trafford Publishing, Victoria B.C. Canada, 2007).

## אין סוף, ומלכות שבאין סוף

על פי המטרה שהצבתי לי בחיבור הזה לברר וללבן את כל סדר ההשתלשלות בכל הפרטים, ולהיות ידוע שכל הנמצאים עליונים ותחתונים נתהוו מעצמות אור אין סוף ברוך הוא, זקוק אני בהכרח מקודם לבאר מעט את ענין שם "אין סוף", ובפרט לבאר את ענין המלכות שבאין סוף, כי ידוע שכל השפעה הנשפעת מהמשפיע להמקבל הוא רק מבחינת וחלק המלכות שבמשפיע.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> קל"ח פתחי חכמה פחח י"א וז"ל: הוא יוצא מספירת המלכות שהיא שורש לתחתונים, ועיין תניא אגרת הקודש פרק כ' בזה על מלכות דאצילות שלכן נקראת עלמא דאתגליא, כי בה נגלה כח האין סוף לברוא יש מאין שלא על ידי עילה ועלול.

## EYN SOF AND MALKHUT-IN-EYN SOF

The goal which I have set for myself in writing this book is to clarify and understand the entire *Seder Ha-Hishtalshelut* / the sequence of the devolution of the chain of being, in all its details. Since it is well known that all manifestations, above or below, were brought into being from the essence of the Or Eyn Sof / Endless Light, blessed be He, I must begin by explaining briefly the name Eyn Sof and more specifically, the attribute of Malkhut / the majesty / sovereignty of Eyn Sof , since it is a general principle of Kabbalah that whatever is transmitted from a *mashpi'a* / bestower to a *meqabbel* / receiver comes only from the Malkhut aspect of the bestower. <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Moshe Hayyim Luzzatto, *138 Pitchey Chokhmah, Portal 11*: “It emerges from the s, firah Malkhut, which is the source for everything below.” Cf. *Tanya*, , Iggeret Ha-Qodesh,“ ch. 20: Malkhut of Atzilut is called ‘*alma d’itgalya*’ / the Revealed World, because in it is revealed the power of Eyn Sof to create ex nihilo, without utilizing cause and effect.

## COMMENTARY

*Seder ha-hishtalsh'lut*: This term means, “The sequence of devolving,” or, “The order in which the chain of being was laid out.” It begins in the Infinite, and leads, step-by-step, into the worlds. Most of the time, we think of God as being beyond, outside, transcending the world. The author wants to help us reach an understanding of how it happened that we got here as the result of a continuous process of Divine manifestation.

*Ha-hishtalsh'lut*: From the word *shalsholet* which means “chain.”<sup>1</sup>

*Elyonim v'tachtonim* / supernal and infernal: Originally, infernal didn't mean hell, but below.<sup>2</sup>

*Nit'havu*: a reflexive form of the Hebrew root *hyh*, “to be,” meaning “it came into being.” By using *nit'havu*, Baumann tells us that he doesn't want to talk about the details of the creating yet. He wants simply to ask how it all comes into “*hoveh*”, i.e., into being. Other words Baumann might have used in this context, but chose not to, are *boray*, (to create), *yotzayr* (to form, to make) and *'oseh* (to do or make).

Look at the verb forms of *hoveh*, (the root of *nit'havu*): “*Yihyeh*” is the future. “*Hayah*” is the past. “*Hoveh*” is the present. The present participle *hoveh* can be turned into a causative, “*yihaveh*,” “He causes something to be.” Hear that! We're getting mighty close to the divine name, YHVH. So the basic grammar of the divine name means, “The One who causes being.”

Eyn Sof / Infinite: When we apply the term Eyn Sof to God, we mean to say, that which is beyond the beyond, that which was prior to there being any universe, i.e., pure, infinite *'elohut* / “divinity” before all creation. Eyn Sof refers to a no-thing-ness beyond worlds; before the Big Bang. It brings home a sense of time's vastness, since Eyn Sof stretches to contain pre-existent, post-existent and a now-existent. You can hear it in the words of the popular hymn *Adon Olam*: “You were cosmic Lord who ruled before anything was created...and after it's all over, alone, awesome will He reign.”

The term Eyn Sof is not found anywhere in the Bible. The closest is, “Nothing else exists besides Him” in Deuteronomy 4:35, and in the *Aleynu* prayer, “Know therefore this day, and take it to your heart, that YHVH is God. Nothing else exists, there is nothing else but God.” But a world filled with God is not the same as pure Eyn Sof. Pure Eyn Sof precedes creation. There is a passage, Isaiah 11.9, which says that in the messianic era, “the world shall be filled with the knowledge of YHVH like the water covers the sea.” A world filled with God is not the same as

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<sup>1</sup> Implied in the use of this word is a fundamental cosmological understanding shared by Jews, Christians and Muslims during medieval times, characterized by Arthur Lovejoy as “the great chain of being,” that sees the universe as a linked hierarchy of being and knowing. The philosophical and mystical theologies and cosmogonies of all three traditions share the same basis in the Neoplatonic theory of emanation. Cf. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being; A Study of the History of an Idea* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978). This cosmology has also been characterized by some as “the perennial philosophy” which claims a common metaphysical reference point among many religious traditions. Cf. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred* (Albany: S.U.N.Y. Press, 1989). [SRI]

<sup>2</sup> Baumann is affirming that all phenomena, no matter how “close to” or how “far from” the Infinite Absolute, the Eyn Sof, are rooted in the essence of Eyn Sof. There is no other “cause” or source, no fundamental duality. [SRI]

pure divinity, Eyn Sof. One understanding of the messianic era is that there will be knowledge in the world of an identity between all of creation and God; the whole world will come to a recognition of our connection to the divine; there will be a raising of consciousness that our connection to the divine is as the unity that exists between water and sea. However, although there will be a recognition of that basic oneness, this oneness will not be Eyn Sof; because after the world is created, the divinity in the world is no longer Eyn Sof. Eyn Sof precedes and transcends creation.

*Barukh hu* / “May He be blessed,” is added to divine names to remind us with What One we are dealing. To talk about God as if God were not right here now is an insult. E.g., If I say “Charlie has toes, he has bones, he has a heart, etc.,” it’s a way to talk about somebody in the third person, someone not present here. But we can’t do this with God since God is always here. By adding *barukh hu*, the author is saying that even though he is going to talk theology and we may listen in, he will address it to God at the same time. In this way he doesn’t forfeit the I-Thou part of the connection. When talking about God in the third person, in an I-It way, we become alienated and distanced from God. Adding *barukh hu* reminds us to make a kind of a flip inside saying, in effect, “*Oy Ribono Shel Olam*, Master of all, it’s You we are talking about.” Then the heart can also come into that situation. Otherwise, we are merely learning **concepts**; not having a place where soul and God share a space. We find another model, similar to adding *barukh hu*, in the *Patach Eliyahu* from the *Tikkuney Zohar* which begins by addressing God, “Lord of the worlds, You who are One and not just a number...”<sup>3</sup>

*Malkhut* / lit., “kingdom.” Some have trouble with the word *melekh*, because of a negative association with “king.” Think of *malkhut* as different from the English word “King;” think of it as something which functions the way the lens of a camera functions. The vast light of Eyn Sof is concentrated by a *malkhut* lens so the light can be reduced and projected inside the world. Without the lens to reduce it, the light of Eyn Sof would either overwhelm us or altogether bypass us.<sup>4</sup>

Also, some have trouble nowadays with the phrase *’avinu malkeinu*, our Father, our King, which we use especially to refer to God during the High Holy Days. *’Avinu* / our Father, was spoiled by Freud and *malkeinu* / our King, was spoiled by democracy. Thus, I can well understand the attitude that says, “I don’t want to have to deal with a ‘King’; I want to deal with a loving Creator,” or “Let’s not denigrate God by putting ‘power-over-us’ labels on God that have to do with coercion, with hierarchy.” This mechanical decoding allows people to imply that anyone who says, ‘God,’ automatically has trumps on the argument. That’s what fundamentalists often do. They say, “It’s in the text, God said it on Sinai, so I say it in the name of God,” which implies that we have no recourse; we can’t argue with it.

However, another way to think of *melekh* is as a leader who consults and takes counsel in partnership, rather than one who is a tyrant or a dictator. *Sar* and *melekh* are two Hebrew words

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. Zalman Schachter-Shalomi’s full translation in his *Fragments of a Future Scroll: Hassidism for the Aquarian Age*, (Germantown, PA: Leaves of Grass Press, 1975), pp. 129-135.

<sup>4</sup> In this spirit, Marcia Prager translates the “*melekh*” of the standard blessing formula functionally in this way, “channeling creative power to manifest.” Cf. *The Path of Blessing*, (New York: Bell Tower, 1998): 116-127 [SRI].

which both mean “king.” *Sar*, normally translated as “prince” or “Minister” meant, in old Akkadian, the Great King who is boss, the absolute monarch. *Melekh*, in contrast, is related by *midrash* to the expression *b’mi nimlach*, “with whom did he [God] take counsel?” In Gen. 1:26 God says, “Let us make man in our image,” using plural forms. The Midrash asks, “with whom did God take counsel, *b-mi nimlakh*?” (Gen. R. 3:3) There is a constitutional element to this understanding of *nimlakh*, for as the Midrash tells it, God counseled with the souls of the *tzaddikim*, the holy people, to decide whether to create the world. Elsewhere it says that God counsels with the angels [B. Sanh. 38a] and in another *midrash*, God counsels with human beings. [Gen. R. 8]. If one sees God as counseling with God’s creations, this points to a very different picture of the relationship implied by *melekh*.

*Malkhut she-b-‘eyn sof* / Malkhut of Eyn Sof: If there is no connection from Eyn Sof to us, then there is no possibility to establish an interface between the finite and the infinite. On the other hand, if establishing an interface is to be possible, then the infinite light of Eyn Sof has first to be reduced, to be scaled down; because if everything infinite just flowed and flooded through to the finite, then there could be no creation. The scaling down must begin at the source. In Kabbalah, we call the possibility for the scaling down of that light *Malkhut-in-Eyn Sof*.

*Malkhut*, “kingdom,” the last of the ten S’firot [cf. below, p. XX], is a nozzle which regulates flow. In its earliest forms, i.e., in *Malkhut-in-Eyn Sof*, only the slightest hint exists that there might be a connection between the infinite and matter. In its later forms, *Malkhut* thickens, and becomes closer to spirit and to matter.

Says the Siddur, YHVH *melekh*, YHVH *malakh*, YHVH *yimlokh l-‘olam va-‘ed* / YHVH “kings,” has “kinged” and will “king” to eternity. God is eternal, while in contrast our life-spans are so short in comparison, like particles with tiny, tiny half-lives. We are left with some questions: How can the Infinite create into what is finite? Why should the Infinite even bother to establish a connection with finite?. When one considers that our life-spans are like those of muons or psions when compared to God, then why should God be interested? These are puzzling questions. They raise the issue of relationship. So, why does the Infinite choose to deal with human beings?<sup>5</sup> The rabbis tell us, the holy one blessed be he is passionate about dwelling with us here below. Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liady was asked why does God want to dwell with us here below? And he answered: “you cannot answer the question about the passion with an intellectual reasons

*Ha-mashpi’a*: *Mashpi’a* has a literal meaning of “That which seeks out receptacles,” or, “That which looks for someone to receive.” *L’hashpi’a* has as its root, *pe vav ayin*, like *Pu’a*, the midwife from Exodus which is midrashically rendered “revive.” The *shin* acts as a causative prefix, so it would be translated into English as, “The one who causes that enlivening flow, the *shefa*.”

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<sup>5</sup> One answer to this question is that the Infinite desired to be in relationship, to meet, to love. The universe is that process. Human beings with self-reflection can be a mirror for that whole process, mirroring it back to the Infinite. Another response to be amplified below: there is an identity of structure between the divine nearly-infinite manifestation of the Infinite, the S’firotic Tree, and humanity that establishes an identity of the immense, cosmic S’firotic God-field and that God-field that is humanity. In the language of Chaos Theory, the relationship is fractal, i.e., formally identical at different magnitudes. [SRI]