

IDRA ZUTA QADUSHA

LESSER HOLY ASSEMBLY

From the
Sefer HaZohar

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IDRA ZUTA QADUSHA **Lesser Holy Assembly**

The following translation is the Work of the Chariot edition of the first 132 verses of the *Idra Zuta Qadusha* published in 1970. Verses from the *Torah* are written in ***Bold Italic***. Verses from the **Writings** and **Prophets** are written in **Bold**.

TRADITION: On the day that Rabbi Shimeon was destined to leave this world, he was putting his affairs in order, when the companions entered his house. Present with him was Rabbi Eleazar his son, and Rabbi Abba, and the rest of the companions. The house was full.

2. Rabbi Shimeon raised his eyes and saw that the house was full.¹

3. Rabbi Shimeon wept and said, “On another occasion when I was sick, Rabbi Fineyas son of Yayar was present with me and remained until I had chosen my place, and life had been restored to me until now. When I was restored, fire surrounded me, which hitherto has never ceased, and no man entered unto me without permission, but now I see that it has stopped and the house is full.”²

4. While they were sitting, Rabbi Shimeon opened his eyes and saw what he saw, and fire went around the house. They all went out except for Rabbi Eleazar his son and Rabbi Abba. The rest of the company stayed outside.³

5. Rabbi Shimeon said to Rabbi Eleazar his son, “Go out and see if Rabbi Yitza’aq is here, for I am his guarantor; tell him that he should arrange my affairs, and that he should sit by my side, he whose portion is worthy.”⁴

6. Rabbi Shimeon arose and sat and laughed and rejoiced; he said, “Where are the Companions?”

7. Rabbi Eleazar arose and brought them in, and they sat down in his presence, Rabbi Shimeon lifted his hands and prayed and was rejoicing, and he said: “Let those Companions who were in the former Assembly meet here.”⁵

8. The others went out, and Rabbi Eleazar his son, and Rabbi Abba and Rabbi Yehudah and Rabbi Yosi, son of Ya’aqov and Rabbi Chiya remained.⁶

9. Meanwhile Rabbi Yitza’aq entered, Rabbi Shimeon said to him, “How pleasant is your portion, how much joy shall be added to you this day.” Rabbi Abba was sitting behind his shoulders, and Rabbi Eleazar facing him.⁷

10. Rabbi Shimeon said, “Now indeed is a time of favor, and I have to ascend without shame to the world to come.”

11. “And behold holy matters of NOT (לֹא, *Lo*) which previously have been revealed, I desire to reveal before the Divine Presence⁸ of NOT; lest they should say that I have kept back anything, and that I left the world deficient. For even until now these things have been concealed in my heart, so that having entered into these very matters I may be with them in the world to come. But this is my arrangement of you: Rabbi Abba shall write, and Rabbi Eleazar my son, study, and the rest of the Companions in silence meditate in their hearts; Rabbi Abba arose from behind his shoulders and Rabbi Eleazar his son sat in front of him; he said. “Arise my son, for another shall sit in that place;” Rabbi Eleazar arose.⁹ Rabbi Shimeon wrapped himself and sat down; he opened and said (**Psalms 115**): “**The dead shall NOT-praise-לֹא. And all who will go down in silence.**” “**The dead**

will NOT-praise-יה,” here it is certain who is called “dead,” for the Holy One, blessed be He, is called “Living” (חַיִּים, *Chayim*), and He is commemorated among those who are called living, and NOT among the people who are called dead.

12. And it is written in the latter part of this verse, “**And all who will go down into silence,**” and all those who descend to silence remain in *Gehinnom*.

13. There is another reason pertaining to those who are called “living,” for the Holy One, blessed be He, desires their glory.

14. Rabbi Shimeon said, “How different it now is from when we were in the former Assembly.”

15. For there was present the Holy One, blessed be He, with His Chariot (מֵרִכְבָּה, *Merkabah*).

16. But now the Holy One, blessed be He, is here, and He comes with those righteous ones who are in the Garden of Eden (גַּן אֶדֶן, *Gan Aden*), which did not happen at the former Assembly.

17. And the Holy One, blessed be He, cares for the honor of the righteous more than for His own honor, as it is written in the case of Jeroboam, who offered incense and worshipped idols. And the Holy One, blessed be He, was long-suffering with him; but because he extended his hand against Ido the prophet, his hand became withered; for it is written (**I Kings 13.4**): “**And his hand became withered.**”

18. Here it is not written that it was because he worshipped idols, but because he extended his hand against Ido the prophet.

19. And now the Holy One, blessed be He, wants our honor, and they all come with Him.

20. He said, indeed, Rab Hamnuna the elder is here and around him are seventy righteous ones represented in his circle,¹⁰ each one with the splendor of the brightness of the Holy Ancient One, Mystery of all Mysteries.

21. And he comes to hear with joy these things which I will say.

22. And when he had sat down...

23. He said, “Behold Rabbi Fineyas, son of Yayer is here, make ready his place; the companions who were there trembled greatly, and they arose and sat down in the lower part of the house.”¹¹

24. And Rabbi Eleazar and Rabbi Abba remained with Rabbi Shimeon.

25. In the former Assembly I found that the whole company spoke, as I did.

26. Now I alone will speak.

27. And they will all listen to my words both those in heaven and on earth.

28. Worthy is my portion today.

29. Rabbi Shimeon opened and said (**Song 7**): “**I am my Beloved’s, and His desire will arise.**”

30. All the days that I was perfumed in this world, I was perfumed with One perfume, namely the Holy One, blessed be He, and therefore, now “**His desire will arise.**”

31. For He Himself and His whole holy company come, so that with joy they may hear the secret words, and the praise of Him, the Most Holy Ancient One.

32. Mystery of all mysteries.

33. Separate and set apart from all, and NOT separate.

34. For everything is joined in יה,¹²

And He (הוּ, *Hu*) is joined within all,
He is all,
The Ancient One of all Ancient Ones,
Mystery of all mysteries,
Conformed and NOT conformed.¹³

35. He is formed in all that endures, and NOT conformed in all that is NOT manifest.
36. When He is conformed, He produces nine lights, which shine forth from Him, from His conformations, and those lights shine from Him and are lit from Him and they proceed and are spread out in all directions.¹⁴
37. As a lamp from which Light is spread out in all directions.¹⁵
38. And as those rays which spread out, when they are approached to know them, are NOT found, except for the lamp alone; so is He, the Holy Ancient One, the highest lamp, mystery of all mysteries.
39. And He is NOT found, except for those rays that are extended, those that are revealed, and those that are revealed and hidden.¹⁶
40. And they are called the Holy Name,¹⁷ and therefore are all things One (אֶחָד, *Echad*). And what our companions said in the former books, that these are degrees that had been created and the Holy Ancient One was revealed in every single one of them, because these are the confirmations of the Holy Ancient One.
41. Now is not the time for these things for I have said them in the Holy Assembly.¹⁸
42. And I have seen What (מָה, *Mah*)¹⁹ of NOT, which I knew until now, and I have hidden the matters of my heart.
43. And now I alone will describe these things before the Holy King, and all those worthy of truth who have come to hear these things.
44. Skull of the White Head has beginning and end in NOT, the sphere whose parts are extended and illumined and from which the just shall inherit four hundred special worlds in the world to come.²⁰
45. From this sphere with parts, which is the White Skull (Vast Face), dew drops every day onto Small Face²¹ to the place which is called “Heaven,”²² and where the dead are waiting ready to be revived in the time to come, as it is written (*Torah B’reshith* 4.28): **“Therefore Elohim will give you of the dew of Heaven.”**
46. And His Head (רֹשׁ, *Rosh*) is filled with that dew, and from Small Face it drops to the field of apples, and all the field of apples shines from that dew.²³
47. He, the Most Holy Ancient One, is hidden and concealed.
48. And the supernal wisdom is found in that Skull,
Found and found as NOT;
In Him, the Ancient One, Nothing, is revealed except the Head alone,
Because it is the Head of all Heads.
49. The supernal wisdom, which is the Head within Yod ך, is hidden therein, and is called the supernal brain,
50. The hidden brain,
51. The tranquil and calm brain,
52. Of which None knows except הוּ, the Son Himself.²⁴
53. Three Heads have been formed within the other.

54. And One²⁵ is above the other.
55. The Head (רֹאשׁ, Rosh) of One is the hidden wisdom which is covered and opened up in NOT, and this wisdom is mysterious, the Head of all Heads of the other wisdoms.
56. The Head of Above,²⁶ Holy Ancient One, mystery of all mysteries.
57. Head of all Heads,
The Head which is of NOT,
Known as NOT.
What is knowable in the Head is NOT connected with wisdom
And NOT connected with understanding.²⁷
58. And concerning this, read (Balaq 1.81): “**Flee to your place.**”
- 59 (Ezekiel 1): “**And the Chayot ran and returned,**”
60. And for this reason the Holy Ancient One is called NOT.
61. That (אֲשֶׁר, Asher) in יְהוָה depends on NOT.
62. And all those hairs,²⁸
63. And all those threads go out from the hidden brain, and they are all disposed in the weight.²⁹
64. And NOT is seen as the back [of Small Face], ALL HE (כֹּל הוּא, Kol Hu).³⁰
65. Because this Holy Ancient One is within One form!
66. Everything is in joy, and He does not change His mercy forever, in thirteen measures of mercy is He found.³¹
67. And He, the Ancient One, includes them and rules over all.
68. One, which shines in the midst of the hairs going forth from the skull, is that path by whose light the righteous are led into the world to come, as it is written (Proverbs 4): “**And the path of the righteous is as a shining light...**”
69. And concerning this it is written (Isaiah 58): “**You will delight yourself in the Lord יְהוָה.**”
70. And from this path all the other paths that depend on the Small Countenance are illumined.
71. This Ancient One is elder of elders.
72. (He is the) highest Crown of above with which are adorned in יְהוָה all adornments and crowns.
73. And from Him are all the lights illuminated, and they shine; but He, He is the Supreme Light, which is hidden and known as NOT.
74. (And all other lights are kindled by Him and shine.)
75. This Ancient One is found in three heads and they are included in one Head.
76. And He Himself is the supreme Head, highest of the highest.
77. And because the Holy Ancient One is formed in three, so also, all the other lights that shine from Him are formed into three.
78. Further, the Ancient One is engraved in two.
79. This is the division of the Ancient One into two.
80. The Crown (כֹּתֶרֶת, Keter) is the highest of the high ones, Head of all Heads.
81. And HE Himself is that Superior Head, which is known as NOT.
82. So are all the other lights hidden in the two.
83. Further, the Holy Ancient One is formed and hidden in One,

And He is One,
And all are That One (אֶשֶׁר אֶחָד, *Asher Echad*),
Thus all the other lights are sanctified, are restricted, and are glorified in One,
And they are One.

84. The forehead which is uncovered in the Holy Ancient One,
Is called “Grace(רַצוֹן, *Ratzon*, also Will).”
For that Supernal Head,
Concealed in the higher which is known as NOT,
An ornamented, comely, perfumed prince
Which is contained in the forehead.
85. And because the Grace of all Graces is perfected in the forehead and revealed in that direction, this forehead is called “Grace.”
86. And this Grace is revealed.
87. The Grace of Graces is found in all worlds, and all the prayers of the inferiors are accepted, and the countenance of Small Face is illuminated.
88. And everything is found to be mercy and all judgments are concealed, and upset on the Sabbath at the time of the afternoon prayers, which is the time when all judgments are awakened. And this forehead is revealed, and all judgments are upset and mercy is manifested in all the worlds.
89. And because of this the Sabbath exists without heavenly or earthly judgments, and even the fire of *Gehinnom* is stilled in its place, and the guilty have repose.
90. And to this is added a soul of joy on the Sabbath, and men should rejoice in the three Sabbath meals for all faith and the sum of faith is therein manifested.
91. And men should prepare a dish and eat...
92. Three meals of faith, and rejoice in them.
93. Rabbi Shimeon said, “I call as witnesses on my behalf all those here assembled, that I have never missed those three meals, and through them, I have never had to fast on the Sabbath, nor even on weekdays. How much less so on the Sabbath, for he who has the privilege of them, has the privilege of the completeness of faithfulness?”
94. One is the meal of the Great Mother,
95. One is the meal of the Holy King,
96. And one is the meal of the Holy Ancient One, mystery of all mysteries. And in that world, they will have the privilege of them.
97. When this Grace is revealed, all judgments are upset in their sequence.
The perfection of the Holy Ancient One is made in one perfection,
The sum of all perfections,
Which is the upper secret wisdom,
The sum of all the others,
And this is called the ‘secret upper Eden.’
And it is the brain of the Holy Ancient One,
And this brain spreads out in all directions,
And from it another Eden spreads out,
And from this Eden, It is shaped.
And that secret head, which is in the head of the Ancient One, is known as NOT.
When one manner, which is perfected to shine, spreads out,

It touches this brain.

And It is formed and made to shine with several lights,

And It goes out and engraves like this ornament which is in the Forehead.

And a light, which is called 'Grace' is engraved in It,

And this Grace is spread out to the Earth in the beard

As far as that place which rests in the beard.

And It is called 'supernal loving kindness,'

And this is the preserving kindness.

And when this Grace is uncovered,

All the Lords of Judgment behold It, and are turned aside."

98. The eyes of the Head of the Holy Ancient One are two in one, equal, which are ever watchful,

99. And do not sleep, as it is written (**Psalms 121**): "**The Guardian of Israel shall not sleep and not slumber**," meaning Israel the Holy; and for this reason He has no eyelashes, and no eyelids on the eyes.

100. That Brain is formed and shines with three supernal white brilliances.

101. With one white brilliance are the eyes of Small Face bathed, as it is written

(**Song 5**): "**swimming in milk**," which is that primordial white brilliance, and the other lights are bathed in and shine from the other white brilliances.

102. The brain is called "the fountain of blessing;" the fountain, because all blessings are found therein.

103. And this brain is lit with three white brilliances of the eye.

104. On the eye depends the blessing of יי, as it is written (**Proverbs 22**): "**Goodly of eye, he shall be blessed**," for the white brilliance of the eye depends on the brain.

105. When this eye looks upon Small Face (worlds),

106. (a.v. "all the Face shines with joy") they all shine with joy.

107. (With) this eye He restrains the Right Hand; by יי there is no Left Hand.

108. The eyes of below are right and left, two with two colors.

109. We have taught in the *Sifra Detzniyutha* (**Book of THAT Which is Concealed**), that there is "Yod ך above, Yod ך below."

110. "Heh ך above, Heh ך below."

111. "Vav ך above, Vav ך below."

112. All these ones of above depend on the Ancient One.

113. The ones of below are in Small Face.

114. They are dependent on NOT, and these are actually in It.

115. And they depend on the Holy Ancient One.

116. For the Name of the Ancient One is concealed from all, and is found as NOT, except in those letters which depend on the Ancient One, so that they should exist on Earth.

117. And if it were not so, they would NOT exist.

118. And for this reason, the Name of the Holy One is the Secret (סוד, *Sod*) and That, which is the Secret in relation to it, is revealed. For the Holy Ancient One is the Secret of All.

119. And That (הוּ, *Hu*) is revealed, and from That is Small Face, and all these blessings of the secret eye are revealed, and those secret letters that are dependent are revealed.
120. The nose, from the nose of This (זֶה, *Zeh*), from the nostril to the chest on which the breath of life is blown to Small Face.
121. And from that opening of the nose, from those openings of the nostrils depends the [superior] Heh הָ, in order to establish the other inferior Heh הֵ.
122. And this breath proceeds from the Hidden Brain and She is called the Spirit of Life, and through that Spirit will all men understand wisdom in the time of King Messiah.
123. As it is written (**Isaiah 11**): “**And the Spirit of the Lord יהוה יְהוָה shall rest upon Him, a Spirit of wisdom and understanding...**”
124. This nose is life and perfect joy in every part,
125. The repose of Spirit,
126. And Health.
127. Concerning the nose of Small Face (as we have learned by tradition), it is written (**Psalms 18:9**): “**Smoke came out of His nostrils...**”
128. But it is written (**Isaiah 48:9**): “**And for my praise, will I refrain from you.**”
129. And in the **Book of Aggadah** of Rabbi Rav Yiba the Elder:
 The Heh הָ is established in the mouth,
 And here NOT is fulfilled so,
 And NOT brings the combination (as we need it),
 It ascends in One,
 These judgments depend on the Heh הָ,
 And judgments depend on the nose,
 As it is written: “**There went up a smoke out of His nostrils...**”
130. And if you object, saying, behold, it is written (**Psalm 18:9**): “**and consuming fire came out of His mouth...**”
131. The root of anger depends on the Nose.
 All the conformations of the Holy Ancient One are perfected
 By the quiet mysterious brain.
 And all the conformations of Small Face are formed
 Through the inferior wisdom.
 As it is written (**Psalms 104:24**): “**All these have You made in wisdom.**”
 And the Heh הָ is the sum of all things.
132. What is the difference between the [inferior] Heh הֵ and [the superior] Heh הָ? By this [inferior] Heh הֵ judgment is awakened, and by that [superior] Heh הָ mercy within mercy.

¹ The house is an allusion to the Tree of Life. In stating that the house was full, Rabbi Shimeon was alluding that all the Sefiroth of the Tree, embodied respectively in the companions, were present.

² Rabbi Shimeon had ascended the Tree and become extinct in the negatively existent roots. He came back as a Tree of Perfection after the Ayin, and saw that the *Ayn* alone exists. In the house becoming full, his consciousness expanded to include both Vast and Small Face. The mention of Rabbi Fineyas perhaps intimates that he was Rabbi Shimeon’s mentor through this process.

³ The three rabbis who remained represent the three upper Sefiroth on the Zoharic Perfect Tree. Shimeon represents Sefirah Knowledge and Fear of the Lord יהוה (corresponding to Sefirah Knowledge (of the *Ayn*)/The First), Rabbi Eleazar represents Sefirah Spirit of the Lord יהוה Messiah (corresponding to Sefirah Beauty/The Last), and Rabbi Abba represents Sefirah Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding (corresponding to Sefirah Crown/Above).

⁴ Rabbi Yitza'aq is associated with the fourth Sefirah of the Central Column on the Zoharic Tree: Spirit of Counsel and Strength (corresponding to Sefirah Foundation/Below). The combination of the four rabbis therefore represents the entire Central Column.

⁵ This is a reference to the Greater Holy Assembly.

⁶ The rabbis who remained constitute the Lesser Holy Assembly. The rabbis cited in this verse include only those from the Central Column and the Column of the Right, alluded to in the *Idra Rabba* 7:81: "There is no left in that Ancient Concealed One, but all is right."

⁷ If Rabbi Shimeon was sitting facing Rabbi Abba, then it would be the condition of "Face-to-Face" (*Sifra Detzneyutha* 1), and the Creation would be "nullified." With Rabbi Yitza'aq entering, all the Sefiroth of the Central Column are present. Rabbi Eleazar facing Rabbi Shimeon alludes that the consciousness of Small face was directed up the Tree.

⁸ *Shekhinah*.

⁹ The change of positioning of the rabbis sets up the transmission of the Hidden Wisdom (Rabbi Abba who writes or witnesses) of Vast Face into the Lower Worlds (Rabbi Eleazar who studies or receives).

¹⁰ This is the circle of the letter Ayin, whose numerical value is seventy. Rab Hamnuna represents the Spirit of the Ancient of Ancient Ones, the non-dual *Ayn*.

¹¹ The presence of Rabbi Fineyas with the appearance of Rav Hamnuna is significant in the light of Verse 2.

¹² *Sifra Detzneyutha* 4: "And HE, the NOT, is settled in ה", the upper ones (superior letters and the lower ones (inferior letters)."

Sifra Detzneyutha 1: "In His body exists the weight. NOT unites and NOT begins. In ה have they ascended, and in ה do they ascend; who NOT are, and are, and will be."

¹³ Conformed alludes to the condition of manifest in Small Face, NOT conformed to unmanifest in Vast Face.

¹⁴ The nine lights are the nine Sefiroth which emanate from Sefirah Crown/Above. "All directions" refers to the six Directional Sefiroth, wherein the "*Chayot* run and return" in manifesting the Small Face universe.

¹⁵ *Sifra Detzneyutha* 2: "The superior Vav ו, the lamp of heavy darkness that is adorned by its [six] sides. The letters then extend and are included in the Small Face."

¹⁶ "Extended" as emanations in the World of Atziluth; "revealed" as manifest in the Beyt Worlds of B'riyah; "revealed" as forms in the World of Formation; and "hidden" in the apparent duality of Matter and Spirit in the World of Asiyah.

¹⁷ The Holy name is the Name יהוה.

¹⁸ The Greater Holy Assembly.

¹⁹ *Mah* is a Name of Vast Face, and a central Name in the root mantram of Passover, "*Shomer Mah MeLylah*."

²⁰ White Head is Vast Face. "Beginning and end in NOT" refers to the Sefiroth First and Last anchored in the negatively existent substratum. In the *Idra Rabba* 2:41 it is written: "Into forty thousand superior worlds the brightness of the skull of His Head is extended, and from the light of this brightness the just shall receive four hundred worlds in the world to come."

²¹ This dew is the Dew of Bdelium. *Idra Rabba* 4:44: "And from that skull distills a dew upon Him which is external [i.e. Small Face], and fills His Head daily."

²² This is the upper supernal Heaven.

²³ The field of apples is the entire Tree. The apples are associated with the cheeks of Vast Face. *Sifra Detzneyutha* 2: "Two apples are beheld to illumine the lamps." And also, *Sifra Detzneyutha* 3: "The cheeks are covered from this side and from that side. Among them are visible apples red like a rose."

²⁴ This verse alludes to the consciousness of Small Face in the Upper Worlds. The Son is an epitaph of Small Face; hence, it is written: “Only the Son [Small Face] can know the Father [Vast Face].”

²⁵ ONE is the undifferentiated Unity of Vast Face in distinction to the differentiated multiplicity of Small Face.

²⁶ The Head of Above is Vast Face in the Sefirah Crown/Above.

²⁷ This verse is referring to the Sefiroth Wisdom/East and Understanding/North in the World of Atziluth.

²⁸ The Hairs are the convoluting Names of the beards of the Faces.

²⁹ “Weight” refers to the combination of all the Sefiroth (see *Sifra Detzniyutha* 1).

³⁰ A parallel to this is found in the *Maylay* of the Polynesian Kahunas in the verse, “A jealous flame is Pele’s back.”

³¹ *Sifra Detzniyutha* 1: “Thirteen depend from the thirteen of the splendor of splendors.”

Sifra Detzniyutha 2: “In this Fate of all flow thirteen pure balsam oils, all is found in this Fate, and IT is concealed.”