

MYSTICAL CREATION

In the beginning, there was only God. And God filled all space and all time. There was nothing else. No place was devoid of God; no moment was not occupied by God. There was only God's radiant light, everywhere. Then, from deep inside God and for reasons known only to God, God desired to create. So God made room inside God's self. God contracted and cleared a space for God's universe. And God said, "Let there be light in the space." And there came forth from God's all-encompassing, all-filling presence a ray of God's radiant light. The ray took on boundedness and there was limit and vessel. But the ray was too powerful for its limit and the vessel broke. And the pieces of boundedness and the fragments of God's light mixed in the space and there was chaos.

So God said, "Let there be an attenuated light in the space." And it was so. The attenuated light flowed into the vessels and they did not break. And it flowed from vessel to vessel, being more attenuated with each movement. And there were heavenly worlds of angels, of chariots, and of fiery holy beings. The light continued to flow and it became more and more attenuated while the vessels became more and more bounded. And then there were physical worlds of space and time, of stars and galaxies, and of mountains and storm clouds. God spoke again and there were living things: plants and animals of all species and kinds.

Then God formed humankind, man and woman, and God made them in God's image. God commanded them to be fruitful and multiply, and to explore and dominate God's creation. And God gave them the power to sense and to focus God's radiant light. Each one was given the ability to become aware of and to attenuate God's presence according to his or her will. Some could transform the light into wisdom, others into life. Some could turn it into God-fearingness, others into love, and some into the goods of this world. Each human being, having been created in God's image, was of God's all-encompassing, all-filling light. Each could know God and each could attract and direct that light.

God saw everything that had flowed forth from God's radiant light and God knew it was deeply good. And there was morning and there was evening, and there was Sabbath for humankind and for God.*

* From *God at the Center, Meditations on Jewish Spirituality* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988) by David R. Blumenthal; a translation and exposition of the theology and *divre Torah* of Rabbi Levi Yitzkhak ben Meir of Berditchev (1740-1809).