

Presence is held captive in the tresses of the cosmos and the chains of reality. He is completely suffused with an unqualified ontological optimism and is totally immersed in the cosmos. On the contrary, as he sees it, the task of man is to bring down the Divine Presence to the lower world, to this vale of tears. The mystery of *zimzum* should not precipitate metaphysical anguish but rather gladness and joy. Man resides together with his Creator in this world, and it is only through cultivating that togetherness in the here and now that man can acquire a share in the world to come. The creation of the world does not inflict any "blemish" upon the idea of divinity, does not infringe upon infinity; on the contrary, it is the will of God that His *Shekhinah*, His Divine Presence, should contract and limit itself within the realm of empirical reality. The great promised destiny, "In that day shall the Lord be one, and His name one" (*Zech.* 14:9), instead of referring to the mystical dream of the overcoming and negation of reality, refers to the era in which the Halakhah will find its fulfillment, its total realization in this world. The creation of the world is, in essence, the revelation of the will of God and is not a manifestation of His goodness and grace.

R. Simha Zelig, the disciple and friend of R. Hayyim, related to me the following incident: Once he and R. Hayyim visited someone's house in Vilna. While they were waiting for their host to appear, R. Hayyim glanced through some works of Habad Hasidism that were lying on the table. The books apparently discussed the question of God's motivation in creating the world and cited two opinions: (1) God created the world for the sake of His goodness; (2) He created it for the sake of His grace. R. Hayyim turned to R. Simha Zelig and with utter seriousness told him: "Both views are incorrect; the world was created neither for the sake of His goodness, nor for the sake of His grace but for the sake of His will." This view, set down by Maimonides as a firm principle in the *Guide*⁶³ and prevalent in many forms in voluntaristic religious and metaphysical sys-

tems—e.g., that of Solomon ibn Gabirol in *Mekor hayyim* [Foundation of life] and that of Duns Scotus (who was influenced by the former)—is the very seal of halakhic man.⁶⁴ The world was created in accordance with the will of God, who wills to contract His Divine Presence in it.⁶⁵ Therefore, we are called to act and to arrange our lives in accordance with this fundamental idea.

While the mystic shares in the anguish of *Shekhinta be-galuta*, who conceals Himself in His dazzling Hiddenness, "lofty and exalted, abiding in the heavens" [from a piyyut recited on the High Holidays], that descended into the midst of the cosmos,⁶⁶ halakhic man declares that the true home of the Divine Presence is in this world. The Divine Presence goes into exile, according to the opinion of halakhic man, when it departs from this world to the hidden and awesome transcendental realm. "The Divine Presence left Israel by ten stages—this we know from reference in the Scripture: [it went] from ark cover to the holy cherub. . . . And from the wilderness it ascended and settled in its [exalted and remote, transcendent] place as it is written, 'I will go and return to My place' (Hosea 5:15)."⁶⁷ When the Divine Presence returns to its original place, when it rises to transcendence, to the heights of the heavens, there it conceal itself in the shadow of absolute separateness and complete estrangement from this world, the Temple is destroyed and the long chapter of the exile of the Divine Presence begins. The ideal of halakhic man is that the Divine Presence should rest here in this world. "And there I will meet with thee, and I will speak with thee from above the ark-cover" (*Exod.* 25:22). This verse represents the ultimate telos of the Halakhah. "R. Aba bar Kahana said: It is not written in the text 'And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking [*mehalekh: pi'el* form] in the garden' but 'And they heard the voice of the Lord God skipping [*mithalekh: hitpa'el* form] in the garden' (*Gen.* 3:8). This [use of the reflexive] implies that He sprang ever upward [i.e., they heard God departing from the garden]. The principle