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EXPANSES, EXPANSES

From: *Abraham Isaac Kook*

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ed. by Ben Zion Bokser

Expanses, expanses,  
Expanses divine my soul craves.  
Confine me not in cages,  
Of substance or of spirit.  
My soul soars the expanses of the heavens,  
Walls of heart and walls of deed  
Will not contain it.  
Morality, logic, custom—  
My soul soars above these,  
Above all that bears a name,  
Above delight,  
Above every delight and beauty,  
Above all that is exalted and ethereal.  
I am love-sick—  
As a deer for water brooks.  
I thirst, I thirst for God,  
Alas, who can describe my pain,  
Who will be a violin to express the songs of my grief,  
Who will voice my bitterness,  
The pain of seeking utterance?  
I thirst for truth, not for a conception of truth,  
For I ride on its heights,  
I am wholly absorbed by truth,  
I am wholly pained by the anguish of expression.  
How can I utter the great truth  
That fills my whole heart?  
Who will disclose to the multitude,  
To the world, to all creatures,  
To nations and individuals alike,  
The sparks abounding in treasures  
Of light and warmth  
Stored within my soul?  
I see the flames rise upward

Piercing the heavens,  
But who feels, who can express their might?  
I am not like one of those heroes  
Who have found whole worlds in their inwardness.  
Whether the world knew of their wealth or not,  
It was all the same to them.  
These herds of sheep walking on two feet—  
Of what use was it if they knew  
Man's true height,  
And what loss in their not knowing?  
I am bound to the world,  
All creatures, all people are my friends,  
Many parts of my soul  
Are intertwined with them,  
But how can I share with them my light?  
Whatever I say  
Only covers my vision,  
Dulls my light.  
Great is my pain and great my anguish,  
O, my God, my God, be a help in my trouble,  
Find for me the graces of expression,  
Grant me language and the gift of utterance,  
I shall declare before the multitudes  
My fragments of Your truth, O my God.