

This is a transcript of a video interview of Rabbi Dr. Sendor of Young Israel of Sharon, Mass. (Orthodox), regarding the work of the Meru Foundation and Stan Tenen. (A few paragraphs have been deleted from this transcript in the interest of brevity.) Permission to reproduce this transcript is courtesy of Mainstream Media.

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The following persons participated in this interview:

RS = Rabbi Dr. Meir Sendor, interviewee

RC = Robert Cohen, videographer and interviewer

TB = Tom Bates, videographer and interviewer

RS: You had asked me how I first came in contact with Stan Tenen's work, and that was through a mutual friend, Martin Farren, who had been introduced also from a mutual friend, a rabbi in Israel. And Martin was very excited. He first showed me some of Stan's work. I immediately saw its connection to some of the basic doctrines of Jewish tradition, particularly the tradition of Maaseh Bereshis, the doctrine of the creation of the world, and of Kabbalah.

RC: Okay. Could you actually state for us here --introduce yourself, your name, your position, your background.

RS: Sure. I'm rabbi Meir Sendor. I'm the rabbi of the Young Israel of Sharon, in Sharon, Mass, which is an Orthodox congregation of moderate size, 130 families. I also have a doctorate in Jewish History, particularly Medieval Jewish History, particularly in Kabbalah. It's from Harvard University. I have a masters from Yale, and I have a long-standing interest in Jewish History, particularly Jewish mystical history, particularly Kabbalah. I also teach a course on Brandeis University on the history of Jews and medicine, which deals with Judaism and science, Judaism and medical issues. We get into Jewish medical ethics, as well as what Judaism has to say about the mind-body relationship.

RC: Why don't you tell us about after your first introduction to Stan, what the progress for you was in how the information was revealed -- was it instantly obvious that it was true, or -- what was the progression of your reaction.

RS: You asked me about how I initially reacted to the material that Stan Tenen presented, and what my progressive reaction was. Initially I was quite intrigued, when I was first introduced to the material. Of course, Stan's studies themselves have evolved over time, since the time that I was first introduced to them, but I remember particularly what struck me was that he had a profound reading, what I call a hyper-literal reading, of an important rabbinic midrash from Midrash Bereshis Rabbah, regarding the fact that God looked into the Torah and created the world. This is understood, really, literally by the Kabbalists, that the Torah is the pattern of the creation of the universe. And this had usually been understood, in most scholarly circles, metaphorically, as something that was to convey a general idea that the Torah is the legal and in that sense, natural structure of the world, constituting kind of a natural law. But Stan took this doctrine to a much deeper level: that the sequence of letters, and words, and verses, throughout the Torah, can literally be understood as the basic energy-patterns by which the world is created. And this tied in beautifully with basic Kabbalistic doctrine, of the letters as Divine energy patterns. For anyone that's familiar with the material, this is a very very exciting association of Stan's work, and a core tradition of Jewish mysticism. I remember in particular one doctrine -- let's say one phenomenon, in Stan's early

work, was his explanation for the tagin, or the crowns, little crowns, on the letters of the Torah, and what the sequencing of those tagin, those crowns, are. No one has ever really been able to explain that -- hadn't been able to explain that to my satisfaction, though we have a tradition that mentioned in the Gemara Menachos, the Talmudic tractate of Menachos, that Rabbi Akiva was able to interpret piles and piles of halachos, of Jewish laws, of Torah laws, based on those crowns, and that those crowns have a profound significance. Stan is the first person that - Stan Tenen is the first person that I'm familiar with that has really given a cogent explanation of what those tagin might very well be about. It's very compelling. Very compelling. *[Note: See diagram on last page of this document]*

RC: Could you elaborate on that?

RS: The -- Stan understands that these crowns, these tagin on each -- on certain letters of the Torah, sort of become orienting signposts in what moves into his concept of sacred geometries, and the way in which the letters of the Torah, and particularly the letters of the first verse of the Torah -- and there's an important Rabbinic tradition that the first verse of the Torah does contain the basic pattern of the Universe -- Stan's understanding of the orientation of the crowns, as -- of the letters, has given us a way to really locate ourselves, and to organize the letters of the first verse of the Torah into a form that reflects the basic patterns of creation. It's a very compelling view. It works very nicely.

RC: Can you tell us if you feel that Stan's work is important in relation to modern interpretation? That is, these are ancient texts that have in some ways become obscure, and there's always an interest to revitalize. Do you have any thoughts on that?

RS: You asked me to comment on Stan's work in terms of its modern relevance, and how it interprets ancient texts with a modern relevancy, if I've restated your question properly. Stan Tenen is quite aware that at the core of all the great ancient texts of Judaism, particularly the Kabbalistic texts, are eternal truths, which is to say, eternal patterns which represent the constant relationship between human mind and creation and reality. While our knowledge of the world increases scientifically, the basic patterns by which we think and interrelate with the world and the structure of creation remains remarkably the same. For anyone that's involved in the history of science, you can see that certain modes of perception in Plato and Aristotle are just as relevant today, and we're still working with those modes of perception, even though the content may have changed dramatically. But we're still thinking along lines that often navigate somewhere between Platonic and Aristotelian thinking. This is also true for the works of Kabbalah. Kabbalistic thought involves the basic patterns of human consciousness and its relationship with the world. These remain, again, remarkably constant, even in our modern age, and I think Stan's work shows that. Stan Tenen shows that the structure of Kabbalistic thinking, and the structure of the most up to date, state of the art, quantum physics or astrophysics, really have an awful lot in common. This also is very exciting, for anyone that's interested in all of these fields, as I am.

RS: Can I make some comments of my own?

RC: Absolutely.

RS: I'd also like to talk about the importance of Stan's work from the point of view of a scholar of medieval history. One of the exciting things I've found about Stan's work, and his exploration of what you might call these sacred geometries, is that this mode of thinking seems to be the way in which some important Kabbalistic figures and authors of Kabbalistic texts were thinking, back in the late 12th, early 13th century, up to the 16th century. I have to say that there are certain texts, for a scholar of Kabbalah -- this is important to us -- there are certain texts which it seems to me are almost impossible to interpret and to read properly, without some awareness of what Stan Tenen is doing, and his explorations in these sacred geometries. These patterns seem to be at the core of these texts. I'll just mention one, that's really eluded most scholars of the history of Kabbalah up to this day, and that's the text Ma'ayan Chochma, "The

Fountain of Wisdom." The terms in which this text moves, and its basic concepts, its terminology, is reflected -- all of it's reflected in Stan's work. It's extraordinary. It's as if you get the key to understanding the text once you grasp what Stan Tenen is talking about. And there are a number of other scholars of the history of Kabbalah, as well as practicing Kabbalists, whom I'm aware of, who are excited about Stan's work for this very reason.

RC: That brings up that other issue -- the difficulty in getting scientists to accept any scientific validity from something from a spiritual source, or getting spiritual teachers to accept that the academic community might have something to say about this. In your discussion of Kabbalah in relationship to this, how do you think the academic community would respond, and vice-versa, and what's the problem there?

RS: The way in which different intellectual communities respond to this work is really rooted in its authenticity. When the work is genuine, well-documented, disciplined, and has an authentic relationship to Jewish texts, spiritual texts, on the one hand, and scientific work on the other, that in itself is what is attractive to scholars from the fields of Jewish history on the one hand, scholars of math and physics and other aspects of the scientific fields, and also people who are committed practitioners of Kabbalah, and spiritual practices. I think one of the things I respond to in this work is it's level of authenticity. There's nothing flighty or flaky about this at all. We're not talking new-age here. We're talking very solidly grounded and disciplined thought. And it's important to appreciate this, and distinguish this from other things that are out there in the world. People of truly curious minds, people who are genuinely intellectual, will be, I think, attracted to this, as I am. It's important that the work is well-grounded, and this work is.

RC: The academic biblical scholars tend to dismiss anything that comes from Kabbalah as poetry, it's words only, and they tend to not see that there could be any other meaning -- a tendency to just dismiss anything that doesn't come within their field of expertise.

RS: I'm not sure -- you're saying that people of some academic communities would dismiss Kabbalistic material. Kabbalah is a field of historical inquiry just as legitimate as any other field. I think the issue here really is, there are people who are narrow specialists, and it would be difficult, and perhaps even futile, to try to get them to move out of their specialty. That's their job. But there are people that have broader minds, who do see the interconnection between many different disciplines. People like that who have become acquainted with this work, I think, get very excited by it, because they do see the potential for kind of a cross-disciplinary fertilization from this work. So I wouldn't worry about "selling" the work, so to speak. It sells itself, for those that have open and curious minds, and are looking for on the one hand, an interesting theoretical, historical, kind of investigation, and on the other hand have a sense of commitment to the historical work, a personal commitment that informs their spiritual life as well. People that have those interests, those broad interests, I think are very excited by this work.

RC: Thanks. That's going to be very useful.

TB: These are somewhat related questions -- one, I'm wondering if there was any sort of -- when you first encountered the work -- if there was for you some "aha" experience about something you hadn't understood before, that fell into place as a result of this work. You mentioned the crowns. But I'm wondering if there's others.

RS: There were certain texts in the Merkava and Hechalos traditions -- these are early mystical traditions in Judaism from the first millennium in the common era, again, that are best understood on the basis of this work. That seem to have had the geometrical relationships and letter relationships that Stan Tenen is talking about, that seem to have had them in mind in some way, in some form. The texts from, for instance, "The Letters of Rebbe Akiva," the Pirke Hechalos, a text called Maaseh Bereshis, these are texts

that seem to have these geometries at their core. They're implicit in the texts. And the texts begin to speak to you in a much deeper way when you understand these geometrical relationships.

TB: I want to talk a bit about the letters themselves, and the importance that the letters and the shapes of the letters are given. My understanding is that the letters play a very important role, and I'm wondering if you can talk a bit about how that particular aspect of Kabbalah -- what you think this work can contribute to the understanding of that.

RS: The doctrine of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet is perhaps one of the most esoteric aspects of Jewish mysticism, and of Kabbalah in particular. Most of Kabbalah has focused on the ten Sefirot, or aspects of divine revelation in the world. The doctrine of the letters has always been an important part of Kabbalistic doctrine, Jewish mystical doctrine, but much less well understood. It's always been treasured as kind of the inner, most hidden aspect of Jewish tradition. Stan's concept of the letters, the meaning and shapes of the letters, the letters really as representing energy patterns, ultimately, correlates very well with basic Kabbalistic doctrines about what the Hebrew letters mean, doctrines that you can find in some of the early texts of Kabbalah, texts like Sefer HaBahir, which you find throughout the Zohar, which you find throughout the work of Rav Abraham Abulafia, and on into the Lurianic Kabbalists. You also find this in the very early texts I mentioned, the book known as the Letters of Rabbi Akiva, which interprets the shapes of the letters in interesting, rather prosaic ways, not perhaps as energy patterns, but which gives you the precedent for seeing the shapes of the letters as something significant, as having semantic significance in themselves, and even a metaphysical significance, and even perhaps a physical significance, in themselves. So there's great precedent for this in Jewish tradition.

RC: I'm interested in what you think might be in your background or your education that gives you some perspective on this, that allows you to see a holistic model here, as opposed to having to look at the individual parts.

RS: In my own personal educational history -- well, my field is history, and Jewish history, in particular Medieval Jewish history. I studied pre-med in college, and after college, I was at Brandeis for a while to take some pre-med courses. I have an interest in science in general. When I went into the rabbinate, I still maintained my interest in scientific thought -- really, in all forms of human thought, literature, as well as Jewish studies, and a strong background in Talmudic law, and in rabbinic law in general. I see all of these fields as interrelated -- I did that already, that's always been my intellectual perspective. So Stan's work fits very nicely into that.

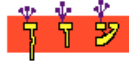
RS: Actually, let me expand on that question a little bit more. One of the principles that we were trained in at Harvard, in the doctoral program in Jewish studies, is that human thought is characterized by the interrelationship between fields and disciplines. So we were always encouraged to see what legal scholars have to say about mysticism, what mystics have to say about philosophy, what philosophers have to say about literature and law, and to see the interrelationship between all of these disciplines. This has always characterized the best of human thought, and it's true today, as much as it ever was.



The Shushon Flower Arrangement of the 27-Letters of the Hebrew Alphabet
 on the 24-Edges and 3-Internal Diagonals of a Cube-Octahedral Frame
 The Triple-Crown Letters Count Out a Tetrahedral
 Coordinate System and a Spin Axis

THERE ARE 9-LETTERS WITH TRIPLE-TAGIN ("Crowns") UNEVENLY DISTRIBUTED IN THE ALPHABET. A TETRAHEDRON'S 6-EDGES EXTEND INTO THE 12 SPHERE-POINTS OF A CUBE-OCTAHEDRON, WHERE THE TRIPLE-TAGIN LETTERS CLUSTER, MATCHING THE SHAPE OF THE TRIPLE-TAGIN.

THE REMAINING 3-LETTERS WITH TRIPLE TAGIN, THAT ARE NOT SHOWN IN THE DIAGRAM BELOW,

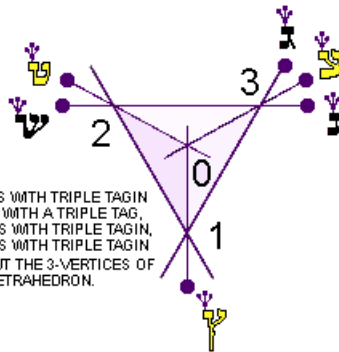


FRAME THE TRIANGULAR FACE ON THE BACK OF THE CUBE-OCTAHEDRON.

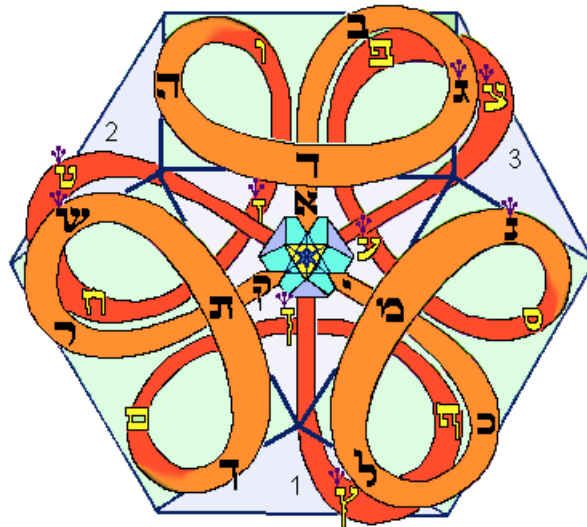
THESE 3-LETTERS ARE OPPOSITE 3-LETTERS WITH NO TRIPLE TAGIN



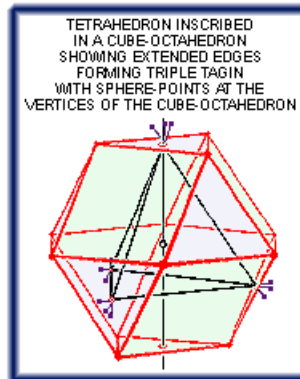
ON THE FRONT TRIANGULAR FACE OF THE CUBE-OCTAHEDRON, AT POSITION "0" IN THE DIAGRAM BELOW:



NO-LETTERS WITH TRIPLE TAGIN
 1-LETTER WITH A TRIPLE TAG,
 2-LETTERS WITH TRIPLE TAGIN,
 AND 3-LETTERS WITH TRIPLE TAGIN
 COUNT OUT THE 3-VERTICES OF A TETRAHEDRON.



The SPIN AXIS is defined by **ד מ ת** - **ק ט צ**
 "RIDGE-POLE" "HAWK"



TETRAHEDRON INSCRIBED IN A CUBE-OCTAHEDRON SHOWING EXTENDED EDGES FORMING TRIPLE TAGIN WITH SPHERE POINTS AT THE VERTICES OF THE CUBE-OCTAHEDRON