



21. IN FRAGMENTS



The only true voyage of discovery ... would be not to visit strange lands but to possess other eyes, to behold the universe through the eyes of another, of a hundred others, to behold the hundred universes that each of them beholds, that each of them is. — Marcel Proust

In the end, we return to where we began, but now with a new level of understanding. And so we return to the lake and the limestones — now seen at **100x magnification**, looking like some primordial cosmic event from before the beginning of time. The stones become a galaxy; the **ouroboros** eats its own tail. Two flames appear, searching for something not known. They explore the stones, the sand, and the water. They come too close to the glass, and it shatters into fragments. Twenty-one limestones flash across the frame, their white veins of calcite intact even at this microscopic perspective. The flames return, probing the fragments for some kind of meaning. A face or a mask is briefly discovered. The flames are swallowed by the void.

In the Jewish mystical tradition, **Kabbalah**, the act of creation is understood as an act of stepping back or withdrawing, known as “**Tzimtzum**”. Through this act of contraction, a **void** is created into which new creative light can then flow, traveling forth in a series of **vessels**. However, these vessels are too fragile to hold the divine light that fills them, so they shatter into myriad fragments through a process known as “**Shevirah**,” casting “**holy sparks**” throughout all of creation. To restore the broken vessels, the sparks must be gathered together again, no matter where in the world they are hidden, through a process known as “**Tikkun Olam**” (literally, *world repair*).

This work of “**world repair**” is an invitation to each of us — no matter where in creation we may happen to be. It is ultimately personal work, less about moving things around externally, and more about resolving the enigmas within.

Joseph Campbell speaks to this paradox:

The world is a wasteland. People have the notion of saving the world by shifting it around and changing the rules and so forth. No, any world is a living world if it's alive, and the thing is to bring it to life. And the way to bring it to life is to find in your own case where your life is, and be alive yourself.

To mystics like the Kabbalists, speech is not merely a technology for describing the world, but a vector for applying intention — closer to the original notion of “**spelling**” as “casting a spell”.

This kind of sacred speech is not only what we say, but also what we think, do, and believe. It is a powerful tool for practicing *world repair* in our own unique life situations. In other words, it is a tool for making “**Life Art**” — using intention as an underlying technology and ritual as an amplifying force. Taken together, a potent portfolio for shaping reality.

Performed in 2016 — Duration 2:03

