



Foreword

There was once a king whose only son was a source of enormous pride and joy. Then disaster struck. The young man contracted a mysterious illness, collapsed into a deathly coma, and no royal doctor could revive him.

In desperation, a professor of herbal medicine was summoned to the palace. The specialist examined the boy and prescribed an unconventional remedy.

“Grind a twenty eight karat ruby gem stone to a pulp, and then mix it with several common herbs and mineral water and feed it to the boy.”

Many of the king’s attendants heard the professor’s words as quackery. The rare and precious stone he had requested was the centerpiece of the setting on the king’s crown. These skeptics felt that the king’s crown should not be destroyed on the directives of a shaman. Other officials contended that their king certainly wanted his court to attempt every possible cure, regardless of cost or plausibility. The professor did not wait for the two groups to resolve their fight. He seized the crown, tore out the jewel that was its heart, and crushed the stone into granules. After feeding the potion to the prince, the boy immediately opened his eyes, and eventually recovered fully.¹

The King in the parable is God, the Ultimate Sovereign. The Jewish nation is the crown prince, as we are called in the

¹ This parable was related by Rabbi *Shneur Zalman* of Liady (1745-1813). Rabbi S.Z. was one of the greatest thinkers of the Chassidic movement. His book, called the *Tanya* or *Likutey Amarim*, is the essential handbook of Chassidic thought. He related the story to explain the timing of the appearance of the Chassidic movement.



Torah, “children of God.”² The wise professor who saved the prince was Rabbi *Yisrael Baal Shem Tov*,³ known as the *Besht*,⁴ who started a movement of ecstatic Jewish observance, *Chassidus*.

In the mid-eighteenth century, the Jewish nation in Europe underwent a momentous change. After centuries of discrimination and suffering, sounds of civic, economic, and political emancipation began to resonate behind the ghetto walls. Yet, this emancipation engendered a debilitating spiritual infection, which struck the Jewish people and fully emerged once the Jews stepped beyond the strictures of the ghetto and took their place among the ranks of European citizenry. Jews began to forsake the traditions of their ancestors and assimilate into gentile societies. To ingratiate themselves with newfound gentile friends, millions of Jews forsook their identity and religious heritage. *R. Yisrael Baal Shem Tov*, the founder of the Chassidic movement, fashioned a unique remedy to this epidemic.

He seized the initiative. He took the Torah, God’s crown, and extracted the wisdom of *Sod*, Jewish Mysticism, Torah’s most precious part. To enable the digestion of the stone, he ground it up; he translated mystical concepts into the realm of the common man; he explicated principles, popularized esoteric imagery, and encouraged spiritual practice for all. He organized the devotees of his lessons into a movement that is still vibrant in our times, *Chassidus*.

The secrets from the inner meaning of Torah form the soul of the Chassidic movement’s thought. They inspire, revive,

² See further *Deuteronomy*, 8:5

³ He was born circa 1698 and passed away in 1760. The name *Baal Shem Tov* literally means “Master of the good name.” He had a good name for he always judged the deeds of others favorably and his prayers for others brought about miracles.

⁴ *Besht* is an acronym from his name *Baal Shem Tov*.

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and inflame Jewish souls with a passion to constantly increase observance and devotion.⁵ This ecstatic Jewish practice and belief has stood the test of time. For more than two centuries it has inoculated millions against the ravages of secularism and preserved the spiritual life of the Jewish nation.

Chassidus emerged for it was needed as a protection from the storm winds of modernity. Today's Jewish community might benefit from a new look at the Chassidic movement's beginnings and reflections. Intermarriage is rampant and assimilation into American culture has become the norm. Even those Jews who fulfill their religious obligations frequently perform rituals in a lifeless and habitual way. Were we to discover the depth and soulful vitality that fill Chassidic literature, Chassidic passion might inflame our faltering Jewish experience with the warmth of Torah. Unfortunately, for many of my contemporary American Jews, access to the gem stones of the Chassidim has been denied.

Chassidic works are overwhelmingly in Hebrew and few good translations exist.⁶ For the American Jew whose Hebrew is not fluent, these books are welded shut. Even those who can read

⁵ Chassidic thought is an encounter with the depths of Jewish experience. Once your soul has been lit with the spark of *Chassidus* other sections of Jewish knowledge, such as Talmud study, in Hebrew called *Gemarrah*, will display similar flames. One usually considers Talmud study to be a cold, intellectual, endeavor, however, Rabbi Aharon Karliner (1736-1772), a contemporary of Rabbi *Shneur Zalman* of Liadi, would teach that the word *Gemarrah* means a burning ember, "*gumrah diaisha*." "For when someone learns Torah for its own sake, his heart burns with a desire to dedicate his entire being to the Master of the Universe." (*Beis Aharon*, pg. 5a) Rabbi *Shraga Feivel Mendelovitz* o.b.m., the founder of Mesivta Torah Vodaath, taught Chassidic thought to his American born students in Torah Vodaath for he felt that once inspired with the profundity of *Chassidus* his boys would experience Talmud study and Mitzvah observance in a warmer, more passionate, and joy-filled manner. (Rav Wolfson)

⁶ Fortunately, Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan (1934-1983), the great expositor of Jewish thought to the masses of American Jewry, published several excellent volumes of Chassidic thought in English. However, there are still many works of *Chassidus* that have yet to be translated.



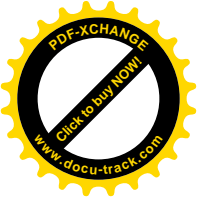
Rabbinic Hebrew find Chassidic literature challenging, for the Chassidic masters assumed that their readers were knowledgeable about basic mystical concepts and terms. Absent an introductory course, many try to absorb the warmth of Chassidic Torah and then give up in frustration when the texts do not seem to explain their basic assumptions.⁷ This book is an attempt to fill that void. It attempts to provide an introduction to the basic terms and ideas of Chassidic texts so that once it is mastered the reader will be able to comprehend the works of the Chassidic masters directly.

This book is written for the interested lay reader who may be new to Torah study. That is why I have endeavored to translate all terms into English.⁸ It is also directed to the Yeshiva student who is knowledgeable about Biblical narratives and Talmudic law but may be new to the world of *Chassidus*. Hopefully, these introductory lessons will open the door to new dimensions of observance, piety, and study.

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⁷ See *Chassidic Masters*, Chapter 1

⁸ At times this book draws upon the depths of insight that emerge from the Hebrew language. *Chassidus* discovers inspiration through the etymology of Hebrew words. Many ideas in this book are derived from the meaning of words in different contexts. Further, the letters of the Hebrew alphabet have assigned numeric values. This book draws on the wisdom of *Gimatria* – calculating the numeric value of a word and phrase and explicating its relationship to other words or phrases that equal the same sum. Another linguistic device is *Roshey Teivos*, word headings. Lessons in this book might interpret a word as an acronym for a phrase with each letter representing an entire word that begins with that letter. For instance the word *shevy*, literally captive, through word headings, represents the phrase *Shimon var Yochai*, which means, Simon son of Yochai. This book was written for the non-Hebrew literate. I have attempted to explain in plain English, as best I can, all Hebrew word interpretations, so that even the non-Hebrew speaker or reader will understand the ideas of this book.



Introductory Notes on Style and Content

This preface contains notes about what this book is and where the ideas of the book are taught.

Chassidus and Kabbalah

This is a book of *Chassidus* not Kabbalah, Jewish mysticism.

“The earlier Kabbalah tried to bring man into heaven. The main idea of *Chassidus* was to bring heaven into man.”⁸

Chassidic thought is predicated on Kabbalah, but Chassidic works differ greatly from Kabbalistic tracts. *Chassidus* emphasizes practical application, while Kabbalah describes Heavenly domains.

The following story accentuates this distinction. *Rabbi Aryeh Leib Heller, the author of Ketzos Hachoshen,*⁹ once challenged Rabbi Zvi, the Chassidic Grand Rabbi of Zhiditchov:

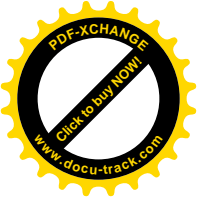
*What is unique about the Baal Shem Tov? Why are thousands of simple Jews excitedly following him? He is merely a teacher of Lurianic Mysticism. Rabbi Luria's*¹⁰ *lectures did not excite such passion amongst the masses.*

R. Zvi answered:

⁸ Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan, Chassidic Masters pg. 4

⁹ *Ketzos* is a classic commentary about Jewish financial law, its author lived from 1745-1813 and is considered one of his era's greatest scholars of the Talmud.

¹⁰ Rabbi Isaac Luria was one of the foremost mystics in Jewish history. Born in Jerusalem in 1534, he led the Jewish mystics of Safed during their period of prolific scholarship. He passed away in 1572. His work is the definitive guide for Kabbalah and he is known as the *Ari Hakadosh* “the Godly Rabbi Isaac,” *Ari* is the acronym of the Hebrew phrase – *Eloki* (Godly) *Rabbeinu Yitzchok*.



Picture a land whose king died abruptly. The populace plunged into self pity, certain that no adequate replacement would be found. A search committee was formed and its agents set out to find a regent. An investigator heard vague rumors about a man from the distant east: "He is tall, handsome, and wise; blessed with royal ancestry, and a kind, gracious heart." He seemingly possessed the desired qualifications for the throne. Unfortunately, due to the vast distance between the candidate and his prospective subjects the reports lacked details and sounded vague and unsure. As a result, most of the kingdom's citizens felt that they were sheep bereft of hope for a shepherd.

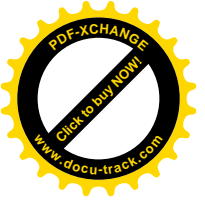
A short time later a traveler arrived from the Far East who was a close friend of the prospective leader. The traveler described the strengths of the candidate with first hand clarity. His presentation was convincing and the leaders of the community announced that a king had been found. However, the simple folk remained depressed. Preoccupied as they were with the daily struggle for subsistence they could not pay attention to the visitor with exciting news.

One man thought to relieve the tension of the commoners. He brought the candidate himself to the people. Once the nation saw him and experienced his speeches all were taken with his stature and wisdom. The masses joined the leaders, spontaneously all shouting, 'Behold our king! Long live our new king!'

R. Zvi then explained:

This parable is the story of Jewish mystical thought. R. Shimon Bar Yochai (the author of the Zohar)¹¹ revealed a glimpse of the secret world. The Jews of that historical period needed an insight into the Heavenly worlds to inspire devotion,

¹¹ Zohar literally means Glow or Splendor, it is the title for a work that collects mystical lessons from sages from the times of the Mishna (the second century). It is the basic text for all Jewish mystics.



but his lessons were couched in esoteric language and they were like the distant rumors about the king, only a small and elite class fully appreciated them. The Ari Hakadosh's¹² time needed more of this heavenly light. As a result, Providence blessed Rabbi Luriah with an intimate knowledge of the sacred dimension. He described the secret realms with great precision. His reach was broader than Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai's, yet his work too was only meaningful to righteous people and intellectual giants. The current historical era, needs these lights on a scale for the layman. The Baal Shem Tov is the man who travels to the peasants and reveals to them, 'Behold here is your king!' He shows that God is everywhere. He takes the secret wisdom and explains how it can be actualized into daily living. His message is accessible to all since it is reached in an experiential and not merely intellectual way. As a result the masses join him and excitedly shout 'We see our King (God)! Long live our King!'¹³

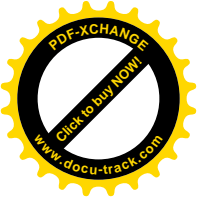
¹² Rabbi Luriah

¹³ I adapted this story from the Torah commentary *Divrey Tzadikim* written by Rav Dov Berish of Ushpitzin.

Rabbi Moshe Chayim Luzzato (1707-1746), one of the greatest mystical masters, revealed that Rabbi *Shimon Bar Yochai* had a special soul which came to earth to help lead wayward Jews back to observance. His logic can be extended to include Rabbi Isaac Luria and the *Baal Shem Tov*.

"When Moses rose to the highest spiritual levels he took out of the light of *Binah*, the force of return to God, a special soul. This soul became Rabbi **Shimon Bar Yochai**. That is why in the Psalms (68:19) it is written, '*Alisa lamarom shavisa shevy*' 'You rose to the heavens and took, **shevy**, a captive.' This "captive" was the soul of Rabbi *Shimon*, which is why his name is hinted in the letters of the word *shevy*. The Hebrew letters *shin*, *bet*, and *yud* are the three letter acronym of his name **Shimon Bar Yochai** and they are the letters of the word *shevy*..." (Rabbi Luzzatto's *Adir Bamarom*)

Rabbi Isaac Luriah was the son of *Shlomo*, his Hebrew name is **Yitzchok ben Shlomo**, *shin*, *bet*, and *yud* are the three leading letters in his name. The *Baal Shem Tov*'s Hebrew name was *Yisrael* and his mother's name was Sarah, **Yisrael ben Sarah**'s acronym also results in the letters *yud*, *bet*, and *shin*. An individual's essence is contained within the letters of his name. These three individuals shared the same leading letters, for these personalities



The Chassid seeks to answer the charge of application: "How does one translate the secrets of the universe into service of God?"¹⁴ For example, Kabbalah discusses the different manifestations of the *Sephiros*, distinct gradations of God's light, in the varying spiritual universes. *Chassidus* uses the *Sephiros* to develop a psychological map of man's personality and then guide man as how best to approach Divinity.

The various customs designed to preserve mysticism for the scholars do not refer to Chassidic thought. Kabbalah with its other worldly focus is traditionally studied by experts of Jewish thought. *Chassidus* however, focuses Kabbalistic lessons toward man's behavior in this world. When Kabbalah is used to encourage practical actions, when its ideas are expressed in the human realm, then all should study it. Consider the lesson of Rabbi *Chaim* of Tzanz:¹⁵

It is written, "the honor of God-(demands that one) conceal the matter; and the honor of Kings-(requires the) study of the matter."¹⁶ This means that if a student seeks to study Kabbalah in order to know how many spiritual worlds there really are and how many *Sephiros* exist, namely the "honor of God," then "conceal the matter" do not teach such a person. However if he wishes to study Kabbalah in order to know how to serve God with dedication, sanctify all of his two hundred and forty eight limbs, and turn them

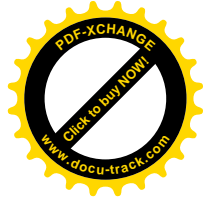
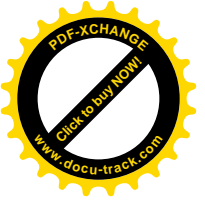
were partners in a common mission, to reveal the innermost secrets of the Torah and thus encourage Jews to renew their ties with the Almighty. (Rav Wolfson)

¹⁴ This question is referred to in Chassidic literature with the phrase "*Al derech haavodah*" meaning "According to the way of service to God." Every Torah concept can be applied to *derech avodah*, it can be interpreted as advice about serving the Almighty.

¹⁵ Rabbi *Chaim* Halberstam of Tzanz was born in 1793 and passed away in 1876. He was a renowned Talmudist and Chassidic leader who fathered several great Chassidic dynasties.

¹⁶ *Proverbs* 25:2

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into a *Merkavah Lashchina* – channels filled with God’s light ¹⁷ – namely the “honor of **Kings**” then “study the matter” and reveal Kabbalah to such a seeker.¹⁸

Chassidic Thought Reveals Oneness

A Chassidic term that befuddles many students is “*bechina*.” In Chassidic texts many items are described as being a *bechina* of something else, and multiple *bechinos* may be ascribed to a single item. It is hard to translate the term *bechina*.¹⁹ It denotes an analogy or a relative value. For example, male is to female as giver is to receiver, for to create life male

¹⁷ According to Jewish thought the physical body can become a *Merkavah* – a container – to the *Shechina* – the Divine presence. Our physical bodies can be sanctified to the point that the Divine is felt on them and they become billboards that increase His Glory. Literally *Merkavah* is a chariot. Travel usually causes a person to have less honor (for in the new location he is unknown, see further *Rashi* at the beginning of *parshas Lech Lecha*). Travel in a chariot increases the honor of the passenger (because the chariot engenders respect and through his journey more people learn that he is a nobleman). Similarly, physical life usually causes a decrease in God’s honor, but for those who are a *Merkavah*, their sojourn of life is like a chariot, and their deeds and life-story bring added glory to God. (*Pachad Yitzchok, Pesach Maamar #1*)

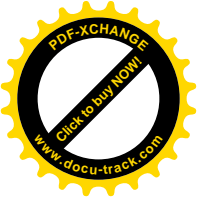
Each of our forefathers was a *Merkavah*. They were exclusively dedicated to serving God and God’s attributes were discernible from their deeds. See further *Bereishis Rabba 47, Michtav Meeliyahu vol. 2 Lech Lecha, Daas Tefillah* pgs. 75-78.

Rabbi Jacob I. Schochet explained the idea of a *Merkavah* in the following passage:

“*Tzadikim* are a *merkavah* (chariot; vehicle) for G-dliness. That is, just as a chariot has no will of its own but is in total submission to the will and directions of the charioteer, so is the *tzadik* with total self-negation altogether submissive to the Divine Will even with his body and bodily functions... To see and meet them (such *tzadikim*) is tantamount to seeing and meeting the ‘Face of the *Shechina*.’ Why are they called the ‘Face of the *Shechina*?’ Because the *Shechina* is concealed within the manifest *tzadik*.” (*Chassidic Dimensions* pg. 100)

¹⁸ Introduction to *Imrey Yosef* (Spinka). See further *Bereishis Rabbah 9:1*

¹⁹ Some translate it as “an aspect of.”



gives seed that female receives. The sun gives light that the moon receives, thus the sun is *bechinas zachar*, relatively it is masculine, while the moon is *bechinas nekeiva*, analogous to the feminine.

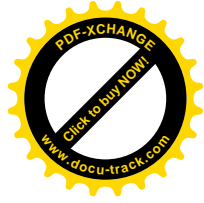
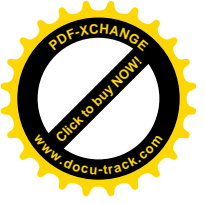
Personalities are thus a *bechina* of certain times or places. Some Rabbis are a *bechina* of Shabbos (Sabbath)²⁰ while others are a *bechina* of *Yom Tov* (holidays). Shabbos is the day of complete rest and during the six days of work all of Shabbos's needs are prepared. Holidays are times of partial rest, when some forms of work, food preparation in particular, are allowed. Shabbos individuals are constantly at rest. Due to their faith and trust in God, they do not engage the material world at all. Their great faith is rewarded and miraculously their material needs are met. Other sages resemble *Yom Tov*; their faith is not as complete as the belief of the Shabbos scholars. As holidays on which some work is performed, they expend minimal effort in the material realm.²¹

Relativity allows for many different *bechinos* within an item, for an item can be contrasted by many disparate phenomena. If we look at the relationship between sun and moon, the sun is male while the moon is female. But if we look at the relationship between the Creator and His creations, God represents the male concept and the sun is female. This leads to items symbolizing different concepts, some of them contradictory, such as the sun being the symbol of both the masculine and the feminine.

One God created our world and, as a result, a powerful unity underlies all of creation. *Chassidus* seeks to reveal this unity. Chassidic thought delights in finding the common themes of different details within a particular lesson, even when a different principle is suggested for the same material in another

²⁰ See further *Zohar* part 3 pg. 144b

²¹ See further *Emunas Etecha* to *parshas Naso* pg. 120.



lesson. Thus, Abraham in one lesson might be defined as the ultimate personification of Shabbos (*bechina* of Shabbos), while in another lesson Abraham is the personality of kindness, and Joseph is presented as the paragon of Shabbos-like living. In truth, both Abraham and Joseph had multiple elements to their personalities, one of which was a Shabbos-like quality.

In this work, I have attempted to remain faithful to the Chassidic mode of thought. In many of the lessons I tried to link together seemingly distinct entities through revealing the *bechinos* of an item. I have avoided the use of the term *bechina* since it is so difficult to translate and I have tried to spell out the points of comparison to the extent that I understand them.

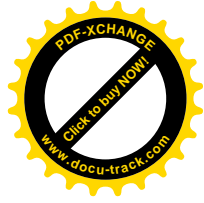
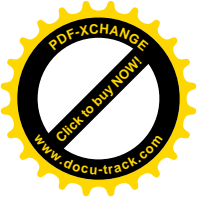
The Essence of *Chassidus*

In R. Zvi's parable the *Baal Shem Tov* showed the king to the peasants. *Chassidus* encourages a perspective on life that sees God everywhere ... guiding every personal experience and maintaining the existence of every physical item.²² Rabbi *Menachem Mendel* of Kotzk²³ once said, "Where is God?

²² "In truth every item in the physical world needs constant care from God. Without God constantly renewing an item's life it would disappear. Every item only seems to exist on its own, in truth, God is continually affirming its existence. If you seek the inner reality and reject externals you will find God everywhere. Do not focus on the mirage, focus on the essence and then you will be able to point with your finger at God who inheres within every sphere of the physical world." (*Mishbetzos Zahav* pgs. 210-213, *Shabbos Hagadol* 5753)

Rabbi Levi Yitzchok of Berdichev (1740-1810) encapsulated this view of the world with a song called "*a Dudele*." In Yiddish the word *Du* means "you" in a very intimate manner. The song's lyrics are; "To the east *Du*, to the west *Du*, to the north *Du*, to the south *Du*, in front *Du*, behind *Du*. *Du, Du, Du, Du*." The song is about the Master of the World and Rabbi L.Y. was teaching that he saw Him everywhere.

²³ Rabbi Menachem Mendel Morgenstern (1787-1859) of Kotzk was a passionate Chassidic leader. He is most remembered for his insistence on absolute truth and his critiques of any form of hypocrisy.



Wherever you let Him in.”²⁴ Over the centuries of the existence of *Chassidus*, thousands of devotees, from all walks of life, allowed God into every aspect of their lives. Their theology painted the world with dazzling new colors. Once you acquire their point of view, wherever you turn, you’ll find infinite light.²⁵

Seeing the King excited the peasants. Seeing is a physical sensation – an experience – not a logical argument. The essence of *Chassidus* lies in experience and passion. A verbal definition of *Chassidus* is inherently deficient. Words cannot do justice to the tearful eye of a teenager singing “*Tzumah Licha Nafshi*” (“My soul is thirsting for You, God”). Nor can verbiage accurately convey the joy of the dancer leaping in honor of God.

The highest emotion is love. *Chassidus* calls upon man to fall in love with Holiness. Its devotees enter into a state of rhapsodic ecstasy and revel in the personal bond they feel with their Maker.²⁶

Genuine seekers of spirituality should not satisfy themselves with study of this or any other book. They should travel to Chassidic centers and sense the emotional power of Chassidic life.²⁷

²⁴ See *Chassidic Masters* page 4

²⁵ See Rabbi *Tzadok Hacohen* of Lublin’s *Dover Tzedek* pg. 12. Rabbi *Tzadok Hacohen* Rabinovitch of Lublin was a great Talmudic scholar and an original Chassidic thinker. He was born in 1823 to a distinguished rabbinic family and he passed away in 1900.

²⁶ Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan points out that since *Chassidus* calls on man to love God, it demands of all, even the common man, to achieve saintly sanctity. This ideal is a realistic one for the Chassidic community for “Where love exists, nothing is difficult, and when love for God is absolute, even sainthood may not be an overwhelming goal.” (*Chassidic Masters*, pg. 5)

²⁷ Rabbi Kaplan expressed the essential role of feeling in *Chassidus* in the following way:

“In the teachings of the Hasidic Masters, one comes across a new way of approaching God and the spiritual. Neither Kabbalah nor philosophy,



The key to the understanding of Chassidic thought lies in experiencing Chassidic teachings directly. This work is presented as a series of lessons filled with Chassidic insight. Hopefully, these will serve as an introduction to *Chassidus* in general and, once mastered, as a springboard to the comprehension of classic Chassidic texts.

Sources

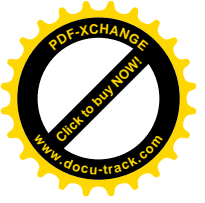
The overwhelming majority of ideas contained herein have been gleaned from the lectures of my teacher, Rav *Moshe Wolfson Shlit"a*, the *mashgiach ruchani* (spiritual guidance counselor) of Yeshiva *Torah Vadaath*²⁸ and the Rav (Rabbi) of *Beis Medrash Emunas Yisrael*. As an introduction to *Chassidus*, the *Mashgiach* taught an English language class on the *Tanya* for three years. This work is based upon my notes from those lectures.²⁹ In addition, I have listened to lectures on the *Tanya* by the Rebbe, leading Rabbi, of Stutchin, Rav *Mordechai Zilber shlit"a*, the *Mashgiach's* son-in-law. The Rebbe's deep presentations have also helped me immeasurably in the preparation of this work. I have also added material from the writings of Rabbi Wolfson and other Chassidic masters.³⁰ There are works from the *Mussar* schools of thought that seemed to

but experience is the proper way to approach God. "Serve God with gladness!" "Taste and see that God is good!" "For me the closeness of God is best" The words of the Psalmist became the watchwords of the Hassidic movement." (ibid. pg. 3)

²⁸ *Torah Vadaath* is one of New York's oldest and most prestigious Yeshivos. Rabbi Wolfson was a student at *Torah Vodaath* and was a close disciple of Rabbi *Shraga Feivel Mendelovitz* o.b.m., the institution's founder. Today Rav Wolfson provides inspiration and guidance to the students at *Torah Vodaath*.

²⁹ The *Tanya* is the basic text of Chassidic thought, and while there are different approaches than that of the *Baal Hatanya*, his work is integral to understanding *Chassidus*.

³⁰ In particular I have drawn upon Rav Wolfson's writings, *Emunas Etecha* and *Tzion Vi'arehah*. I have also tried to incorporate insights from *Mishbetzos Zahav*, the writings of the Stutchiner Rebbe.



deal with the same themes the *Mashgiach* advanced, and I have attempted to incorporate their insights as well. I have tried to note in the footnotes the sources for all the ideas that I did not hear directly from Rav Wolfson.

The *Mashgiach* is a selfless teacher. He has shared his wisdom and life with thousands, many of whom seek him out on a daily basis. He has been a major influence and source of inspiration in my life and in the lives of countless other students of Torah. I will never be able to sufficiently express my gratitude to the Almighty for bringing me to the *Mashgiach*. His outlook and personality have had an enormous impact upon me.

Some ideas in the book are from sources that I do not remember. Whatever sources I did recall I have tried to note, and I hope that I did not violate the Talmudic dictum demanding that lessons be taught in the name of their originator. Finally, I pray that if I misrepresented a concept its author will forgive me.

A Prayer

One of the few pieces of literature written by the *Baal Shem Tov* is a letter he sent to his brother-in-law. In it, the *Besht* related a dreamlike experience in which he ascended the heavenly ladder and met the soul of *Mashiach* – the Messiah.

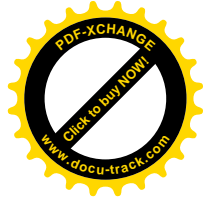
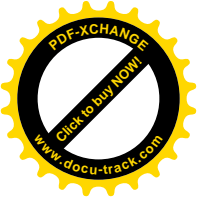
I spoke to Mashiach and asked him, "When is your majesty coming?"

He replied, "This is your sign: It will be at a time when your teachings become widespread in the world, and 'your springs spread their waters afar.'"³¹

Hopefully this book will help spread the waters of the springs of *Chassidus* a little further.

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³¹ *Chassidic Masters* pg.13



Lesson One

The Commitment at Birth

The Talmud³² teaches that the most exquisite moments of life are spent in the womb. The embryo gains insight, as it sits together with its own personal angel and is taught the entirety of Torah. A glowing candle allows them to see from one end of the world to the other. As the soul leaves the womb, the angel guides it in a final and irrevocable oath:

I will be a *Tzadik*, a righteous individual. I will never take pride for virtue even if the whole world calls me a saint. In my eyes I will (always) remain like a *Rasha*, a wicked person, (who must still grow and improve).³³

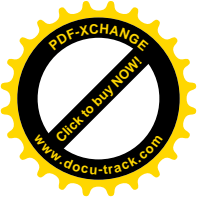
Upon entering this world, the child is touched by his celestial mentor, and the illuminating candle, the dotting angel, the Torah learning, and the solemn oath vanish from memory.

Three questions arise from this Talmudic account: First, since we have no memory of this prenatal oath, why were we led to accept it? Next, according to Jewish law, only the oaths of adults can create legal and binding obligations, therefore, why is an unborn child taking an oath? Last, considering that an oath usually serves as a guarantor to the truth of one's words, why is the pure soul of the child not accepted as trustworthy without the oath?

The questions may be answered as follows: an oath is not merely a verbal guarantee; rather it is a process that imbues an individual with added strength. We glean this understanding of the oath-taking process from two sources, the usage of such

³² Tractate *Niddah*, pg. 30b

³³ *Ibid.*



verbal commitments in the Torah and the etymology of the Hebrew word *shevua*, oath.

Oaths in the Torah

In the book of Genesis, after the death of Sarah, Abraham sends his trusted servant Eliezer to find a wife for *Yitzchok*, Abraham's son. Abraham saw the rampant corruption among the indigenous Canaanites, and he sought a suitable daughter-in-law from a different society. Not satisfied merely to request that Eliezer avoid choosing a Canaanite, Abraham led him in an oath:

I will make you swear by **God**, the God of heaven and earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from among the daughters of the Canaanites in whose midst I dwell. But you should go into my country and to my relatives and take a wife for my son for *Yitzchok*.³⁴

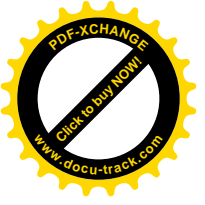
Abraham's insistence on this oath is disturbing. Would he not trust Eliezer's solemn commitment? Eliezer had been Abraham's most loyal student.³⁵ The two had fought together and depended on one another in battle.³⁶ Abraham had trusted Eliezer's loyalty to defend his life; why would he not trust Eliezer's word? One might posit that Eliezer's word was not trustworthy in the absence of an oath since he was not a member of Abraham's family. This solution would not apply to a different circumstance of oath-taking in the Torah.

According to Jewish mystics, Joseph was the paradigm of virtue and righteousness, the personification of *Tzadik Yesod Olam*, a man of such holiness that his merit sustains the entire world. Joseph was also Jacob's favorite son, and they shared a

³⁴ *Genesis*, 24:3-4

³⁵ See *Genesis*, 15:2 and the commentary of *Rashi* s.v. "*uven meshek beisi*" and "*Damesek*"

³⁶ See *Genesis*, 14:14 and *Rashi's* commentary on that verse.



special relationship.³⁷ When Jacob lay dying he called Joseph and requested burial in the Land of Israel. Although Joseph promised that he would ensure his father's internment in Israel,³⁸ Jacob was not satisfied and demanded that an oath be sworn in God's name:

And he (Jacob) said "Swear to me" and he (Joseph) swore to him, and *Yisrael* (another name for Jacob) bowed back toward the head of the bed.³⁹

Did Jacob really suspect that Joseph would not fulfill his final request? It is a mitzvah to fulfill the last wishes of a dying man.⁴⁰ Did Jacob fear that the paradigmatic *Tzadik* would not fulfill a moral charge? Did he think that his most beloved son's word could not be trusted?

Evidently, oaths function in the Bible as more than mere guaranties of truth-telling. They give the oath-taker added strength to attain what might otherwise be too difficult to accomplish. Abraham trusted Eliezer, and Jacob trusted Joseph, yet the goals that Joseph and Eliezer were charged to achieve were seemingly unattainable. To find a suitable spouse for his master's son, Eliezer had to overcome his personal interests, having a daughter of marriageable age, and the opposition of both the boorish Besuel and Lavan, relatives of Abraham who rejected Abraham's mission.⁴¹ To bury Jacob in Israel, Joseph had to overcome the opposition of Pharoh, a tyrant who believed

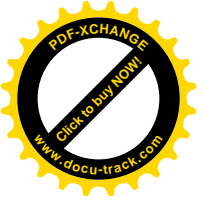
³⁷ See *Genesis*, 30:25 and *Rashi's* comment on that verse; *Genesis*, 37:2 and the respective *Rashi*; also *Genesis*, 37:11, 37:35, 45:27-28.

³⁸ *Genesis*, 47:30

³⁹ *Genesis*, 47:31

⁴⁰ Tractate *Gittin*, 15a

⁴¹ Furthermore, Eliezer had to leave *Avraham's* house and in the home of Besuel convince Besuel and Lavan to allow *Rivkah* to marry *Yitzchok*. The home of *Avraham* was suffused with a spirit of sanctity while the home of Besuel was a den of iniquity. *Avraham* feared that the atmosphere of Besuel's home would affect Eliezer; in *Aram* Eliezer would not be able to overcome his own biases, and he would falter and leave the task unfulfilled. (Rav Wolfson)



that Jacob's physical presence in Egypt brought blessings to the land and prevented the recurrence of famine. Without their oaths, Eliezer and Joseph might have tried their best but given up had their initial efforts proved unsuccessful. Perhaps they would have invoked the Talmud's rule that "the coerced are not liable." Their oaths called forth added strength from the core of their soul. The extra determination and fortitude enabled them to successfully complete their missions.⁴²

The Words *Shevua* and *Sheva*:

Hebrew words are derivations and variations of three letter roots. The root of the word *shevua*, oath, is also the root of the word *sheva*, seven. The verbal confluence reflects a connection between an oath and the symbolic message of the number seven.

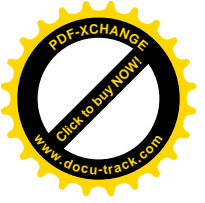
The number seven recalls the days of the week and also God's creation of the world. On each of the seven days of creation he formed a different elemental spiritual force. These spiritual forces devolved into the material world.⁴³ The number seven symbolizes these forces and the totality of the natural world's origins.⁴⁴

⁴² See *Ohr Gedalyahu* on *parshas Vayetze*, contrast this with the *Sfas Emes* at the beginning of *Vayetze*, see also the *Sfas Emes* on *parshas Matos*, 5634, who writes, "My teacher and master, my grandfather, explained the concept of *Shevua* – when man accepts upon himself a commitment with his *entire* heart, (he swears and) this is the *shevua* – the gathering together of all the seven *midos* – character parts – within man. Once fully devoted the name of God rests upon him." In later lessons there will be a further explication of the seven character parts of man.

⁴³ See further later lessons where the further depths to the creation narrative are revealed.

⁴⁴ See the *Collected Writings of Rabbi Samson Rapheal Hirsch* (1808-1888), vol. 3, pgs. 96-111. Rabbi Hirsch develops the theory that the number seven represents completeness, as in the verse (Proverbs 9:1) "Wisdom has hewed out its seven pillars." The seven pillars of wisdom represent all the knowledge in the world. Rabbi Hirsch then symbolically interprets details of many laws

18 ó *The Commitment at Birth*



How is an oath related to seven? Oath-taking invokes all of the natural forces within man.

In critical situations a person may discover the enormous potential strength latent within him. A mother might manage to dash through flames to rescue her child who was trapped in the inferno. Caring relatives might spend weeks with inadequate nourishment and sleep to take care of a sick family member. During moments of trial, the adrenaline in our bloodstream increases to give us added vigor and enables us to perform at seemingly superhuman levels. Usually, in normal daily living, we utilize only a fraction of our physical strength, mental concentration, and spiritual capacity – that is, unless we enter into an oath.

Oath taking calls forth and dedicates every ounce of willpower and strength. If one swears in God's name that a statement is true, that person is committing his or her entire being to the fulfillment of these words. An oath is a guarantor of truth because it arouses the most passionate of commitments.

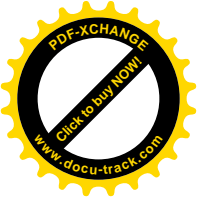
According to the sages, when God declared in the Ten Commandments, "Do not take my name (through swearing) in vain" the entire universe shook.⁴⁵ Why did this command frighten the entirety of creation? Perhaps because a *shevua* summons all *sheva*, all the seven spiritual roots of creation, and invests them in the cause.⁴⁶ A human is a miniature universe. Since I parallel the world, whatever I do with my soul causes a corresponding effect on the soul of the world.⁴⁷ When I swear I arouse all the

such as the seven sprinklings of blood of animals offered as offerings, and the seven branches of the menorah as representing a totality.

⁴⁵ Tractate *Shavuos*, pg. 38b.

⁴⁶ Nachmonides in his commentary to *Numbers* 30:3 writes, "The secret is that the word *shevuah* is from the word *sheva*." See further *Emunas Etecha, parshas Chayei Sarah*, pg. 70 s.v. *Vichen Matzinu*

⁴⁷ See further lessons five and six where this concept is explained in greater detail.



parts of my heart; the physical world then finds all the sources of its existence aroused as well. A false oath weakens every root of mine, and that causes all the channels through which God pours life down to the world to shake with instability.

Hebrew has a variety of letter sounds that are similar and therefore interchangeable. Commentators sometimes replace letters in a word with similar sounding letters in order to obtain an additional layer of meaning.⁴⁸ One such interchangeable pair is the letters *bet* and *peh*.⁴⁹ Through their interchange *sheva* acquires a relationship to the word *shefa*, an overflow of energy. Every *shevua* is really an awakening of a Divine emanation of spiritual energy and the source for renewed strength and commitment.

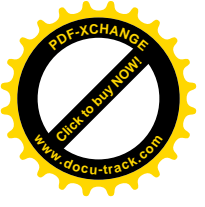
The Meaning of the Unborn Child's Oath

The oath of the yet to be born child is a charge of strength that gives each human added energies and determination to succeed in this life's journey. This world can be a house of horrors that is filled with trials and doubts that undermine faith. The wicked often seem to prosper and the righteous to suffer. Maintaining the inner faith that is harbored within our souls and following the faint voice of conscience despite the deafening protestations of lust and self – interest are most difficult feats. To resist the seductions of the profane and fully devote our energies to God's work we must commit all the spiritual forces

⁴⁸ The name for this concept is *Otiyot Mitchalphot* – letters which interchange. An example is the letters, *ayin*, *chet*, *heh*, and *alef*; all of which are interchangeable with each other. *Otiyot mitchalphot* is the guiding principle of Rabbi Samson Rapheal Hirsch's analysis of the Hebrew language; see the Introduction to the *Etymological Dictionary of Biblical Hebrew* by Matityahu Clark. See also *Rashi* on *Leviticus* 19:16 who explains that the letters *bet* and *peh* interchange as well as the letters *gimmel*, *chaf*, *kuf*; *nun*, *lamed*; *resh*, *zayin* and *tzadi*.

⁴⁹ In the *ktiv ashury* form of the Hebrew script, within the black ink of the letter *peh* "פ", is a white letter *bet* "ב".

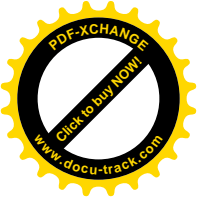
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within us. Before birth, we did not lift our hands onto a Torah scroll and swear, but every fiber of our being was charged with passion for our mission. We may have forgotten the encounter with the angel, but the invigoration from that parting persists. We have an enormous latent force, an overflowing river of spiritual energy, committed to the task "To be a Tzadik."

The oath of birth is continually renewed through the celebration of Shabbos. Lesson two will detail the role of Shabbos and how it resembles the pre-natal oath.

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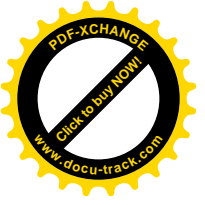
Lesson Two

The Role of Shabbos

In Jewish practice, we continually renew the seven-fold commitment of birth through commemorating Shabbos, the seventh day. Shabbos resembles a *shevua*, an oath. On Shabbos, the silent devotional prayers contain seven blessings. These prayers are like an oath; they invigorate the seven parts of the heart and personality. In Chassidic literature, Shabbos is called *Beer Sheva*, a seven-fold well. Shabbos is similar to a well, a source of life-renewing water for the seven parts of the personality. Shabbos energizes every spiritual part of the soul so that we might redouble our efforts to serve God in this world.

In the writings of Slonimer Chassidim the role of Shabbos is explained by means of the following parable.

In pre-modern Eastern Europe there was an itinerant peddler who would trudge from town to town selling meager wares. One time, while making his way through the forest between hamlets, the sky darkened and a winter storm erupted. The overcast sky soon disappeared in the black darkness of night and a thick layer of snow covered the forest paths. He lost his way and found himself alone with snowflakes and biting winds. As the hours progressed and he marched on helplessly, he lost all feeling in his fingers and toes, while his cheeks turned crimson red due to the frost. Suddenly, in the distance he saw a shimmering light. Realizing that the light must be a sign of human settlement he marshaled his final reserves of strength and made his way toward the beacon. He arrived at the light source and found that it was a travelers' inn. He entered the motel and sat down next to the roaring fire. He then ate the dinner that was served and quickly fell asleep. The next morning, after a hearty breakfast, he received directions from the innkeeper to the next



town. He then stepped out into the snow-covered forest confident that he would find his way.⁵⁰

Shabbos is the inn, the fire, and the food, the respite from the storm. Life is the journey through the forest and the inclement weather.

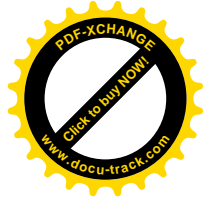
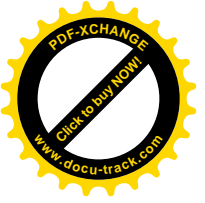
Each soul is sent down from a Heavenly perch to this lowly earth to fulfill its mission of increasing the glory of God. Our experiences during the week, when we engage the material world, are akin to the storm in the forest; it is dangerous for the soul and we easily lose our way. That danger, though, is also the reason for eventual reward.

Another parable might help elucidate this concept:

A king once sought to display the broad reaches of his empire. He issued an edict that called on his subjects to provide him with precious stones from the different parts of his kingdom for he desired to fashion a crown that would demonstrate to all the breadth of his rule. The loyal subjects scaled mountains and dug deep mines to find the many different types of gems in the king's territories. A simple peasant decided that he would provide evidence that the king's rule reached the depths of the ocean. He set out in a small boat to the middle of the sea, then, he dove into the frothing waters, to try and procure a pearl from the ocean floor. It was a dangerous dive, undercurrents swept him away from his goal, sharks lurked beneath the waves, and his lungs quickly felt as if they would burst from exhaustion. He had to rise to the surface and gulp air many times, yet he persevered and kept diving below. Eventually, he found a tiny pearl. Exhausted, he brought the pearl to the king. The king, touched by the peasant's dedication, took the small and simple stone and made it the centerpiece of his crown.⁵¹

⁵⁰ *Divrey Shmuel, Shabbos note # 22*

⁵¹ *Sidduro Shel Shabbos, shoresh 5, anaf alef, aleh 15.*



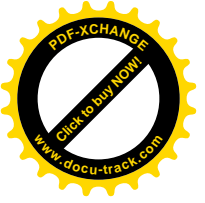
Each of us can be the simple peasant in the story. We were sent to this sphere of existence to display the breadth of God's rule.⁵² When we obey His commands, while in a lustful, physical body and in a tempting material environment, we demonstrate that God is King even in the depths of the physical realm.

The mission is a dangerous endeavor. Many fail. They drown in the ocean of natural urges⁵³ and ignore their higher calling. The danger is ultimately for the good. The fact that our souls take risks, the fact that we are struggling to sanctify God's name despite material desires, is what gives the Almighty great joy and earns the soul infinite reward in the World-to-Come. Were there to be no risks of sin, such as if we would live in an exclusively spiritual state, our observance of Mitzvos would not be a display of dedication. Now that we are in a physical realm and blessed with difficult temptations, our observance of God's Mitzvos and avoidance of misdeeds solely because He commanded, shows our love for the King.⁵⁴

⁵² In *Proverbs* (16:4) King Solomon taught, "All that God made He made for His sake, even the evildoer for the day of retribution." The *Gaon* of Vilna explains that the verse is revealing the purpose of life, to reveal God as Ultimate Sovereign. Righteous individuals fulfill this purpose through observance of God's commandments. Obeying His directives demonstrates that He is King. Wicked individuals ignore God's ethical mandates. They reveal God as King when they are punished for their misdeeds. Thus, since all were created for the sake of increasing God's glory, the wicked will suffer punishment for their misdeeds if they do not repent.

⁵³ The Hebrew word for nature is *teva*. The same letters in a different context mean drowning. The connection between the two meanings of the word is that, "The natural world of desires and animal instincts drowns an individual." (*Chidushey Harim*, the first Gerrer Rebbe)

⁵⁴ *Rabbi Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev once sought to demonstrate the dedication of the Jewish people. On the morning of the third day of Passover he turned to his followers and asked them to find for him some contraband, "I would like to save two rubles and avoid the government's tax" he explained. The word quickly spread, "The Rebbe desires some illegal material." Within thirty minutes a Chassid came forward and brought the Rebbe a spool of yarn*

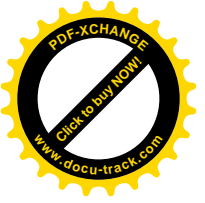


The peddler's journey through the forest stands for the same life-long mission that the peasant's dive into the sea represented. The dangers of the sea and the winter storm of the forest are representations of the material pitfalls that can drive us off task and cause us to lose our way. The peddler who is lost is the person who has forgotten the goal of increasing God's glory. (*The peddler lost in the wilderness began to suffer from the cold and deprivation.*) When we forget our goal in life and ignore our Divine obligations, the soul suffers spiritual frostbite and hunger. Shabbos is the light in the distance that guides and provides a glimmer of hope from the midst of the tempest.

When Shabbos comes, we retreat from the world to warm our bodies and nourish our souls, so that we might redirect our lives and renew our faith in God. Then we are ready to re-engage and sanctify existence as commanded by our Creator. Shabbos is a *sheva/shefa*-moment when the seven forces of creation, represented by the seven days of creation, coalesce and recharge. It is the day in which our souls re-enact the oath-taking of our births and recommit to be *Tzadikim* – Righteous Individuals.⁵⁵

that had been smuggled illegally across the border. Then the Rebbe said, "Find me some leavened bread in the house of a Jew! I will pay two thousand rubles for a single slice." His followers protested, "That is impossible, Rebbe. The Torah prohibits the possession of Chametz during these days; there is not a single piece of bread in any Jewish home in Berditchev!" At this point, the Rebbe turned to God and said aloud, "God, see the love of your people! The czar has thousands of soldiers and police. He prohibited possession of this yarn with a penalty of death. His soldiers are looking for these infractions and eagerly punish those they catch; people are afraid of his men. Nevertheless, with a meager sum of two rubles I could display disobedience of this human king. You have neither policemen nor soldiers. You wrote in your Torah that Jews should not have Chametz on Passover; and see; no Jew in Berditchev has a drop of Chametz! I offered thousands of rubles and the people thought I was mad, they had no desire for such funds; they observe your commands with disregard of monetary loss and gain. Why is this so? Because they are committed to You!" (ZR)

⁵⁵ The connection between Shabbos and the prenatal oath can be found in a lesson of the *Sfas Emes*:



In mystical literature,⁵⁶ the Biblical personality of Noah is identified as a paradigm of Shabbos-like living. Perhaps the reason for this is that Noah represents renewal. His world was destroyed in the deluge that swept away a sinful creation, and he merited to see mankind begin anew.⁵⁷ Shabbos is a day of renewal; after Shabbos we are reborn. At birth, the baby is dedicated with full passion, as Shabbos departs and we start afresh, we are charged with renewed vigor to march firmly along the path of holiness.

Oaths and Shabbos are examples of a *davar klali*, entities that encapsulate in microcosmic form the entire physical world. Shabbos touches all seven forces through the dimension of time whereas an oath-taking localizes them in the construct of personality.⁵⁸ This *davar klali* appears in another manifestation as well.

Shabbos in Three Dimensions

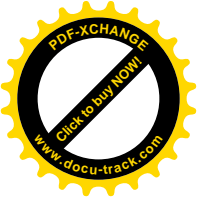
The mystical aspect of Torah teaches that a profound unity underlies mundane reality. Phenomena and objects that

"Our sages teach that the Angel makes him swear "I will be a *tzadik* etc." Can a soul undergo an oath?! Can it hold a Torah scroll?! Rather, the meaning of that passage is that at the point before birth it is clear to the soul that life comes exclusively from the Almighty and should be utilized to fulfill a mission; the realization of God's willed commands. Similarly, the Shabbos is called a *shevua*; this is why the Torah was given to Israel on a Shabbos. We refer to the experience at Sinai as being an occasion when we all entered into an oath, since at Sinai as well, it became clear that life comes from Him and all our energies were charged and directed, which is the meaning of *Shevua*." (*parshas Mattos*, 5634-1874)

⁵⁶ *Tikkuney Zohar*, *Tikkun* 21.

⁵⁷ See further *Midrash Rabbah*, *Noach*, *parsha* 30, letter 8.

⁵⁸ See *Shem Mishmuel* (Commentary to *Bereishis* pg. 5) who explains, "Shabbos unites all and encompasses all, that is why it is described with the word *kol* (all) – as in the verse "*vayechulu hashamayim vihaaretz vichol tzavaam, vayechal elokim bayom hashvii* etc." – On Shabbos, heaven and earth became part of *kol*, since the microcosm that integrated all appeared."



commonly appear to be different and distinct may be identical in their abstract essence. The Book of Creation⁵⁹ teaches that each spiritual concept in the world necessarily appears in three dimensions – space, time, and soul.⁶⁰

The holidays called *Mo'adim*⁶¹ display this principle. The room in the Temple in which God spoke to Moses was also called *Mo'ed*, *Ohel Mo'ed*, the Tent of Meeting. Here then, in a word, is a connection between the holidays (part of time) and the Tent of Meeting (a part of space). The selfsame holiness of the Divine Presence that filled the Tent of Meeting infuses the holidays.⁶² During the holidays, God is so close that He can be seen.⁶³ The Tent of Meeting was the place where His presence was so palpable that it was as if He were seen there.

The Midrash reinterprets a verse in Leviticus in a manner consistent with the principle of unity in different dimensions. The

⁵⁹ In Hebrew it is called *Sefer Yetzira*, many sources attribute its authorship to *Avraham Avinu*, the Biblical Abraham, others, say it bears the handiwork of Rabbi Akiva. See further *Innerspace* pg.4 and notes 22 and 23.

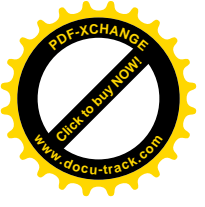
⁶⁰ The acronym for this idea is *Asha"n*, indicating the common denominator of *Olam*, places in the world, *Shana*, time during the year, and *Nefesh*, individuals within society and parts of the human being.

⁶¹ *Levit.* 23:4-8

⁶² In his book *Horeb*, Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch also points out that the *Mo'ed* in time corresponds to the *Mo'ed* in place, although he explains their relationship in a way that is different from the metaphysical explanation provided in the text.

"Mo'adim, appointed seasons, summon us entirely to the contemplation and inner realization of those ideas which lie at their foundation. **Just as the Mo'ed in the spatial sense refers to the locality which men have as their appointed place of assembly for an appointed purpose, so Mo'ed in Time is a point in Time which summons us communally to an appointed activity** (emphasis added) – in this case an inner activity. Thus Mo'adim are the days which stand out from the other days of the year. They summon us from our everyday life to halt and to dedicate all our spiritual activities to them." (to the messages of the holiday) *Horeb*, paragraph, 161

⁶³ See also the Talmud *Hagiga*, 2a and *Rashi* s.v. *Yireh Yeira'eh*



Torah states, "*Eleh mo'adey Hashem asher tikrau osam*" "These are the meeting times of God that you shall proclaim..." The Midrash suggests that the closing, "*Asher tikrau osam*" literally "that you should call them" should be interpreted to refer to people, and read as, "*asher tikrau atem*", literally, "that you will call yourselves." The Midrash is applying the concept of *Mo'ed* to the realm of person. Some individuals are similar to *Mo'adim*; they see God, and when you see them you might be inspired to seek and discover the Divine.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ See further *Likutey Moharan*, Lesson 4, who teaches that seeing the face of a righteous individual can cause a person to fully devote themselves to God.

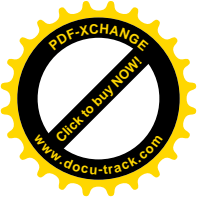
Rabbi Dr. A. Tatz described how a righteous face leads one to Divinity in the following passage:

"There is a mystical idea that the highest level of the personality is crystal-clear and transparent, but the lower self, the ego clouds it. (Spiritual beauty is expressed as being transparent, Hashem's (God's) light shines through. When one sees a *Tzadik* one is perceiving something of God; the limited human dimension has been clarified and a higher reality becomes visible. In fact the opposite of beauty, ugliness, is *caur*, the same root as *acur*, opaque.)" *Living Inspired*, pg. 104

Another application of this principle of the *Sefer Yetzirah* pertains to Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the year. This day is called in the Torah, *Shabbos Shabboson*, the Shabbos of Shabbos, the source of all holiness. Just as there is a day, so too, there is a place that is the foundation of all holiness – the *Kodesh Hakodoshim*, the holiest of holies – the innermost sanctum in the Temple of Jerusalem. Similarly there is a person who is filled with this type of spiritual energy – Aharon the High Priest, who is described in the verse as "*kodesh kadoshim hu*" in "*Vayvdel Aharon Lihakdisho, Kodesh Kadoshim Hu*" "Aharon was set aside to be sanctified, he is the Holy of Holies." (*Divrey Hayamim*, book 1, 23:13)

On Yom Kippur a great unification occurs when the holiest of souls, enters the holiest place, at the holiest time. This union of themes arouses divine blessings for the coming year. (*Arvey Nachal, parshas Emor*)

Rav Wolfson points out that the connection between Aharon and the Holy of Holies may explain why Aharon passed away on *Rosh Chodesh Av* – the first of the month of *Av*: The first day of a month is called *Rosh*, literally the head of the month, for its function is like that of the human head. It expresses the essence of the month and contains in microcosmic form all of that month's events and energy. Because *Av* is the month in which the



In lesson one we discovered that Shabbos is an all-encompassing force of holiness in the realm of time. Because all forces appear in triplicate form, Shabbos-like holiness must also manifest simultaneously in the realms of place and soul.

Shabbos is Jerusalem

The liturgy for Shabbos, in a seemingly incongruous diversion, prays for Jerusalem.

The highlight of the prayers to inaugurate Shabbos is the song of *Lechah Dodi*. The second stanza refers to the teaching of Shabbos at Sinai in the Ten Commandments. In the third stanza we sing,

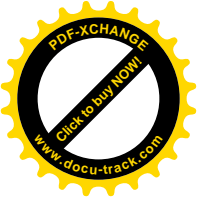
To welcome the Shabbos come let us go,
For it is the source of blessing;
From the beginning, from antiquity she was honored,
Last in deed but first in thought.⁶⁵

Then, there is an abrupt change of subject. Instead of Shabbos, the song speaks of *Yerushalayim*, Jerusalem. We call on this royal city to leave the destruction and its vale of tears (the fourth stanza), and to awaken and reveal its Godly light (the sixth stanza). Finally, we declare that, with the Redemption, the city will expand to the right and left, and all of Jewry will rejoice in her success (the ninth stanza). Only in the final stanza does the song return to the topic of Shabbos, welcoming her as a bride into Jewish hearts and homes.

Why do we sing of Jerusalem in the prayers of Shabbos? The answer is that Jerusalem *is* Shabbos. What Shabbos is in the

Temples in Jerusalem were destroyed, Aharon the personification of those places, passed away on its first day. (*Emunas Etecha, parshas Mattos*).

⁶⁵ *Artscroll Siddur*, pg. 317



dimension of time, Jerusalem is in the dimension of place; they share the same type of Godly revelation.⁶⁶

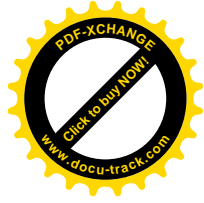
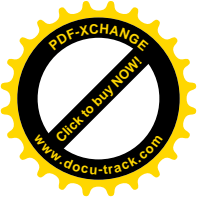
According to the Talmud, when God began the creation of the universe, He first created a middle point and that center then expanded until the entire universe was formed. According to the deeper wisdom of Torah, that starting point contained within itself the entire world in a form of latent potential. Mystics add that the creation process is constantly occurring anew. King David wrote in *Psalms*⁶⁷ that the Divine words that formed the Heavens still hover in the ether, since God renews the entire creative process every moment. Thus, even today, thousands of years after the happenings in the Book of Genesis, the central starting place contains within it a microcosm of the entire universe that emerged and will re-emerge from it. That point is Jerusalem.

Shabbos contains within it the entirety of time; it encapsulates the other days and itself, while Jerusalem is a microcosm of the realm of place. Shabbos is the portal through which the Divine blessings for the coming six days shower down to earth. Similarly, Jerusalem was described by Jacob as “the Gate of Heaven.”⁶⁸ All of the earth’s blessings for the dimension of space flow to Jerusalem and from there emanate to the rest of the universe. Jerusalem is an international city. All nations desire a foothold within her walls, because spiritually all sources of life for all countries inhere within her streets.

⁶⁶ Shabbos displays that man is not the master of his fate and livelihood, God is the master of the universe. During the times of the Temple there was no private ownership of homes in Jerusalem. For instance, during the holidays any Jew could stay in any home in Jerusalem without paying rent, for in Jerusalem the homes belong to God. Jerusalem teaches the lesson of Shabbos that God is the only master of the world. See further *Tzion Vi'arehah*, pgs. 100-107.

⁶⁷ 119:89

⁶⁸ *Genesis*, 28:17



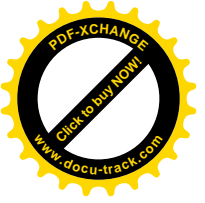
Just as Shabbos sanctifies every fiber of our feelings, so does Jerusalem. The holy city provides added strength and inspiration to every part of one's being.⁶⁹ Through observance of

⁶⁹ In truth, the entire Land of Israel parallels Shabbos. That is why in *Pirkey D'R' Elazar* it is written that just as God created six days of work with a seventh as Shabbos, He also created six important bodies of land, the six continents, and a seventh important land, the Land of Israel. Based on this Midrash, a question of liturgical accuracy can be resolved. In the prayers for Shabbos, it is written that Shabbos was called by God, "the most beloved of days", "*Chemdas yamim osso karassa.*" Yet, nowhere in the Holy Scriptures is Shabbos called "the most beloved of days." In light of the above, Shabbos has the holiness and quality of the Land of Israel; adjectives about Israel are therefore true about Shabbos. The Land of Israel was called by God "most beloved" in the verse "*Vayimasu beeretz chemdah*" "And they (the generation of the desert) rejected the most beloved land" (*Psalms* 106). (*Tzion Vi'arehah*, pg. 23) See further the final lesson of the book.

On Shabbos each Jew receives an added soul. The Land of Israel has the holiness of Shabbos thus one who lives in Israel also possesses a dual complement of soul. Outside of Israel, Jewish law insists that each holy day (other than Shabbos), such as the beginning of *Sukkos*, be observed for two days while in Israel the holy day's duration is only one day. Since residents of Israel have a double soul they can internalize the holiness of the festival in a single day. Those outside of Israel only possess half such spiritual capabilities, this is why they must observe the holy day twice to internalize its blessings. (Rabbi Isaac Luriah)

Since the entire Land of Israel is like Shabbos – the *shefa chayim* – the Godly life flow for the entire world flows through the Land of Israel. Israel is to the rest of the universe what the heart is to the human body. The heart distributes nutrients to the limbs and Israel distributes Godly nutrition to the rest of the world. On the level of soul, all countries are related to Israel and that is why the nations of the world seek to stake out a claim in the holy land and refuse to accept that it belongs exclusively to the Jewish nation. (*Emunas Etecha, Bereishis, pg. 3, s.v. uvazeh muvenes*)

The Talmud states that Israel is the highest land and that the Temple Mount in Jerusalem is the highest point within Israel. What is the meaning of this statement? From a geological perspective there are many mountain ranges that are taller than Israel. How can Israel and the Temple Mount be considered higher than the Himalayas? Rabbi Moshe Sofer (1762-1838) answered that Israel and Jerusalem as the starting points for creation are the keys to unlocking the meaning of the Talmud's claim. Our earth and the universe as a whole are circles. The beginning of the circle can be called its highest part. Since the Temple Mount was the first place God created it is the "highest



the Shabbos in the dimension of time, we will be worthy of reclaiming the Shabbos of place, the rebuilt city of Jerusalem.⁷⁰

Shabbos in Man

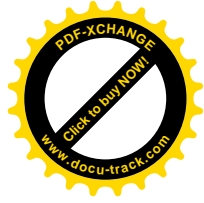
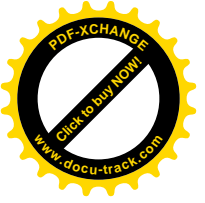
There are individuals who are Shabbos, and they have an all-encompassing holiness. These individuals have within their souls a little bit of every other soul that exists. They touch all and provide added strength to the totality of the natural world. All the blessings for the coming six days, the realm of time, flow through Shabbos, and the Divine blessings for all lands, the realm of space, flow through Jerusalem. Similarly, there is an individual through which all souls are blessed.⁷¹

point" along the circle of earth. Since Israel was created right after Jerusalem, when one compares Israel to the rest of the world's lands it is the first and thus called the highest. (Heard from Rav Wolfson)

Both Jerusalem and the Land of Israel can be Shabbos. Firstly, Jerusalem as the capital of the Land of Israel has within it a concentrated version of the entire Land of Israel. Furthermore, our sages teach that Jerusalem in the future will extend and fill the entire Land of Israel (*Shir Hashirim Rabba* 7:10), it may be that the latent Jerusalem quality in the Land of Israel makes the Land of Israel Shabbos in place. Finally, Chassidus and Kabbalah are not attempting to draw fine distinctions. These disciplines seek to display underlying unity. They therefore highlight those aspects of institutions that bear a similarity. Thus, Jerusalem is the place of Shabbos when one compares Jerusalem to the rest of the Land of Israel and if one compares the Land of Israel to the rest of the world, the Land of Israel is Shabbos and the other lands are the days of the week.

⁷⁰ The *Midrash Yalkut* on *parshas Bihaaloscha* links Shabbos with the renewal of Jerusalem stating, "If you will observe (the obligation of) the lighting of Shabbos candles I will show you the candle of Zion (the reconstitution of Jerusalem)." The blessing for lighting Shabbos candles, through which Jewish women enter into Shabbos, contains the phrase "*vitzivanu lihadlik ner shel shabbos*" "And has commanded us to light the candle of Shabbos" the numeric value of the phrase is the same as the numeric value of the phrase "*Liyirushalayim mivaser etain*" "I will appoint a harbinger of redemption for Jerusalem." Due to their innate congruence, observance of Shabbos will cause God to restore the glory of Jerusalem.

⁷¹ "The Land of Israel in general, and Jerusalem in particular, are the very heart and center of the world as a whole. The life-force for the world, all



The *Tzadik* is this person, the personification of Shabbos.⁷²

*The Baal Shem Tov taught that God only shows a person the sights that he deserves to see. If you see the performance of a sin, it is because you have that misdeed within you in some form. God might reveal to you an exaggerated form of your flaw so that you will examine yourself and improve your character.*⁷³

The Baal Shem Tov once witnessed a Jew violating Shabbos. He realized that his witnessing Shabbos desecration meant that, in some way, he too was a violator of the holy day. The Baal Shem examined his deeds on past Shabbosos and

blessings and emanations from Above, therefore, issue to all countries through Jerusalem and the Land of Israel...

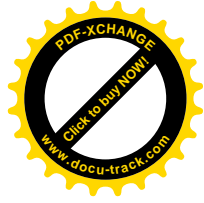
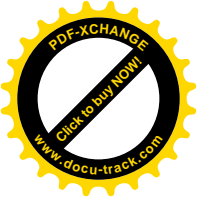
It is the very same with the people of Israel. It is the very heart of all mankind. Thus Israel is the channel for the sustenance and all blessings of the world...

In analogous terms, the *tzadik*, the leader and shepherd of Israel, is the very heart of the people of Israel. Thus he is the very specific channel connecting Above and below." (*Chassidic Dimensions*, pgs. 114 -115)

⁷² Since the *Tzadik* is the person of Shabbos and Israel is the land of Shabbos there is a special relationship between the Holy Land and the *Tzadik*. An example of this is the Biblical figure Noah. Noah is called a *Tzadik* (Genesis 6:9) and he was saved from the deluge that destroyed the earth. According to Rabbinic tradition, the Land of Israel was never touched by the flood. Noah embodied Israel, which was why he experienced the Land of Israel wherever he went. (*Tzion Vi'arehah* pg. 15, *Emunas Etecha, Bereishis*, pg. 3 s.v. *viyadua*).

⁷³ Torah law obligates the witnesses who testify to the court about a crime that carries the penalty of stoning to cast the first stones. "This is due to the principle of the *Baal Shem Tov* (quoted in *Heichal Habracha, Devarim*, pg. 208b) that if one sees a misdeed performed by someone else it is a sign that the one who sees has the same flaw in, at least, a minute measure. Witnesses who saw idol worship have within them the flaw of paganism. This is why the witnesses must participate in administering the punishment. Through casting the first stones they are to learn to rectify their flaws in the realm of that sin." (*Emunas Etecha, parshas Shoftim*, pg. 232 s.v. *Yad*)

See further *Emunas Etecha, parshas Naso*, s.v. *Vichiper*



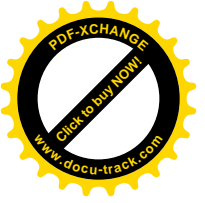
concluded that his observance of Shabbos had been perfect. But after extensive analysis, the Baal Shem realized that he had committed a sin of "Shabbos desecration." He had seen an individual insult a Torah scholar. The Besht had not attempted to defend the scholar's honor. Torah scholars (since they are Tzadikim) are individuals who possess the holiness of Shabbos, the desecration of their honor that the Besht was complicit in, was in a certain sense the desecration of Shabbos.⁷⁴

To understand why a *Tzadik* merits to reach all human souls it is necessary to refine the definition of who is indeed a *Tzadik*.

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⁷⁴ *Not Just Stories*, pg. 58

Rav Wolfson quoted this story in *Emunas Etecha, parshas Naso s.v. Vichiper*. He added that to rectify the flaw of not honoring Torah scholars sufficiently, the *Baal Shem Tov* immediately traveled to the author of the work *Pney Yehoshua* and helped light the pipe of the great Rabbi to fulfill the Mitzvah of serving Torah scholars.



Lesson Three

The Tzadik

*The Tzadik, righteous individual, is the foundation of the world.*⁷⁵

*For the Tzadik will fall seven times and rise while the wicked will stumble within Evil.*⁷⁶

Rava taught: Iyov, Job, wanted to absolve all from accountability. He said to the Almighty,

“Master of the Universe, You created the ox with split hooves and the donkey with webbed feet. You created Eden and you created Gehinom, Hell. You created Tzadikim and you created Rishoim, wicked individuals, who forces You to do anything?”⁷⁷

How could Iyov ascribe sainthood to birth? The Talmud seems to teach that only man determines whether or not he will be righteous!⁷⁸

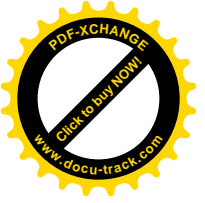
We frequently assume that man’s spiritual status hinges upon the measure of his deeds. God places man’s actions on the Divine scale: *mitzvos*, good deeds, on one side and *aveiros*, violations of God’s commands, on the other. Defendants who are weightier with mitzvos are *Tzadikim*, saints, while an excess of *aveiros* characterizes *Rishoim*, sinners. The few with perfectly split behaviors belong to a third category – *beinonim* or middle-of-the-roaders. *Chassidus* argues that this simplistic definition is not wholly accurate.

⁷⁵ *Proverbs*, 10:25

⁷⁶ *Proverbs*, 24:16

⁷⁷ *Bava Basra*, 16a

⁷⁸ *Tanya*, Chapter one, pg. 5



Rabbi *Shneur Zalman* of Liadi⁷⁹ dedicated the first part of his book *Likutey Amarim (Tanya)* to the premise that a *Tzadik* is not “merely” a person whose deeds are usually *mitzvos*. The Talmud records a dispute between two sages, Abaye and Rabbah, as to whether the latter was a *Beinoni* or a *Tzadik*. Rabbah insisted that he was a *Beinoni*, while Abaye argued that if Rabbah was a *Beinoni* it would be impossible for anyone to be a *Tzadik*.⁸⁰ Rabbah definitely performed more good than evil⁸¹ yet felt undeserving of the *Tzadik* title. The *Tanya* deduced that a *Tzadik* is not just a practitioner of good deeds. His inner life is virtuous, Sin repulses him, and he is attracted only to virtue.

A handful of individuals are born *Tzadikim*. Job referred to the natural *Tzadik* when he said “God, You created *Tzadikim*.”⁸² While the Talmud states that the angel of

⁷⁹ The founder of the Lubavitch *Chassidus*, see also the Foreword.

⁸⁰ *Berachos*, 61b

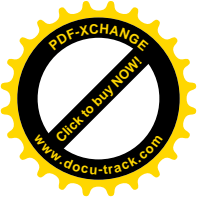
⁸¹ According to the Talmud in *Messeches Bava Metzia*, pg. 86a, Rabbah constantly studied Torah and never had time to sin.

⁸² *Bava Basra* 16a.

This is a partial reason for the existence of Chassidic dynasties. It is felt in certain groups that owing to the merit of great ancestors their Rebbes are born *Tzadikim*.

Purportedly, when the *Sfas Emes* was offered the leadership of Gerrer *Chassidim* he protested that he was too young and inexperienced to lead such an important group of Jews. One of the elder *Chassidim* answered with a story.

“A group of professional mountain climbers decided to climb Mt. Everest. After several difficult days of climbing many hardened climbers tired of the challenge and left the group and a small set of the most expert climbers continued with the climb. Eventually they reached the peak, where they discovered a young child sitting alone atop the mountain. They were astounded, ‘How did such a young boy climb a mountain that experienced rock climbers could not scale?’ They wondered aloud. To which the boy answered, ‘I was born here.’”



predestination⁸³ does not declare the spiritual level the child will attain because each individual must attain holiness through his own efforts, that is merely the norm. Every rule has exceptions. The natural *Tzadik* that Job referred to is such an exception. From birth, this *Tzadik* is predisposed to a life of holiness, and internally he hardly feels that sin is a viable option for him. King David was a different type of *Tzadik*, he was born with powerful and sinful urges. Through mortification of his material body and rigorous Torah study, he killed his evil urge and reached the spiritual level of a *Tzadik*.⁸⁴ A *Tzadik*, whether by birth or through spiritual achievements, is not afflicted with the struggle between lust and conscience. The only desire of the *Tzadik* is attachment to the Divine.

Examples of *Tzadikim*

Most souls presently on earth are not on their first trip to this planet. We were here in previous lives, did not accomplish our Divine task, and as a result are sent down to earth again⁸⁵ for another *gilgul*, transmigration of the soul, in order to relive the trials of life and this time reach *tikkun* – rectification of the

The *Chassid* explained to the *Sfas Emes*, “Despite your youth you can be our leader since you were born at the top of a mountain that your forefathers scaled.”

⁸³ This is the view of *Rav Chanina* who taught that the angel *Layla* (night) is the authority for conception. *Layla* takes the seed and brings it before the Heavenly throne and queries the Almighty, “Master of the World, what will this one be, strong or weak? Wealthy or poor? Wise or foolish?” But he does not ask whether it will be a *Tzadik* or a *Rasha* for *Rav Chanina* taught, “All is in the hands of Heaven bar the fear of heaven, that is in the hands of man.” (*Niddah*, 16b)

⁸⁴ Perhaps this class of *Tzadik* was referred to in *Proverbs* 24 as the *Tzadik* who falls seven times yet rises.

⁸⁵ See Rabbi *Yisrael Yaakov* Klapholtz's compendium *Nishmas Yisrael* in which he collects all the Rabbinic sources for the concept of *gilgulim* – transmigration of the soul.



spirit. Most of mankind can not remember their earlier lives. A select few righteous individuals recall their prior identities.

Rabbi Moshe Teitelbaum⁸⁶ remembered the time when he was a Jew leaving Egypt. When his grandson⁸⁷ asked whether he supported Moshe after Korah rebelled, he replied that he stayed neutral.

The Apter Rav,⁸⁸ during the Avodah prayers of Yom Kippur,⁸⁹ would not recite the traditional "Vikach hayah omer" "and this is what he (the high priest) said," rather he would say "vikach hayiti omer" "and so I would say." He also recalled a life as a King of Israel.

Rabbi Yisrael of Rizhin⁹⁰ remembered when his soul was a sheep of our forefather Jacob, and he revealed to his Chassidim the song that Yaakov would sing to his sheep.

Why did they remember what most of us can not?

The answer is: these men did not need full freedom of choice.

For most of us, fixing our soul (*tikkun haneshamah*) demands engaging in the internal struggle of good versus evil and ensuring that holiness triumphs. As we learned in lesson two,

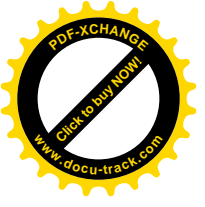
⁸⁶ He was born in 1759 and passed away in 1841. He authored the work *Yismach Moshe*.

⁸⁷ Rabbi *Yekutiel Yehuda* of Sighet (1808-1883). He was a student of Rabbi *Chaim* of Tzanz and the author of the work *Yitav Lev*.

⁸⁸ Rabbi *Avraham Yehoshua* Heshel (1755-1825) was the author of *Ohaiv Yisrael*, and was renowned for his piety and love for all Jews.

⁸⁹ These prayers detail the sacrificial service that the High Priest would lead in Jerusalem's temple.

⁹⁰ He was born in 1797 and he passed away in 1850. He was a grandson of Rav *Avraham* the Angel, the son of the *Maggid* of Mezritch. The *Maggid* was the student of the *Besht* who led the entire Chassidic movement after the passing of the *Besht*. Rabbi *Yisrael* was renowned for his religious devotion and regal manner.

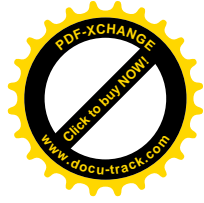
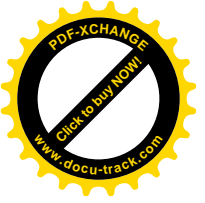


"The king rewarded the peasant diver *because* he tried and succeeded in displaying the king's rule in the dangerous depths of the sea." The fact that our life is dangerous for the soul, the fact that strong forces seek to shove our behavior into the realm of misdeed, and yet we persevere and seek to serve God is why God loves our service and rewards us in the world-to-come. If we would remember the migrations of our souls, then we would sense the urgency of life's purpose, deviance would lose its appeal, and we would not battle. Our life's journey would then be like a stroll along a well marked path instead of a dive into a raging ocean, and life would not be as meaningful to the Almighty.

Those who do not need the challenge of choice can afford to have the good within them weighted with the memory of their earlier lives. *Tzadikim*, like the Rabbi of Rizhin, already succeeded in their mission during prior lives. Before their souls were sent again to this earth, they justly argued, "Why must we risk the eternal accomplishments that we earned?" God agreed and gave them an existence devoid of spiritual danger.

Such *Tzadikim* differ from all other humans. Most of us came to this world to perfect our own souls. Souls like Rabbi Moshe Teitelbaum were sent to help the world. They serve humanity as role models and sources of merit.⁹¹ Since the *Tzadik's* holiness reaches even the innermost human realm, inclinations and desires, he is the most appropriate vessel for God to use to transmit blessings to mankind.

⁹¹ The Talmud in tractate *Yoma*, 38b, is referring to *Tzadikim* like the Rizhiner when Rav *Chiya Bar Abba* taught in the name of Rav *Yochanan* "The Holy One, blessed be He, saw that there were few *Tzadikim*, so he planted several in each and every generation."



The Cosmic Role of the *Tzadik*

*Tzadik Yesod Olam*⁹² is the verse that teaches that the *Tzadik* is the foundation of the world. The physical world that we see is sustained by the spiritual gifts and flows of blessing that God continually pours into it. This *shefa eloki* – divine abundance of good – comes through the purest human soul, the *Tzadik*. The *Tzadik* loves every Jew and all of God's creatures with thoroughly dedicated affection.⁹³ His love of existence

⁹² *Proverbs* 10:25

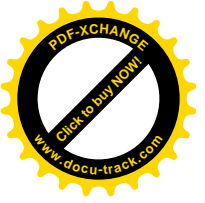
⁹³ The *Maharal* (Rabbi Yehudah Loew of Prague, 1512-1609, a great Kabbalist, philosopher, and educator) in his commentary to the *Aggadah* (non-legal sections of the Talmud) explains that a Jewish leader such as the high priest, is the heart of the nation. All limbs are connected to the heart and receive their life from it and all Jews are attached to the *Tzadik* and nourished through him. (*Makkos*, pg. 11a). "The *Tzadik*, the leader and shepherd of Israel, is the very heart of the people of Israel." (*Chassidic Dimensions*, pg. 115, quoting *Tikuney Zohar*, 21:50b).

"The *Tzadikim* of all times share the common denominator of absolute attachment, commitment, and devotion to G-d, Torah and Israel. As such they follow and share in the qualities of the first and greatest leader and shepherd of Israel: Moses. In fact, they are regarded as extensions and reflections of Moses. Thus it is said that there is not a generation without a leader like Moses. This is not simply in terms of an analogy, but in a quite real sense: an extension and emanation of Moses exists in every generation, in every *tzadik*..

This Moses-aspect goes further: Moses had a *neshamah kelalit*, a comprehensive soul. His soul was a root-soul which compounded all the souls of his generation: they were all rooted in his soul. Thus it is also with the *tzadikim*-leaders of every generation: they, too, are comprehensive root-souls compounding the souls of their respective generations. In this sense they are the leaders and the shepherds of their generations in every respect that Moses was in his. For the head of the generation is the whole of that generation." (*Chassidic Dimensions*, pgs. 101-102)

The *Tzadik's* overwhelming love for creation leads him to be gentle to all. As a result, even when rebuking sinners he will express his displeasure in muted terms.

"I remember that they once related to my father, of blessed memory, that when our great master, Rabbi Ahron Rokeach of Belz, may his merit protect us, was in Munkatch policemen came to arrest him. These evildoers



connects all of creation to the *Tzadik*, and they receive their life through him.⁹⁴

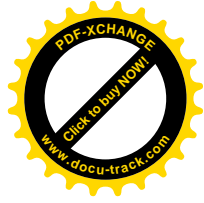
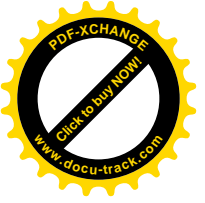
beat him, pushed him, and treated his so roughly that he could not stand their evil and he said, 'They are slightly strange, these Goyim.' This was already a very harsh critique for his standards. I remember when they related this to my father he smiled slightly. This is their way of Tzadikim, they are good to all." Rabbi Yekutiel Yehuda Halberstam (1905-1994), the Rebbe of Tzanz-Klausenberg, in his book *Imros Tzadikim*, pg. 22 story #5.

⁹⁴ See *Tanya*, Chapter two. Even the sinners are connected to the *Tzadik*, and they benefit from him. The Almighty will periodically cause the *Tzadik* to sin, so that he can fall to the realm of sinners, connect with them, and then mystically elevate their souls with his subsequent return and elevation.

The Rebbe of Klausenberg explained that the *Tzadik* loves his nation, that is why his personal penances for his own misdeeds are performed for the sake of all the sinners in the nation, and thousands of souls are uplifted in a hidden and mystical manner through his personal improvement.

"The true path of the Baal Shem Tov and his disciples was that they would perfect themselves first before they would pass judgment on others. When the Baal Shem isolated himself in the Carpathian mountains, he rolled in the snow to atone for his misdeeds, and he broke the frozen ice atop the river in order to immerse himself in the waters beneath the ice. During those moments tens of thousands of Jews felt the removal of the foreskins covering their hearts and remembered their Maker. This is the meaning of the verse, (Psalms, 19:4) "There is no speech and there are no words; their sound is unheard" and despite that "Their line goes forth throughout the earth, and their word reaches the farthest ends of the land" (verse 5). In this manner the Baal Shem's students made thousands of returnees to the faith. The masters, R. Elimelech of Lizhensk (1717-1786) and Rabbi Aharon of Karlin (1736-1772) brought eighty thousand Jews back to observance. They accomplished this through the maxim of Hillel, 'Love the creations and bring them closer to Torah.' They loved all. They knew to defend and find merit in the behavior of Jews, and they accepted all guilt upon themselves. As Rabbi Yishmael stated in the Mishna, 'Children of Israel, I am your atonement.' Through fixing their own internal minute flaws, they caused the entire world to be filled with a spirit of Teshuva, return to God." (Imros Tzadikim, pg. 23-24)

Our forefather Abraham brought people to observance through meeting them and impressing upon them the truth of monotheism. Our forefather Isaac was very restricted, he did not venture forth into human society, yet he too brought thousands of strangers under the rubric of observance. Isaac's influence was affected in the *Tzadik* mode. When he learnt



The Talmud relates that Rabbi *Chanina ben Dosa* was a *Tzadik*.⁹⁵ It then teaches:

Rabbi Yehuda taught in the name of Rav, every day a Heavenly voice emerges from Mt. Sinai and

Torah, or improved himself, these acts caused thousands of others to move closer to monotheistic belief and practice. (Rav Wolfson)

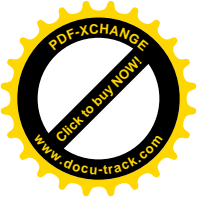
“Even as the *tzadik* is the channel for the Divine effluences to the world in general, so he is also an intermediary for the people of his generation to ascend to Divinity.

A common denominator establishes a relationship. On the spiritual level, any commonality, even if limited to a single aspect, already establishes an inherent oneness. When joining different parts of water they become one for every species attaches itself to its own kind. So, too, the *tzadik* is unified with those who became sanctified through his holiness and is able to raise them along with him. Moreover, as he is the comprehensive soul of his generation, he can elevate all and everything that is rooted in his soul. By means of his own good deeds and service of G-d he can elevate even the souls of the wicked.

In this context, the *tzadik* will sometimes appear involved with mundane affairs. He is seen engaging in mundane speech or the telling of seemingly inconsequential stories, or otherwise dealing with the masses on their own level. This behavior would seem incompatible with his sublime status. Externally he appears to have lowered and degraded himself, to have stepped aside from his attachment to G-d. In truth, however, he is and remains in a constant state of *dveykut* (attachment to G-d) in all he does. His anomalous behavior is but for the establishing of a relationship with the simple and the lowly. Thus he is able to raise them to higher levels.” (*Chassidic Dimensions*, pgs. 109-110)

“R. Aryeh Leib, the author of *Aryeh D'bey Ha'ah*, once said, ‘When I was a young man I thought that I would lead the entire world to a path of holiness. As the years went by I realized, ‘I cannot change the entire world,’ but I thought ‘at least I will change my entire hometown.’ Eventually I saw that this too was unattainable so I decided that I will correct my entire family. Now in my old age I say, ‘I wish and hope that I will be able to fix myself.’” I believe that the meaning of this saying was that in his older years he recognized that when he learns Torah in holiness and purity he does not need to seek out sinners and impress upon them to return to observance, the holiness that shines in the world from his Torah will accomplish that job for him.” (*Imros Tzadikim*, pg. 32)

⁹⁵ See further *Berachos*, 17b, and *Rashi* s.v. *viheim*



proclaims: "The entire world is sustained *bishvil* (through or because of) *Chanina* my son. And as for *Chanina* my son, he is satisfied with a small measure of carobs as his weekly total of food."

In Hebrew "*bishvil*" can mean "because of" or "along the path." The *Baal Shem Tov* taught that when the Talmud said, "*bishvil Rabbi Chanina*," it also intended the meaning of path. The *Tzadik* like Rabbi *Chanina* is the path through which all blessings flow.⁹⁶

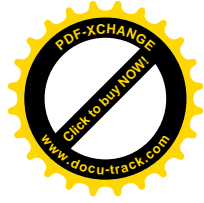
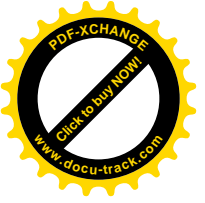
Why Chassidim Have Rebbes

Chassidim seek attachment with their Rebbe to strengthen their bond with the *Tzadik*. The Rebbe is considered a possible foundational *Tzadik* – the source of life affirming good. Therefore, the stronger one is connected to him the more life one derives directly through the *Tzadik*.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ "The *Tzadik* is like a path or a channel through which liquids flow. Through his righteous deeds he pulls down Divine flows of blessing from Heaven. Just like a pipe does not benefit from the water that flows through it, so too the *Tzadik* has no desire for his own benefit, he only desires that others, the members of the world, receive plenty. This is the meaning of the voice from Heaven, '*kol haolam nizon bishvil*' the entire world is sustained through the channel of '*Chanina bni*' '*Chanina* my son.' Why does he resemble a channel? He does not seek his own benefit, 'He is satisfied with a small measure of carobs as his weekly total etc.'" (*Avodas Yisrael, Likutim* pg. 275, quoting the *Baal Shem Tov*)

⁹⁷Rabbi Jacob Immanuel Schochet expressed this idea in the following passage:

"In view of the special and ideal nature of the *tzadik*, it is of great significance to seek his presence, to be associated with him as much as possible. For "He who walks with the wise, shall be wise" (*Proverbs* 13:20). This is analogous to entering a perfumery: though one will not sell or buy anything there, nonetheless, when leaving the shop he and his garments will have absorbed the pleasant scent, and this good scent will not depart from him all day long. Likewise, he who associates with *tzadikim* is influenced by their ways and good deeds." (*Chassidic Dimensions*, pg. 94, quoting *Pirke deR. Eliezer*, Chapter 25)



To receive vitality in the holiest manner⁹⁸ there is a need for a direct channel to the *Tzadik*. One can get life in other ways. Evil gets life from God even though it is not connected to the *Tzadik* in a direct way. However, evil receives flawed vitality.

The world of evil is superficial. Sin is a product of externalism. For instance, lusts tantalize with promises of pleasure yet they are rarely a path to satisfaction. Once they are realized man is left with an aching emptiness, for evil is hollow within. A holy person is an inner person who rises above an extrinsic perspective.

There is a superficial connection to the *Tzadik* and an internal attachment to the *Tzadik*. Physically being a Chassid, a follower, while in practice not emulating his ways is a superficial

⁹⁸ The Stutchiner Rebbe explained that life received directly through the *Tzadik* has a unique quality. The essence of the *Tzadik* is his abnegation of self, his *messirus nefesh*. The *Tzadik* does not perform *mitzvos* for material benefit nor for spiritual rewards, he has nullified any sense of self and is exclusively dedicated to servicing the Almighty for Divine reasons (See *Imros Tzadikim*, pg. 23, story #2, where the Klausenberger Rebbe related an example of the dedication of *Tzadikim*; the son of the *Divrey Chayim* would wholeheartedly express and manifest a willingness to suffer enormous pain and hardship of the sake of God at every moment of his life. See also the Talmud in tractate *Chagigah*, pg. 12b. The Talmud teaches that *Tzadikim* are constantly offering all that they possess, including their lives, to God. This sacrifice continues even after their earthly passing. In the next world, every day they offer their souls to God again.) As a result, the *Tzadik* is willing to sacrifice all, from physical pleasure to spiritual delight, for the sake of God's commands. A businessman attached to the *Tzadik* will receive a divine *shefa* of wealth that first went through the *Tzadik* (while belonging to the *Tzadik* the *shefa*-gift was in a sensitive form and not necessarily wealth). Since the *Tzadik* is always giving to Heaven, the businessman's wealth is charged with the *Tzadik's* character, it has a spiritual quality, possessing it ennobles and sensitizes the businessman and he will find that it is easy to give this wealth to the poor and other Divine causes. The businessman who does not emulate the *Tzadik* at all and is disconnected from him might receive Divine blessings of wealth but they will not have a holy charge, his wealth will lead him to arrogance and only after great effort will he succeed in using it for holy causes.

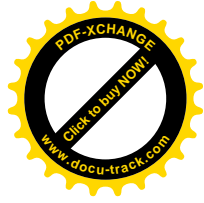
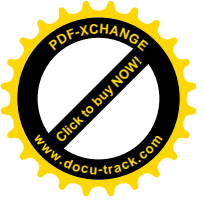


attachment. The attendant who hovers around the *Tzadik*, setting the holy man's schedule or serving him lunch, is only externally close to the *Tzadik*. True connection, requires a relationship on an inner level, where one learns and grows from the example of the *Tzadik*.⁹⁹ The quiet student who is inspired by the *Tzadik*'s presence or words to serve God with added devotion and to emulate the *Tzadik* has the inner bond even if he never introduces himself to the *Tzadik*. The student who resembles the *Tzadik* is the true Chassid. The attendant is a Chassid only in name. He and the *Tzadik* reside in different worlds, and he does not receive life directly through the *Tzadik*.

Personally becoming a *Tzadik Yesod Olam* might seem to be an unrealistic goal for many of us. The *Tanya* teaches that many souls do not have the potential of reaching the heights of Tzadikhood. However, all souls can attain great spiritual levels. An awareness of the different types of souls within mankind can help each of us actualize our unique, latent, proclivities for holy behavior. Lesson four will elucidate the different types of human individuals.

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⁹⁹ Heard from the Stutchiner Rebbe



Lesson Four

Humanity's Five Categories

There are five types of individuals within mankind, three holy and two sinful.

Tzadik Gamur, a total *Tzadik*, lacks an evil inclination. The part of the personality that is usually expressed as a drive for physical urges and evil behaviors has been transformed¹⁰⁰, and it now only seeks virtue.

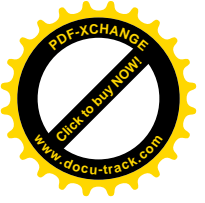
Tzadikim called *malachim*, angels, belong to this group because the *Tzadik Gamur* is as dedicated as an angel. Celestial beings do not have an urge to violate God's commands. A *Tzadik Gamur* also has no urge for sin. In the final prophetic work, *Malachi* wrote, "*Siftey cohen yishmaru daas vitorah yivakshu mipihu ki Malach Hashem Tzivakos hu*"¹⁰¹ ("The lips of the Cohen preserve wisdom and Torah is sought from his mouth for he is a *Malach* – an angel – of the God of Hosts".) Literally, *Malach* means a messenger. We are all God's messengers, sent to accomplish the mission of living a life with God, observing His commandments, learning His Torah, and thus sanctifying His world.¹⁰² Unfortunately, we too often ignore our calling. A true *Tzadik* lives with a constant awareness of mission, and as a result *Malachi* named him a *Malach*, a constant Messenger.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ As King David said "*Libi challal bikirby*" "My Heart is empty within me." David was saying that he had successfully emptied the stone part of his heart. The desire for sin, that is unfeeling of the spiritual, is referred to in the Talmud as the stone heart.

¹⁰¹ *Malachi*, 2

¹⁰² See further *Sfas Emes* to *parshas Shelach* (5631)

¹⁰³ R. *Tzadok Hacohen* of Lublin, *Sichas Malachey Hashareis*, pg. 5

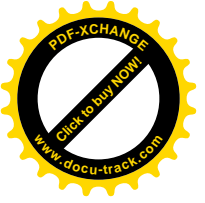


Tzadik Sheeno Gamur, an imperfect *Tzadik*, is primarily attracted to morality. He also possesses a weak drive for evil and sin. His desire for the holy is supreme and he consistently chooses virtue. Within his heart the advocate for holiness is loudest so it is said to rule over the evil inclination. Such an individual is also called *Tzadik vira lo*, a *Tzadik* whom evil is his, (literally a *Tzadik* who suffers),¹⁰⁴ he has some *rah*, evil, but *lo*, it is his since he controls it.

A *Beinoni*, a middle of the road type, is drawn equally to the ungodly and the Heavenly yet never follows the call of evil. Externally, he is perfect for all his deeds are Mitzvos. Internally, this man's body is a battleground with two forces, one angelic the other demonic, wrestling for supremacy. With the help of God and his own efforts he always acts with virtue.¹⁰⁵ While he may succeed in overcoming lowliness, he is constantly aware that the physical within is a sleeping giant, primed to arise with virulent intensity. The *Beinoni's* task is to remain vigilant and avoid complacency. He is called "*Oveid Hashem*" "The one who works for God" and not "*Eved Hashem*" "The Servant of God"

¹⁰⁴ The reason why in this world such a *Tzadik* might suffer is due to the fact that his essence is not fully pure; there is still some evil that he harbors within.

¹⁰⁵ According to the *Tanya*, the *Beinoni* never allows the evil urge to fully conquer his actions, speech, or thought. Man possesses a core deeper than conscious thought. In this subconscious realm, the *Beinoni* possesses a seething volcano of material desires. This volcanic urge is equal to the inner advocate of holiness. (*Tanya*, Chapter 12) According to the *Tanya*, the primary way to succeed in this struggle is by means of love for God. In his system, true love of God can only emerge from intellectual inquiry in the mind. Think about the greatness of God, consider how relative to God nothing exists, realize that God is the source for your life. These meditations will give birth to love of God. (*Tanya*, Chapter 13) The *Tanya* also describes other methods by which one can become a *Beinoni*. R. *Tzadok Hacohen* in *Sichas Malachey Hashareis*, pg. 7-8, explains that virtue can succeed to gain the upper hand, by means of shame in the presence of God. Internalize an awareness of constantly standing before the Infinite. This attitude causes one to be ashamed of sin and a devotee of the internal voice for Mitzvah.



since he is in the throes of a struggle and has not fully achieved spiritual heights in a permanent manner.¹⁰⁶

Then there are two types of *Rishoim* – evil doers. *Rasha vitov lo*, is a sinner who has enhanced his lust for physical pleasures due to sins he has committed. Materialism is more enticing for him than the moral, but he maintains a residual advocate for holiness. As with the *Beinoni* his inner life is a combat area with two armies battling over the small city (his body). Most of his deeds and desires are sinful, yet the good advocate inevitably resurfaces for a moment and causes regret for the misdeed, and his life is filled with guilt. This class contains most of mankind.¹⁰⁷

Rasha vira lo, or *Rasha Gamur*, is the polar opposite of a *Tzadik Gammur*, he is all bad with no desire to perform good deeds.¹⁰⁸ Hitler, may his name be obliterated, was part of this class. He had no regrets or contrition for his misdeeds. Apparently, he obliterated his inner advocate for good. The ancient king Pharaoh of Egypt was also such a villain, as a result of his many decisions to adopt evil behaviors God punished him with forfeiture of his innate advocate for the holy, essentially he lost the ability to do good.¹⁰⁹

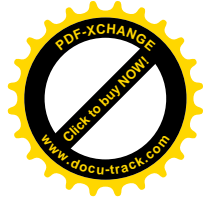
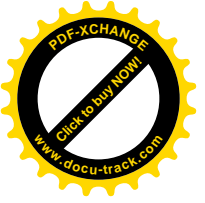
Now it may be understood why Rabbah called himself a *Beinoni*. Rabbah constantly performed Mitzvos yet he claimed that his essential core, his desires, still needed refinement. Abaye argued that Rabbah's remarkable achievements indicated a magnificent internal state and Rabbah had little (*Tzadik Sheeno Gamur*) or no (*Tzadik Gamur*) desire for evil.

¹⁰⁶ *Tanya*, Chapter 15

¹⁰⁷ *Tanya*, Chapter 11

¹⁰⁸ *Tanya*, end of Chapter eleven.

¹⁰⁹ *Mishneh Torah*, Maimonides, "Laws of Return," 6:3



Ramifications of the Different Levels of Virtue

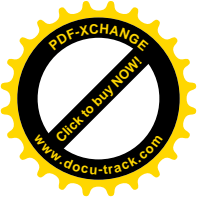
Every Jew can reach the level of *Beinoni*. God has given man free choice. While our physical nature pulls us to laziness, haughtiness, anger, and desire we can overcome these vices. We personally, may not reach a point where we emotionally abhor evil, but we can reach a level of perfection in speech, thought, and deed.¹¹⁰

Consideration of the meaning of the *Beinoni* concept can serve as a source of succor and support. We should never feel guilty about harboring desires for evil or lusts after temptation. We may have been created with the potential of a *Beinoni* and do not have an innate ability to reach the level of a *Tzadik*, who is not even attracted to misdeed. Man's purpose is to provide pleasure to the Divine through living a life of Torah. God may not want of us to be a *Tzadik*. He might desire that we serve Him in the context of battle. This service may be even more beloved to Him than the service of a *Tzadik* for it entails effort.

It is important for all to study the characteristics and nature of a *Tzadik* since there are moments when a *Beinoni* can temporarily become a *Tzadik*, such as, when overcome with love towards God. If we think about the awesome size of the universe, when we focus and repeatedly meditate about the wisdom of the microscopic creations and how they were all created for our enjoyment, a passionate love of the Creator will fill our heart. At the height of passion, we may reach the level of *Tzadik*. The material is repulsive, God's infinite love and generosity fill us with a burning passion to come close to Him, to cleave to Him and feel Him in every fiber of our being.

Tzadikhood is also relevant due to *ibbur neshamah*, soul impregnation, which occurred to Pinchas. According to the Zohar, the Bible's Pinchas was impregnated with the souls of

¹¹⁰ *Tanya*, Chapter 14



Nadav and Avihu¹¹¹ as a reward for his bravery that saved the Jewish nation. The Torah, therefore describes him as "*Pinchas ben Elazar, ben Aharon hacoheh*." The seemingly misplaced comma after the word Elazar indicates that Pinchas was the son of Elazar by virtue of his own soul and also the son of Aharon the High Priest due to the souls of Nadav and Avihu (Aharon's sons who had died earlier) that had entered his body.¹¹²

¹¹¹ *Zohar, parshas Pinchas*, pg. 213b, see also the writings of the *Ari, Shaar Hagilgulim Hakdama* 32 that Pinchas really had four different souls within him, he was born with one soul, then he received the soul of Nadav and Avihu, later on he received the soul of *Eliyahu Hatishbi*, and the soul of Elijah from Binyamin.

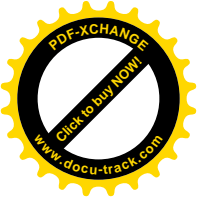
¹¹² Another example of *ibbur neshamah* is found in the writings of the *Meor Enayim* (Rabbi *Menachem Nachum Twersky* of Chernobyl, 1730-1797).

The *Meor Enayim* explained that the reason why there is a powerful urge to share good news is *ibbur neshamah*. At the moment when one brings good tidings, the soul of Elijah the prophet, the *Mevaser Tov*, the person who will bring the news of the ultimate redemption, enters into one's soul.

Using this principle one can understand why *Serach Bas Asher* was counted as two individuals in the count of the members of Jacob's family that went down to Egypt (see *Midrash Rabba, parshas Vayigash*, 94:9). Since she brought the good news of Joseph's survival to Jacob she had two souls, her own and the soul of Elijah, two souls cause her to be counted as two. Perhaps it was this soul of Elijah within her that caused her to enter Heaven alive as Elijah did. (The *Targum Yonatan, parshas Vayigash*, writes that *Serach* entered Heaven while still alive.)

Serach's added soul teaches an important lesson about exile. Exile is not a permanent state. At the onset of Jewish subjugation a member of the community harbored the soul of *Eliyahu*, the harbinger of redemption. Thus the light of redemption started to glow with the beginning of exile to comfort the Jews and inform them that their salvation was already set in place, and it only had to be revealed. The full spelling of the letters of *Serach's* name *Sin, yud, nun, + resh, yud, shin, + ches, yud, taf*, yields the same *gimmatriah* value (1288) as the phrase "*Yitaka bishofar gadol uvau haovdim*" "(On that day) It (the ultimate redemption) will be heralded through a great *shofar* and the lost ones will come (to God's home in Jerusalem)." This correlation further indicates that *Serach* had the soul of *Eliyahu* who, like the great *shofar*, sounds the call of the ultimate return to Israel. (*Emunas Etecha, parshas Vayigash*, 5756)

50 ó *Humanity's Five Categories*

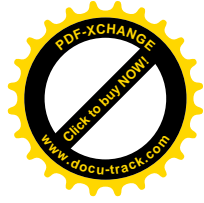
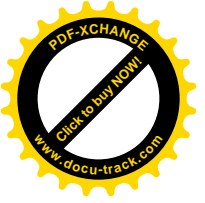


The Talmud's lesson¹¹³ about the prenatal oath is understandable in light of the different spiritual levels of the *Tzadik*, *Beinoni*, and *Rasha*. The commitment of the young soul to be a *Tzadik*, is to strive towards the internal wholeness of the *Tzadik Gamur*. "Even if the entire world calls you a *Tzadik*, see yourself as a if you were a *Rasha*" means that one should never assume that they have reached the level of *Tzadik*. Even when every act, feeling, and thought, is pure, see yourself as a *Beinoni*, with lusts and desires as virulent as those of a *Rasha*, and this way you see yourself "as if" you were evil but not actually a *Rasha*. This perspective will ensure that you do not grow complacent or arrogant, while allowing you to maintain a healthy self esteem.

To discover the route to fulfillment of the pre-natal oath we must study the Godly and physical souls within man.

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¹¹³ Tractate *Niddah*, pg. 30b



Lesson Five

Body Versus Soul

God formed man out of dust of the earth, and blew into his nostrils a soul of life, and man (thus) became a living creature.¹¹⁴

For you are dust and to dust you shall return.¹¹⁵

Man is composed of two opposing components. He has a body that was initially formed from dust and is coarse like the physical world. Man is also the guardian of a soul, a fragment of Divinity, that God “blew” into Adam.¹¹⁶ Since God is not a

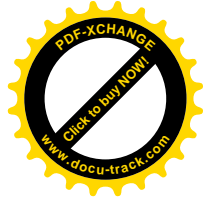
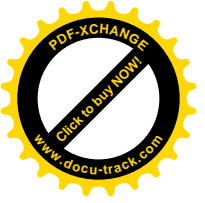
¹¹⁴ *Genesis, 2:7*

¹¹⁵ *Genesis, 3:19*

¹¹⁶ The Midrash, (*Bresishis Rabbah, 12:8, Rashi's version*) describes the composite nature of man in the following text.

“Great is peace for when God created His world he made peace between the higher (spiritual) creations and the lower (physical) creations. On the first day He created in both realms, as is written, ‘In the beginning God created Heaven and Earth.’ On the second day He created in the spiritual realm, as is written, ‘And God said “Let there be a firmament.”’ On the third day He created in the lowly realm, as is written, ‘And God said “Let the earth sprout grasses.”’ On the fourth day He created in the Heavenly realm, as is written, ‘And God said “Let the Heavenly lights (the sun and moon) appear.”’ On the fifth day He created in the lower realm, as is written, ‘And God said “Let the waters swarm.”’ On the sixth day He wished to create man. God then said, ‘If I create Him from the Heavenly then the spiritual will exceed the physical by one creation and there will be no peace in the world. If I create him from the lowly then the physical will be one more than the spiritual and there will be no peace in the world. Therefore, I will create him from the Higher and lower realms for the sake of peace.’ This is what is meant by the verse, ‘And God formed man dust from the earth’ (man is) from the lowly, and ‘He blew in his nostril a soul of life’ (man is also) from the Heavenly.”

Hebrew names manifest the essential nature of an item. The essence of man can be found in his name *Adam*. The letter *aleph* is a composite of three letters, two letters *yud* (one on the right and the other to the left) and a



human who has a respiratory system, what does the Torah verse mean when it speaks of God's breath?

God's breath symbolizes the Almighty's "essence", as it were His "vitality." In Jewish thought, breath equals life. Time of death is determined in Jewish law as the point when respiration ceases,¹¹⁷ and the Hebrew word for soul, *neshamah*, shares a root with the word for breath, *neshima*. Life is essence. Thus, human breath represents man's existence and God's breath is symbolic language for His essential vitality.

To blow means to push out breath from the depths of your being, "G-d blew into man", He reached to the essence of Himself, cut off a piece, and endowed it to man as the human soul. Body (earthiness) and soul (pure Godliness) are opposite entities joined together.

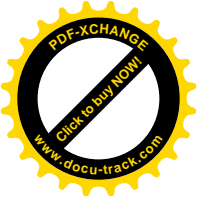
A parable helps explain their relationship: *There was once a cripple who was blessed with vigorous eyesight and a keen intellect. One day he was told that his daughter, who lived in the next town, was organizing a party in her home celebrating the birth of her first child. The invalid sorely wanted to attend the party. The next town was only a few miles away, but he could not walk, and he could not afford to pay for a horse and buggy to transport him.*

In the same town as the invalid lived a blind man who was healthy and strong. He had heard that a medical professor, expert

vav. The *gimmatria* equals 26 which is the numerical value of God's name of being (*Yud* then *Heh* then *Vav* and *Heh*). The *aleph* of Adam recalls "*Alufo shel Olam*" "The Master of the world" for man has a part of Divinity within him. The remaining two letters spell the word *dam* – blood. Blood is the home for the animal soul of man. Thus man is a union of Divine Soul with animal flesh. (Rav Wolfson)

See further *Daas Tefillah*, pg. 270, *Innerspace*, pg. 128, *Kometz Hamincha*, pg. 34, *The Light Beyond*, pgs. 110-111.

¹¹⁷ Heard from the Stutchiner Rebbe



in vision restoration, was in the next town for a short visit. The blind man desperately desired to visit the doctor, however, he knew that he could not attempt the trip on his own. Were he to try and grope along the roads he would quickly lose his way at the various turns and would be easy prey for the bandits who ambush passersby.

The invalid asked a friend to bring him to the town's central square to find a ride to the next town. The blind man also came to the square for the same purpose. They ended up sitting next to each other. They both waited for hours but no ride materialized. Eventually, they started talking to each other and the invalid realized that he and the blind man both sought the same destination.

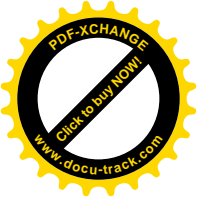
He recommended that the blind man carry him. He would look out and guide the blind man along treacherous turns and watch from his elevated perch for ambushers who may be lying in wait, while the blind man's vigorous strength would easily carry them both to their goal. Together they arrived in the next town.¹¹⁸

The blind man is the body while the invalid is the soul.¹¹⁹

The body does not see well. The body accepts pleasure as the purpose of life. The body desires to sleep and waste time. It is quick to anger, and it revels in foolish speech and thought. The body is often depressed and it seeks pride and power. The soul however has perfect vision. The soul knows that we are on earth in order to display the Divine's rule and thus mend His world. The soul sees ultimate reality, what truly matters and what real pleasure is. Alone, the soul is an impotent invalid. For its *tikkun*,

¹¹⁸ Adapted from *Vayikrah Rabbah*, Chapter four

¹¹⁹ The next town is the World-to-Come where celebration and Divine pleasure reign supreme.



to accomplish its mission of performing Mitzvos and learning Torah in this sphere of existence, it needs a body.

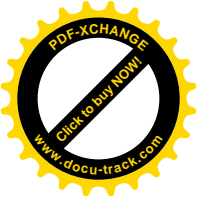
It was most important for the blind man to walk and the invalid to ride. Imagine if the order had been inversed, would they have achieved their goal? If the blind man had ridden atop the invalid, he would not have been able to see afar in order to protect the invalid from robbers who lay in ambush, nor would the invalid with his atrophied legs have been able to carry the blind man's weight. The soul must control the body and have the body serve it. People in whom the soul serves the body lack the correct perspective on life, they enslave their moral thinking to legitimize base behaviors, and they torment their soul with the lowest desires.¹²⁰

The differing attractions of the body and the soul

Everything in nature seeks to return to its root. So as well is a child always attracted to his parental home. Home as the source of one's life has the quality of a root and branches are attracted to their roots. Consider the strength of the bond between father and child. The father is the source of the son, he is a root, and the son is an offshoot. Since the attraction to source is so powerful the son seeks to emulate his father and earn his father's

¹²⁰ The highest point of the soul is concentrated in the mind, that is why the prayer recited before placing *Tefillin* (phylacteries) on the arm and head declares, "(the *Teffilah* box) on the head stands opposite the brain so that the ***Neshama Shebimochi*, the soul, whose location is in the head**, together with my other proclivities and abilities will be fully committed to the service of God." Thus, thought is associated with the soul, while impulses are expressions of the body.

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch explains that many of the commandments are in fact measures to insure that man's soul (his logical thoughts) rule his lower animal self (his impulses and desires). See his commentary to *Leviticus*, 19:27, and *Horeb*, Chapters 65, 68, 69; see also his *Jewish Symbolism* (vol. 3 of his *Collected Writings*) pgs. 175-178 (where he interprets the commandment of *Shatnez*).

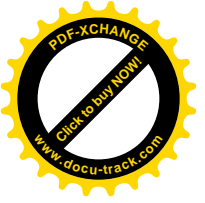


approval.¹²¹ Similarly every man is attracted to his wife and when single feels forlorn and incomplete. This too stems from the need to reconnect to one's roots. Before birth each soul is a duality, with a male half and a female half. When we are born, only half of a soul enters the world at a time. There is another half, of the opposite gender, that is born into another family, usually at a different time. The urge for marriage is a desire to return to the perfect state, the most natural, the form in which we were originally created. Marriage is not a union of disparate individuals, it is a reunion of the halves that were initially one soul.¹²²

¹²¹ *Tzion Vi'arehah*, pg. 31

¹²² See further *Made in Heaven*, pg. 1, note 1.

The primordial unity of souls is hinted at in the verse, "*Hema Mehevel Yachad*" "They are together from mist," namely, since the point of mere soul mist, male was together with female. Perhaps this concept can explain a difficulty that is found in Rabbinic sources about marriage. Legal authorities stress that marriage should be performed with symbolic omens of blessing. For instance, ideally one should marry at the beginning of the lunar month when the moon, the symbol of the Jewish nation, is growing in luster. Secondly, there is a widespread custom to place the wedding canopy under the stars, the artifact of God's blessing to Abraham that Jews will be as plentiful as the celestial lights. Yet, the Rabbis derived the laws of marriage from the purchase of the *Machpela* cave, the burial plot where Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sara, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Leah are interred. Can a cemetery and death be a good omen? The answer is yes, the *Machpela* cave indicates the heights of union married individuals can reach. Marriage is not merely a partnership of bodies and lives, it is a reunion of souls. As a result it does not have to end. The body stops living at the point of death but the soul lives on and a marriage where husband and wife are fully connected to each other, continues after death. Even in the next world the two souls are fused. That is why our patriarchs and matriarchs were buried as couples in the same cave, to indicate that during their lifetimes they had fully fused their personalities and therefore the bond fully continued on a soulful level after death. Perhaps the name *Chevron* (where the *Machpela* cave is located) reflects this concept, since *Chevron* stems from the word *Chibur* – connection. Deriving the laws of marriage from the purchase of the *Machpela* cave is a wonderful omen, it shows that in marriage an absolute unity can be



The body and soul have different roots. The body is from the earth. It is organic and chemical like the earth. Since the body is attracted to its root it is drawn to an animalistic life, one of passions, laziness, emptiness, and false pride. The soul however is also attracted to its root. The soul stems directly from God's breath. The soul pulls us up to God Himself. The soul attracts man to the highest ideals, it inspires morality, and demands behavior that connects man to God.¹²³ The concentrated

achieved during the lifetime of the couple and that union can continue after physical death. (*Emunas Etecha, parshas Vayetze*, pg. 86)

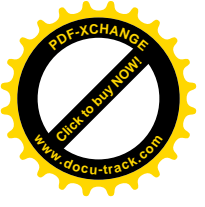
Since marriage is a return to one's root it resembles and symbolizes the ultimate redemption.

Every nation's root is their homeland, that is why Englishmen are loyal to England and Americans are loyal to America. The root of the Jewish nation is the Land of Israel. That is why Jews are innately attracted to the Land of Israel.

In the realm of person the roots of the Jewish people are our forefathers, *Avraham*, *Yitzchok*, and *Yaakov*. God introduced Himself to each with commandments about the Land of Israel. God's first words to Abraham were, "*Lech lecha*" "Leave your land, birthplace, and family and go to the Land that I will show you (Israel)." (*Genesis*, 12:1) To Isaac He said "Do not go down to Egypt, reside in the land that I will command you to stay there. Stay in this land (Israel)." (*Genesis*, 25: 2-3) And Jacob's first message was "I am the G-d of Abraham etc. the land that you are lying on will be given to you and your descendants." (*Genesis*, 28:13) Since the land of Israel is the root of the nation in the dimension of space, in the dimension of people our roots first began their relationships with God through hearing of the bond to the land. (*Emunas Etecha, Lech Lecha* 5759)

The ultimate redemption will return Jewry to their land and thus will return us to our root. Since marriage is also a return to the root, marriage is the symbol of the redemption. That is why in the blessings celebrating marriage the seventh blessing requests the ultimate redemption. At a time of return to a root it is fitting to pray for the ultimate return to the Source. Thus, the prophet promised, "Once again it will be heard in the hills of Judea and in the outskirts of Jerusalem the sounds of joy and gladness, the sounds of groom and bride, the sounds of thanks to God."

¹²³ See *Horeb*, Chapter 61, who explains the obligation of burial as a requirement to return the body to its root, just as the soul has returned to its root in Heaven through death.



life force of the body is called *nefesh habahmis* – the animal soul, since animals also have organic “spirits” that provide their life and attract them to lowly desires.

The soul is the *nefesh elokis* – the Godly soul, since it is a piece that was hewed off of the Divine. The *nefesh habahamis* is concentrated in the blood, which is why loss of much blood causes death to the body. The Torah severely prohibits¹²⁴ ingestion of animal blood because what you eat influences your character¹²⁵ and since the blood contains an intense form of the animal’s vitality and nature, eating it would cause the human *nefesh habahimis* to become too strong.¹²⁶ The organ with the most blood in the body is the liver, the *nefesh habahamis* is therefore said to be located in the liver, or the left half of the heart, a section of the heart that has excessive amounts of blood. The home of the *nefesh elokis* is the mind, and it is concentrated in the right half of the brain. The *nefesh habahamis* is sometimes called *yetzer hara*, evil inclination, for it draws the person to evil, the selfish behaviors of the animal world. The *nefesh elokis*, pulls man to attachment with the Divine and is called *yetzer tov*, the inclination for good.

“The candle of God is the human soul.”¹²⁷ Just as in a candle the flame seeks to leap ever higher, the soul (*nefesh elokis*) seeks to leap out of the body into the embrace of the Heavens. The wick tethers the flame and the body tethers the soul keeping it grounded and constrained.¹²⁸

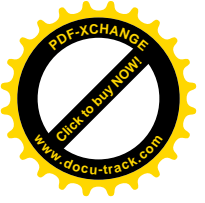
¹²⁴ Ingesting blood carries the punishment of *karet*, the soul is disconnected from the Divine, and the individual dies at an early age.

¹²⁵ See further Nachmonides’ commentary to *Leviticus*, 11:13, *Mesilas Yesharim*, Chapter 11, *Shaar Hakedusha*, part one gate two, *Degel Machaneh Ephraim*, *parshas Eikev* s.v. *Umaltem*.

¹²⁶ See further *Ohr Hachaim*, *Vayikrah*, 17:10

¹²⁷ *Proverbs* 20:27.

¹²⁸ *Tanya*, Chapter sixteen. See further *Chassidic Masters*, pg. 33.

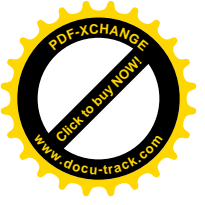


These conflicting urges may be the source for the custom to *Shuckle*, sway back and forth, while praying and studying Torah. To remove an embedded tooth a dentist must pull it. Resisting dislocation, it shakes back and forth. When praying or learning the soul seeks to leap out of the body; it wants to rejoin its root and feel God without the limitation of flesh.¹²⁹ Yet the body keeps the soul in this world. The two drives face off against each other, as a result, there is a swaying back and forth.

The greatest miracle is the human specimen. According to Rav Moshe Isserles,¹³⁰ the blessing recited after relieving oneself in a lavatory expresses thanks for the wonder of human life. The blessing concludes with praise to God, "*Baruch atah hashem rofeh chol basar umafla laasot*" "Blessed are you God who heals all flesh and created a wondrous creation." The final few words seem incongruous. The ability to release excrement and the various holes in the body preserve health, but what is so wondrous about them? Seeing the intricacies of the microscopic realm or the magnificence of a waterfall does not elicit a blessing with the term "wondrous creation" in it, why does excretion? Rabbi Moshe Isserles answered that the paradoxical nature of man makes his existence wondrous. On the one hand man is a physical being who eats, procreates, and excretes as the lowest animals do. On the other hand man is a soul with the ability to praise God, thank the Almighty, and experience transcendent Divinity. Joining these two forces is a supernatural feat. Thus, after the most physical of activities when we are reminded of the

¹²⁹ Rav *Moshe Chayim* Luzzato writes in his work *Daas Tevunos*, "The soul is a fragment of Divinity, its only desire is to return to and cleave to its Source, to reach Him; (this is because the soul is) like all effects that seek their cause, and the soul will only rest and feel inner peace once it accomplishes this goal."

¹³⁰ Rabbi *Moshe* Isserles was born in 1530 and he passed away in 1572. He was regarded as the "Maimonides of Polish Jewry." He was one of the greatest Halachic authorities of all time and he served as the Rabbi of Cracow, Poland.



coarse nature of man it is the time to thank God for maintaining the union of body and soul.¹³¹

Body and soul seem to be opposite forces destined to eternal conflict for supremacy. A deeper look, however, reveals that the body can help you learn about the soul, and that the body is neither exclusively nor permanently an opponent to the soul.

The story of "The turkey prince"

Once the king's son went mad. He thought he was a turkey. He felt compelled to sit under the table without any clothes on, pulling at bits of bread and bones like a turkey. None of the doctors could do anything to heal him or cure him, and they gave up in despair. The king was very sad.

Until a wise man came and said, "I can cure him."

*What did the wise man do? He took off all **his** clothes, and sat down naked under the table next to the king's son, and also pulled at crumbs and bones.*

The prince asked him, "Who are you and what are you doing here?"

*"And what are **you** doing here?" he replied.*

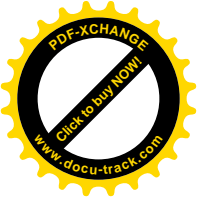
"I am a turkey," said the prince.

"I am also a turkey," said the wise man.

The two of them sat together like this for some time, until they were used to one another.

Then the wise man gave a sign and the king's men threw them shirts. The wise man-turkey said to the king's son, "Do you think a turkey can't wear a shirt? You can wear a shirt and still be a turkey." The two of them put on shirts.

¹³¹ *Rm" a* (the acronym for Rav Moshe Isserles), *Orach Chayim*, 6:1



After a while he gave another sign and they threw them some trousers. Again the wise man said, "Do you think if you wear trousers you can't be a turkey?" They put on trousers.

One by one they put on the rest of their clothes in the same way.

Afterwards, the wise man gave a sign and they put down human food from the table. The wise man said to the prince, "Do you think if you eat good food you can't be a turkey any more? You can eat this food and still be a turkey." They ate.

Then he said to him, "Do you think a turkey has to sit under the table? You can be a turkey and sit up at the table."

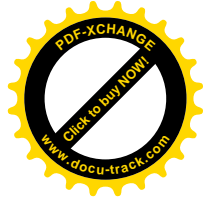
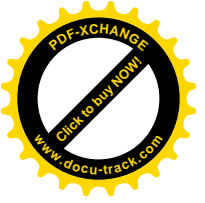
This was how the wise man dealt with the prince, until in the end he cured him completely. (Rebbe Nachman of Breslov)¹³²

Rabbi Nachman of Breslov's parable can be understood as a display of the ideas in this lesson. Every human has a body, that is his animal or turkey part, and a soul, that is a prince as the son of God.¹³³ We should stress our soul and the fact that we are the children of the King of Kings. Yet the prince thinks he is a turkey. We so often immerse ourselves in bodily concerns that we view them as the sum of our essence. Physical desires

¹³² Rav Wolfson's teacher, Rabbi *Shraga Feivel* Mendelovitz would refer to Rebbe Nachman as "The poet of *Chassidus*." Rebbe Nachman was the great grandson of the *Besht*. He was born in Mezhibozh in 1772 and he passed away in Uman in 1811.

¹³³ On the verse, "*Vigam haNefsh lo timaleh*" "And the soul as well will not be satisfied" (*Kohelet* 6:7), the Midrash compares the relationship of body and soul to a marriage of unequals:

It is like a village peasant who marries the king's daughter. Even if he were to bring her many luxurious items they would be worthless in her eyes since she is the daughter of the regent. He can never provide for her according to what she expects. So too the soul is the daughter of the King, even if the body brings her all the physical pleasures of the world she will not be satisfied, for she is Heavenly.



become our needs and the body's urges our obligatory behavior. We are the prince who is certain that he is a turkey.¹³⁴

The wise man used the turkey misconception to heal the prince and free him from his delusions. As a turkey the prince had to act like the other turkey, (the wise man), since turkeys cannot be different from each other. Guided correctly, the body itself, its physical urges, can further the cause of holiness and eventually become saintly.

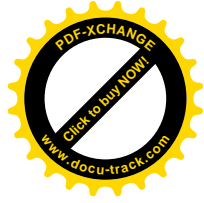
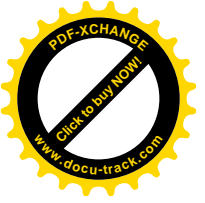
Rebbe Nachman's lesson can serve as a source of comfort. Even if I feel that I am lost in a morass of physical urges and I am naked of my spiritual dignity, there is still hope. I can be rescued by a wise man, a *Tzadik*, who will descend to my level and attach himself to me. The *Tzadik* will then show me how to channel my physicality and turn a turkey into a prince of God's kingdom.¹³⁵

Study of the body is one of the ways in which the material aspect of man might help further the cause of his soul. Why can the body help further the soul's agenda? Why should these opposites complement each other? Lesson six will attempt to answer these questions.

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¹³⁴ In the Song of Songs (1:9-10), King Solomon compared the beloved to the chained horse of Pharaoh's chariot. The work *Afikei Yehuda* explains the verse to refer to the themes of Rebbe Nachman. The horse is the body and the charioteer is the soul. When the chariot leaves the stable the horse is in the lead and it imagines that it is the master. The body, since man is aware of it first, thinks it is the master and the essence of life. A few minutes after the stable doors open, the viewer will see the charioteer and the ropes that control the horse. An individual who controls his body displays his soul as his truest self. (quoted in *Limudey Nissan*, part 1, pg. 322)

¹³⁵ Rabbi Wolfson did not quote this story of Rabbi Nachman in this lesson. I inserted it and adapted its explanation from Avraham Greenbaum's, *Under the Table and How to Get Up: Jewish Pathways of Spiritual Growth*.



Lesson Six

The Body Can Complement the Soul

A superficial view of body and soul and their relationship to each other would lead one to view them as eternal opponents. Yet, once one delves deeper one can see how the body can help the cause of the soul.

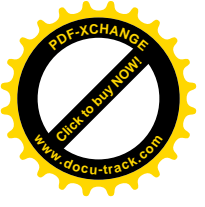
The Body Clothes the Divine Soul¹³⁶

The inner wisdom of Torah teaches that the relationship between the physical body and the Divine soul is like that of a garment. The body is the clothes of the soul. In mystical terminology, *Oros*, lights, is the term for soul-like forces¹³⁷ while *Keilim*, clothes or vessels, is the term for body-like entities.

Consider a lamp in your living room as an example of *Oros* and *Keilim*. Light in the elemental form is soul-like, it is the *Or*. Essential light is clothed in the *Keli* (vessel) of the light

¹³⁶ Most of this segment (The body as clothing) I heard from the Stutchiner Rebbe, not Rav Wolfson. See further *Mishbetzos Zahav, Shavuos* (5751), pg. 194.

¹³⁷ Mystics use the term light to describe the soul and other spiritual entities. This is because light is one of the least physical of items in our material world, it cannot be grasped and held, thus it represents the spiritual, non-tangible, entities. Light also provides a clear field of vision and is a universal symbol of purity. Furthermore, it spreads out quickly just as spirituality causes a person to spread himself out and do acts that bring honor to God. Additionally, light was the first creation and thus it represents the source of existence. Rabbi *Yechiel Bar Lev* suggested that light represents an extremely strong degree of connection to root. If you cut a branch off a tree the branch will no longer grow but it will not disappear, it continues to exist. However, if you sunder a ray of light from its root, say shuttering a window, thus separating the rays from the sun, the room will become dark because light detached from its root ceases to exist. Light represents the spiritual dimension since we must be totally connected to the root and if we are not connected to the Divine we cannot exist. See further *Yedid Nefesh*, pgs. 35-36.



bulb. Light itself; pure, absolute, and unlimited in any way would be so bright that no one would benefit from it. In a light bulb, light is restrained so that it can be appreciated.

This is the function of all *Keilim*. They limit the *Oros* to enable enjoyment.

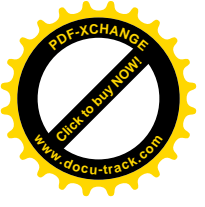
The light bulb is an *Or*, a soul-like light, relative to the lamp shade, its *Keli*, its vessel. The light bulb on its own would be too bright for anyone to benefit, the shade around it reduces the glare so that its rays are soft and helpful. Body is light to clothes as its vessel. The clothes conceal the body so that it is not seen in its naturalness.

The soul is light to the body as vessel. The soul on its own is like pure unlimited light. It is overwhelming. Just as a light fixture limits absolute radiance and cloaks it in a manageable form, the body obscures the light of the soul.¹³⁸ Body as vessel to soul as light seems to mean that the two are opposing forces since concealing is the opposite of revealing.

The soul is the source of life, it is what gives life. The body receives life from the soul. The body is a receiver to soul as a giver. Here again, body and soul are opposites for taking is the opposite of giving, just as dimming is the opposite of illuminating. A deeper look will reveal that the definition of body and soul as light and vessel is the reason why study of the body can teach about the soul.

We can delve deeper. A vessel need not always dim the light. Sometimes the vessel becomes pure and radiant. Then, the vessel itself becomes light-like. For instance, a lampshade can become translucent so that the light bulb shines through it without

¹³⁸ Another pair of terms that describe this relationship is *chomer* and *tzurah*. *Chomer* literally means matter and it is body-like or vessel-like. *Tzurah* literally means form and it is the soul or light to matter. Within man the soul is the *tzurah* and the body is the *chomer*. See further *Yedid Nefesh*, part 1, Chapter 5.



being dimmed at all. In such cases the lampshade is indistinguishable from the bulb and one might say that the lampshade produces light for it loses its identity to the light bulb. The body is the vessel of the soul, yet once the body is purified it will not oppose the soul nor will it hide the soul.¹³⁹

Even prior to the absolute purification of the body, the body can help you grow spiritually.¹⁴⁰

Every *Keli* (vessel) can become an *Or* (a light), and the ability to become a light is constantly latent within it. Thus a study of the vessel that discovers its latent abilities will teach about the light's characteristics.

Lessons of the Body

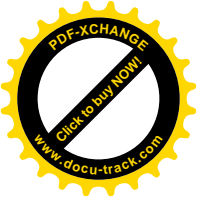
What is the body's strongest impulse? I would argue that it is lust. Lust is a mask of a Heavenly and soulful force,

¹³⁹ "The body should reflect the *neshamah* perfectly, (it) should serve the soul in perfect loyalty. Never should the body stray after its own desires. It should be a vessel, a tool which obeys its control dimension totally selflessly. It should be like a vehicle driven only from within, its very existence justified only as a loyal servant.

At the Creation, the body of Adam was just that. It was an ethereal, luminescent structure which revealed the spiritual content." (*Living Inspired*, pg. 118)

"The garments of the world, the covering of Adam before he sinned were of *Or* "light." After the sin, the covering became skin. The root *Or* has the silent *aleph*, it is light, spiritual, all revelation. The root (for the Hebrew word for skin) spells not only skin but **blind** too – the covering which revealed has become a covering which obstructs." (*Living Inspired*, pg. 120) When one purifies his body he is, in some measure, returning to the state of Adam before the sin.

¹⁴⁰ The body clothes the soul. "Clothes hide but also reveal – although the wearer is hidden by his clothes, his dignity is revealed by his clothes. Royal robes cover the king, but they reveal his royalty. ('*Oteh or ka'salma*' – 'God wears light like a garment'; nature hides God, but accurately reveals His presence!)" (*Living Inspired*, pg. 120) Thus the body obscures the soul and reveals the soul.



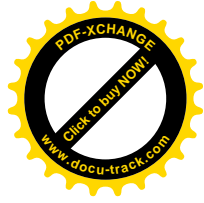
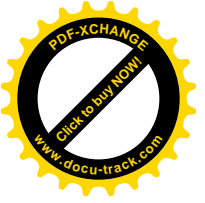
Chessed, the desire to spread out and connect with others.¹⁴¹ Lust is when I seek to connect with them for my own selfish pleasure, *Chessed* is the elevated form of this urge; desire to connect with others in order to give and to help them and an urge to attach oneself to God. Lust as the most virulent bodily desire teaches that generous giving is the most powerful urge of the soul. **The body's lust drive is enormously powerful; that should teach us how deeply the soul desires *Chessed*.**

Perhaps the following thought might help one overcome improper drives: The animal soul is ascendant when lust is actualized. If one acts according to the dictates of selfish desires one is little better than the beasts of the wild. On the other hand, the Heavenly soul shines through the body when one displays selfless giving. When experiencing lust temptation the body is reflecting a fallen urge of the soul. It is a moment to engage in *Chessed* – selfless giving to other humans and to the cause of Holiness.¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ In *Leviticus*, 20:17, the Torah states, " *Viish asher yikach es achoso bos aviv oh vas imo viraah es ervasah vihi sireh es ervaso chessed hu vinichrasu lieiney bnay amam ervas achoso gilah avono yisah* " " A man who marries his sister, daughter of his father, or daughter of his mother, and he saw her nakedness and she saw his, **it is *chessed***, and they will be cut off before their nation, he revealed his sister's nakedness he must bear his sin." (emphasis added) The *Baal Shem Tov* explained that the verse included the word *chessed*, to teach that lowly lustful desires are a misapplication of the Heavenly drive for *chessed*. The verse is bemoaning the disgrace saying, "Lust? How could you do that, to misapply *chessed*, the most radiant and important of character traits?"

¹⁴² Raising lust is a very high level of service of the Almighty. When overcome with such feelings contemplation that at its root it is a desire for divinity and turning those passions towards feeling Love towards Him or His children is a difficult task. Chassidim demanded it of themselves.

"The *Baal Shem Tov* taught that God created human emotions to teach man how to serve his Master. The *Besht* explicitly said, 'Man must believe that when an evil lust falls into his heart it was sent to him from God, for the time has come for him to serve God with love of Holiness. Heaven is hinting to him, "turn love to the love of God.'" Once the heart is already in a state of



The reason for the centrality of lust and generosity is that *Chessed*, the Divine and elevated form of this drive, was the foundation of the world; as scripture states, "*Olam Chessed Yibaneh*" "The world was built upon *Chessed*".¹⁴³ God's creation was an act of total love, and he placed *chessed* as the foundation of a Heavenly personality.¹⁴⁴

Even the physical form of the body can teach lessons about the *Nefesh elokis*, the Godly soul. Look at the body; from the form of the body, and the various functions its parts fulfill, you may learn about the nature of the soul. For instance, the tongue is the vessel for speech. The tongue has unique characteristics. It does not have a bone. It can easily be burnt and damaged. This is a lesson about the soul. Soulful speech is soft and delicate. Soulful rebuke is delivered to others through a context of love and in an oblique manner that does not offend.¹⁴⁵

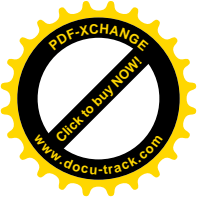
desire it is easier to reach love of Divinity. Similarly, when a great fright falls upon man, he should know with certitude that this fear was sent from Heaven to tell him, "Now is the time to arouse your own innate fear of God." So it is with all the emotions'" (*Divrey Sholom, Purim*, pg. 38) See also *Degel Machaneh Efraim, parshas Eikev*.

¹⁴³ Psalm 89

¹⁴⁴ See *Pachad Yitzchok on Rosh Hashana* for his discussions of *Chessed* and see the *Kuntress Hachessed in Michtav Meeliyahu*.

¹⁴⁵ See further *Mishbetzos Zahav, parshas Noach*. The tongue has two uses, it enjoys taste that no one else will enjoy, and it reveals to others insights through oral communication. This teaches that some ideas, such as lessons of the revealed Torah should be shared, other concepts, such as the secrets of how God created the universe are to be hidden and each individual should enjoy them by himself. (See further *Pachad Yitzchok on Rosh Hashana, Maamar one*).

The *Maharal* explains that the reason why the human body is naturally straight and we do not walk on all fours with our head to the earth is that God wanted to send a message to man through the human form. "Because God's presence is not visible in this world, it is easy for people to come sin. God compensated for this physical blind spot with the spiritual ability to perceive and fear God. Our erect human posture directs our gaze upwards to the Heavens. There we observe God's presence... and we are less inclined to



Another lesson about the soul can be found in the sum of components that comprise the human body. The body has two hundred forty eight primary limbs and three hundred sixty five sinews.¹⁴⁶ The limbs are the major bones of the body, the sinews are what hold muscles to bone and contain blood within their channels. Bones are white while sinews (that are filled with blood) are red. Thus there are two hundred and forty eight white parts of the body and three hundred sixty five red parts of the body. The soul has matching segments.

There are two hundred forty eight “white lights” and three hundred sixty five “red lights” in the soul. Each soul “light” (part of the soul) is Godly holiness clothed in one of the physical parts of the body. The soul-part is what gives life to that portion of the body. The “white lights” are clothed in the limbs, in the white bones, and the “red lights” are sheathed within the sinews.¹⁴⁷

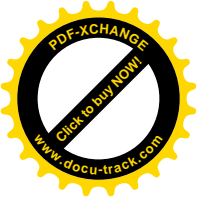
Jewish observance is divided into two parts, *Mitzvos Aseh*, commandments that require a particular act from the Jew, and *Mitzvos Lo Taaseh*, enjoinders prohibiting behaviors. The Torah contains two hundred and forty eight *Mitzvos Aseh* and three hundred sixty five *Mitzvos Lo Taaseh*. Performance of the *Mitzvos Aseh* draws life to the limbs from the “white” of the soul while observing the prohibitions of *Mitzvos Lo Taaseh* brings added strength and purity from the “red” of the soul. Thus each Mitzvah parallels a soul and a body part. The more Mitzvos one performs the purer the body becomes and that much more spiritual vigor may flow into it.¹⁴⁸

sin.” (*Maharal of Prague on Pirkei Avos*, pg. 81, see further *Derech Chaim*, end of the commentary to Mishna 2:1)

¹⁴⁶ The *Mishnah* in *Ohalos* (1:8) delineates the limbs and sinews.

¹⁴⁷ *Shefa Tal*, pg. 2, See further *Chassidic Masters*, pg. 22 s.v. “One must.”

¹⁴⁸ Rabbi *Tzadok Hacohen* of Lublin explains that for every physical illness of a Jew there is a spiritual cause. Return to God, *Teshuvah*, erases the spiritual



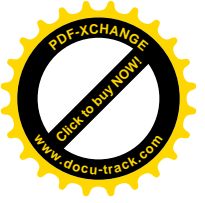
In mysticism, the different colors along the spectrum symbolize different Divine attributes.¹⁴⁹ The color white symbolizes *chessed* – unbridled generosity and love. The color red represents *din* – harsh justice, and limitations. *Mitzvos Aseh* require that action be taken, one has to extend his personality and do, and are expressions of love for God. What we do is the basis of who we are, thus our deeds provide added life to the white bones, the body part that frames a person's form and shape. *Mitzvos Lo Taaseh* are injunctions, forbidding acts that are injurious to our and the world's spiritual well being. Observance of these laws entails constriction, pulling one's self in and not doing what sensory urges seek. Scrupulous adherence to the commands of *Mitzvos Lo Taaseh* is thus an exhibition of *din* – fear and justice – setting boundaries and rigorously maintaining them.¹⁵⁰ The goal of *Mitzvos Lo Taaseh* is to preserve the

sin and effects physical healing. (*Takanas Hashavin*, note 1) Perhaps the idea in the text is the explanation of his lesson. Since each Mitzvah parallels a part of the body, lack of observance of a mitzvah causes physical weakness and illness to the part of the body that corresponds to that Mitzvah. Return to God rectifies the spiritual soul-light and therefore brings about physical healing.

¹⁴⁹ See further *Meditation and Kabbalah*, pgs. 179-183

¹⁵⁰ Our forefather *Avraham* was the ultimate paradigm of *chessed*, Heavenly giving and love. *Avraham* even sought to perform kindness with earth worshippers and the sinners of Sodom (see *parshas Vayeira*). Since *Mitzvos Aseh* are expression of giving, extending oneself for God's sake, *Avraham* is the personification of *Mitzvos Aseh*. The *gimmatriah* of *Avraham's* name (1 + 2 + 200 + 5 + 40) is 248 the same as the sum of all *Mitzvos Aseh*.

Isaac was the paradigm of *Din* or *Gevurah*, setting limits and constriction. Isaac's greatest moment was when he allowed himself to be bound on the altar, an act of remarkable discipline and withdrawal. Isaac is the personification of *Mitzvos Lo Taaseh*, as a result, when God first appeared to him and gave Isaac a Mitzvah to live in the Land of Israel it was phrased as a prohibition "Do not go down to Egypt, stay in this land etc." (*Genesis* 25:2). (*Emunas Etecha, Lech Lecha*, 5759)



spiritual well being of the person, thus they parallel sinews that tie the muscles to the bones and maintain the person.^{151 152}

Death divides the soul from its physical body and the soul then enters another dimension, the World-to-Come. A soul always needs some sort of vessel to contain it. Since death rids us of a body, what will clothe our soul in the next dimension? The answer is the Mitzvos that we performed. Since each Mitzvah parallels a soul part, if we fulfill all of the Mitzvos in the next world they will clothe us fully in a Heavenly body-like cloak.¹⁵³

The Heavenly Body of a Tzadik

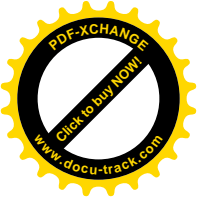
A *Tzadik* utilizes his body for the sake of his soul. He internalizes many of the lessons of holiness that the body teaches. He fulfills all the Mitzvos. As a result of his many good deeds he brings a new spirit to his person. While in this world he already has some qualities of the next world. His body is constantly being purified through the Mitzvos that he performs and it becomes a vessel like the translucent lampshade. It does not oppose the soul, rather it reflects God's glory to all. When seeing such an individual you immediately sense his soul and its message, for it shines right through the body.

¹⁵¹ *Maharal in Tiferes Yisrael*, Chapter four, Rabbi *Chaim Vital* in *Shaarey Kedusha, shaar aleph, Daas Tefilla*, pgs. 97-98, *Razey Habosem*, pg. 154.

¹⁵² The *Nefesh* part of the soul is the part that has 613 "pieces" that correspond to the various body parts.

¹⁵³ Every Jew can fulfill all the Mitzvos even though some commands only apply to priests and others were limited to the Land of Israel. A simple Israelite outside the Holy Land can study the Torah's discussion of the Mitzvos of priesthood or of the Land of Israel. Intellectual thought of these commandments and discussing their laws are partial fulfillments of these Mitzvos. Another way for each individual to fulfill all 613 obligations is through love. If a Jew binds himself with great attachment to all the Jews within the nation, the Mitzvos that the *cohanim* perform will accrue merit for him as well.

70 ó *The Body Can Complement the Soul*



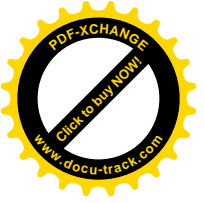
At an ideal level all of us when seeing others focus on what is essential, the soul of the other and not what is external, the body that clothes the soul. If you shake the gloved hand of a friend you would not characterize it as, "touching Jake's glove", rather you would describe the event as, "I shook Jake's hand" since the glove pales in importance to the hand it covers. Similarly the body is merely the clothing of the soul. It should pale in importance to the soul. Where there is a conflict between the will of the body (the *nefesh habahamis*) and that of the soul (the *nefesh elokis*), the needs of the soul should come first, and in truth when we think of ourselves we should immediately think of our essence, our soul and not the clothes, the body.¹⁵⁴ The

¹⁵⁴ The *gimmatriah* of the word *ahava* (love) is 13 the same as for the word *echad* (one). Total love demands singular devotion. One can only truly fully love one spouse or ideal. If so, how did the Torah demand love for fellow Jews once we were already commanded to love God our Lord? If the heart is filled with love for God where will there be room for love of fellow men? The answer is that the Torah demands love to one subject, God. If one sees souls and not bodies, then one sees the Divine in others and that Divinity is what is beloved. If one loves someone he loves that person's children who are extensions of the beloved. "You are children to God," according to the Torah, therefore, love of God demands love for the Jewish soul that emerges from Him.

The *gimmatriah* of the Biblical verse for love of fellow Jews, "*Viahavta lireacha camocha ani hashem*" equals the verse "*Viahavta es hashem elokecha*" "Love God your lord" for it is all one devotion.

The *Zohar* teaches that God, Torah, and Israel are one. In truth, God clothed himself in the thoughts and words of Torah, and Jewish souls are pieces of the Divine as well; thus Torah, Israel and God are linked in an intrinsic manner. Rabbi *Levi Yitzchok* of Berdichev (1740-1810) explained a Scriptural ambiguity with this principle.

"As God commanded Moses, he counted them (the Jews) in the Sinai desert." (*Numbers* 1:19) One can ask, it should have written, "He counted them in the Sinai desert as God commanded Moses?" Behold, God gave the Torah to the Jewish people, and the souls of Jews are the essence of the Torah, for there are 600,000 Jewish souls and 600,000 letters in the Torah scroll. In fact, the name *Yisrael*, Israel, is an acronym for *Yesh shsishim ribo otiyot latorah*, there are 600,000 letters to the Torah. Therefore, Jews are the Torah, for each Jew is a different letter in the Torah. When Moses counted the



Tzadik reaches this level; he only sees souls; all he sees is the *nefesh elokis* – the Divine within others.¹⁵⁵

Lesson seven will draw a rough sketch of the process the *Tzadik* engages in to transform his body.

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Jews he was learning Torah. This is why the verse changed its usual formulation to hint "As God commanded Moses he counted the people," like the Torah that God commanded Moses was the (experience of) counting of the nation." (*Kedushas Levi, parshas Bamidbar, s.v. Caasher*)

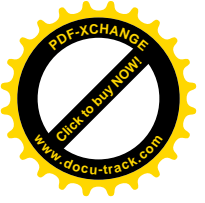
A classic Chassidic tale tells of Rabbi Moshe Leib Sassov's devotional midnight prayers. (The Tikkun Chatzos prayers were instituted by the Kabbalists to be recited at midnight in mourning for the loss of the Temple in Jerusalem.) One wintry day Rabbi Hirsch Zedotchover decided that he had to witness his teacher's devotions, so he hid himself under R. Moshe Leib's bed to observe how R. Moshe Leib recited Tikkun Chatzos.

Shortly before midnight R. Moshe Leib awoke and dressed in the clothes of a Ukrainian peasant and left his house; Rabbi Hirsch surreptitiously followed. He walked out into the forest and chopped down a tree, he then carried this tree to a small shack at the edge of the town. He entered the shack and turning to the poor Jewish widow who was shivering in the cold, he offered to sell her the extra log that he had on his back. The widow related how cold she was but she could not afford to pay for timber-wood. Rabbi Moshe Leib responded that she could pay him at some other time, "Just go to the village square and ask for Ivan the Ukrainian, they will get me and you will then be able to pay." While chopping the wood and warming the widow's home Rabbi Moshe Leib recited Tikkun Chatzos.

Rabbi Moshe Leib was a transcendent *Tzadik*. He saw Divinity everywhere. His act of connecting to a fellow Jew through charity was an act of connecting to a soul, to a piece of God. Prayer is also a process of attachment to the Divine, he linked his attachment to God through words of psalms with attachment to Divinity of helping souls, for in truth souls are a piece of the Divine as well.

¹⁵⁵ See further *Mishbetzos Zahav, Shabbos Hagadol*, 5753. The Stutchiner Rebbe explains there the spiritual level of *Moshe Rabbeinu*. *Moshe* saw right through the external body, and always saw the spiritual, Heavenly soul when he interacted with others.

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Lesson Seven

The Soul and Body of a *Tzadik*

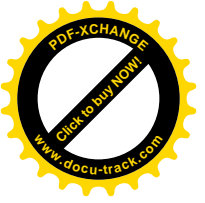
The *Tzadik* first subdues and then entirely redirects his *nefesh habahamis* and only at the highest spiritual levels turns his body into a shining light thus uniting body and soul.

The physical soul primarily seeks selfish pleasure. The *Tzadik* struggles with those desires, and develops a hatred for the hedonistic attitude. The *nefesh habahamis* is said to receive its nourishment from the *Sitra Achra* literally the "Other side." The material, mundane, and sinful are all part of the non-saintly domain. This area is called *Sitra Achra* because like two sides of a sharp divide, one can only stand in one side. It is impossible to straddle the fence and place one's feet in both areas. Holiness is one world, material pleasure is a different one. To achieve sanctity materialism must be eschewed. The *Tzadik* is on the side of the saintly, he therefore totally rejects materialism and finds it revolting.¹⁵⁶ *Tzadikim* completely rid themselves of the external, physical perspective.

*Rabbi Isaak of Kamarna*¹⁵⁷ related that his entire life, starting from age nine, when he would see a woman, he would

¹⁵⁶ The lack of selfishness and desire for physical pleasure allows the *Tzadik* to engage in seemingly questionable behavior. The Talmud in *Kesubos* (17a) relates that Rav *Acha* would carry the bride on his shoulders when dancing at weddings. When the propriety of such behavior was questioned, Rav *Acha* replied that it is permissible to carry on a man's shoulders an adult woman who is not his wife if in his mind she is like a log of wood. Rav *Acha* was teaching that he had a *Tzadik* like quality. He had risen above lust, to him a woman on his shoulders was like carrying inorganic matter. See further Rabbi *Tzadok Hacohen* of Lublin, *Yisrael Kedoshim*, pg. 12.

¹⁵⁷ Rabbi *Yitzchok Isaak Yehudah Yechiel* of Kamarna was born in 1806 and passed away in 1874. He was blessed with remarkable spiritual abilities from birth. As a child he had the ability to reveal hidden mysteries and to predict



immediately see the name of God of aleph, dalet, nun, yud, which is the Godly manifestation that gives life to the feminine.

Evidently, he had suppressed his *nefesh habahamis*, abhorred its lusts and dictates, and eventually rid himself of lustful desires and therefore constantly found Heavenly displays in all physical sights.¹⁵⁸

After the *Tzadik* truly abhors physical pleasure his *nefesh habahamis* transforms and he finds Torah and Mitzvos appealing, exciting, and delightful in a physical manner. He feels the infinite pleasure that can be accessed within the performance of Mitzvos, experience of genuine *tefillah* – prayer, and the joy of comprehending the Divine through Torah thought.¹⁵⁹

In Berditchev, the Grand Rabbi, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok's lighting of the menorah was a public event. Students of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok,¹⁶⁰ other great sages, and simple townsfolk would

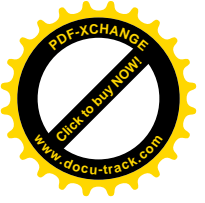
future events. His uncle, Rabbi *Zvi* of Zhiditchov, was afraid that his spiritual gifts might lead him to weakness in the realm of fear of Heaven, and as a result, at age six he lost his ability to see "from one end of the world to the other." He authored many important Chassidic works such as *Heichel Habracha*, *Derech Emunah*, *Otzar Mitzvosecha*, *Zohar Chai*, and *Megillas Setarim*.

¹⁵⁸ Perhaps the goal of seeing divinity in all is the theme of Psalm 29. Rabbi Hirsch explains the very first verse of that psalm in the following manner; " 'Havu lahashem kavod va'oz' 'The verse may also be read in the accusative form; i.e., 'Bring unto the Lord, **attribute and ascribe to Him** everything that you admire as being endowed with strength.'" See further Rabbi Hirsch's, *Commentary to the Psalms*, pgs. 204 -210.

¹⁵⁹ The *Chassam Sofer* explained that the eating of an apple dipped in honey on Rosh Hashana is a prayer that our good deeds, symbolized by an apple, should be sweet and enjoyable. We are praying to find their performance pleasurable, the way a *Tzadik* experiences Mitzvos.

¹⁶⁰ Rabbi *Levi Yitzchok* of Berditchev (c. 1740-1809) was one of the most beloved personalities of Jewish history. He was a student of the *Maggid* of Mezeritch and after the passing of the *Maggid* (19 *Kislev*, 5533; December 15, 1772) he served as the leader of Ukrainian *Chassidus*. He was a man of great love of God and love of Israel who would argue with Heaven, during his

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all gather to witness his devotions when he would kindle the Chanukah flames. One year, right when Rabbi Levi Yitzchok was to begin, the Rebbe (Grand Rabbi) seemed to needlessly delay. Eventually, Chatzkel the unsophisticated attendant of the Poritz (the Russian landowner) entered the room.

"Chatzkel, where are you coming from?" R. Levi Yitzchok called out.

"I just arrived from the home of the Poritz."

"How's the Poritz doing?" asked the Rebbe.

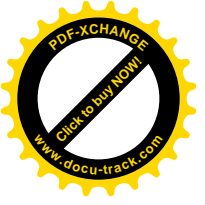
"Oh, life is good for him. He has expert chefs from Germany, Italy, and France who prepare for him the finest delicacies. And his table, what a table! The cutlery glitters and shines, and his plates are the finest china." Chatzkel enthused.

"How does the Poritz sleep?" continued the Rebbe. "Wow! The Poritz sleeps well, he has it good", gushed Chatzkel. "Rebbe, you sleep on a pile of straw. The Poritz has a mattress like the czar and a beautiful bed, with beautiful sheets, warm blankets, and soft pillows. And what a room! The floor is covered with antique Persian rugs, the walls are adorned with antique art and tapestries, and the ceiling supports the most exquisite chandeliers. Rebbe, the Poritz has it good!"

Finally, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok asked "Does the Poritz light Chanukah candles?" "Of course not," replied Chatzkel with a laugh.

Rabbi Levi Yitzchok grew animated and shouted with fervor, "The Poritz stuffs himself with food, sleeps with feathers instead of hay? That is the good life? Without Chanukah candles!? We have it good! We have the joy of God's Menorah!"

prayers, advocating blessings for all members of Israel. His work *Kedushas Levi* is one of the classics of Chassidic literature.



With that, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok began to shout with delight the words of the blessings for lighting the Menorah.

Reb Levi Yitzchok's nefesh habahamis was transformed. For him pleasure from Mitzvah observance dwarfed the physical comforts of the Poritz.

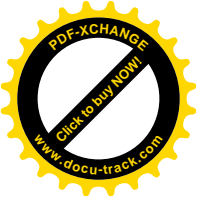
Rav Aharon Karliner's Poritz loved sleigh riding. One summer he brought thousands of bags of sugar (a rare commodity) to simulate snow and he rode in his sled on the mounds of the confection. A Chasid once wistfully told the Rebbe about the pleasure the Poritz must experience when riding a sled in the heat of August. The Rebbe responded, "That pleasure is not nearly as powerful as the enjoyment I feel when I recite on Shabbos the prayer of "Nishmas Kol Chai Tivarech Es Shimcha Hashem Elokeinu" ("The souls of every living creature will bless your name God our Lord.")

According to the Talmud, holidays are times when half of one's day should be spent for oneself, engaged in physical pleasure, *chetzyo lachem*. The other half of the day should be dedicated to God and His service, *chetzyo lahashem*.

*When Reb Uri of Strelisk¹⁶¹ would complete his holiday prayers he would tell his community, "We have just completed, chetzyo lachem (the physical half of the day). Now that we are going to eat our holiday meal we will fulfill the chetzyo lahashem (the half of the day that must be given to God)."*¹⁶²

¹⁶¹ *Reb Uri* was born in 1757 and passed away in 1826. He was a student of Rabbi *Shlomo* of Karlin. He was a renowned *Tzadik* who would pray with such passion and displays of fervent feeling that he was called the *saraph*, literally, "The fiery angel." He had a great impact upon Rabbi *Sholom* of Belz.

¹⁶² *Imros Tzadikim*, Klausenberg, pg. 24 story # 1



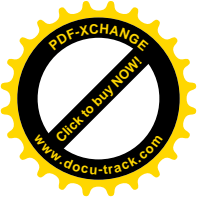
R. Uri's body had been transformed, after all the years of battling his urges, he experienced prayer as a sensory pleasure. To him, eating was difficult and was an obligation performed solely because Jewish law demands food ingestion on the holiday. That is why in his holiday experience the prayers were the physical enjoyment while eating was the spiritual duty.¹⁶³

Some *Tzadikim* reach an exalted state. They are personifications of an *Atzilus* type existence. *Atzilus* is a Heavenly universe whose name is derived from the word *Etzel* meaning next to. In this world light and vessel are one. In this universe body and soul are a total unity,¹⁶⁴ with oneness that transcends verbal description. A *Tzadik* who is on the level of an *Atzilus*-type manifestation is like a head to the body, and leads his generation. *Atzilus* is integral for life of the spiritual worlds that are lower than it. Just as the head provides life to the body and if it's attachment is severed the body dies, this type of *Tzadik* is the life for the rest of the universe, and is *Atzilus*-like.

¹⁶³Rav Wolfson added that R. *Moshe Leib* of Sassov was also a *Tzadik* who experienced the spiritual as physically pleasing.

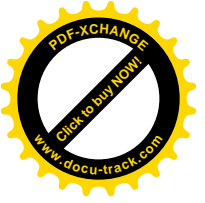
R. Moshe Leib was renowned for his dedication to redeeming Jewish prisoners. He would also frequently fast and pray for success in his dangerous exploits. One day, after a long and exhausting fast, he went to a Russian nobleman who was holding a Jew captive. When he entered the room the nobleman's lunch was brought in as well. Weakened with hunger, Rabbi Moshe Leib swooned at the aroma of the nobleman's food. He felt an overwhelming desire to request a taste of the dish. Intellectually, however, he knew that the food was not kosher. To overcome his hunger he thought of Shabbos. His spiritual feelings were so potent that considering Shabbos and its holy food brought him so much pleasure that his body no longer hungered for the gentile's meal. (Rav Wolfson)

¹⁶⁴ "In the book *Orach Latzadik*, R. Elazar the son of R. *Elimelech* of Lizensk related; 'My father said several times, "I wish people would have souls as pure as my body.'" This is something remarkable, consider how high a human can reach! We have no sense of how holy **the body** of R. *Elimelech* was." (*Imros Tzadikim*, Klausenberg, pgs. 26-27)



To better understand the nature of the universe of *Atzilus*, we must study all five of the spiritual universes. Understanding the parts of the Godly soul within man will facilitate comprehension of the heavenly universes that are the soul of the physical world. Lesson eight will explain the nature of the human soul's components.

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Lesson Eight

The Five Parts of the Soul

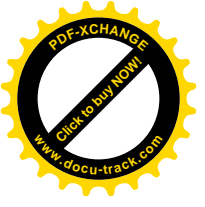
The human soul was created in a unique manner. All other creations were formed through command, God declared and the item appeared. For example, of the sky Scripture states, "*Bidvar Hashem shamayim naasu*" "With the word(s) of God Heavens were created".¹⁶⁵ The soul was not commanded to emerge rather God blew man's soul into him.¹⁶⁶

God does not recite words. What is meant by the image of God declaring the existence of a physical dimension? As we learnt in lesson five, breath is the life of a person. Human speech

¹⁶⁵ *Psalms 33:6*

The Hebrew language and the letters of the alphabet have a unique holiness since the world was created through God's speaking Hebrew. For instance, God said "*shamayim*" and out of the letters "*shin, mem, yud, mem*" the heavens eventually emerged. The Hebrew letters are the spiritual root of the world. A great *Tzadik* only sees these letters. When he sees the skies he sees the Hebrew word *shamayim* since it is the spiritual source of the physical heavens. Perhaps King David referred to this perception when he said in Psalm 29 "*Kol hashem Bakoach, Kol Hashem Behadar etc.*" "The sound of the Almighty is within strength, the sound of the Divine is within glory etc." David was a *Tzadik* and he was describing his perception of reality. All strength comes from the Almighty, God gives energy to the powerful, in truth they are impotent and only God's force is significant. David also wrote "*Shivisi Hashem Linedi tamid*" "I have placed the Almighty before me always". David only saw the Divine essence, this Divine essence is letter combinations of the holy language. The combinations spell out Divine names, that is why he proclaimed that he constantly had the Divine before his eyes, for he constantly perceived the Divine source. See further the *Commentary of Rabbi S.R. Hirsch* to Chapter 29 of the *Psalms, Bereishis Rabbah* (18:4) and R. *Tzadok Hacohen* in *Sichas Malachey Hashareis* pg. 44.

¹⁶⁶ From scripture's account it is clear that man's body was formed from the earth in a way that resembled the rest of creation, apparently it was formed through a command.



limits breath, modulating it with the mouth and limiting it to particular sounds. Speech is a process in which the essence of man is clothed and limited. God's creation resembles human speech, the created world is a cover for God, His Essence was limited many myriad of times until He was clothed within the world. The image for the creation of the soul is one of direct breath, for the soul contrasted to the created world is like blowing versus speaking. The human soul, when compared to the rest of the created world, is "pure", essential, and unclothed Divinity.¹⁶⁷ An even deeper truth reveals that the image of a soul emerging out of blowing is a lesson about the parts of the soul, they resemble the different stages of breath a glassblower employs when blowing glass.¹⁶⁸ With glass once the vessel is shaped the other steps in the process are lost, but in the Heavenly realm every stage of the formation leaves eternal results.¹⁶⁹

Firstly, the glassblower wishes to create a vessel. Then he decides what the vessel will look like and prepares for the process by filling his lungs with sufficient air. The glassblower then pushes the air through his lungs to his mouth and releases the breath out of his lips. The breath turns into a mini wind. It enters the heated glass and changes its form. As the wind settles the glass's shape is solidified.

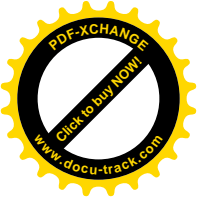
God is the glassblower, my soul is His breath and my body and personality comprise the glass vessel.

There are five parts to the soul and they resemble the five stages of glass production.

¹⁶⁷ I heard it from the Stutchiner Rebbe on tape 1 of his classes on *Tanya*. This principle should lead us to an enormous respect for every soul, for the soul is pure Godliness. Furthermore, it should teach us that our souls seek absolute and total attachment to the Divine, for each soul is a piece of absolute infinity.

¹⁶⁸ *Innerspace* pgs. 17-20

¹⁶⁹ Rabbi *Tzadok Hacohen* of Lublin Chapter Three of *Sichas Malachey Hashareis*.



The first part, or the lowest level, is *Nefesh* corresponding to the craftsman's breath that settled within and fully shaped the vessel. *Nefesh* is a derivative of the term *nafash* meaning to rest.¹⁷⁰ *Nefesh* is the "resting soul." This is God's "breath" once it has reached its destination within man.

Nefesh can be felt when a person is fully an empty vessel. It can be felt through the quietistic experience. Silence the external static that we are constantly processing; relax, and humble yourself. Open your heart as an empty vessel to be animated with God's light and you might feel a bit of *Nefesh*...

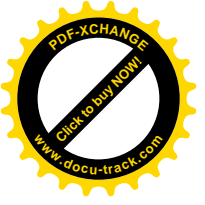
Nefesh is the part of the soul that is most directly connected with the body and physical existence.¹⁷¹ One merits receiving the holy form of *Nefesh* soon after birth. A Jewish boy will receive his *Nefesh* with his circumcision and a girl when her father names her in the synagogue. The next stage of the soul, *Ruach*, is received with adulthood. When a boy or girl, who are righteous, celebrate their bar or bat Mitzvah they receive their *Ruach*.

The Hebrew word *ruach* conjures a picture of a forceful wind. In the glass making analogy, before the breath settled in the vessel, it was a powerful force that gave form to molten glass. Forceful and emotionally stirring spirituality is God's "wind", the *Ruach* part of the soul.

Imagine a room filled with dancing Chassidim. They are singing and when they reach the climax of the song, all are screaming, "*Ki ata hu melech malchey hamlachim malchuscha netzach*" "That you God are the King above all kings; Your rule is eternal." Their eyes are closed and their bodies bob up and down throbbing with devotion. They pull you into their circle and

¹⁷⁰ *Innerspace* pg. 16

¹⁷¹ *Innerspace* pg.18, *Daas Tefilla* pg. 271, *Nefesh Hachayim* 1:14. The GR"A in his commentary on *Proverbs* 22:5 writes that the *Nefesh* is the lowest level of Godliness within man and is the "partner of the body."



you join their dance. You lose yourself in a passionate swirl. You feel that God is everything and your deepest desire is to be loyal and close to Him. Those feelings are an expression of *Ruach*.

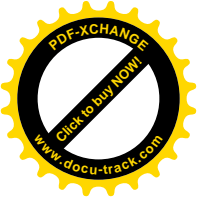
A level higher than the wind is the breath at the lips of the glassblower. God's breath at His Lips is the *Neshama*. This level of soul is felt in the experience of pure thought. Most of our thoughts are tainted, they are the result of physical biases and emotional inclinations; pure, abstract, moral thought is an experience of Godly intimacy. The pleasure of comprehending and fully grasping the pure truth of Torah is a bit of *Neshama*. *Neshama* is the highest part of the soul most of us will ever fully internalize, as a result, the soul as a whole is called *Neshama*.¹⁷² It enters a righteous, scholarly, married person at age twenty. If one is not righteous enough to internalize the holiness of the *Neshama*, it will hover above man, serving as a *Makif*—an encompassing light, not a *pnimi*—an inner light.

Above *Neshama* are two levels of soul that are rarely fully internalized by humans, *Chaya* and *Yechida*. *Chaya* is the breath of the glassblower before it reaches the mouth, it is the stage when he has first determined the mental picture of the vessel he will create and has filled his lungs with sufficient breath for the creation of the vessel. *Yechida* is the first possible stage of glass making, the will and desire to produce a vessel, it is the level of soul that parallels God's decision to create a being. *Yechida* is God's will before He has even conceived of the form of man, it represents God's desire.

The Body and the Parts of the Soul

The different parts of the soul are concentrated in distinct body organs. *Nefesh* is in the blood. The Torah characterizes

¹⁷² In lesson five the soul, as a whole, was called the *Nefesh Elokis*. It is due to the *Neshama* part of the soul that I wrote the Godly soul is primarily located in the mind. This lesson provides a more detailed and precise picture of the soul and its components.



blood as *Nefesh* when it prohibits the ingestion of blood, “*Ki hadam hu hanefesh*”, “for the blood is the ***Nefesh***.”¹⁷³ The blood of a person is his source of organic life. If blood stops flowing to a limb in the body, the limb will atrophy and waste away. The body part that has the most blood is the liver and *Nefesh* is primarily concentrated in the liver¹⁷⁴ and the left ventricle of the heart. The limbs of the body are the tools for all human action, thus bodily action, *Maaseh*, of Mitzvos, such as stretching your hand to give charity, or walking to hear a Torah lecture, is an expression of the holy form of *Nefesh*. *Nefesh* is attached to the body, and we learnt in lesson five that the body seeks evil behavior. Hence it is said that *Nefesh* has much evil potential.

According to the *Midrash*,¹⁷⁵ *Ruach* is the part of the soul that “rises and descends.” This soul part rises to the mind and then descends to the body, connecting our thought with our deeds. What is the intermediary between the mind and the limbs? Feelings. All emotions stem from *Ruach*. It is also related to *dibbur*, speech,¹⁷⁶ a wind that connects the mind’s thoughts to the physical mouth.¹⁷⁷ Speech also connects people to each other.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷³ *Deuteronomy* 12:23

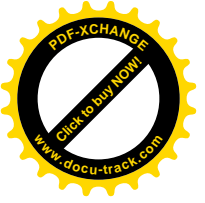
¹⁷⁴ *Daas Tefilla* pg. 271 in the name of the *Nefesh Hachayim*.

¹⁷⁵ *Bereishis Rabbah* 14:9 states “She (the soul) has five names; *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, *Neshama*, *Chaya*, *Yechida*. *Nefesh* is the blood as is written “For the blood is the *Nefesh*.” *Ruach* for it rises and descends as is written “Who knows the *Ruach* of men that rises on high.” (*Kohelet* 3) *Neshama* is the intellect and in the Baraita it is taught the intellect is good. *Chaya* for all the limbs die and she lives on in the body. *Yechida* for all the limbs have doubles while she is uniquely singular.”

¹⁷⁶ *Targum Onkelos*, one of the oldest commentaries to the Torah, translates *Nefesh Chaya*, living soul, as *Ruach Mimalalah*, a *Ruach* that speaks, for *Ruach* is manifest in speech.

¹⁷⁷ *Daas Tefillah* 273 – 278, *Nefesh Hachayim Shaar* 1 Chapter 15, Rabbi Dr. Akiva Tatz expressed this thought in the following paragraph:

“Speech is the world of connection. Understood simply, speech connects the speaker and the listener. A relationship can develop, can flourish, because deep communication is possible by means of speech. In the Torah



Speech primarily strengthens the emotions that you are feeling. Why do words have such an impact on the heart? Because emotions and speech are expressions of *Ruach* while an act is a manifestation of *Nefesh*.¹⁷⁹ Our emotions usually dictate how we act, thus, *Ruach* is usually the deciding part of the human personality. It is concentrated in the heart – the source of all emotions.¹⁸⁰ Feelings of purity, such as fear of violating Divine mandates, or love for fellow Jews, are expressions of a holy form of *Ruach*.

Neshama is located primarily in the mind.¹⁸¹ The *Neshama* is the most Godly of the soul parts. It is pure intellect. One feels God's "breath", with *Machshava*, pure thoughts, such as when you fully understand an abstract, correct, and moral principle.

Chaya and *Yechida* are called *Makifin*, enveloping lights. These are levels of holiness that are hardly attainable for most mortals. That is why they surround man and do not enter man.

"speaking" is a euphemism for intimacy ("They saw her speaking with one... ") this is not usage borrowed from a distance; the parallel is intrinsic.

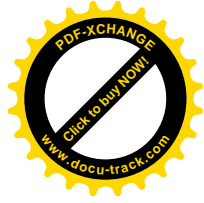
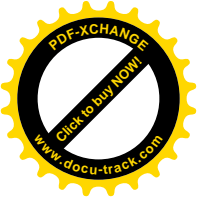
At a deeper level, speech represents the connection between higher and lower worlds. Speech is the mechanism by which an abstract idea which exists only in the higher dimension of thought can be brought down into the material world: when I speak, I transform ideas into the physical medium of sound, which is tangible enough for you to hear with the physical tools of hearing." *Worldmask*, pgs. 128-129.

¹⁷⁸ See further *Derech Hamelech* on *parshas Vayetze* 5690. The Piasetzne Rebbe (1889-1943, authored *Derech Hamelech*, *Chovas Hatalmidim*, *Aish Kodesh* and other classics, and led his Chassidim valiantly through the difficult years of World War 2 in the Warsaw ghetto) points out that the Talmudic term for a form of marriage, the ultimate connection between two individuals, is *Maamar*. *Maamar* also means a statement. The Rabbis chose this term for marriage to teach that heartfelt talking connects people.

¹⁷⁹ Heard from the Stutchiner Rebbe.

¹⁸⁰ *Daas Tefilla* pg. 273

¹⁸¹ *Daas Tefilla* pg. 272



They form a protecting shield and occasionally send to the individual flashes of inspiration. Since these levels of soul are outside man's essential personality they are not internalized within a physical body part.¹⁸²

A Lesson from the Body

The most perfect hierarchy within man is one in which the *Neshama* rules the *Ruach* and *Nefesh*. Think clear and abstract thought, then allow untainted logic to inspire emotions and finally let those pure feelings control the body and guide its lusts. In symbolic terms the ideal arrangement is mind then heart and then liver. God teaches this lesson by the very makeup of a human being. God placed mind (which holds the *Neshama*) in the skull, the highest point of the body, the heart (the place of *Ruach*) and liver (the seat of the *Nefesh*) are beneath the head, thus indicating that the head should rule the others.

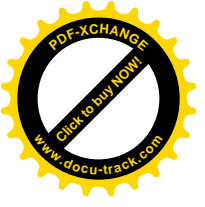
The Hebrew terms for mind, heart, and liver are *moach* (mind), *lev* (heart) and *kaved* (liver). An acronym of the terms is *Melech* – literally king.¹⁸³ When man lives a life of mind first and then heart and liver, he is king over his lower self.¹⁸⁴ Frequently,

¹⁸² They are symbolized by body parts and not internalized within body parts. The skull, which stands above the mind, symbolizes these soul parts, for these soul parts are above logic and rational intelligence.

¹⁸³ Words in the Hebrew language have many layers of meaning. In addition to the literal meaning of the words, the letters of a word might refer to a complete sentence. This occurs when each letter in the word represents the opening letter of a word in a phrase thus a three letter word is in truth an acronym for a three word phrase. This process is called *Roshey Teivos* – beginning of words.

¹⁸⁴ A king can rule others if he first asserts total dominion over his lower self. This unity between king over others and self control was clearly expressed by Rabbi Yehuda Halevi in his *Kuzari*, which is a record of a discussion between a gentile king and a Jewish scholar.

“Al Khazari: Give me a description of the doings of one of your pious men at the present time.



we reverse the order. Our lusts lead. For example, we desire someone else's money, or we are lazy and seek to avoid performing a moral duty, we then arouse our heart to love that path and we employ our mind to rationalize and justify misbehavior, saying, "He did not need that money anyway, I will use it for better purposes than he," or "The duty will be performed by someone else, I can safely ignore it." In these instances our livers were really first, followed by the heart and then the mind. The first letters of *Kaved*, *Lev*, *Moach*, (the reversed order) spell *Kalem*, which means embarrassment, shame, and death. A life in which lusts rule inevitably ends with the unholy trinity of embarrassment, shame, and death.¹⁸⁵

Man does not deserve a life of embarrassment. Man deserves great honor. Man carries the image of God and as a result deserves regard. Lesson nine demonstrates how the five parts of the soul are the image of God that man contains.

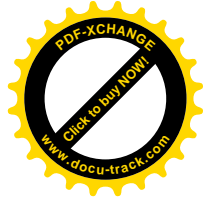
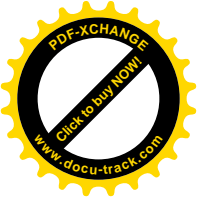
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The Rabbi: A pious man is, so to speak, the ruler of his country, who gives to its inhabitants provisions and all they need. He is so just that he wrongs no one, nor does he grant anyone more than his due. Then, when he requires them, he finds them obedient to His call. He orders they execute; He forbids, they abstain.

Al Khazari: I asked you about a pious man, not a prince.

The Rabbi: The pious man is nothing but a prince who is obeyed by his senses, and by his mental as well as his physical faculties, which he governs corporeally, as it is written: "He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city (*Proverbs 16:32*) (*Kuzari* part 3)"

¹⁸⁵ *Daas Tefilla* pg. 273



Lesson Nine

The Image of God

Man is the highlight of creation and deserves honor and respect for he carries the image of God.¹⁸⁶ What is the meaning of *Tzelem Elokim*, the image of God? If I look at my reflection in a mirror am I to think for a moment that I have seen God?! Judaism abhors any attempt to ascribe to God any physical characteristics, as Maimonides defined it and it is one of the articles of faith that Jews recite on a daily basis,

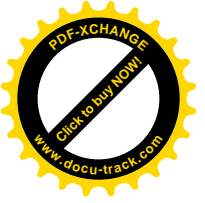
I believe with complete faith that the Creator, Blessed is His Name, is not physical and is not affected by physical phenomena, and that there is no comparison whatsoever to Him.

God is totally incorporeal, so in what way is man in His image?

The mystics explain that each Hebrew name of God denotes a different way in which man perceives the Omnipotent. Sometimes, I feel the Almighty's boundless love, at other times I witness His awesome force and power, at still other points I might see His hand in nature. Each of the different attributes of God that man acknowledges is characterized with a unique name. The name *Y-H-V-H*¹⁸⁷ reflects our feeling His love, *Ado-n-y* is

¹⁸⁶ The honor due man as the representative of God who carries His image is a basic theme in Chassidic thought. Supposedly, this was the last teaching of the *Baal Shem Tov*. On his deathbed his final statement was, "An artist invests himself and expresses his deepest self in his work. Want to understand an artist? Look at his handiwork." The point of the lesson was that to appreciate God and to love God it is necessary to appreciate and love man. Man is God's greatest masterpiece, study the sculpture and appreciate it in order to appreciate the Divine. See further *Maasey Hashem* vol. 1 pg. 55.

¹⁸⁷ In deference to the saintliness of the names I have not spelled them out fully.



the name for the fact that He is the master of all, and *Sha-d/k-y* reflects His power and dominion, His setting limits for the world.

Man was formed in the image of *Elokim*. This name represents the awareness that God is "*Baal Hakochos kulam ubaal hayecholes*,"¹⁸⁸ "Master of all powers and He has total authority." Man in the image of *Elokim* means that man too, in a certain sense, is the master over all the forces of creation and is endowed with unbridled power.

Tzelem Elokim teaches the cosmic effect of human behavior. Our deeds affect the entire world and the entirety of creation follows man's lead.

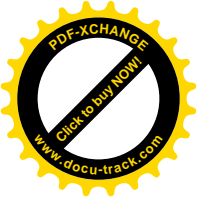
An example of this principle is the story of the great flood.

In *parshas Noach* the Torah tells of a time when all creatures were corrupted. Even animals and the inanimate earth violated nature's law. Lions copulated with bears and a man would plant peach seeds only to reap apples. As a result of the pervasive corruption God sent a deluge of water that destroyed almost all of humanity, the animals, plants, and several feet worth of topsoil. Only man has freedom of choice, animals, plants, and the earth do not have the ability to decide between good and evil, so how did all of creation become corrupt? The answer is that man controls the rest of creation.¹⁸⁹ When man performs evil, the spirit of misconduct is increased throughout the world. Animals and the earth become infected too, and they start to perform in ways that are at variance with their law.

Mankind at the time of the flood was thoroughly rotten. They consistently chose evil. All the humans were sinners who polluted themselves and they caused the rest of creation to be

¹⁸⁸ *Tur, Orach Chayim*, Chapter five. See also *Nefesh Hachayim, Shaar Aleph*, Chapter two.

¹⁸⁹ See further *Beis Halevy* on *parshas Noach*.



polluted as well. Noah was righteous and his influence allowed for a minute sample of animal and plant life that maintained fidelity to its laws.

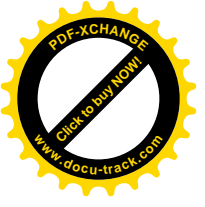
Currently we confront a physical world that suffers from pollution, ozone depletion, and global warming. The earth's illnesses do not result merely from industrialization and its excesses. Spiritually there is an obvious cause for our planet's troubles; human society is an increasingly corrupt group. Presidents lie, corporate titans shamelessly deceive, and the various forms of media pull readers and viewers to the lowest of lowly urges. Innocent faith, old-fashioned honesty, decency, and morality have become rare commodities. The rest of creation reflects our misdeeds.

How does this cosmic power work? Why do the actions of man have such effects?

The answer is that man is a miniaturization of the entire spiritual realm. Man's soul parallels God's spiritual universes that form the foundation for this physical world.¹⁹⁰

Imagine two harps tuned to the same pitch placed right next to each other. Play note A on one harp, its string will vibrate and produce a loud sound. Even though you have not touched the second harp, note A in the other harp will also vibrate softly. Man and the universe are parallel harps; when we cause our strings to vibrate, parallel strings in the supernal

¹⁹⁰ The technical term for this concept is *Olam Kattan*, man is a miniature of the entire world. See further *Sichas Malachey Hashareis* Chapter three, and the Overview of Artscroll's *Tehillim* by Rabbi A.C. Feuer. When God created man, He said "Let us make man." Nachmonides explains the plural of "Let us" to mean that God invited all of creation to contribute to the creation of man, man has within him microcosmic traces of each created being. When a man displays strength and power that is the aspect of the lion within man, sometimes man is timid and fearful, that is when the nature of the lamb expresses itself in man. When people idle, doing nothing, it is a display of the plant element within man.



realms vibrate ever so softly, broadcasting the same notes throughout the world.¹⁹¹

The Spiritual Dimension as Supernal Universes

A great Rabbi once walked with his student along a grassy path. While they were talking, the student carelessly picked a flower from the ground and started to scatter its petals. The Rabbi stopped walking and said to his student, "In the Midrash¹⁹² it is taught that every blade of grass has an angel that stands behind it hitting the grass saying, 'Grow.' When you picked the flower from the earth, you caused this flower's angel to die. Do you have a good reason for destroying the life of a celestial light?"

Our physical world is controlled by a spiritual world. Each blade of grass, for instance, has a spiritual channel, an angel that provides for its life. Jewish mysticism details the makeup of this spiritual dimension. In a broad sweep this spiritual dimension is comprised of five spiritual universes.

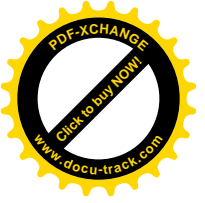
Why is there a need for a spiritual dimension? Can't God direct us personally without any intermediates? The answer is

¹⁹¹ The imagery of two parallel harps is utilized by Rav Wolfson to explain a Talmudic story. The Talmud in *Berachos* 3b relates:

There was a harp hanging above the bed of David. When midnight would hit, a northern wind would blow. The harp would then play. David would awake and rise to study Torah until the morning.

This story sounds too fantastic to be true. Can a wind play tunes on a harp? The story is not to be understood in a literal manner rather the Talmud is utilizing allegorical imagery. The harp above the bed is really David's heart, and the northern wind is the song of the souls of *Tzadikim* who reside in the northern part of the Garden of Eden. The righteous begin to sing at midnight. David's heart was perfectly attuned to the souls in *Gan Eden*, when they started to sing, like a parallel harp, his heart started to vibrate in harmony, and he then awoke and studied Torah.

¹⁹² *Bereishis Rabba* 10



that man's feeble physical and spiritual nature would be overwhelmed by the presence of God.¹⁹³

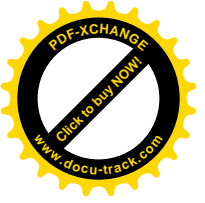
God's essence is so overpowering that it does not allow for anything to exist independently before It. The spiritual universes are the steps in which God has limited His essence so that an independent existence can emerge. The key terms in understanding these steps are *Tzimtzum*, constriction, and *Or Ain Sof*, Light With No End.

Consider light. Light usually enables sight, yet too much light can blind.¹⁹⁴ Similarly, God is called Infinite Light (*Or Ain Sof*), with no end and no beginning. He is the ultimate Reality. His life and vitality is so powerful, it overwhelms all other existing items that face Him directly. To allow for creation God acted with *Tzimtzum*, He pulled in His light. He then emanated from Himself a light that was less bright than His essence. Even this light was too much for existence, so out of this light He caused another further limited light to emerge, and then another and another. At the last stage of limited light a physical universe emerged out of the spiritual lights. *Olam* is a universe, and the words *heelam* and *neelam*, unknown and hidden, share the same Hebrew root. A universe is a "hiding of the Infinite", a diminution of Divine light. The process of limiting the light and turning the spiritual into a progressively more physical creation is called *Seder Hishtalshlus* – the order of development.

Hishtalshlus shares a root with the word *shalsheles*, a chain. Creation is a chain for two reasons. Firstly, in a chain each ring leads to another and creation is a process of cause and

¹⁹³ When the Torah was given at Mt. Sinai Jews experienced a direct revelation of Godliness. The experience was so overwhelming that their souls left their bodies and all of Jewry had to undergo a revival of the dead. Finite man cannot directly experience the breath of the Infinite.

¹⁹⁴ The same is true with noise. A whisper can hardly be heard, only if one raises the volume of speech is it audible. However, if one shouts at the top of his lungs, the heightened noise renders the words inaccessible.



effect, greater lights producing lesser lights, out of which are formed even smaller forces.¹⁹⁵ Secondly, in a chain, the rings interlock, the end of the first ring's airspace has within it the beginning of the second ring and in the spiritual dimension each level is interwoven with the next level. For instance, the lowest level of the universe of *Atzilus* (the first universe), is also the highest level in the universe of *Beriah* (the second universe).

The different stages of the *Seder Hishtalshlus* are the universes that are the soul parts of the physical universe.

The first supernal universe is so high that it too is a light that is almost infinite. This universe is hardly spoken about in Chassidic literature¹⁹⁶ and is called *Adam Kadmon*, Initial Man, in Kabbalah, it parallels the human soul part of *Yechida*.

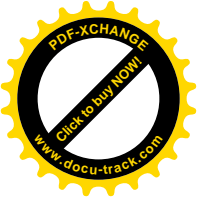
The second universe is *Atzilus*. *Atzilus* means next to, noble, and emanated or given off. This world is "next to" God, it is the first light that God gave off. An *Atzil* is a nobleman,¹⁹⁷ he has power and importance because of his proximity to the king. Similarly, this universe is next to the King of Kings and that is where its importance stems from.

Prayer is a soulful sojourn through the universes. *Atzilus* is represented by the extremely righteous in their *Shemoneh*

¹⁹⁵ "The *Nefesh Hachaim* and many other sources tell us that there are many interlocking levels to the Creation. In an infinitely stretching chain beginning at the very Source of existence, many worlds are connected in sequence. Each of these higher worlds infuses the level below it with existence and energy; each is "male" with regard to the world below it which is relatively speaking, "female", and together they "bring out" yet another level below them. This process continues with myriad complexity until finally our finite world results." (*Living Inspired* pg. 71) This process is called the *Seder Hishtalshlus*.

¹⁹⁶ The *Ari Hakadosh* wrote that humans should not try to meditate and think about this world. (*Sichas Malachey Hashareis* Chapter 3)

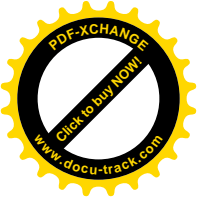
¹⁹⁷ See further *Exodus 24:11* " *Vel atziley bney yisrael* " " And to the noblemen of the Children of Israel etc."



Esreh, – silent devotion – part of prayers. For the silent devotion one takes three steps forward to enter into a new dimension in which the prayers are recited silently. At this point of the service the petitioner is standing next to God and that is why all can talk with Him in the hushed tones of an intimate whisper. Furthermore, according to *Halachah* ideally this prayer should lead to leaving the physical self and getting lost in rapture of the Divine. During the silent prayer the *Tzadik* achieves *Dveykus*, absolute cleaving. *Dveykus* means becoming one with God. Oneness cannot be described nor defined it can only be understood through the experience of a sensitive heart. Loss of all bodily sensation and absolute union with the Infinite is a human sensation that is *Atzilus*-like, it is a sense of a wholly new dimension. The sense of absolute oneness with the Divine is an out of body experience that emerges from *Atzilus*, the universe that is above our world and serves as a *makif* an enveloping light to our physical dimension.

Atzilus is all good and it produces the *Chaya* part of the human soul. *Chaya* is the source of *dveykus*, devotional oneness, and what *Chaya* is in the human is what *Atzilus* is to the cosmos.

Out of *Atzilus* a further diminished light emerged, the world of *Beriah*, creation. *Atzilus* experientially is felt as a loss of self-hood, it is called *Ayin*, a sense of nothingness. *Beriah* emerged out of it, thus *Beriah* is a manifestation of and the place of *Yesh meayin*, something coming out of nothing. In this world there is a possibility of evil although good is the majority. This world parallels the section of prayers that speak of accepting God's yoke, the recital of *Shma* and its blessings. This world is also termed "*Olam Hakisey*" "the universe of God's throne." Symbolically the Almighty "sits" there, that is why there is a widespread Jewish custom to sit during the prayers of *Shma*. *Beriah* produced and parallels the *Neshama* part of the soul. The *Neshama* is located in the mind and expressed through thought, and in the world of *Beriah* thoughts are tangible and real. The



depths of *Neshama* can be felt when all of one's thoughts are holy, centering on Torah knowledge and Mitzvah fulfillment.

Beriah let out a lesser light that became the world of *Yetzirah*. *Yetzirah* implies *yesh miyesh*, something from something, to form an item out of a primordial matter. In *Yetzirah* evil has even more presence and is equal to the amount of good. This world is represented by the *Psukey Dzimrah* – verses of praise – part of the morning prayers. *Zimrah* also means to prune, the verses of praise are pruning shears, they cut away the forces of evil and allow man's prayers to enter before God.¹⁹⁸ This universe let off the *Ruach* part of the soul that it parallels.¹⁹⁹ *Yetzirah* is the world of feeling and man's emotions of holiness reach this world. The ultimate level of *Ruach* is felt when one's heart is filled exclusively with the best desires, such as swirls of love for Judaism, or awe and fear of Heaven. Feelings are as tangible in the world of *Yetzirah* as objects are in our universe.

Finally, there is the universe of *Asiyah* where the majority is evil, and it parallels the *Nefesh* part of the soul, and the prayers of *Korbanos* – the sacrificial order that purified and provided the spiritual merit for this world.²⁰⁰ Good deeds performed on this earth reach the world of *Asiyah*.

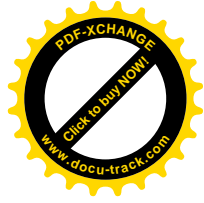
After the spiritual universes, stands the physical universe itself, which is joined to the world of *Asiyah*.

Man in Hebrew is called *adam*, a word that shares a root with the word *adameh*, literally, "I will resemble." What is a

¹⁹⁸ See further *A call to the Infinite*, pg. 67, quoted from Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla

¹⁹⁹ In *Yetzirah* the forces for good and evil are equals. This is why the heart, which contains *Ruach*, has two ventricles. The left ventricle contains an advocate for sinful acts and the right ventricle contains a spiritual force that attracts man to *Mitzvos*.

²⁰⁰ See further *A call to the Infinite*, pgs. 74-75, quoted from *Derech Hashem*, 4:6 13-14



man? A being who resembles the Heavenly domain. Since man's soul parts constitute a small harp to the great harp of the physical universe's "soul-parts" his actions cause similar results in those realms. Man is the soul of the universe.²⁰¹

The secrets of creation are hinted in the letters of the Hebrew language. Lesson ten will show how the spiritual universes and the parts of the human soul are hinted in the four letters of God's name *Y-H-V-H*.

ggggggg

²⁰¹ See further *Sichas Malachy Hashareis* Chapter three. Rabbi *Tzadok* explains that the life-forms on our planet are roughly divided into four categories; *domeim*, inanimate materials such as air and water, *tzomeach*, growing items such as grass and trees, *chay*, living beings like animals, fowl, and insects, and *medaber*, speaking creatures, namely, humans. The world of *Asiyah* and the soul part *Nefesh* are expressed through righteous deed. If you put a coin into the hand of a poor person without any care for his welfare nor a thought about why it is correct to give charity, then it is exclusively in the realm of *Asiyah*. *Domeim* bears a trace of *Asiyah*. An act without feeling or thinking is like an inanimate item, the doer was a block of wood during its performance, no better than a mechanical machine. The world of *Yetzirah* is the source for *Ruach* and feelings and resembles *tzomeach*. Most of what I feel is internal, only a small fraction of my love or hate can be seen by others. I cannot see the tree moving up when it grows, however I do see a small fraction of the growth process, and by regular monitoring of a plant I can stay abreast of its development. Animals have some intelligence, thus *chay* corresponds to *Beriyah* and *Neshama*, the sources of thoughts. *Chaya* and *Atzilus* is total connection to God, thus corresponding to *medaber*, the human who through speech can experience union with Infinity.