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Tishrei Lessons

The High Holidays & More

Torah/Kabbalah
Musar/Halakha
Contemplations & Common Sense

A compendium of essays written by

R. Ariel Bar Tzadok

**Tishrei Lessons - The High Holidays & More
Torah/Kabbalah/Musar/Halakha - Contemplations & Common Sense**

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The KosherTorah School

Forms divide, essence unites.

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Religious lessons enlighten us about the collective psychology of all humanity.

Religion is thus more about man than it is about God, and that is the way God wants it to be

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Returning to G-d

Returning is no mere simple change.

Returning means to stop going the way you are now, turning around and going the other way.

If the way you are going now was the right way, then you would already be getting close.

You would not need to return, but only confirm your commitment to stay on your path.

Many of us walk a path with commitment, yet we very rarely ask ourselves if indeed it is the right path.

It is easy to proclaim oneself religious, to look religious and to act religious, yet is this all there is to religion, to look like it and to act like it?

Real religion is not what one does, it is what one is. Herein lies a great secret of the Masters.

The Holy One, blessed be He, Torah and Israel are all one. This means that one is in the others and the others are in the one.

Our Masters taught us that in the beginning the Holy One gazed into the Torah and created the world.

This means that all of existence existed in the Torah; therefore by deduction we must conclude that Torah exists in everything in existence.

The human soul is attached to Torah. Torah exists in all things. Therefore the human soul can recognize its source in Torah everywhere and in everything. This is the meaning of the cry of the angels who proclaimed, "the whole earth is full of His glory."

To be religious means one must bond with Torah and mitzvot. Yet, one cannot just do this on the surface and expect it to be done.

That which does not penetrate to the essence has no true connection and thus no true power.

Torah is inside us, within the very particles that make up every part of us. It is not in the Heavens or beyond the sea. Torah is within us. We cannot escape it. We cannot lose it.

We can however lose ourselves and forget our integral connection to the Torah within us.

This then is the meaning of return. This is true religion; when one unleashes the Torah from within oneself and allows oneself to again be one with Torah and with the Holy One, blessed be He.

The unity is already there. It is always here. It is eternal. All we need do is to reconnect. This is the meaning of return.

Looking religious and acting religious does not make one religious. Only being religious makes one religious. Being religious is a matter of the heart. It can never be anything else.

During these days of return it is wise for us to consider these simple truths...

What path must I walk to find my inner Torah? How do I awaken my sleeping soul and arouse it to again experience the radiance of truth?

These questions are truths, for what greater truths can there be than the ones known in the heart.

Life is full of noise and distractions. Take time out of your daily schedule and take time to put into contemplating your own heart.

The Voice of Heaven is speaking at this very moment. It can be heard deep within your heart. Hush! Listen for it and you might hear its whisper.

“Come back to me, come back to me.” The Voice is calling. “Come back to me and I shall come back to you.” This is the Voice of the inner Torah, the very echo of the Voice of the Holy One, blessed be He.

Become Torah. Do not just study it as a book. Do not just make it a part of your life. Torah is far more than a part. It is all parts, each individually and all together. Inside everything, within every pursuit and behind every interest Torah is there.

Torah is alive. It is watching you from within the very recesses of your soul. Unleash it and allow the power of the Living Word to flow through you and to become you.

When you restore the union of the Holy One, blessed be He, the Torah and yourself, then the return is complete.

Take the time now to contemplate. Ask Heaven for guidance how to open your heart and unleash the great power therein. Seek out the Holy One. He has been looking for you much longer than you have been looking for Him.

Now you know the secret of return. It is not so much a matter of how you do it; it is simply a matter of getting it done.

Simplicity here is the key. You need no further instruction. All you need is sincerity and the will to succeed. The Holy One is already with you; as is His Torah.

Restore the connection; become a walking, living Torah. This is the bonding. All who are

bonded in this fashion to the Holy One and Torah are called alive. This is the return. This is true Teshuva.

May we all be inscribed in the Great Book of Life, with all the great blessings from Heaven above.



It is Elul, our traditional time to contemplate teshuva.

What is teshuva?

Many will tell you that “doing teshuva” means to become more religious.

Yet, just does it mean to become “more religious”?

To become more ethnically or culturally religious is just superficial hypocrisy.

To act religious like others who act religious is equally hypocritical.

Being more strict in religious observance is also no meaning of “doing teshuva,”

and in some cases, can actually be the opposite.

So then, what is “doing teshuva”?

How does one return?

This can only be answered

once we answer one primary question:

to whom are we returning: to religion, or to God?

If you are returning to religion,

then all one has to do is to become more ethnic, more cultural, and more strict.

Such a one will have returned to one's religion, with or without God!

In most cases, we see by unfortunate example,

that the more ethnic, more cultural, and the more strict one becomes,

the more religious one becomes, the further and further away such a one floats away from God.

Being superficially religious is one thing.

Drawing close to God is another thing.

So, simply speaking,

how does one draw close to God?

The answer to this is not as hard as you might think.

Indeed, the answer is right in front of you,

and inside you.

One: cultivate awareness of the Presence of God, inside you, and around you.

Two: cultivate awareness that God is truly in charge of all things, inside you, and around you.

Three: live life simply, and naturally. Do not over- complicate matters.

Visualize God as a person, as a friend,
standing next to you, ask the Presence,
“what do you think?” should I do this, or that?
Allow the Divine Presence to speak to you
within your imagination,
and to guide you back to “natural Torah.”

“Natural Torah” is that which is written
upon your soul, and resides within your heart.
Doing Teshuva means returning the Presence
to its rightful place within your consciousness.
Cultivate God awareness – do what's right!
Live natural Torah.
Embrace the commandments,
not as burdensome rituals,
but rather as holistic paths to living a natural life.
In this way, you will naturally separate
from the unnecessary ethnic, cultural,
and strict interpretations of religion.
Living naturally, and living by holistic Torah
cultivates awareness of the Divine Presence.
This is doing teshuva,
this is returning to become right with God.
It is not hard, it is natural.
You do not need to make strenuous efforts,
all you need to do is be natural,
and let it happen all by itself.
Do not try to do teshuva, merely let it happen.

Visualize the Presence of God.
Make God your friend.
Ask God for advice and guidance.
God never fails, therefore neither will you.

Do this, and you will see:
God's blessings will be with you, always.

The Words of Ariel Tzadok, 8/26/17

Elul Contemplations 1

Let's start off right. The Torah concept of teshuva (repentance) does not mean becoming more religious. While there is nothing wrong and everything right about refining and improving one's Torah observances, we must remember that the essential factor of a Torah life is not the observance of ritual but rather applying the lessons of moral refinement and character improvement that our religious rituals are meant to teach us. Torah rituals are a means to an end; they are not an end unto themselves. There is no teshuva that does not include the strengthening of one's positive character traits and the improvement of one's moral convictions.

Real life is harsh; it is not merciful to the weak and the selfish. We all acknowledge the Divine order established by our Creator. Yet, there is some valid scientific reality expressed by Charles Darwin that also is true. Although Darwin's theory of evolution is presented as contradicting religion, anyone who does the appropriate intelligent investigations quickly realizes that Darwin never spoke against G-d or religion. His theories of evolution never contradict Torah. Since Darwin's days, many Rabbis have very publicly stated this. Science and Torah go hand in hand, after all they both emanate from the same Divine Hand. They are teaching the same truths. It is we in our limited and lazy minds that have a hard time seeing this.

This being said let me now share with you a Darwinian concept that judging from Torah seems to be very true (to a point). Darwin speaks about the survival of the fittest. Whenever there is a conflict between species or individuals, it is the stronger of the two that will dominate and thus survive. Natural history has shown this to be true and so has human history over the course of millennia of political conflicts.

The nation of Israel was and is a small nation. If it were not for the supernatural intervention of the Divine Hand, the little nation of Israel would never have left Egypt, all the more so survived the destructions of two Temples and a two thousand year long exile among hostile, violent neighbors. Yet, the Jewish people do survive, far from being the fittest they manage to survive, in clear contradiction to Darwin.

This does not by any means disprove Darwin's theory. One need just look at the history of the rest of the world's nations to validate it. Israel, however, is not under natural law; it is under a supernatural Hand. This does not mean that natural events will not befall individuals, for we see that the fate of individual Jews are absolutely no different from that of individual non-Jews. All of us are mere frail human beings, subject to the consequences of our personal choices. The Divine Hand watches over the nation as a whole, all the while leaving the individual many times subject to natural forces. This truth may be argued theologically by those who wish to waste our time with religious words, but based upon our daily affairs and tragedies, the reality of this cannot be denied.

Ultimately, almost all troubles that befall us are somehow due to our own personal failing, in one form or another. When tragedy strikes us and we lift up our eyes to Heaven and ask, why? Heaven in turn responds and says, we did not cause this, you did! Because you ignored Heaven's warnings and chose your present course, you have simply received the just fruits of your labors;

you have merely faced the consequences of your foolish choices. Cry out as you will to Heaven and complain how harsh life is and how unforgiving Heaven is and you will still not see one bit of change. Life is what life is; only the fittest survive. The necessary fitness to survive life comes from strength of character and moral conviction. In the end, the only ones who truly survive and thrive are those who are strong internally and externally.

Torah is about commandments. It is about doing things. The commandments were not given to us without reason. They are a means to an end and not an end unto themselves. This is a well known and definitive Torah concept. We keep kosher for a reason. We observe Shabat or a reason. We observe all the other commandments for a reason. From the mystical point of view of the Kabbalah, we observe the commandments for the sake of building the supernal "spiritual faces" in the Heavenly realms. In other words, the commandments we observe below reverberate a powerful influence upon worlds above. Although this reasoning sounds rather other- worldly, it is, in fact, just metaphorical terminology used to describe fundamental psychological transformations of human personality. Indeed, whenever the mystical tradition of Torah speaks about rectifying the supernal worlds, it is in fact talking about the inner psychological world within the human psyche and the refinement of character and personality. Essentially Kabbalah is Torah psychology and psychoanalysis.

When we observe the commandments and fail to understand the purpose and meaning behind them we fail in our Torah observance. Commandments are a means to an end, if they do not accomplish their end, then the performance of the means becomes an empty shell, bereft of any meaning and unable to perform any rectification. Rabbi Haim Vital states in his Sha'arei Kedusha that without proper character one cannot properly perform the commandments. The Ba'al Shem Tov goes so far as to state that the observance of commandments performed without proper intent is a very bad thing. (Reference Sefer Ba'al Shem Tov, Shemot 1).

Throughout human history we have seen how sometimes the weak actually do prosper over the strong. However, this is usually not by power of force, but rather through perseverance. This is the secret and key to survival in our jungle-like world. Each of us mortal human beings has obvious strengths and obvious weaknesses. Not one of us can stand against all things, every time and be absolutely victorious. Simply, this is not realistic, no one is invincible. Each of us faces battles daily against forces outside of ourselves and all the more so inside ourselves. Some battles we win and some battles we lose.

This now is the rule. With the battles we face outside of ourselves, we can indeed turn to Heaven with a contrite and humble heart. Our prayers and supplications can be heard and a miracle of sorts can happen within our personal lives saving us from a domineering and dangerous foe. However, what happens when the foe is inside us and is an aspect of our own personality and character? This enemy Heaven cannot defeat. This internal enemy is one we have to fight all by ourselves.

Ultimately, we never take on any enemy internal or external alone, Heaven is always with us to support and guide us. What is different with fighting an internal enemy is that we have already been given the weapons to wage this war and if we chose not to use these weapons then indeed we will lose the fight. The weapons we have been given to fight the good fight against our

internal enemies are the good character traits and moral righteousness that are supposed to come to us through our observance of the commandments.

Therefore, when we observe the commandments properly, internally and externally, they provide for us a fantastic amount of resolve and strength enabling us to face the worse case hardships and conflicts. External loss of life, limb and property are always in the Hands of Heaven. Yet, whether we open the door to our own weakness and demise, this is entirely in our hands. And if we open the door to our own doom, then indeed Darwin's law will most definitely come into play and the strong will survive and the weak will perish. The Torah therefore is the solution to Darwin's determinism. Torah cultivates strength. Embrace Torah and you embrace strength and thus you survive. Observe the commandments without embracing the internal essence of Torah that transforms character and you only have an empty shell. A shell cannot protect you against anything for too long.

Natural law and Heavenly law are very simple and direct. Essentially the two are one, only one is visible and active, while the other is invisible and causative. Heavenly law and natural law are both parts of Torah. Natural law influences Torah practice. Heavenly law is influenced by Torah essence. Just as Torah has its essence and practice, so too do we human beings have correspondingly a Neshama soul and physical body. The physical body is subject to natural law and thus Torah practices define our relationship. The Neshama soul is subject to Heavenly law and thus Torah essence defines this relationship. One who safeguards Torah practices safeguards their bodies. One who safeguards Torah essence safeguards their souls. This is why throughout the Torah promises are made for blessings in this world to those who observe the commandments, whereas no mention is made of the Heavenly realms or afterlife rewards. These relate to the Neshama soul and this must be refined through character and morals.

No one needs to be told that life is harsh. We all know it, although we often live in a fashion that seems to defy the dangers inherent in our actions. Some of us arrogantly believe ourselves immune or immortal. We intellectually acknowledge the fact that tragedy can strike us and almost immediately dismiss any possibility of our behavior possibly being a contributing factor. Once tragedy does strike, we cry out in anguish and pain asking, "Why did this happen to me"? What kind of answer could we possibly receive that would truly comfort us in the hour of our loss and pain? None!

Sometimes we cannot avoid tragedy, yet sometimes we can! When Heaven ordains against us, there is very little we can do. Our only hope against a Heavenly decree is prayer and Teshuva. However, when we create our own troubles and bring tragedy upon ourselves, then Heaven looks upon us with anger and rage. Yes, Heaven will punish us even more for bringing on our own heads a tragedy that did not have to happen!

Throughout history who has caused us the most harm? Was it the punishments of Heaven, or the natural outcome of our own actions? Why were both Temples destroyed? Because we created the environment and circumstances that led to their destruction. We could pray until we were blue in the face and the Temples would still have been destroyed, regardless of the number of righteous people living at the time. Unless the collective whole of the nation takes collective steps to resolve collective problems, then no small number of individuals can make

enough of a difference to change the natural course of national events. Abraham learned this lesson with regards to Sodom and Jonah also learned it with regards to Nineveh.

Ultimately, our fate is in the Hands of Heaven, true, but we have the power to either help or hinder Heaven's hand. We can make our lot in life either better or worse. What tomorrow brings depends upon the decisions we make today.

Repentance before G-d has to be more than words and must include more than just increased religious practice. Without the strengthening of character and improvement of morals, there is no Teshuva. If Teshuva does not rise from within, then one must question everything seen on the outside.

In Pirkei Avot, Rabbi Meir said one should do the right thing even for the wrong reasons, for eventually one will do the right thing for the right reasons. The truth of this simple and pure logic speaks for itself. Yet, today, people are not paying attention to Rabbi Meir. Once one does the right thing, even for the wrong reason, one must continue to strive to develop the right reasons. For if one does not eventually develop the right reasons, one will quickly stop doing the right things, even for the wrong reasons, and start doing the wrong things for whatever reasons. We have seen this happen all too many times.

Whether we like it or not, we all eventually fall victim to the consequences of our own decisions. It is the natural course of life and it is unavoidable. Sooner or later, we all have to pay back. In the end, usually always too late, we discover that the pay back costs us more than we could have possibly imagined. The foolish choices we make in life are never worth it. Why then do we continue to make them should be reason to make us pause and contemplate.

Contemplating and putting into action changes of behavior should never be limited to a single time of the year. It should be a continual process that one does daily. Before one sleeps at night, one should take a few moments and review one's behavior of the previous day. Upon seeing something that could have been done better, one must resolve there and then that tomorrow will be different. When one awakens, again one should pause for a moment and make a commitment that today one will control oneself and behave better than one did yesterday. It is a simple step like this that begins our path on a much better road through life.

Life is harsh enough, we do not have to contribute to make it harsher. We cannot change the entire world, but we can change our individual little corners of it. Heaven is waiting for us to make a difference, all we have to do, is simply go out and do it. Remember, all change begins within. Heaven is found in the heart and no place else on Earth.

Elul Contemplations 2

Did you know that to say that “G-d is love” is actually a form of idolatry? Did you know that to say G-d loves you and will forgive you all your misdeeds borders on blasphemy? No, you probably did not know these things, did you?

Knowledge of Torah has fallen to a possibly all time low. Although many people study day in and day out, not many of those who study grasp the true foundations of what the message and way of Torah actually is. So many people pay so much attention only to matters of surface importance. So few actually make the effort to delve deep to truly grasp the essence of Torah.

Today many people embrace ideas about G-d and Torah that are foreign in origins. Many today embrace the messages of other religions and then try to wrap them up to make them sound Jewish. One can serve the highest quality kosher stuffed chicken for dinner, but if it is stuffed with pork it is still unkosher. Just because some say something is compatible with Torah does not make it so. To think G-d is love and forgiving to all is one of these foreign ideas that have crept into Judaism, but have no actual Biblical foundation in the Jewish TaNaKh.

All one needs to do is to read any section of the TaNaKh and see how over many centuries G-d has interacted with humanity, Jews and non-Jews alike. One will see a striking consistency between how G-d interacted with humanity during Biblical times and how He has acted with us since. There has never been a period in human history that we can say that the Grace of G-d shined all over the Earth and that everywhere and for everyone, life was Heavenly.

Many of us have been seduced by a concept about G-d and Torah that severely blinds the eye from seeing the true and dangerous nature of spiritual reality. G-d is not so forgiving. G-d is not so loving. Indeed, the prophet Isaiah said very clearly that G-d is the author and creator of both good and evil. In Torah (specifically the Book of Job), the concept of the Devil is not one of being the lord of hell in a dual with G-d. On the contrary the Devil is viewed as being G-d's loyal subject whose job it is to test humanity and then serve as prosecutor over one's soul. Indeed, the Hebrew term Satan actually translated as prosecutor or accuser.

Ultimately, there is no dichotomy in the universe. Everything emanates from a Singular Source. This is true for both good and evil. G-d uses both as His agents, as His tools. Good and evil both serve G-d and are His faithful servants.

G-d therefore, is love, but He is also hate. G-d is peace, but He is also war. G-d is the giver of life, but He is also the sender of death. G-d blesses and He curses. G-d rewards and He punishes. To everything there is a time and purpose under Heaven (Kol. 3:1). To say G-d is one thing over another or one thing and not another is to split the Divine Unity. This is akin to idolatry.

Understanding that everything, be it good or bad, emanates from the Divine Source is no mere lesson in theology; it is a sound warning and good advice. Too many of us have long held religious beliefs that are akin to children's myths and stories. It is OK to believe in stories as

long as one recognizes the fantasy nature of those stories. I do not consider it bad if someone wants to believe in Santa Claus. I do however; consider it dangerous when one wants to travel alone to the North Pole to visit Santa Claus. This is the difference between a benign silly belief and the dangerous literal application of said belief. As it is with Santa Claus so it is with our understandings of G-d and how He runs the world.

For centuries our Sages have spoken about G-d using a form of symbolism that describes G-d as some type of super-human king. G-d is personified and given human type attributes. Yet, our Sages are emphatic that all their talk of this nature is entirely symbolic and there is nothing literal about it whatsoever. G-d is not a man, nor son of man. G-d is not human, nor does He have any corporeal form. The Torah refers to G-d as a "He," but this is not done to ascribe sexually. G-d is clearly said to be both male and female. Yet, these terms too when applied to the Divine are absolutely different from anything that we associate with sexuality. To sum it up, almost everything that we believe about G-d is a myth and a religious fairy tale; a set of metaphors using symbolic language to describe to us a reality so unlike anything we know that we can only grasp a glimpse of its existence by using these symbolic terms to describe it.

Our problems with religion have arisen because of the different symbols each group uses to describe spiritual reality. Groups believe that their symbols are literal and that when another group does not accept one's symbols that this is tantamount to that group rejecting spiritual reality, with all the consequences of Divine wrath attached to such a rejection. Of course there is no such Divine wrath; the wrath is merely that of the collective consciousness of one group expressed on to another group that embraces a different set of myths.

This competition of myths and symbols is very similar to the conflicts that transpire between children in a playground. Yet, unfortunately with religions, we are talking about adults and groups seeking global domination. These so-called adults are nothing more than children who have matured physically, but not a bit emotionally, mentally or spiritually. This is why I consider the simplistic embrace of religious myth to be a dangerous thing. This is why Torah prohibits us to ascribe any form or semblance to anything spiritual or Divine. Heaven knows well the true nature of their own being and how radically different it is from mortal temporal life here on Earth. Heaven sought to protect us from the dangers of our infantile intellectual limitations. Therefore, every time we say G-d is this or G-d is that, we are in violation of a fundamental spiritual and psychological truth and creating a very dangerous precedent.

Idolatry is ascribing fantasy beliefs onto spiritual reality. This is a debilitating psychological problem. It is ego inflation at its worse. Idolatry is not dangerous because of what we believe; it is dangerous because based on what we believe we end up doing terrible evil deeds, all in the name of the myth of serving our fantasy idea about G-d. For millennia, millions have been tortured and murdered in the name of religious purges. What sheer stupidity this is, but even in our days, no one can see this.

Those who have personally had spiritual experiences have long taught us that we live in a much grander universe than meets the eye. Secular scientists, using their modern methods have come to the same conclusions. Both religionists and scientists now state that we live in a multi-dimensional universe, possibly inhabited by countless other races of beings. While science

claims no extraterrestrial contact has yet been made, religionists have claimed that such contact has gone on for millennia.

When religionists speak about close encounters of the alien kind, their experiences, like everything else in religion, has been run through the filter of mythology and fairy tales. The other-worldly entities that these individuals have experienced have been given mythical names like angels and demons. Our society is full of fantasy images of both these types of beings. Yet, if these entities are real as religionists have claimed, and their true nature and appearance is not how we have portrayed them in our fairy tales, then what is their true nature? What is their true appearance? Where do they come from? Why have they come here? What do they want from us? And possibly the most important question is what are the true parameters of our relationship?

Religionists have long asked these questions and often their answers have been wrapped up in myth and embellished with silly children's-like fairy tales. Yet, many religionists have safely guarded a truth about their close encounters that has not been tainted by the myth making, story telling limited human intellectual capacity.

Scientists also ask questions about what kind of life is "out there"? Today, the official position of the scientific community is that we have not yet made any such contacts. Whether or not this is true is something we will probably never know. Regardless of when it is we make contact (or if we already have) I am sure that scientists will ask the same questions on that day as religionists have asked for millennia. Ultimately, we will all be faced with the same questions once our eyes have been forced open to see the greater universe in which we live.

We live in a greater universe. Nothing is as it actually appears. This is both a religious and scientific fact. Religion embraces its myth and modern science embraces its own. Only with the removal of myth can we get down to the business of discovering truth for its own sake and to see the universe as it actually is. In religious terms we call the era in which this will occur "the days of Mashiah." Even this term and its associated concepts have long been subject to religious story telling and mythical embellishments. Yet, underlying all the children's stories about the coming of Mashiah there is a reality that can only be interpreted as being an invasion of Earth by an extraterrestrial power. This sounds frightening and I am sure that it will be.

I am sure that the coming entities that we have in our myths called angels will impose a new world order as designed by Heaven. Upon their arrival we will see for real who they are and what they are. We may or may not welcome their intervention in human affairs. Yet, whether or not we like or approve, I do not think we will be in a position to resist.

In light of understanding the true extraterrestrial nature of spiritual beings, we should also acknowledge the extraterrestrial nature of any communicate that they might bestow upon us. The greatest of such communicates is the Torah. While we have thousands of years of Torah commentaries and have built the entire religion of Judaism upon them, we have only begun to scratch the surface of what Torah really is and what it really teaches. In our present state of human limitations there is only so much of Torah that our minds are able to grasp. Without our ability to grasp the depths of Torah, thousands of years of Sages have built upon its surface, thus

reinforcing a connection between the Torah and her people. Were it not for the wisdom of our Sages in creating the present form of Torah practices the people of Torah would have long ago ceased to exist and the Torah itself might have disappeared from human history. I do believe that those entities, who made the effort to bring Torah to Earth, would not be very happy seeing their plans thwarted.

Although modern science has not yet discovered this, religionists for millennia have known that those whom we call spiritual entities have long been involved with human affairs on an intimate basis. Truly, we are not alone and those who are amongst us are not very happy and satisfied with what they see. If these entities were merely performing a duty of observation then we might not have that much reason to be concerned. However, if their observations overlap with their outright meddling in human affairs, then we truly do have very much to be concerned with.

History rebounds with stories of other-worldly creatures interacting with people, often to their harm. Modern myth speaks of extraterrestrial entities in secret collusion with clandestine government agencies planning and plotting some mysterious ominous plan that could spell doom for us all. Is there any truth to this? If not, then we can all have a good laugh at silly urban legends. Yet, if there is even a grain of truth to all this, had we not better ask, what is the true part and what is really going on?

Now we have come full circle. Torah teaches that we are not alone in the universe, or on planet Earth. Torah teaches that we human beings were put here on Earth for a purpose. That purpose is for the education and evolution of our true essence, which we call our souls. Those that placed us here are very active in our education. Their influence is felt in almost every arena of life. Therefore, the Book of Daniel refers to them as the Watchers. They watch, interact and intervene. They act in ways that we would interpret as both good and bad. Their sense of values is far different from our own. They show no concern for those things that we hold of value. They seem not to be concerned about suffering, pain or even death. Apparently, they view these things in a different light than do we. As such how they guide and direct us is based upon parameters totally different from what we would consider fair or just. Yet, it is they who are in charge. They do what they are instructed to do from their superiors, who carry out the orders of their superiors and on and on up the chain of command up to the Source.

Do not think for an instant that life operates according to our standards and our definitions of right and wrong. This is certainly not the case. G-d and Heaven are certainly not about love and forgiveness and all our religious hype of the opposite will not make it so. All the positive thinking in the world will not change reality.

Reality is not what you think it is or what you want it to be. Reality is regardless of what you want or what you think. You cannot change this. Accept this and live accordingly and you will learn wisdom, your soul will evolve and all will be well with you. Reject or ignore this and try to live life according to your own rules and you will forever be in conflict with reality. Eventually reality will catch up with you and your little private make-believe world will be shattered.

We truly live in a greater universe, one not of our own making, one in which we are not in control. We have been contacted and instructed what to do. The choice of what we do, of course, as always, is up to each and every one of us. Just remember this, the Watchers are watching and they are very much involved.

Elul Contemplations 3

“When the Holy One, blessed be He ordains a Heavenly edict according to the deeds of mankind, He desires not to change it, He sends forth His Power through the Attribute [of Judgment] to pay [mankind] their just rewards according to their deeds....

No man, not even a prophet has permission to request mercy to nullify the edict in any size, shape or form, as the verse says, “and you, do not pray for this people” (Jer. 7:16).”

Sefer HaYihud, Perush HaShavuo

As Kohelet (3:1) says, “there is a time and a purpose for all things under Heaven.” There is a time to repent, and then there is a time when it is too late to repent. There is a time when we can receive forgiveness for what we have done, and then there is a time when this grace period also passes. Such are the ways of HaShem. Divine Patience is always tempered by Divine Justice. There is a limit to all things under the sun.

We look out at our world and how mighty is our nation and culture. We cannot dream that all that we know and love will some day come to an abrupt halt. Yet, every culture in history that has risen to its heights, has fallen from said heights into the depths of oblivion and is soon forgotten. Our present world culture will not escape the course of history faced by every other world civilization before us.

Do not blame G-d and proclaim that He is punishing the world. Indeed, G-d is only the ultimate force behind the Universal Balance of Justice. Indeed, it is our behavior at the individual and collective level that decides our fates, as individuals and as nations.

What happened on 9/11 in New York and most recently with Katrina in New Orleans are both disasters with catastrophic loss of life. One was initiated by the hand of man and the other was a natural event, sometimes called the hand of G-d. Whatever one wishes to believe about both these events is irrelevant, they nonetheless both share one common element, both events are warnings from Heaven of even greater judgment to fall upon this land and people for the great sins and perversions our society has produced and perpetuated upon the world.

The laws of nature are ordained by Heaven. The forces of nature are but Heaven’s servants. Indeed, the Bible is clear that even the insanity of individuals to kill and destroy is often used by Heaven as its agents. One way or another, Heaven does not lack the means of expressing its displeasure over our behavior. Heaven has almost infinite resources to use to correct us individually and collectively, to set us on a proper moral human path. Whether we choose to walk this path, or not is, of course, our choice. And what we choose, of course, chooses for us the consequences that we will ultimately face.

Human tragedy brought on by natural or political forces are very much a part of life and a major cause of death. Where an event will strike and who will be affected thereby are not haphazard, happening randomly. As much as the secular will howl, disasters are brought about, permitted and ordained by the Hand of the Living G-d. Everything and anything that comes our way is a

warning from Above that must be viewed with the utmost seriousness. Those who wish to deny this are like the magicians of ancient Egypt in Pharaoh's court, advising him that the Ten Plagues were not the work of G-d. Just as Egypt was in for further trouble and ultimate destruction, so too are those who today wish to deny the Will of G-d in similar fashion.

Let the scoffers howl, as they will. Let them condemn and mock the religious for the warnings. Angry people as they are, immoral people that they be, they will face the judgment of the Living G-d, whose presence and activity they wish to deny.

I wish no one any malice; I pray that no one will ever be harmed. Yet, I also know that a time of judgment is quickly coming upon us and that only those who prepare themselves wisely will stand a chance of coming through it. Mind you, emergency preparation for disasters must include spiritual, mental and emotional preparations alongside the physical. For even one with the largest hoard of food, supplies and weapons will crack and fall if one's heart is not stable and one's mind clear.

We are now just days away from Rosh HaShana, the Day of Judgment for the entire world. This day should be a holiday commemorated by everyone Jew and Gentile alike. All are affected by what happens of this day, all should prepare on this day to give an accounting before one's Maker. At night, as every soul will sleep, it will ascend before the Heavenly Court and there be told what will be its fate for the coming year. Indeed, those who died on 9/11 or by Katrina had their fates decided and settled long before these events occurred.

And what of teshuva, repentance, you might ask? After an edict is issued, can one repent and avoid its punishment? I cannot speak for Heaven. I do not have the authority to overturn Heavenly edicts. All I can say is that our Sages teach us that one should never lose faith in the power of prayer, repentance and forgiveness. Indeed, although an edict may be proclaimed in Heaven against a certain area or population, the righteous individual may still escape, if and when that individual does the proper things necessary to solicit Divine intervention and protection. Many did make it out on 9/11, many others survived Katrina. Not all survivors were religious or righteous, by known standards, yet Heaven decided that it was not yet their time to meet their Maker. As it was then, so will it be in tomorrow's events, whatever and wherever they may be.

We cannot avoid disasters. We must not be so blasphemous to deny the hand of G-d in all these matters. We must turn to G-d in serious and thoughtful contemplation and best choose how to correct our behavior and our lives to properly reflect the Biblical requirements of moral character, brotherly love and sincere and honest devotion and commitment to Heaven.

There are statements in the Kabbalah which speak about the coming year 5766 (2006) and being one of serious disturbances. I am not at liberty to elaborate. I just want that people should take these times very seriously and use the blessed time we now have to properly prepare to stand before our Creator this Rosh HaShana.

Look in the mirror, ask G-d in prayer, what it is you need to do to make yourself better, and to solicit His Divine blessings for yourself, your family and loved ones. G-d will speak to your

heart, through study of His Word, by the performance of mitzvot and in many other ways. Seek out what it is G-d wants of you. Do it now while you still have the opportunity. Miss this chance, and face Him you will on Rosh HaShana. What your soul will say then, and what G-d will say then to your soul will be what it will be. Choose wisely your course of action.

The Ways of Teshuva (Repentance)

According to the Kabbalah of the Ari'zal

*Selections From Sefer Even HaShoham,
the Shulkhan Arukh of the Kitvei HaAri'zal
Vol. 7 – Hilkhos Teshuva*

Chapter One

Now it is written, "Give strength unto G-d, upon Israel His pride." (Ps. 68:35). The meaning is as if to say that HaShem needs help, assistance, and strength from the actions of Israel below.

Now the Malkhut (the holy Shekhina) is called the "Fallen Tabernacle (Succah) of David," for in our sins, it has fallen due to our bad actions. Thus when there is desire for it to ascend it needs to be by our merits and our good deeds. It is as if to say that our sins cause it to fall and our merits enable it to rise.

Know then that each year has its own individual Angelic Prince. One does not have the authority to violate the border of another. This is also why one must do Teshuva each and every year. For the teshuva of one year does not apply to any other year. (Sefer HaLikutim, Tazria 45d).

Therefore, now it is impossible for Her [the Shekhina] to rise if we do not have amongst us purely righteous individuals, whose souls are holy and pure who have the power to elevate up to the place of Imma (Binah). By their hands will the Malkhut ascend, even as it says in the Tikunei Zohar (21, 58b), for Israel is called the wings of the Shekhina to raise her up above (Sha'ar HaKavanot, Kiryat HaMitah 6, 24b).

For this reason, our exile becomes greater and longer, for there is no one among us to rise up to this level. For if there was among us one who was able to elevate his soul there he would also elevate the Malkhut (the holy Shekhina) and thus speed along the End and the redemption. However, now in our days, in our many sins we cannot perform the appropriate Yihud (spiritual union) above. For this reason, this End is distant. Almost all ill and suffering that comes upon men is for this reason.

However, with all this, there is still a small rectification by those who, with all their hearts, offer their souls for the sanctification of G-d's Name. For by this, although we have no good deeds and have been horribly sinful, nonetheless by offering our souls to be killed all of our sins are atoned for. We thus have the ability to ascend to the Supernal Mother (Binah), as our Sages have taught (Yoma 86a), "So great is teshuva (repentance) that it reaches the Throne of Glory, as it is written (Hoshea 14:2), "Return Israel to HaShem your G-d."

For the matter of Teshuva elevates a man and brings him up to the Throne of Glory, which is the Supernal Mother who is called Teshuva. By this can the Malkhut (Binah) ascend with us, for we are the wings of the Shekhina.

It appears to me Haim that I heard from my teacher (o.b.m.) that one should [fast] four times in a year three complete days and nights, before Rosh HaShana, before Yom Kippur, before the Tenth of Tevet and before the 17th of Tamuz. Even if one does this only once in his lifetime, it is enough. It does not have to be done every year. However, these [fasts] are enough only to nullify from oneself that which has been ordained to come upon him in this world because of his sins. However, this does not nullify the punishment in the World to Come. (Sha'ar HaKavanot R.H. 90c).

The essence of the punishment of sins is when one is punished in Gehinnom after one dies. This [punishment] is not nullified by the previously mention fasts. However, one needs [perform] other rectifications as will be explained (in Sha'ar Ruah haKodesh 13, Sha'ar HaYihudim 3, 33).

All the good deeds that a man does all the while that he is a wicked person or the Torah he studies certainly do not add holiness to him. On the contrary, such a one adds strength to the forces of evil (klipot). Of such a one does the verse speak (Ps. 50:16), "and to the wicked one G-d says, to what purpose do you recount My decrees and bear My covenant upon your lips." Such a one [only] brings holy things into the realms of evil (klipot). By this one adds sins upon his wickedness and his sin will be greater than he can bear.

When one returns in Teshuva, he releases all the holiness that he put into the forces of evil and returns them to holiness. This is [true] repentance, that one restores a thing to its rightful place. His reward [for doing so] is multiplied greatly because he subdues the forces of evil and releases the holiness from within them. He [thus] gives power to holiness when he brings it inside himself. With this will we understand what our Sages have taught (Yoma 86b) that, "one's sins are turned into one's merits." (Sha'ar HaYihudim 3, 11, 40b).

Chapter Two

May it be for a good sign that I begin to write the rectifications for the sick of soul, even as I have heard from the mouth of the holy Kabbalist, his honor, my teacher, Rabbi Yitzhak Ashkenazi (o.b.m.).

Being that a human being is created from both physical and spiritual matter, [the spiritual matter being] the nefesh, ruah and neshama souls [with the neshama being] a portion from G-d above as it is written (Gen. 2:7), "and He breathed into him the soul of life" (nishmat hayim). The body is dense physical matter from the side of the husks [klipot]. It acts as an accuser, hinders one from spiritual completion, and cuts one off from the Tree of Life. [The evil inclination is activated at one's birth and by the time one becomes aware of good at the time of one's bar/bat mitzvah, the evil inclination is already called] an old and foolish king. [This is because the evil inclination] was born thirteen years prior to the [descent of the] neshama into the body. Therefore, there is no righteous one on earth who does good and yet, who has not sinned.

It is known that sin blemish, stain and undermines the soul. This then is the sickness of the pure soul. When the soul is tainted and blemished it is not able to see or grasp true completion,

which [comes through the study of] the secrets of the Torah. [The reason why this is so important is that it] enables [the soul] to bond [with G-d]. For this [reason] was [the soul] created.

Therefore [on Judgement Day, the soul will be asked] did you [when alive] ever meditate upon the Supernal Image, which is [to be found within] the secrets of the Torah? Sin causes there to be a division and separation between the soul and the Creator [disabling the soul] from seeing and understanding Supernal, holy and pure matters. (Olat Tamid, Tefilah, 46a).

Just as when one is physically sick, the doctor gives him/her bitter medications to swallow, yet these very things restores him/her to his natural state of health as he/she once was. Thus it is with the sick soul, in order to remove the illness the soul needs to accept upon itself the bitterness of the [spiritual] medication, which is Teshuva, with suffering, fasting, sackcloth and ashes, stripes, and going to the mikvah. [With these things] will one become pure from the filth and blemish of sin.

In order [for us] to be able to grasp and understand Supernal matters, which are the mysteries of the universe, which is the wisdom hidden from ancient days in the time of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yohai (o.b.m.) until now, we have our teacher, the holy, the godly Kavod Moreynu Yitzhak Di Luria (o.b.m.). For by the spirit of prophecy that was within him [did he] begin to enlighten our eyes in this sacred wisdom.

[The Ari'zal] would never reveal any of the secrets of this holy wisdom to one that he saw had a blemished soul. [First] he would give him a rectification to perform in order to rectify his sins. (Olat Tamid, Tefilah, 46b). {Let this as a lesson to all those who study Kabbalah without the observance of the mitzvot}.

Our Sages have said (Yoma 38b) that, "one who comes to purify him/her self is assisted [from above]." In order to achieve personal merit and to benefit those who wish to perform sincere repentance, who wishes to purify his soul and enter into the "vineyard of wisdom" I [Rabbi Haim Vital] will write [a list] of the sins that people stumble over, be it in their youth or old age, and the healing that is needed for each and every sin.

One must know the place of the blemish [in one's soul] so as to know what to rectify, and what specific Teshuva one needs perform in order to rectify one's sins. What we find from the mouth of the Rav (the Ari'zal), are the meditations, and the rectifications that are necessary for each and every sin so that one's heart will tremble because of one's sins and return to HaShem who will have mercy. (Olat Tamid, Tefilah, 46b).

The rectification for a man who misses any of the following four positive commandments, a) not praying, b) not wearing Talit or c) not wearing Tefillin or d) not reciting the Shema is to fast 61 days for each of them. (Sha'ar Ruah HaKodesh, Tikun Alef, 13a).

Note: Most individuals today do not have the physical stamina to fulfill the required number of fasts. These and the following fast requirements are fulfilled today by giving similar dollar amounts to tzedaka. For further information on this, see Sefer HaTanya, Igeret HaTeshuva.

One who sins in thought must fast 87 days. (Sha'ar Ruah haKodesh, Tikun Bet, 13b).

One who violates an oath or who swears falsely, his rectification is to fast 28 days in a row.

One who speaks about disgusting things should fast for 37 days. (Sha'ar R.H. Tikun 6, 14b).

To rectify the sin of arrogance and mockery (both are the same) is to fast 55 days. (S.R.H. Tikun 6, 16b-17b).

One who sins by dishonoring one's father or mother should fast 45 days. This is the number of Av (Father) and Em (mother). (Tikun Tet).

The rectification for one who publicly embarrasses another is to roll naked in a bed of thorns.

One who stays awake all night, who doesn't sleep at all but who studies Torah all the night long will be exempt from punishment for one sin liable of excommunication (karet), (if one did such G-d forbid). Each night exempts one [sin liable of] karet. (S.R.H. 11a).

One who has relations with a woman who has not immersed after her menstrual cycle should fast 59 days. Each day he must go to the mikvah, and not have any intimate relations other than on Shabat, Yom Tov and Rosh Hodesh. All other nights he should sleep on dust.

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The rectification for a Jewish man who sleeps with a Gentile woman. Our Sages have said (Tanhuma, Vayeshev 8) that "one who sleeps with a Gentile woman, she becomes attached to him like a dog." What our Sages meant here was that if a Jewish man were to have intimate relations with a Gentile woman, he will reincarnate in his next life as a dog.

His rectification is that he roll himself in snow seven or nine times.

The rectification for adultery is to fast 325 days.

Each of these days one is to wear sackcloth and one must put some ashes on his forehead in the place where the head tefillin is worn.

To rectify the sin of homosexuality one should fast 233 days.

The soul of the sinner and his supernal image is either muted, deafened or blinded [as a result of the sin]. Each sin causes its own blemish.

Immediately once one does teshuva, his/her supernal form is restored completely as at first.

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Chapter Three

Everyone who sins, if he/she does Teshuva then the Supernal Imma (Binah), who is called teshuva has the ability to rectify the person's blemish and this will be enough.

However, if one does not do Teshuva, one will need to return in reincarnation to rectify his/her sin. This [comes about] through Abba (Hokhma), for He is called Thought as is known. Regarding Him is it written (2 Shmuel 14:14), "[Let him] ponder thoughts so that no one be banished from him." It is [the sefirat] Hokhma that returns the soul in reincarnation in order to rectify it.

We will now explain the matters of Teshuva, and we will also explain the saying of Rabbi Matya Ben Heresh (o.b.m.) in the last chapter of Yoma (86a), regarding the four parts of atonement; "if a man violate a positive commandment etc..." (Sha'ar HaGilgulim 21, 20a).

The first part [of atonement] is if one violates a positive commandment. This blemishes the realm of Asiyah. When one repents and does Teshuva, he will not move from his place until he is forgiven immediately. For by violating a positive commandment one causes the descent of the Malkhut of Asiyah. When one repents and does Teshuva, it easily ascends and immediately rectified. (20b).

The second part [of atonement] is if one violates a negative commandment and repents, his/her [forgiveness] is postponed, and Yom Kippur will atone. For this sin blemishes the realm of Yetzirah and causes a separation between the Malkhut and six Sefirot (HaGaT, NaHiY) who [become] concealed [because of the sin]. When one does Teshuva the Malkhut is restored to Her place. However, She still must wait for the Lights of Beriah, (which are called Yom HaKippurim). Then She will ascend up to there. This is what it means when it says that forgiveness is suspended and Yom Kippur will atone. (21a)

The third part [of atonement] is if one were to violate a commandment punishable by either being cut off or by being put to death by the Court. This blemishes Beriah. Thus when one does Teshuva, both forgiveness and Yom Kippur are suspended for the Tiferet (really, the whole HaGaT, NaHiY) and Malkhut both are unable to ascend above to their rightful places, until one endures suffering, which come from Abba and Imma (Hokhma and Binah). They will cleanse the sin in accordance to the secret meaning of the verse (Ps. 118:18), "G-d (specifically the Name YaH, spelled Yod Hey) has chastened me exceedingly." [The Name YaH, spelled Yod Hey] refers to Abba (Yod) and Imma (Hey), for from them emanate trials and tribulations.

The fourth part [of atonement] is if one were to commit a Hillul HaShem (desecration of G-d's holy Name). This blemishes Atzilut, which is called the World of Life, wherein which there is no death. [Such a sinner] causes there to be death in the World of Eternal Life. Therefore, Teshuva, Yom Kippur, and suffering are suspended. For not one of the three worlds (Beriah, Yetzirah,

Asiyah) are able to ascend above to their places until the death of the sinner. This is measure for measure. [One's death] will then atone for one completely.

Now I will explain the difference between [the two types of sins] Avon and Pesha. A Pesha sin is when one knows his Master and intentionally intends to rebel against Him, to anger Him. This causes the klipot (forces of evil) to take all the Supernal Radiance (source of blessing) and they do not give any of it to Israel below. An Avon sin is when one does what he wants following his desires. This enables the klipot to also take the Supernal Radiance that descends [from Heaven], however after they take it, they pass on the smallest amount of it to us below.

With this insight will one understand the two statements recorded in Yoma (86b). One says that so great is Teshuva that one's intentional sins become like unintentional sins. This is speaking about one that intentionally sins, the Pesha. Initially such a one causes the klipot (forces of evil) to take all of the Supernal Radiance for themselves. Now, by his deeds of Teshuva he causes the klipot to give us a portion of the Supernal Radiance after they have taken a portion for themselves.

The other statement is that [when one does Teshuva] one's intentional sins become like merits. This is speaking about the Avon [type of sin], where one sins only due to lust. When one does Teshuva, he causes the klipot not to take any portion of the descending Supernal Radiance at all. [Such a one] prevents [the forces of evil] from taking even their own portion.

Know that there is hardly any man on Earth who does not return in reincarnation.

Now the wicked, after they die, enter Gehinnom (Hell), where they are judged for twelve months.

There are those wicked of whom it is written (I Sam. 25:29), "And may He hurl away the soul of your enemies as one shoots a stone from a slingshot." [These souls] do not merit entering Gehinnom. Their souls go from bad to worse in various reincarnations until their sins are partially removed. [Only then] are they able to enter Gehinnom for twelve months to atone completely. For [these reincarnations] there is no set time. Sometimes one reincarnates for twenty years, sometimes for a hundred or [even] a thousand years.

The Righteous and Torah Scholars however are not subject to the fires of Gehinnom. Therefore, they need to reincarnate into this world to cleanse any sin that they might have. With a Tzadik, immediately upon his death he is punished to cleanse him of whatever serious sins he might have. Then he is taken one level higher. When it comes his turn to ascend to the next higher level, he is again punished to cleanse him of his sins that were less serious than the first ones. Then he ascends a second time to an even higher level. Then he is punished again over the finest points of the mitzvot, which are as a hair's breadth. Then he ascends to his rightful place of which he is worthy. (Sha'ar HaGilgulim 22, 21a).

A number of times I (Rabbi Haim Vital) would be walking with my teacher (the Ari'zal o.b.m.) in a field and he would say to me, that there was such and such an individual whose name was so and so and he a Tzadik and Talmid Hakham (a learned Rabbi). Yet, for the reason of such and

such a sin that he did when alive, he is now reincarnated into this stone, or plant or similar thing. My teacher never ever knew the person of whom he spoke. We investigated the manner [to see if there really was such a person] and we found his words were indeed true.

After one dies his sins are ripped out of him prior to his entering Gehinnom by many different ways of punishments, all of which are called reincarnations. This means that one will reincarnate in an inanimate object, a plant, an animal, or a person. Almost all human beings are subject to these reincarnations.

Sometimes after the leaf is destroyed [the soul] returns and reincarnates in another leaf. This was too will be destroyed. [This cycle repeats numerous times] similar to how one reincarnates as a person numerous times, all in accordance to the appropriate punishment. (Sha'ar HaGilgulim 22, 23a).

Know that all souls that are reincarnated and all souls otherwise punished by the heavenly Court have an angel that goes before them and proclaims their sins and what is their punishment. The proclamation follows the soul into every reincarnation and never leaves his side. (Sha'ar HaGilgulim 22, 23a)

There is also an angelic "policeman" who carries out on the soul the appropriate punishment. When the soul is pushed into a reincarnation this enforcement angel keeps the soul there until its punishment is complete.

The vast majority of those reincarnated or otherwise punished also have a Heavenly Court that is constantly watching them. The Court periodically changes the soul's punishment from time to time from one thing to another in accordance to the appropriate sentence and judgement.

There are those who will reincarnate into animals.

One who donates charity with a haughty heart will reincarnate as a bee.

A man who has intimate relations with a forbidden woman will reincarnate after his death as a dog. (Sha'ar Ruah HaKodesh, Tikun 20, 20a).

One who has sexual relations with an animal will be reincarnated as a [vampire] bat. (Sha'ar HaGilgulim 22, 23a).

A man who has intimate relations with a menstrual woman will be reincarnated as a woman. (Sha'ar HaGilgulim 22, 23b). One who commits adultery will reincarnate as a donkey.

One who commits the sin of homosexuality will reincarnate as a male or female rabbit, depending on which aspect of the sin he committed.

One who continuously looks at immodest members of the opposite sex will be reincarnated as a vulture.

One who acts without mercy to the poor will reincarnate as a crow.

One who causes one to forfeit money in an inappropriate court (one not following Torah Law) will reincarnate as a rabid dog.

Rabbis and Tzadikim that need to reincarnate to be cleansed of some minor sins will reincarnate as [dolphins or as other such] fish of the sea.

All these apply only when the individual sinner in question has not done Teshuva, for nothing stands in the way of Teshuva.

Chapter Five

The essence of all good midot (personality attributes) is that one should behave to the ultimate degree with humility, humbleness, and fear of sin.

One should to the ultimate degree stay away from pride, anger, strictness, mockery, and slander.

Even if one has good reason to be demanding, one should nonetheless not be overly strict. (Sha'ar Ruah HaKodesh 11a). One should not be demanding even with the members of one's own family.

One should keep distant from wasteful speech, although this is not as serious as the others listed above.

Know that from here to Heaven there are numerous [angelic] accusers and angels of destruction. In each of the seven Heavens, there are a number of gates. At each gate, there are a number of guardian angels. When a soul ascends there, they examine him/her to see if he/she is worthy. If yes, then the gates are opened and the soul ascends. If not, the soul is cast out and the gates are locked before them, blocking their entry. Therefore, every intelligent person should pay attention and place appropriate boundaries around one's [attitudes and behaviors]. Only then will the Gates of Righteousness be opened.

There are three types of sinful pride. There is the type where one is proud in one's heart, yet before others he/she appears humble. Regarding this is it written, "if the person will have on the skin of his flesh a swelling" (Lev. 13:2), meaning that one's pride is concealed under the skin of his flesh. Such pride is not apparent to all, but it is evident to the individual him/herself.

The second type of sinful pride is when one is haughty over one's peers, but not over one who is greater in either wisdom or number. This is like a skin rash, which clings to healthy skin.

The third type of sinful pride is truly an illness similar to leprosy. This is when one is haughty even over those greater than him/her in wisdom, number and wealth. Such a one turns up his/her nose at all. This is arrogant pride.

All three of these does G-d hate. All three types of pride cause one to become open to disease. Even the first type, which is the least serious where one's pride is not exposed, does the verse apply, "and it will become an illness of leprosy on the skin of his flesh. Such a one will be severely punished, even more so those who expose their haughtiness.

We have found that G-d hates haughtiness as it is written, "G-d rules, clothed in pride" (Ps. 93:1). For G-d's "pride" is a reference to His glory, which covers Him like a garment. For within the physical worlds G-d is cloaked in His Powerful Glory, which can be called His "pride." This is done for all to be in awe of Him. Yet, this revelation lasts for only a moment. From this do our Rabbis learn (Megilah 31a), that whenever we find mention of G-d's greatness we also find His humbleness.

Humbleness (Anava) is numerically equal to the name of the Satan. This is to suggest to us that the Satan will never dominate one who is sincerely humble. The Satan is not able to level accusations against the truly humble.

With regards to anger, my teacher (the Ari'zal) o.b.m. was extremely careful with regards to anger more than with any other sin.

His reason was that no other sin could cause an exchange of a person's soul more than anger. For when a person becomes angry his pure neshama soul departs from him and in its place enters another spirit from the side of evil.

For this reason, one who gets angry will lose his/her spirit of prophecy and wisdom (Pesahim 66b). This holds true even if one is a great and pious Sage. . . . even if one is angered over a matter of a mitzvah.

This is the secret of the verse (Job 18:4), "his soul is torn asunder in his anger." For one tears asunder his/her soul and makes it unclean and dead all the while when he/she is angry. His soul gets mangled and is cast away from him.

Even when a person does rectifications for his soul and performs many mitzvot, all become completely lost due to anger. For when his soul is lost and another comes to take its place, one must then start again from the beginning of the process of rectification. This occurs each and every time one gets angry.

We thus find that there is no repair for the one who gets angry, rather he is like a dog that returns to its vomit. If the person has a guardian angel (ibbur neshama) then this too is removed.

One who is always angry is not able to receive any true insights. For he destroys everything that he builds. Other sins do not cause this much damage to the soul. While other sins blemish the soul, they can be repaired by performing a specific meditation corresponding to the specific sin. That sin can thus be removed.

Anger however requires many rectifications and meditations to restore the soul and return it after it has been so ravaged. Anger does more than blemish the entire soul; it ravages and kills the soul. In the Zohar (Titzaveh 182b), it says that one who gets angry is like one who worships idols.

Every individual has two angels that escort him at all times, one to his right and one to his left. If one is a tzadik (righteous) then the angel on the right cries out before him, "give honor to the image of the Holy One, blessed be He." If one is a rasha (evil) then the angel on the left cries out, "This one rebels against his master." (Pri Etz Haim - Kriyat Shema Al HaMitah, 11, 79b).

It is an accepted teaching in our hands that when one rises from his bed when the rays of the sun are on the horizon (or slightly before) and does not sleep the entire day and night afterwards, eats only the minimal amount necessary and sits and studies Torah and mitzvot until the following morning when the rays of the sun begin to be seen on the horizon, these actions will save one from the punishment of one sin of karet (cutting off of one's soul).

It is a good thing that everyday one read Psalm 20, "May HaShem answer you on the day of trouble." (Sha'ar Ruah HaKodesh 12b).

A person needs to accustom him/herself to giving Tzedaka (charity) to the point where the hand acts automatically to give. (Sefer HaLikutim, Shemot, 29b).

It is good for one to visualize before him/herself at all times the Name YKVK with the vowels of the word Yirah (fear). This is the secret of the verse, "I place HaShem before me, always" (Ps. 16:9). This will cause one to cultivate a great fear of G-d in his/her heart. [In this way] will one's soul become purified. (Pri Etz Haim 83c, Mishneh Berurah 1:4).

In order for one to achieve wisdom there are certain conditions [that need be fulfilled].

The first condition is that one must be silent. One must lessen what one speaks at much as is possible. One should never speak wasteful words. Thus have our Rabbis taught (Avot 3:13), "the safeguard of wisdom is silence."

The second condition is with regards to every subject of Torah study be it in Pshat (Gemara, Halakha) or Sod (Kabbalah, Zohar) whatever is not clearly understood one should sit and cry over it all that one is able. (Sha'ar Ruah haKodesh 6b).

The observance of Shabat with all its Halakhic details in deed and in speech greatly elevates one's level of spiritual insight. (Sha'ar Ruah HaKodesh 11a).

Going to the Synagogue and sitting there in awe of G-d, with fear and devotion assist greatly in receiving Ruah HaKodesh (Divine inspiration). My teacher (the Ari'zal) o.b.m. told me that the essential way for one to receive Divine inspiration is to be meticulous in reciting the blessings over food. (Sha'ar Ruah HaKodesh 11a). One also must be careful everyday to set times for study of Torah, Mishna, Talmud, and Kabbalah, each with their appropriate meditations. One must be very careful about this.

Torah Secrets of Rosh HaShana & the Shofar

*Astrology, Kabbalah, M Theory,
Quantum Physics & the Sefer Yetzirah*

Everyone knows that we are subject to the laws of nature. There is no getting away from them, no matter how hard we try. No one will jump off a high building and expect not to fall. No one will stand in front of a fast moving vehicle and expect not to be hit. We all have relatively certain expectations of what we can expect from natural law and we live (or die) accordingly. I believe we all acknowledge this as evident truth.

Now, let me ask you this; what are the parameters and boundaries of natural law? The examples I just gave, we all agree upon. Yet, how far does the influence and power of natural law extend? We know that the entire universe, planets, galaxies and even space itself are all part of greater “nature” and are therefore subject to natural law, just as we are here on our miniscule and insignificant little planet Earth. Have you ever considered the relationship of natural law as it affects the universe and natural law as it affects us here on Earth? You might entertain the thought for a moment and then dismiss it because it is far too vast a consideration and, after all, who knows enough about science to tell us about any or all of the intricate natural law involvements and relationships that we human beings here on Earth share with the universe at large?

True, modern science may not have all these answers just yet. However, ancient science revealed some information about our human interactions with universal natural laws that are radically profound and extremely relevant, especially at this time. The ancient science of which I speak is Torah. The one universal natural law I wish to address now we call Rosh HaShana. For most people these are topics of religion and totally devoid of science. Yet, the opposite is true. There is no word for “religion” anywhere in the Torah.

Rosh HaShana, while it is observed with certain rituals described as religious, is actually the marking of an astronomical alignment of the Earth in space. As this interaction with specific stars occurs, we come into contact with certain fields of natural cosmic radiation that envelops our planet and influences it for a time to come. The nature of this influence is manipulated then by human consciousness and behavior through the Rosh HaShana observances.

Rosh HaShana is called the New Year. It is a marker of the passage of time. It has become a religious observance, but in reality, it is a scientific event of great significance. As our Earth makes its annual passage through its unique relationship with that group of stars we call Libra, we interact with natural cosmic energy fields that inhabit this part of space at the time when this passage occurs. These in turn express a strong influence on everything here on Earth and its influence is felt until the coming of the next year’s passage. This is why the ancients called Rosh HaShana, the beginning of the New Year and also the “day of judgment.” They never meant this in a religious or mythical way. They very well knew and understood the astronomical nature of this event and observed it accordingly. Yet, the Sages of ancient Israel were not the first to become aware of this relationship.

Centuries before the receiving of Torah on Sinai, the ancient Chaldeans, (and possibly earlier civilizations) developed what we today call the twelve signs of the zodiac. In essence, they created pictures out of groups of stars shining in the night sky. They gave them names and ascribed to them attributes. They taught that as Earth rotates around the sun and our planet's astronomical position shifts in relationship to these stars, that there are fluctuations in some type of natural cosmic radiation that extends its influence over matters here and upon us. Today we call this astrology. Many today seek to dismiss it as old and foolish folklore. However, throughout human history and even today, in almost every culture and society worldwide, including many modern secular circles of big business and politics, astrology is still highly respected and revered for what it has always been: a science.

Unfortunately, modern astrology has become a pop fad with daily horoscopes in the newspaper and their like. These should all be dismissed and not taken for anything other than entertainment. Real astrology is not a predictive art for foretelling the future. It is actually a scientific explanation of what happens when our Earth passes through vortexes of natural cosmic radiations in its annual travel around our sun and how these fields of energy have an influence over Earth and everything on it, including us.

Rosh HaShana begins the Hebrew month called Tishrei. The astrological sign for this month is Libra, the scales of balance and justice. Remember, this picture of stars and this name was developed in a culture that existed far before and far away from Sinai. The ancients already knew that what we call Tishrei was a time of reckoning. Torah merely expounded upon and expanded what the ancients already knew.

Torah revealed to us more about this time period than was previously known. Prior to Torah, the cosmic influences of Libra were known. Torah came and taught us how we can interact with these fields and manipulate their influence for our betterment. More than this, we even have a Biblical story alleging that this passage of time in relationship to Earth also influences matters happening on other worlds. Cosmic fields of radiation are expressions of natural law. They are not fabricated; they are not a myth; they are natural and a part of science. As such, we should not be surprised that their influence is felt far and beyond our own little corner of the galaxy. Somehow, regardless of differences in space or dimension, the relationship of stars and planets in synchronized time seems to have a binding factor for us here on earth with some "others" whomever and wherever "they" are.

The Biblical story I am speaking about is the Book of Job. In the opening chapter there is narrated a story about the "sons of god, discussing the affairs of the sons of men." True, maybe this is nothing more than a myth or metaphor, but tradition relates that this gathering occurred on, of all "days," Rosh HaShana. "Sons of god," whoever or whatever they might be are clearly not indigenous life forms on our Earth. They are clearly somewhere else in a domain that our myths call "Heaven." Who knows if Heaven is in actuality another dimension of being, or possibly another planet or world in our own universe. We have many unanswerable questions. Rather than argue about the unknowable, we can agree on what is known. The Biblical account is associating with Rosh HaShana "day of judgment" type characteristics, similar to the ancients representing this period of time in the stars by the sign of a scale (Libra), signifying balance and judgment.

In Torah legend, Rosh HaShana is described not as the day the Earth was created but rather as the day Adam first came to this planet. The Biblical tale tells us how G-d created Adam out of the “dust of the Earth” from the Garden of Eden. This is a lovely metaphor for our humble beginnings. However, the guardians of the secrets of the Torah revealed to us a rather shocking revelation about Adam. Prior to his being in our present human form, he was originally created in a much different form, one that the Bible calls, the “image of G-d.” We only took our present form as Homo Sapiens as a result of the “fall in Eden.” Yet, prior to this, we are taught that we were physically rather different from how we appear today.

Indeed, the guardians of Torah secrets actually suggest to us that the Garden in which Adam was originally “formed” was not on the face of our Earth at all. Without saying it outright, they subtly suggest that Adam might have had extraterrestrial origins. This insight adds extra meaning and significance to what we say that Rosh HaShana was the day that Adam came to Earth. This day marked a relationship in time and space that saw Adamic man come to Earth and thus begin the entire course of human events to follow. No wonder then that this day that the Earth’s passes through Libra is celebrated as the “head” (rosh) of the year (hashana). This day is humanity’s birthday and therefore, as this day served as the entry point of the human race to Earth, so too would this juxtaposition of time and space always have a profound influence over Adamic man. As Earth passes through this point in time and space on its annual passage around the sun, we regularly pass through that field of cosmic radiation that connects us to our original home in Eden and all the associated powers and influences of natural law that come forth from there.

When I speak about interactive energy fields operating within natural law I include within this the energy fields operating within the human being, both physically and psychologically (in which is include the spiritual). Through our technologies, we have all become familiar with what we know as electromagnetic fields. Most of our technological devices project such fields. They are real and very much have an affect upon things around them. What we often fail to pay attention to is that we human beings also generate our own electromagnetic fields. I am not speaking about some fantasy energy auras, I am speaking about brain waves, very real, very measurable fields of energy that are generated by our own brains and thoughts. Just as the electromagnetic field of our cell phones can have affect upon us physically, so too can the electromagnetic fields that are generated by and project human consciousness.

Electromagnetic fields exist throughout the universe. Indeed, underlying the entire universe, scientists can still detect the energy field that they say is left over from the moment of the “Big Bang.” Energy is everywhere. Energy is everything. We human beings are in essence packets of energy. We are integral components of the universe. We fit into the universe like cogs in a machine. We are connected to the greater whole. What happens in one area of the machine has an affect on other areas. Our universe is one giant machine and we are all parts in it, with distant parts having an affect on one another, all in accordance to the machine’s design and operations. The interrelationship of everything in the universe is substantiated by science in what today I believe is called “M Theory.”

M Theory believes that prior to the Big Bang our entire universe was an empty dimensional plane. It was only when a nearby parallel universe collided with our empty dimensional plane, at a specific point, that energy from the full one spewed out into the empty other and later that energy congealed to form physical matter. From this point of singular primordial energy came the diversity of the universe. Ultimately, therefore everything in the universe came from the same source and is therefore somehow still connected to it. Indeed, M Theory states that everything in the universe is still somehow connected and therefore, any one thing can somehow affect any other thing. If you will allow my use of metaphor, creation was almost as if the other dimension penetrated our dimension, ejaculated in it and impregnated it; our growing universe (and us) being the children. I use this metaphor because the guardians of Torah secrets speak in sexual metaphorical terms to describe the relationship between dimensions (Z.A. and NOK). There might be more to this set of terms than mere metaphor.

This interaction of primordial cosmic radiation fields affects everything, including human consciousness. King Solomon wrote that there is a time and place for every purpose under Heaven, a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to sow. These nice words are much more than beautiful poetry. Solomon, who was a keeper of the secrets, was actually discussing natural laws and how cosmic energy fields bombard Earth in a relatively mechanical timely manner, influencing shifts in collective human consciousness and thereby influencing and shifting the course of events on Earth, be they political, social or economic.

This cosmic interaction between Earth, radiation fields and their influence upon human consciousness is by no means generic. The interactions never affect two people or two places in the exact same way. As each point in space is finite and subjective, so too is each monad of human consciousness. Each unit of consciousness is what we call a soul. As each of us go through our daily lives, oblivious to anything happening in the universe, we regularly pass through specific fields of cosmic energy bombarding our planet. Some are large and can affect all humanity, some can affect only a relative physical locality; some vibrate at a specific resonance that affect only individuals of a certain orientation of consciousness. Everything is subjective and relative; yet, everything operates according to the natural laws of the universe, in its own version of mechanical form.

Authentic astrology is the science of understanding how natural cosmic fields present in the universe affect life on Earth as Earth passes through them and is influenced by them. These influences are scientific and not mythical. The nature of these energy fields are some form of electromagnetism, that may or may not be detectable by means known to present science. The nature of the influence that energetic fields have on human consciousness can be displayed in the laboratory. What is even more radical than this is the influence that human consciousness can have on energy fields. It is a well-known principle of Quantum Physics that atomic particles react in a different manner when they are being watched as to when they are not being watched. The nature of the observation affects them.

Our universe, our planet and our race all operate in this quantum reality, so too does our Torah. Torah is not a mere book about religion and stories of legend. It is an extraterrestrial communiqué of a quantum nature and contains within it significant scientific lessons. If we ever bothered to explore Torah scientifically and mathematically, we would make discoveries so

profound that they would enable us to find our collective way back home, to the stars from which we came.

Torah directs its recipients to perform specific ritual acts, in very precise specific ways, in very precise specific moments. The details can be as complicated and precise as operating a technical piece of machinery or operating software on a computer. If the lessons of the Torah were merely symbolic and mythical in nature, then all the details would be superfluous and unnecessary. Yet, the fact that such details exists, with such precision, indicates to us that there is a reason for their being. A scientific exploration of Torah rituals reveals to us how human consciousness influences and affects not only human behavior, but also the electromagnetic fields (brainwaves) that they generate.

The significant ritual associated with Rosh HaShana is the blowing of the shofar (rams horn). Very precise details are given how a shofar is to be made, how it is to be blown and even how it is to be held in one's hand. Again, if this were all a metaphor, the details would be superfluous. However, the ritual of blowing the shofar, when performed properly, combining all the necessary elements, creates a manipulation of subtle cosmic energy fields that have a profound affect upon human consciousness. Thus, we have the synthesis of time, space, action and consciousness, each interacting with and influencing one another. The blowing of the shofar on Rosh HaShana is, in actuality, an implementation of a natural/scientific program facilitating the smooth flow of energy fields functioning within the universal machine. As an extraterrestrial communiqué, would we expect anything in the Torah to be any less profound?

Human consciousness is the vital key that can influence all the other energy fields in the universe. The untapped powers of consciousness are today called extra sensory perception. We all have these abilities. They are part of our being human. They operate and function autonomously, whether or not we are aware of them. This is why we can always be influenced by forces from afar, afar in time and afar in place. This is also why, when we train our minds properly, we in turn can influence forces from afar, afar in time and afar in space. In order to assist us to accomplish this, we perform rituals (mitzvot). These have deep archetypal meanings in the unconscious and therefore affect us deeply when we interact with them (by our performance).

Torah commandments are expressions of scientific universal principles. When we perform them properly we are creating influences and subtle shifts of cosmic energy that have a great affect upon ourselves and our surroundings. Knowing the meaning of the time of Rosh HaShana is one thing; knowing what to do at that time is another. This would have been impossible for humanity to discover, had it not been for the reception of the Torah.

As the alignment between Earth and Libra occurs, the doorway that brought us to Earth reopens as it was in the beginning. When Adam came to Earth and stood at that metaphorical place on his descent, he was still fully connected to his source, receiving 100% of the energy that his source provided. Now, at this same time every year, we, Adam's descendants, return to the same place that Adam stood. Yet, what exactly is our individual relationship to the original "place" of Adam? Are we fully there or only partially there? Are we in direct alignment with the flow of natural cosmic energy emanating from our source or are we somewhat out of sync with

it? Where we stand on Rosh HaShana defines for us how much of a reconnection we each individually make. This is what defines what we religiously call blessing and curse.

Mind you, where we stand in not a statement of physicality, rather it means where our minds and souls are at in relationship to our inner human potential and source. "Above" usually is a metaphor for another non-physical realm or dimension where the power of mind rules supreme outside of the influence of finite matter. However, even such a "place" must have its correlate counterpart here in physical space. "Above" therefore is a parallel dimensional plane, possibly the one spoken of previously in relationship to M Theory, which according to the secrets of Torah, we call Eden. Yet, this dimensional plane has its entrances here in physical space, most likely in appropriately protected areas right here on Earth. As the Torah states, there is a revolving sword of fire guarding the way to Eden.

Our relationship with the cosmic energy field that flows from that other dimensional plane to ours defines for us almost everything in life, including our times of death. Indeed, the influx from that other dimension that began our dimension is the secret of life. The original influx ejaculated into our dimension, then and now, is the energy that Torah calls Nefesh and the Chinese call Chi. This is pure and raw "life force" energy, the fundamental power of creation and form. This is the indwelling presence of G-d imbuing everything in the universe and in Torah tradition is called the Shekhina.

This is why Rosh HaShana is "judgment day." On this day, as we travel through space and time, we return to our place of origin. The original window of Nefesh cosmic energy is there flowing down in its original abundance. How we stand at that moment in relationship to it defines for us how much of a portion we will be able to maintain for the year, until our return to that place. There is no greater "judgment" than this. Yet, it is only a metaphor to say that Heaven or G-d is judging us. Rather it is we ourselves that is judging ourselves. Our psychological/spiritual state in relationship to our true inner Higher Self (our inner Adam) defines for us our portion and prescribes how we will be influenced over the coming year.

Knowing well the full extent of our quantum universe, the Torah formed for us commandments that serve as archetypes that enable our true human essence to reconnect with our "higher" other dimensional source. This happens in a very precise and specified fashion, as do all other things in the laws and ways of nature. The Rosh HaShana blowing of the Shofar is a perfect example of this.

We blow the shofar in order to arouse us to inner contemplation and outer repair of bad character and other immoral or illegal behavior. This is not done in some silly symbolic way. There is actually a science to the shofar, its sounds and the mental contemplations projecting from the brain waves of the one doing the blowing.

The shofar is not a musical instrument; it is an instrument of sound. Sound, like electromagnetic fields have profound affects upon everything around them. Sound waves can kill and sound waves can heal; sound waves can create and sound waves can destroy. It is said that G-d created the universe speaking it into being. What G-d spoke was a unique combination of sounds. Interestingly, modern science believes that the smallest particles of subatomic matter are called

strings. Their vibrations form larger particles that eventually form atoms, molecules and the rest of our universe of physical matter. Sound is thus the foundation of our universe. Everything comes forth from it. It is no wonder then that the shofar expresses a sound that is primordial. The shofar creates a sound that speaks to the inner essence of our being. Its sound contains a wealth of information, unknowable and undecipherable to rational consciousness.

Torah dictates that the shofar is to be made from the horn of a kosher animal. The details of making a shofar are not important now; what is important is what the shofar is used for. We blow the shofar during Rosh HaShana prayers. It is supposed to arouse us to contemplate bettering our lives. While many religious and moral teachings are taught about Rosh HaShana and the blowing of the shofar, it is only the guardians of Torah secrets who reveal to us exactly how the blowing of the shofar works to alter human consciousness and by doing this alter construct reality.

In brief, the language of the Kabbalah states that the sefirotic face of Binah called Imma (the Supernal Mother) is the one who blows the shofar above. She is said to blow the shofar over the head of "her son," the sefirotic face of Tiferet called Zeir Anpin. In synagogues today, the shofar is always held with its opening facing up. However, the Kabbalah teaches that its opening is supposed to be facing down, corresponding to the Supernal pattern. The guardians of Torah secrets were masters of metaphor. They concealed a tremendous amount of psychological and scientific information within their mystical codes. In order to appreciate the scientific nature of the shofar and how it influences fluctuations of the cosmic energy fields vibrating on this day, we have to strip the Kabbalistic metaphors of their myths and explain what really happens.

The sefirat Binah is the metaphor used to describe human consciousness. The mind is the mother of being. From the mind comes forth the heart, the seat of emotions, passions and motivations. The heart is the receptacle that connects the human essence to Earth. Unfortunately, it is also the heart that gets caught up, confused and misguided. When the heart is led astray, higher human consciousness gets disconnected from the point of consciousness active in the human body. Mentally disconnected from our higher Mind (source) we end up becoming trapped on Earth, exiled and lost from our original source.

This is the "fall of man" in Eden; it is a split of the higher mind from what has become the lower mind. This is a form of psychic/spiritual schizophrenia. We live in a finite physical reality here on Earth, lost and oblivious to our origins and true higher essence. In order to help us repair this breach in consciousness and to direct us home Torah came to Earth. Torah speaks to our hearts and tells us what to do to reconnect our hearts, minds and souls. Torah speaks the language of the soul, the higher self, which now resides within the unconscious part of our minds. Mitzvot reverberate universal truths of natural law. They are not metaphors; they are actual scientific formulas for the transformation of consciousness that enables us to evolve from being present day Homo Sapien man to a future Homo Superior man.

The heart is metaphorically called Tiferet, Zeir Anpin, the small face of G-d. This is because it reflects the supernal image above. Lower "man" was formed in the image of supernal "man." Higher human consciousness, referred to as Binah the Supernal Mother looks after her children. Higher human consciousness looks down upon the heart, educates it, provides for it clarity and

nurtures it with reminders of its true being. Unfortunately standard human living often creates interference and the inner “voice” of the “mother” is often blurred. This is the definition of exile. Exile is not a political or national condition; it is a condition of the psyche, of the mind.

The shofar is the channel that reconnects Binah (the mind) with Tiferet (the heart). Not only do we symbolize this by holding the opening of the shofar down towards the heart; there is an entire set of meditative contemplations performed as the sounds of the blasts move through the shofar horn.

We all pass through cosmic radiation fields at any given moment as they bombard our planet. The power of directed human consciousness can have profound affects upon these fields. Sound waves can be directed by human consciousness through the medium of voice. The tonnage of voice can be elevated and strengthened when projected through the shofar. Therefore, the blowing of the shofar when performed correctly along with the appropriate focus of mind can create a profound affect upon those who encounter the sound waves it projects (in other less scientific terms, those who hear its blasts).

The specific focus the mind takes during the blowing of the shofar is called by the Kabbalists kavanot meditations. They are a very intricate and detailed set of instructions for the movement of Nefesh energy (shefa in Hebrew) from its domains above in the highest realms in the inner recesses of the unconscious mind to ultimately manifest here on Earth, specifically within the human heart (the “head” of Zeir Anpin). It is not enough that one have a general conception of this; the duty is in the details. Compare this, if you will, to operating a computer. You can know how to turn on and off a computer and even know how to move its mouse, maybe even how to open a program. Yet, can you write the program? Do you understand how to write the program for Windows? Most likely not! Your knowledge of computers is limited; there is only so much you can do with what you know. Granted you can do some things, but what you cannot do far outweighs what you can. This same example applies to kavanot meditations.

First, one must have the training to discipline the mind in order to be able to attain a state of focused mentality. Only when the mind can remain focused without distraction for significant periods of time will it be able to attach itself to pure unadulterated, non-mythical thought and use it to manipulate the energy fields surrounding and penetrating human consciousness. Indeed, a very good Kabbalistic meditator, like the Biblical prophets, could use their powers of mind even further to actually manipulate physical matter.

This is how the Kohanim used the combined power of their shofar blasts to topple the walls of Jericho. This is how Eliyahu HaNavi was able to in essence, create the rain that he was praying for. This is how numerous Sages throughout Torah history used their mind powers to create material forms. The stories of golems and animals being created out of the technology taught in the Sefer Yetzirah are far from mythical. There are those who to this day have sufficient education and training to manipulate these forces.

On Rosh HaShana, when the time is right, trained human minds, make use of specific rituals and by doing so create profound psychic affects in collective human consciousness. The blowing of the shofar by those who know what they are doing according to the secrets of things is at a

subtle level of consciousness heard by everyone around the world. The numerous others blowing their shofars on Rosh HaShana without the proper mental focus are acting as local amplifiers for the “voice” emanating from the mouth and the mind (Binah/Imma) of the properly trained.

In conclusion, my purpose in writing this essay was to demonstrate a little of what in Torah circles we call, “ta’amei mitzvot” (the meanings behind the commandments). We have for so long made a myth of Torah and religion to the point that many have fallen away from it, dismissing it as nothing more than outdated fairy tales. This is partially the fault of those Torah teachers who themselves do not know the true depths of Torah. How can the student be expected to embrace that which even the teacher does not know?

I believe in light of the moment it is wise to reveal the underlying scientific realities of Torah. In order to dispel myth I believe it is prudent for us to understand the significance of the movements of stars and planets, cosmic electromagnetic radiation fields and their affects upon our planet and its life forms. We need to know how Torah teaches us the science of sound (prayer) and the power of the human mind (kavana) that can tap into and manipulate cosmic fields and how the performance of mitzvot can actually create and generate a difference in our little unaware lives here on Earth.

We truly do live in such a grander universe than we can imagine. Through our contemplations we can tap deep inner recesses of our minds of which we are seldom aware. I pray that I have given you something to contemplate, to think about, or possibly even dream about. When the shofar blows on Rosh HaShana clear your mind of distractions and listen intently to your heart. You might very well hear the “voice” of Binah/Imma speaking within you. What “she” will be saying, only you will ever know.

Avinu Malkeynu in Kabbalah

During these days of Teshuva we have a special addition to our daily prayers entitled Avinu Malkeynu (our Father, our King). These words introduce a number of requests that HaShem should forgive our sins, bless us with a good New Year and many more.

The question to ask is why is HaShem referred to both as our Father and our King. Why not just refer to Him as either one or another?

A simple answer can be that, as we know, HaShem acts towards us as both a loving Father and as a stern King, which ever we merit. Being that we do not know our merit before HaShem, it is wise for us to refer to Him by both titles.

While this answer is true, from the pshat (simplistic) point of view, the secrets of the Kabbalah reveal to us a more profound reason, one that has much personal relevance to how our prayers are heard and answered.

To understand the Kabbalah of Avinu Malkeynu, let us turn to a small prayer in Rosh HaShana Musaf entitled the HaYom Harat Olam and to its Kabbalistic meaning.

After the blowing of the Shofar in the Rosh HaShana Musaf prayers, we recite the following short prayer:

“Today is the birth of the world, today He [HaShem] stands up to judge all the creatures of the world. We are before You either like children or like servants. If we are like children, be merciful to us as a father is to his children. If we are as servants then we raise our eyes and depend upon You until You will favor us and bring our judgment into light.”

In the Kabbalistic Siddur Rashash, the following comments are added to the above prayer: “We are before you like children” – these are they who merit a NaRaN (soul) from the realm of Atzilut. They are the children of ZA and NOK.”

“Or like servants” – these have a NaRaN (soul) from the realms of BeY'A (Beriah, Yetzirah, Asiyah) and are called slave, servant and handmaiden.”

As we see, those called “children” have souls that emanate from a higher source than those called “servants.” The explanation of this is as follows.

Due to the sin of Adam (and our own) the souls of collective Israel fell from their original celestial heights in the spiritual realm known as Atzilut. Atzilut is the realm of pure holiness. Souls emanating from this level are in a constant state of union with HaShem. Such souls are thus called HaShem’s children. The Kabbalistic appellation of ZA and NOK is used to express the unification of the sefirot Tiferet and Malkhut. Atzilutic souls emanate from this source.

Although Adamic souls have fallen from the Atzilutic heights, HaShem in His mercy has provided for us His holy Torah, the observance of the mitzvot therein serves to purify our souls and enables them to be restored to their Atzilutic heights.

However, our souls go through a long and arduous process along the path of return to HaShem. We compound the fall of Adam with our own sins, entrapping our souls in the lower worlds that include within them various levels of evil, contamination, and defilement. These lower worlds are called BeYA (Beriah, the realm of thought; Yetzirah, the realm of emotion and Asiyah, the realm of the physical). Whenever we sin in thought, word, feelings, or deeds, our souls become ensnared in these lower worlds and the forces of evil present within them.

Impure souls cannot be called “children” because they do not possess the purity of the sefirotic “parents” Tiferet (ZA) and Malkhut (NOK). Those souls still going through the process of purification are referred to as “servants” and not “children.”

It must be remembered that souls themselves are composite entities consisting of five general parts (nefesh, ruah, neshama, haya, and yehida). Each of these in turn can reincarnate separately from the others and rectify at its own pace and speed.

Therefore each and every human soul has within it elements of differing levels of rectification and purity. Each of us might have within us an element that indeed has succeeded to return to the Atzilutic heights, all the while the other elements of our composite soul struggle to be free from our earthly containment and contamination.

On Rosh HaShana we are each judged as individuals. Yet, each of us is still a composite being and HaShem judges each and every element within our souls individually.

Therefore, during these days of Teshuva (return to HaShem), we approach Him in the spirit of utmost honesty and spiritual truth.

There is that element within our composite soul that shines the light of Atzilut within us. This level of our souls is referred to as the “children” of HaShem. Corresponding to this level of soul, we can call HaShem “Avinu” (our Father).

Yet, with regards to the still impure attributes of soul within us, these are still ensnared in the lower worlds that possess both good and evil. Such souls and those attributes within each individual soul are called a “servant.” Corresponding to this we call HaShem “Malkeynu” (our King).

HaShem behaves as a merciful Father to those with purified souls and He acts as a stern King to those with impure souls. Children receive His full grace. Servants are treated in according to their merits.

Each of us has within our souls Atzilutic and non-Atzilutic elements. Thus when HaShem comes to interact with us, He acts in relationship to the exact levels of balance within our individual souls.

The more we shine His pure and holy Light, the more we are His “children,” thus the more we receive His mercy.

The more we shine our own light and serve our selves, continuing in the path of our faulty beliefs, feelings and deeds, we are called “servants.” Thus the amount of mercy show is less and the amount of stern judgment shown is more.

Avinu Malkeynu is written for us to remind us of our composite spiritual makeup. With every supplication to HaShem, with every recital of the words Avinu Malkeynu, we remind ourselves that there is definitely much good within us.

We have within us the element that makes us worthy to be called a “child” worthy to call HaShem Avinu (our Father). Whereas at the same time there is still impurity within us that necessitates that we call ourselves “servants” and thus entitle us only to call HaShem Malkeynu (our King).

We should be proud every time we can call HaShem Avinu and we should be humbled every time we are required to call HaShem Malkeynu. Yet, in both attributes we must surrender ourselves to the Divine service and Heavenly cause. In this way we elevate that element of “servant” within us and transform it into the “child.” In this way, we solicit HaShem’s blessing for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness in this coming New Year.

May HaShem bless us all that we rise from being servants and all become worthy children of our Father in Heaven. May we all be inscribed in the Book of Life, for all good things, Amen.

Torah Readings on Rosh HaShana

The Parasha that we read on the first day of Rosh HaShana deals with the fulfillment of the promise of the birth of Yitzhak Avinu.

The message of this reading is a simple one: G-d is with us and will fulfill His promise to assist us in facing life's adversities. But this is on condition that we ourselves do what it necessary to fulfill our human obligations in the task.

That Sarah could become pregnant at the age of 90 is a miracle in its own right. Yet, her pregnancy was no immaculate conception. Abraham was very much the father of Yitzhak. He could not just sit back and wait for a son to come down from Heaven. No, Yitzhak was born like any other child, of an intimate union between his father and mother. Avraham and Sarah did their part and G-d did His. This is the message of Rosh HaShana.

We call this day, a Day of Judgment. We believe that on this day G-d ordains what will be for a person during the coming year. Now, G-d knows our hearts and our minds. He is not a myth nor is faith in Him a myth. Regardless of what we personally believe G-d and His judgment marches forward. G-d actually pays no mind to the mistakes of the human intellect. How or what we believe about Him doesn't seem to matter that much. What is important in the Eyes of G-d and also in the eyes of man is our human behavior and character.

Avraham Avinu was called a righteous man because he embodied a simple attribute; his was a personality of giving and providing hospitality. In a day when hotels did not yet exist Abraham opened his own home to travelers and provided for them lodging and food. This was no small feat in his day.

Avraham was a man of action, and as such G-d blessed his actions, and made even an almost impossible one to be possible. And thus Yitzhak was born.

Whether we today believe in G-d or not is not the point. The point is that we believe in ourselves, as beings created in the image of G-d, to be the greatest human being that we possibly can be; to embrace our responsibilities and obligations and to fulfill them with vigor and resolve.

When G-d sees how we do the right things, then He blesses us that He reinforces our efforts and enables us to accomplish even sometimes the impossible, but only if we stand diligent to believe in the impossible and make all efforts to make it possible.

On the other hand, if and when we seek to shirk our responsibilities we will face all sorts of adversity in life. This is why the Book of Jonah is read on Yom Kippur, ten days after Rosh HaShana.

The days between Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur are called the Ten Penitential Days of Repentance. What we are supposed to be focusing on during this time is how to make ourselves

a better person. And at the time of the afternoon service on Yom Kippur just hours away from the close of the High Holidays we read about Jonah.

We all know the story about Jonah. He was a prophet who G-d spoke to and commanded that he travel from Israel his home to modern day Syria/Iraq to the ancient town of Nineveh and warn the city that G-d is set to destroy them if they do not change their ways. Jonah wanted no part in the Divine mission and immediately booked passage on a ship going to sea in the opposite direction. And what do you know, a great sea storm blows up blocking the ships passage. Jonah is thrown into the sea, a big fish swallows him whole and belches him up back in Israel, where G-d again speak to Him and tells him to go to Nineveh. This time Jonah goes, he preaches and the entire city is so touched by him that they do indeed change their ways. Yet, Jonah is unhappy with the results becomes depressed and that is about where the story ends.

Jonah is the example of the one who desires to stand in opposition to the power of fate and destiny. He tries to steer his own course. Yet, there is a higher Hand over him guiding him in another direction. Only when Jonah acquiesces does his fortune change for the good, but only after much suffering, which I remind you was brought on by himself.

The Book of Jonah stands to remind us that when we accept upon ourselves our duties and obligations, we can create for ourselves all the good that comes with doing the right thing. This is why we read the book on Yom Kippur just before the end of the holiday to remind us that Atonement means more than saying "I'm sorry." It means making a difference.

Rosh HaShana, Yom Kippur and the Ten Penitential Days between them are all intricately linked together with a common cause and a common message. This message must be heard by all, religious and secular alike. The message again is simple. Do the right things in life and you will see the fruits of your efforts. Do the wrong things in life and you will taste of those bitter fruits. The choice as always is our own.

This is why Rosh HaShana is called a Day of Judgment. Yet, ask yourself who is really our Judge? Is it G-d or is it ourselves? We had better pray that it is G-d, for with G-d there is mercy and forgiveness. With ourselves and some of the foolish things we do from time to time, there is often no mercy nor forgiveness; we are forced to eat of the bitter fruits of our own planting.

Which do you prefer: the blessings of abundance (symbolized by the birth of a child) or the belly of a fish (a metaphor for the tight spots we get ourselves into)? Rosh HaShana comes to remind us that like Abraham and Jonah we each have a choice in life, and that as we choose, so will be our path.

Shana Tova to you all. May G-d bless you all with a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year filled with all sorts of good things, Amen.

The Question of Tashlikh on Shabat

Question:

The minhag of tashlikh is normally observed on the first day of Rosh HaShana. However, when Rosh HaShana falls on Shabat many postpone Tashlikh until the second day. What is the proper minhag according to the Sephardim and according to the Mekubalim?

Answer:

The minhag (tradition) of tashlikh is of recent origins. The RaMaH mentions it briefly in his glosses to the Shulkhan Arukh (Orah Haim 583:2), saying that the minhag originated with Rabbi Yaakov Moellin (the Maharil, died 1427). It did not become standard Sephardic practice until it was adopted by the Ari'zal, not too many years after the RaMaH wrote his glosses.

Rabbi Haim Vital mentions the minhag of tashlikh in his Sha'ar HaKavanot (90b). Summarizing the view of his teacher, the Ari'zal, Rabbi Haim writes: *"the matter of the minhag that the Ashkenazim observe on the first day of Rosh HaShana. A short time after the Minha prayers yet before sundown [they go] by the great sea or by a well or spring of moving water. There they read tashlikh. This is a good minhag. It is best if this is done outside the city. One stands by the water, the well, or the spring and reads there the three verses, Mi Kel Kamokha"* (Micah 7:18-20).

Today there are numerous bodies of water within city limits and close to Jewish communities. Not many people have to travel too far to be at a lakeside, pond, pool, or similar body of water. While it is best to recite tashlikh over a natural body of water, with fish in it if possible, there are no laws to require this. In an absence of any body of water, one may simply fill a bucket of water and recite tashlikh over it. (I have seen a bucket of water filled with a hose used in places in Eretz Yisrael too far removed from any natural body of water).

More than just the recital of Micah 7:18-20, the tashlikh service today has been expanded to include sections from the Zohar, numerous prayers and for those so inclined, mystical kavanot/meditations (ref. Pituei Hotam 10-12, in Even HaShoham 583, page 121). When reciting the three verses one shakes out one's outer garment, symbolically fulfilling the verse in Micah 7:9 of casting "one's sins into the depths of the sea" (ref. Even HaShoham 3, O.H. 583:11, in the name of the Pri Etz Haim 142b).

Normally the prayers and sections of the Zohar read for tashlikh are too long to be memorized. Therefore, one usually carries a Rosh HaShana Mahzor (prayerbook) to the tashlikh site. This creates a problem when Rosh HaShana falls on Shabat and the place of tashlikh is outside the eruv, or there is not an eruv at all. Due to the concern of a possible violation of Torah law by carrying an article (the Mahzor) in a public domain, many Rabbis have stated that when the first day of Rosh HaShana falls on a Shabat, tashlikh should be postponed to the second day. (Ref. Kaf HaHaim 583:31, in the name of the Kitzur Sh'lah and the Mishneh Berurah 583:8 in the name of the Pri Megadim).

Rabbi David Yosef, the son of HaRav Ovadiah Yosef addresses this issue in his Torat HaMoadim on the Yamim HaNoraim (3:20).

“When [day one of] Rosh HaShana falls on Shabat, if there is eruv in town, or the place of saying the order of tashlikh is outside the eruv boundaries, one should refrain from saying the order of tashlikh on Shabat. [This is] so that the public will not stumble by carrying Mahzors from a private domain into a public domain. That year tashlikh should be recited on the second day of Rosh HaShana.

If the recitation of the order of tashlikh is performed within the boundaries of the eruv tashlikh can be recited even on Shabat. Even those who makhmir (follow stricter opinions) not to rely on the eruv and do not carry anything in the public domain on Shabat (even with an eruv) are still able to recite the order of tashlikh on Shabat. They can hand the Mahzors to children below the age of observing the mitzvot to carry for them.

There are those who always postpone reciting the order of tashlikh to the second day when the first day of Rosh HaShana falls on Shabat. If there is an eruv in a place it is always more correct to recite it on day one of Rosh HaShana, even when that day is on Shabat.”

This view of Rabbi David Yosef most eloquently summarizes the view of his father HaRav Ovadiah Yosef as recorded in the books Yehaveh Da’at (1:56) an Yibeah Omer (4:47). The point to emphasize here is that even without an eruv, the Rabbis suggest doing tashlikh on day one of Rosh HaShana. As Rabbi David says, *“it is always more correct to recite it on day one of Rosh HaShana, even when that day is on Shabat.”*

The holy Mekubalim always recite tashlikh on the first day of Rosh HaShana, even when that day is the Shabat (ref. Kaf HaHaim 583:31). The reason for this, they explain, is that the severity of judgment on day one of Rosh HaShana is greater than on day two. Therefore, the prayers of tashlikh, which are designed to mitigate judgment, are more auspiciously said on day one than on day two. So important is this that Rabbi Eliyahu Mani of Hevron would never recite tashlikh on day two of Rosh HaShana if day one fell on Shabat. He wrote (Minhagei Beit El in Hevron, 75) that tashlikh is only applicable on day one.

Unfortunately, there are those Sephardim in many places outside of Eretz Yisrael who refrain from doing tashlikh on day one of Rosh HaShana because the eruvim in their communities were designed by our brothers the Ashkenazim and, therefore, do not conform to Sephardic standards. For the longest time, this has been a serious issue amongst Sephardim living in predominantly Ashkenazi neighborhoods.

However, in his recent work Yibeah Omer (9:33) HaRav Ovadiah Yosef writes in detail suggesting that the standards used for eruvim today can be interpreted as being acceptable for Sephardic use. In light of this ruling, many Sephardim today take advantage of the Ashkenazi eruvim without concern.

In relationship to tashlikh, this means that even the most makhmir (stringent observers) can take advantage of the eruv, even if it be just this once, to perform tashlikh, which Rav Mani says must be performed on day one of Rosh HaShana. As Rabbi David Ovadiah wrote above, if one does not wish to carry a Mahzor themselves out of concerns over the eruv, one may then have a child under the age of Bar/Bat Mitzvah carry the book for them.

In conclusion, one may rely upon a local eruv, carry a Mahzor to a body of water within the eruv, and recite the tashlikh prayers of the first day of Rosh HaShana that coincides with Shabat. This is the correct and proper observance in accordance to both Mekubalim and Rabbanim. As always, there are dissenting views, yet they offer nothing so important to postpone the supplications for Divine mercy at this most auspicious of times.

Indeed, as known to the Mekubalim, Shabat afternoon is the most auspicious time for prayer, when our prayers rise to the highest levels and reveal the highest levels of Divine mercy. How appropriate is it to then say tashlikh at this most auspicious hour. Those who do so are assured to receive Divine favor throughout the year.

May HaShem cleanse us all of our sins, and renew for us all a year of mercy, righteousness, protection, health, wealth and all good things. Amen.

A Message for the Eseret Yamei HaTeshuva *(Ten Penitential Days)* *Focus Upon the Heart*

The time of Teshuva (repentance) and self introspection is upon us. Many in the religious world will concern themselves this week between Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur to be meticulous with observing certain stricter interpretations of Torah Law. Many believe that by becoming more “religious” for a week that this will somehow influence G-d, The Knower Of All Truths to favor one with a prosperous New Year. It boggles the mind how spiritually immature and blind some individuals can be to actually believe that their feeble attempts to impress G-d will actually work to their benefit.

Teshuva means returning to G-d. Returning to G-d can include becoming more “religious” but this is only of value if one’s intent is sincere, in order to do the right thing, not just to attempt to impress G-d with a worthless show of false piety.

Returning to G-d actually means to restore within us the Image of G-d in which we were created. Yet, in order to do this, one must have an insight into what that inner Divine Image actually is. Some might consider this task to be so sublime and lofty that it is outside of their normal human parameters to pursue. However such a consideration is a falsehood and there is nothing that G-d hates more than falsehood.

Pursuing the restoration of the inner Divine Image can also be referred to in more modern, down to earth terms. We call it, rectifying one’s character and personality. This task is of such vital spiritual value and importance that to merely describe it in down to earth terms takes away from its massive importance in the Divine scheme of things.

During these Ten Penitential Days between Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur, the true Teshuva desired of us by HaShem is not the hypocritical observance of humrot (stricter opinions of observance of Torah ritual), but rather the sincere rectification of our human character. The one who stands before G-d properly reflecting the Divine Image in this world through one’s character, integrity and personality is the one who is said to have “returned” to Him.

The cultivation of character is no easy thing. This is why so many choose not to pursue it. Proper character means that one must live by a code of ethics and morality wherein which the individual is not the center of his/her own universe, but rather G-d is. Self sacrifice is a normal and desirable characteristic, not for the sake of the praise of others, but simply because it is the right thing to do at the right time in the right place.

Proper character before G-d requires of one the cultivation of such traits as courage (ometz), honor (kavod which is self respect, not self pride), discipline (musar) and responsibility (arvut). These four traits serve as the four pillars of the Merkava (chariot / throne) through which the spirit of G-d can shine through the human personality.

* **COURAGE** (ometz) means that one rises up to any occasion without hesitation or fear, knowing full well that HaShem is at one's right hand and that one will not fall (Psalm 16:8). Courage means that one looks at any difficult task as a challenge, desiring to take on the challenge in order to prove that with G-d's help there is nothing that one cannot do; for it is G-d that gives us the power to do great things (Deut. 8:18).

* **HONOR** (kavod) means self respect. One stands constantly in the knowing presence of the Divine and acts accordingly. One does no debasing or disgraceful thing. One does not compromise one's integrity for the sake of personal gain or for the sake of selfish lust. One does not seek personal benefit at the cost of the harm, loss or lack of any other person. Honor means that one lives by one's conscience, knowing that one's behavior is well pleasing in the eyes of G-d.

* **DISCIPLINE** (musar) simply means doing what one has to do, regardless of how one feels about it. Discipline is the only salvation for one who lacks control over anything or any area in one's life. Discipline controls how one speaks, and how one acts. It does not and is not meant to control how one feels, discipline rather controls how one expresses how one feels. For example, there are right and wrong times for one to get angry. There are right and wrong means through which anger is to be expressed. If one strikes out to harm with one's anger, then one lacks the discipline of control. Yet, if one disciplines one's anger and expresses it in a proper and directed manner, the force of one's convictions can help better many a situation and person. Discipline means that we choose how to act and speak, directed as always by the inner knowing of the Will and Torah of HaShem.

* **RESPONSIBILITY** (arvut) means always doing the right thing. When something needs to be done, and one is in the position to do it, then one can rest assured that you are the right person in the right place at the right time sent by the Will of G-d to accomplish the right results. Responsibility means that one can take upon oneself any yoke or burden knowing full well that if it is G-d's Will that this burden be carried, then by all means one has the strength to carry it for however long is necessary. Responsibility does not seek to place blame on another, not on another person, and not even on the yetzer hara (evil inclination). G-d has assigned us tasks in life, be they the general task of Torah observance or the personal tasks of our daily obligations. Whatever our tasks may be, take responsibility for them and **JUST DO IT!**

When we refine our character before G-d, we enable G-d to move through us here on Earth. We become G-d's Merkava chariot. When we accomplish this great task on a Jewish national level, we will with ease be able to bring the coming of our long awaited Mashiah. Mind you, to think about all Jews as a single nation, with single and united national aspirations and obligations is part of our collective Torah responsibility. This is the true definition of Religious Zionism. It is a mitzvah aseh d'oraita (a Torah obligation) for all Jews to think this way and live this way.

One must remember that the most important character trait of them all is humility, for one to recognize that even with all the great gifts bestowed upon us by our blessed Creator, nonetheless, whether great or small, rich or poor, wise or fool, we are all but mere mortals in His great Divine Eye. No one has special standing before the Creator, for we are all His creations.

Only one who is not full of self can become full of G-d. Therefore to cultivate the awareness that we are all mere mortals of equal creation before G-d and that personal riches or positions of power mean nothing before Him, this is the pathway towards true return (repentance/Teshuva).

Our job is simple, fear G-d, observe His commandments, follow His Torah and allow His Divine Image to shine from within our hearts; to do the right thing simply because it is just that, the right thing.

If you follow the path of proper character development many might become offended by your renewed straightforwardness and simplicity. Pay their objections no mind. Place G-d before you always, not the opinions of others. Others are concerned by their own self interest; they have no honor when they act like this. You are the honorable one, armed with courage and discipline to take on your responsibilities to DO THEM.

You have now read my words. Let me share with you some words of two others. May their words and mine speak to your hearts.

*"All who come to these gates [to seek out HaShem] should not run ahead in one's spirit to come at just any moment to enter [the domains of] holiness.
[One must first] purify one's thoughts from foolish momentary things and cleanse oneself from arrogance and anger; for these are the hindrances (klipot) that prevent one from entering within to gaze upon the pleasantness of HaShem and to visit within His Palace.
One must humble oneself before all people; [even] to hear oneself being abused and to bare it.
[All one does must be] for the sake of Heaven and to show compassion even upon those who one hates (with the exception of those who hate G-d).
One must be of a giving heart and humble spirit.
One must despise the lust for power and pride, as well as the lust of over-eating (bad foods) and the lust towards women.
One must [above all things] love truth and hate falsehood.
One must be modest [and unassuming] and seek out the respect of men of wisdom.
The essence of one's intentions should be [for the acquisition of] the wisdom of truth.
One should not study this wisdom in order to become haughty [over one's accomplishments] G-d forbid. One's prayer to G-d should always be that [one's path] should be straight lest one waver (fall) from the truth, either to the right or to the left."*

Rabbi Avraham Abulafia
Introduction to Sefer Hayei Olam HaBa

*"There was an episode with one individual who was known for his many fast days; for giving much charity and supporting many in need; however he was also one who pursued power. He approached the Mitbodedim (the prophetic Kabbalists) who had ascended to the level of prophecy and said to their leader,
Please sir, [I appeal to] your mercy, show me the reason for this why after I have done all the good things [that I have done] why I [too] have not merited to the level of prophecy to see the future like you."*

*[The leader responded and] said to him, "Take a bag filled with sweet nuts and figs and tie it around your neck. Go to the center of town in the presence of the city leaders and elite, gather around you some children and say to them, whoever wants some of these sweets [first] come and strike me with your hand, first on the neck and then on my cheek. If you do this a number of times, then [you can] return to me and I will guide you in the path of acquiring truth."
[The man] responded and said, "Sir, how can I, a respected individual do such a thing?"
[The leader] responded and said, "This is a big deal in your eyes? This is only the easiest of things you would have to do if you [truly] desire for your soul to see the light of truth."
Immediately the man turned and walked away sorely disappointed."*

Rabbi Hayim Vital
Sha'arei Kedusha, (from the censored Section Four)

Take these words to heart, as the pasuk in the Shema says, "these words that I command you this day shall be upon your hearts." Place them not in your head to seek intellectual avenues to contradict them and thus nullify their message. Seek straightness of heart, feel these words of Torah and you will know them to be true. Cast out all rationalizations and justifications. You know the right thing in your heart because G-d put it there. Now, stop talking and thinking and go out and JUST DO IT!

Gamar Hatimah Tova to all.

Shabat Shuva Insights

Haftarah, Kabbalah, Halakha

FROM THE HAFTARAH OF SHAHARIT YOM KIPPUR

“Is such the fast that I have chosen? A day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush and lie down on sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast acceptable to HaShem?” (Is. 58:5)

“These external acts [of the Yom Kippur fast] are only for the purpose of arousing the heart. These acts serve as only shells (klipot) for what should be in them, which is the sincere intent (kavanot). The [intent] is the soul and spirit of these acts. Without the [intent] these acts [of Yom Kippur observance] are mere corpses of the dead.”

Malbim, Hazon Yishayahu Commentary,
Beur HaInyan 58:5, Mikra’ot Gedolot Yishyahu 229a, page 457

Yom Kippur is the day when our prayers are the longest and should be the most intense. This is our annual chance to get our lives straight before G-d. Unfortunately, not everyone takes this opportunity seriously. Some people are just too shallow to fathom the serious importance of this day.

Instead of making Kippur a day of significant teshuva (repentance), some congregational leaders choose instead to make a show of the prayer services. Aspects of this disgusting behavior, unfortunately, have infected many of our communities. I will provide two examples.

From year to year, I see operatic Hazanim (public readers) specially hired just to recite the High Holiday services. They sing the prayers with such impressive melodious voices. Many of them could easily be professional opera singers.

As for me, whenever I see a minyan that has such a Hazan, I go and pray in another. I do not go to Synagogue on Yom Kippur to be entertained by an operatic Hazan. I do not believe G-d hears my prayers better, nor is He more inclined to answer them because the ceremony is beautiful enough to be considered a professional performance. Indeed, such external shows are loathsome in my eyes. Yet, congregation after congregation will pay thousands of dollars (sometimes tens of thousands) to have these opera star Hazans come perform for them. I wonder if G-d is as impressed with them as they are with themselves?

Another type of Hazan that I loathe is the melodramatic actor. As known there are a number of confessional prayers recited on Yom Kippur in each of the five services. During each of them, we recite a confession of a list of sins.

When certain Hazans begin to read these confessionals all of a sudden, as if on cue, their eyes swell up with tears and their voices choke over pronouncing the words. Their mediocre reading of prayers is all of a sudden transformed into a dramatic performance! It should only be that

such intense dramatic public readings of the prayers be truly sincere. If only everyone was so sincerely sorry for their sins, as the actors make it appear, maybe Mashiah would have come by now.

Yet, there is a price to pay for such drama. It takes these Hazan actors five times as long to finish the prayers as it would if they only prayed normally. By the times they are finished, many in the congregation are ready for a nap as opposed to desiring to finish praying. Instead of arousing the congregations to teshuva, these Hazan actors drive people's hearts away.

The fact that these actors cry and wail does not bother me so much as how they pray in between the confessionals. In these others parts of the service their eyes dry up as fast as they got wet. Their voices instantly become strong instead of weeping and broken. They then race through the service as if there were a prize for the first one to finish.

Worse than this, they turn on their tears in a moment during the confessional then turn them off and run through the rest of the prayers immediately thereafter. In and out of crying they go, right on cue, just like an act. What a performance! I wonder if HaShem and the Watcher angels applaud these Hazan actors as the Hazans and those who hire them would have us do?

Here we are on the most important day of the year and most of us in Synagogue are subject to a dramatic show instead of a real and sincere call to change our behavior, our personalities, and our selves. Instead of a sincere call for us to regret what we have done, and to change our course in life, we put on a show of remorse, reflected by the hypocrisy of our Hazans. It is this type of hypocrisy that HaShem spoke about to the prophet Isaiah thousands of years ago in the verse quoted above. How little have things changed!

Thank G-d not all Synagogues are like the ones I have described above. Many indeed have the regular Rabbi or even laymen of the congregation take turns, each reading a portion of the services. This way no one man puts on a performance anymore than anyone else. Everyone contributes together. I cannot think of a better way to solicit Divine forgiveness for our sins than our working together in sincere cooperation.

KABBALAH

"And He said, pave the way, clear the path, remove the stumbling-block from the path of my people." (Is. 57:14)

It is interesting to note that the Haftarah for Yom Kippur morning conceals within it a number of subtle messages. This one pasuk (verse) will suffice us to reveal just a little bit. Hidden within the gematrias of the original Hebrew words are numerical messages that hint to the deeper concepts involved.

"V'Amar (247) Solu (96) Solu (96) Panu (136) Derekh (224)" (And He said, pave the way, clear the path...).

The word V'Amar is numerically equal to 247. If we add the value of 1 (for the word itself) we have the numerical value of the words Rahem (mercy) and Avraham (both = 248).

The word Solu (pave) is numerically equal to 96. This number is also the value of the holy Name El Adonai, the Name that rules over the physical universe (Olam HaAsiyah).

The words Panu (clear) and Derekh (the way) together numerically equal 360. This is the value of the term Shas (Shin, Samekh), which is another name used for the Babylonian Talmud.

These four words alone conceal within them the secret meaning of what is necessary to pave the way and clear the path. The following is a Kabbalistic explanation.

This physical world of ours is referred to by the Kabbalists as Asiyah, the world of Doing. Our standard laws of physics apply here primarily, even over spiritual law. Asiyah is the realm of the most severe limitations. The way to expand Asiyatic limitations and thus rectify this realm is to perform holy physical acts as ordained by G-d in His Torah. This is why the Torah gave us commandments specifically to perform and not just concepts to think about or believe in. Without the doing, our physical realm remains a primitive and harsh place. Yet, once we work hard to transform our world, we can turn it into a paradise.

Due to the severe restrictions placed upon us by the laws of physics, there is not much room for mistakes. For example, we are familiar with the law of gravity. We all know what would happen if we stepped outside a window. We would fall. The law of gravity is pretty strict about this. We cannot think of too many examples wherein which the law of gravity can be broken. What we can discover, however, is the nature of gravity and how it works. With this knowledge, we can develop a technology that instead of breaking the law uses natural forces to circumvent it. In this way, we can transform our physical world to make it an ever more so comfortable place in which we can devote our time to higher causes, such as the pursuit of G-d.

A psychology of harshness and limitations can never release us from our self-imposed prisons. We need an aspect of high spirituality to do this. This aspect is Divine mercy. Mercy is an attitude that must manifest as action. It is patient, understanding, and forgiving. When we approach our world with these attitudes we accomplish a whole lot more than without them.

While we must respect the boundaries imposed upon us by the laws of Divinely ordained nature; we still must interact with our world with the concept of mercy. Lacking the integration of the concept of Divine mercy into our everyday lives, we will destroy ourselves.

The Torah was given us to teach us matters about conduct. By following proper conduct, we transform our minds and thus our lives. In order to accomplish this in a practical manner, our holy Sages developed the Talmud (Shas). In this sacred set of literature are to be found teachings and wise instruction for all occasions.

The Talmud explains the Torah to us, not verse by verse like a commentary, but rather by example. More than any other book, including the Zohar, the Talmud is the greatest of Kabbalistic texts. The legal arguments of our Sages along with their stories and history all

conceal within them the most profound secrets of how our universe operates. Only one who studies and then applies the lessons of the Talmud truly assists G-d in repairing His world.

When this pasuk from the Haftarah is understood according to this Kabbalistic insight we learn that in order to pave the way, meaning to correct the imperfections of our physical world, we must act with the characteristic of mercy, one towards another. How this is accomplished is taught us in the Talmud (Shas).

This behavior is called “preparing the way.” For when we act with proper behavior one towards another, we hasten the coming of a greater, new world. Moreover, who is responsible to do these things? The answer is the tribes of Ya’akov (the Jewish people and those Righteous Gentiles who assist them to perform their duty). The name Ya’akov has the numerically value of 188 (with the Vav). Add to this the number of letters and we have 193. The words Salu Salu in the pasuk in question together equal 192, with one as the kollel, they equal 193.

The name Ya’akov as described in double the value of 96, the Name ruling over Asiyah, El Adonai. This is no coincidence. The role of Ya’akov (the Jewish people) is to rectify the world of Asiyah in two distinct manners. One is the outer rectification of action. The second is the inner rectification of intent. In other words, in order for one to do the right thing, one must first thing in the right way.

In order to help us think clearly and to know right from wrong, we have the Shas. Everything so neatly fits together. All we need to do is open our eyes and see. When we do, we will be ever thankful to our Creator and give praise to his holy Name. Barukh Hu U’Barukh Shmo.

Halakha & Musar

Yom Kippur as we know is the Day of Atonement. On this day G-d forgives our sins and most importantly removes from us the punishments due us for committing them. However, a point made very clear by our Sages is that Yom Kippur only atones for those sins that a person has committed against G-d alone. If one commits a sin against another person, one IS NOT forgiven unless certain things first are done.

RaMBaM outlines in his Hilkhot Teshuva that merely asking forgiveness from a person you have wronged is not enough to obtain atonement from G-d. In order for one to be truly forgiven for one's sin against another one must first confess to the wronged person in detail what was the nature of your sin against him/her. This is called vidui. It is not enough that you confess to G-d how you wronged another, you must confess to the person him/herself.

After one has made a full verbal confession to the face of the person one has wronged, one must be truly remorseful for one's actions. This is called Harata. One cannot say or believe deep down that at the time the sinful actions one committed were right. One must truly feel deep within one's heart that what was done was very, very wrong.

Even, with Vidui and Harata, there is still one final step to forgiveness. This step is the most important. This is called tikkun. One must make amends and fix or compensate the wronged

person in accordance to how much damage was caused by your wrong actions. This might have to be a financial compensation if the wronged party suffered financial loss because of what was wrongly done to him/her.

Let me state this very clearly – unless one does Vidui, Harata, and Tikun, there is no atonement for sins between people. Therefore, unless, one does teshuva the right way, Yom Kippur will pass over that person with no positive benefit.

There is a common practice today that before Yom Kippur one simply asks others for forgive him/her for whatever sins they might have committed against them during the last year. While this tradition is nice and politically correct, it does nothing to help the individual who has truly done things to harm other people.

I personally know and have seen all too many type of people, religious and not, who act like completely wicked people during the year. They intentionally harm others, and justify their behavior by saying they are doing what is best. The religious sinners are the worst in that they seek to justify their behavior by saying they are doing G-d's work. There are actually disgusting individuals out there (Rabbis included) who perform the most perverse acts of immorality and attempting to justify their behavior by saying that they are acting in accordance to Halakha.

Do not go through the rote observance of Yom Kippur, proud of your meticulous observance, all the while not repenting of the serious sins you have done and continue to do. Do not hide under your kippah or black hat and proclaim in your heart how righteous you are. G-d knows the heart and judges us by our insides not by our external performances. If you want to continue calling yourself religious then you had better start observing the religion G-d's way.

When you act arrogantly towards another and cause him/her harm by your actions or by your words, you had better make amends. For if you do not, what you did to another G-d Himself will do to you (ref. Sefer Ba'al Shem Tov). That is a heavy judgment for one to have over his/her head. Nonetheless, it is only there if we ourselves place it there.

RaMBaM clearly outlines for us what it means to repent. Unless we have done these things, before we recite the long confessional prayers on Yom Kippur, our prayers are hypocritical before G-d. He will not bless us nor will He forgive us all the while that we lie to Him and to ourselves. This is not true because I say so, but because G-d has said so centuries ago to His prophets in the TaNaKh. Read the TaNaKh and see for yourselves. G-d is forgiving, but so must we be forgiving.

It behooves us all to look at ourselves and acknowledge our shortcomings, what we have done wrong to others, and work hard to make right what we have made wrong!

Shana Tovah and Gamar Hatimah Tovah

Secret Truths About Yom Kippur

On Rosh HaShana, Earth passes through natural cosmic energy fields that exert an influence to restore a preexisting state of balance within the human psyche. Where we each stand as individuals in relationship to our original higher human state defines for us the type of realignment we will each become subject to. This cycle is mechanical and natural, ordained by the Creator as the inherent means to instill justice in a world that seems to lack it. Essentially each of us is significantly out of sync with our inner higher selves, therefore, the amount of rebalancing we can each become subject to can be rather much. Being that this system operates on its own accord, it appears that it is rather deterministic; with nothing much we can do about it. Once we have passed the specific point in space and time, we therefore fall under the influence of the field through which we pass.

For a long period of human history, indeed this cycle was definitively deterministic. However, higher forces intervened in human history and gave us Torah. Through Torah, we have revealed to us the proper path of realignment with our higher selves through the unleashed powerful forces of Mind that reside deep within us. On Rosh HaShana, we blow the shofar to arouse our inner self to awaken. The following ten days concluding with Yom Kippur is the process of the psychic/psychological awakening.

In order to properly understand the secret power of Yom Kippur we must delve into the true third dimension. We all know that we exist in a space-time continuum. These two dimensions define for us our natural world. Yet, there is a third dimension; also natural according to Divine design, but according to our present human limitations is often misunderstood to be supernatural. I am talking about the third dimension of the human mind that contains transdimensional consciousness. In spite of all these abstract concepts, I am actually speaking about something very simple. Time, space and mind all interact; these three together are the true three dimensions of the universe. Mind is the highest of these dimensions and has the ability to supercede the other two.

Yet, the power of mind can only exert its natural influence over space-time when it is whole and in complete control of its faculties. We human beings lost control of our minds with what we call the “fall of man” in Eden. This led to the split that we today call the natural and supernatural, the conscious and unconscious parts of the mind.

Today, in our present state of mind, everything follows the natural order unless otherwise ordained by a supernatural power. This is both a spiritual and psychological truth. Torah came to Earth, emanating from such a Higher Power, a power beyond time, space and the human mind. Knowing well our present subjugation to the natural order, to those forces that can kill and destroy, the Higher Power injected into the natural order a supernatural procedure that when observed properly enables mere mortal man to temporarily rise above his mortality.

Atonement means a return of balance. Imbalance is created by the wanton, mindless acts of people. When we act inappropriately we do more than just act unnaturally, we actually cause

the flow of natural energy to invert and flow in unnatural ways. When energy flows in unnatural ways, the result is the creation of unnatural results. This is the cause of calamity and suffering in life.

Using Torah symbolisms, the natural order of the universe was created by and is maintained by the holy Name Elohim. In Torah numerology this Name equals the value of 86, which is the same value of the word, HaTeva, which means “nature.” Elohim is the impersonal, “outer” Face or expression of Divine power that is the dominate force of life in our natural, physical and finite universe.

The Torah discusses creation by saying that Elohim created the Heavens and the Earth. This specific choice of holy Names used here with the creation story teaches us that everything in both our physical and its parallel non-physical dimension was brought into being under the dominion, force and power of what we can call natural law, a law that operates under very precise and strict operations. Only later in the creation story is the holy Name of YKVK introduced. This Name is also a symbol for a different aspect of Divine energy, one that interacts with time and space based upon the third higher principle of Mind. Ultimately, the universe operates automatically according to its preconceived design. This is only changed, altered or influenced once a consciousness of sorts intervenes.

The Mind of the Divine Observer penetrates space-time and by an act of Will alone can change how space-time operates and functions. This influence is totally outside the normal operational parameters of space-time mechanics. It is therefore above what we call the laws of nature. It is a random element, not subject to natural laws, as we know them. This random element cannot be examined, experimented on or ever understood with our present limited level of human intelligence. The random element of what we can call Higher or Divine consciousness is a Mental Process far beyond anything we presently understand within the context of our limited modern sciences. Yet, it is this random element of Higher Intelligence that intervenes on an apparent regular basis in numerous ways, recordable and not, creating outcomes to situations and circumstances outside the norms of natural law.

From our human perspective, we refer to these interventions often as supernatural, which they may or may not be. Yet, almost always we refer to them as miracles. What we do not yet understand is that even miracles have a scientific basis to them. Miracles are nothing more than a Higher Consciousness intervening in space-time, moving a thing here or there, in a similar fashion as to how we would move pieces on a chess or checkerboard. Natural law decides the rules of those games, true, however, outside of the rules, a player can at will, lift any piece and do with it anything he may wish. The only objection would come from the opposite player. Yet, if there is no opposite player then there is no one to complain and the player can proceed as he wishes, completely unopposed, deciding rules and moves as he goes along and plays. This then best sums up how our universe operates.

Our beginnings came from a Singularity and our continued existence is nothing more than a constant expression of that Singularity. The Singularity expressed and maintains natural law for the daily running of its project, our universe. However, IT intervenes to perform whatever task it chooses, as it chooses, when it chooses and how it chooses. It is not subject to our laws,

because IT itself made those laws and by definition is above them. It can operate those laws, violate those laws, reinforce those laws or do away with those laws.

The Higher Intelligence of the Singularity operates inside of Elohim. Elohim is its “Face” yet deep within it there is another agenda, one that to us is random, one that is interested in values higher than the parameters of natural space-time. The higher values important to the Higher Intelligence of the Singularity are manifest within our universe as smaller aspects of itself. These little sparks of Mind and intelligence are individual monads of conscious being. Each one is called a soul. Formed in the Image of their source, each monad of conscious intelligence inhabits a form, a face or body. The body itself existing in space-time is subject to its laws. However the monad itself is from a higher realm, another dimension. Therefore, it is subject to the higher laws of the Singularity of the Higher Intelligence.

The Singularity or Higher Intelligence within the Face of Elohim is what we call YKVK. It is the deeper Higher Face of the Divine that is the Father of the human soul, just as the Earth is the mother of the human physical form. Just as there is duality expressed forth from the Singularity, so correspondingly we humans live in a dual existence that we call the physical and the spiritual. Only, there is nothing really spiritual about spirituality, for in reality that which we call spirit is actually just another part of our consciousness, the deepest portion of our mind/soul. So profound is it that we cannot often fathom its reality or even its existence, therefore that part of ourselves is usually totally unknown. In the science of psychology we call this part of ourselves our unconscious. It is real, it exists, and it controls all that we are and what befalls us, only we are totally unaware of its presence and influence.

Our individual unconscious is our connection to YKVK and maintains us being human all the while that natural law might encourage us to act as nothing more than animals. Unlike members of the animal kingdom, most humans, those who have maintained the connection still can hear the inner voice speak in what we call conscience. This Voice reminds us of who we are and enables the YKVK aspect within us to express itself thus emancipating the individual from rigid enslavement to natural law.

When the Face of YKVK is unleashed it can override the Face of Elohim by sheer Will or Desire. Thus in Torah the great revelation is that YKVK is Elohim; the L-rd is G-d. It sounds like a simple statement of tribal religion and religious competition, but this is only a myth. When Torah speaks of the union of YKVK and Elohim, it is not speaking about individual gods or the like; it is speaking about the integration of Mind over matter, of the Singularity and Random Element acting independently. Thus the great revelation of Torah is the supremacy of consciousness over the dominions of limitations (as expressed through space-time natural law parameters). “YKVK is Elohim” when Higher Consciousness overrides natural law and operates space-time in accordance to its Random element. This then explains to us how we can have something called atonement and a special day for it to occur, Yom Kippur.

Torah is a revelation and a gift from YKVK. It was given to Israel to serve Heaven on behalf of humanity. Israel, as the Torah states, acts as the priesthood or intermediary between Heaven above and Earth below. Through the observance of Torah and mitzvot Israel is to elevate its collective consciousness to serve as a “light to the nations” directing my example, providing a

moral role model of higher character and proper behavior. Israel was chosen to bare a heavy burden. History has recorded collective Israel's numerous failures in performing its task, whereas history does not always record its numerous successes. Serving as intermediary, collective Israel is responsible to perform specific rituals (mitzvot) that archetypally influenced both themselves and the collective unconscious of the world. The specific rituals of Yom Kippur exemplify this.

Atonement means becoming right with Heaven. It means realigning a precious balance of subtle energies that exist between the life force necessary for all things here on Earth and its source off-planet. In essence, humanity suffers by our collective choice to act in inappropriate ways. Yet, our choices may not be entirely our own. We are influenced by forces foreign and alien to our planet. Knowing well the actual state of illegal extraterrestrial intervention into human activities, Heaven ordained that the "devil received his due." This explains the ritual of the offering of the "goat to Azazel" in the days when the Temple stood.

Throughout ancient literature, religious and cultural, there are numerous records of the ancients being visited by non-human others from places off-planet. The nature of these entities is often described as malevolent. In essence, they are thieves, yet what they steal is no physical commodity. What they seek is the actual only valuable commodity recognized universally. This is what we call "life-force" energy; in the Torah, this is called Nefesh, referred to elsewhere as Chi or Orgone. Everything in our physical universe is actually made up of this energy and survives in physical form because of it. Yet, Nefesh "life force" energy is itself fed and nourished. It is strengthened by the power of mind that is expressed through actions of a certain nature. These behaviors are what Torah defines as moral and righteous. Performing them enables one to gather strong life-force energy; the violation of them weakens one's life-force energy. Nefesh is weakened by a clouded mind that is led to perform activities that lead the Nefesh "life force" energy to be wasted and to leak out of the body. Indeed, the purpose of Torah mitzvot is for the sake of building Nefesh and the definition of a "sin" is the wasteful and harmful loss of this energy.

Nefesh life force energy does not belong to any one individual. We are all given a portion, but our portion is only for our usage, it is not our possession. We chose either to expand our portion or to lose what we have. Knowing our present state of collective incoherence, certain entities illegally came to Earth (ref. the Serpent in Gen. 3 & the "sons of god" in Gen. 6) to take advantage of our collective weaken state and to, in essence, keep us enslaved in our weakness so that they may harvest our Nefesh life force energy. They continue to enslave our minds by manipulating us to think clouded thoughts and thus to perform actions and behaviors that lead to a massive release and loss of Nefesh life force, which they in turn gather and harvest for their own purposes.

At one time in human history these unwelcome visitors did this very publicly, as the Torah teaches, "the sons of god came down from Heaven and took wives for themselves from the daughters of men, and set themselves up as rulers." Heaven was not pleased at this rebellion amongst its ranks and set the record straight. It arrested the criminal rebels and cleansed the gene pool with a flood, wiping out all infected DNA. Only Noah and his family were found sufficiently genetically and mentally pure enough to survive, thus through them humanity was

rebuilt. As for the “sons of god,” they were imprisoned and will be dealt with in accordance to Heaven’s law at the appointed time. Yet, in the meantime, certain criminal elements of humanity have voluntarily chosen to imitate the “fallen sons of god” to steal Nefesh energy and to offer it to the criminal “visitors” in turn for favors and power. This collusion has thus enabled at least one of the “fallen sons of god” to continue in his previous pursuits.

This entity is an actual individual and not just a metaphor. Knowing well the realm of human thoughts, this entity, and those whom he has since sired, continue in their course of milking humanity, by confusing their minds and causing them to perform behaviors that lead to their individual loss of Nefesh, which is in turn harvested and used to strengthen themselves and to further weaken humanity.

For these entities, we are not too different from cattle, and in their eyes, all they are doing is corralling us and milking us. Heaven looks upon their actions with disgust, yet Heaven knows well that certain elements in humanity actively participate and cooperate with them. Therefore, Heaven’s hands are tied. Heaven itself is bound to allow individual human beings the choice of their own free wills. However it can be argued just how free is a mind that is being influenced from outside and not being given a fair change to think clearly.

When the sun enters into alignment with the stars of Libra and humanity is put into the position we were originally when we came to Earth, we receive a portion of Nefesh life force energy consistent with our present position in relationship to our original human state. Needless to say the entities here seek to siphon off as much of that energy as they can. Thus Torah came to remedy this situation by providing for Israel to serve as the intermediary for collective humanity to cease this siphoning of stolen life force.

The rituals performed in the Temple were no mere symbolic rituals. Sacrifices were offered because the life force of the animals was extracted and used to replace the life force being drained out of the people. This would leave the people strong enough to begin healing their clouded minds, enabling them to protect themselves from further weakness and leakage. One of the offerings in those days was an actual goat to Azazel himself. The High Priest following a secret directive known only to the priests in those days, would psychically gather the collective misdeeds of the nation and transfer them onto this single goat. This simple goat therefore became powerfully charged with a potent force of Nefesh energy.

The High Priest of Israel was taught a technique involving sound that enabled him to manipulate life force energy and to seal the breaches in the individual souls, to collect that which had been leaked, gather it in one place and then take it away. It was indeed the “due of the devil.” It is what Azazel managed to extract through his illegal and deceitful means. He was given his due and no more. The High Priest put a cap on his share, thus enabling the siphoning to cease and the healing to begin. This was Yom Kippur when the Temple stood.

This is why these malevolent entities worked overtime to subvert and corrupt the Israelite nation leading to the destruction of the Temple and the cap of their restorative activities. For them, the existence of the Jerusalem Temple and the Yom Kippur rituals of the High Priest means the limiting of their activities of harvesting human life force energy. Thus, throughout

history, and today, they are the guiding force in the minds of those who will do anything to make sure the Temple is never rebuilt. This is why Israel as a nation is again being corrupted today.

Because the Temple no longer stands the ability to reveal and manifest the YKVK Singularity is severely curtailed. The Temple and the Ark of the Covenant within it were specifically designed to receive specific energy fields that influenced and brought about changes in physical reality here on Earth. The Temple and the Ark could influence human consciousness and all the more so generate significant amounts of life force energy that translated into growing power for crops, abundant rains in their seasons and other forms of fortune that contributed to good living. When the High Priest performed his rituals, he was performing no mere symbolic acts. He himself through the Urim and Tumim and his psychic interactions with the Ark actually created, through his body, an energy force transference, coming forth from the Ark, passing through him individually and then out on to the collected masses and from them on to the earth at large.

When the Temple was destroyed, all of this, to a point, came to an end. Although the Temple edifice and its proper service ceased to be, the Ark of the Covenant which is the real conduit of life force energy receptivity has been safely secured and its activity continues secretly and unabated to this day. Moreover, in spite of efforts by modern personages to find the Ark, no one ever will. The Ark is not in human hands, it has never been entrusted to human safekeeping. Suffice it to say that the one “son of god” who came to Earth and has caused so much havoc did not come alone.

There are others, who are still faithful to Heaven, who have also descended here and keep an eye on things, kind of like a “heavenly” security detail or police force. They are in control of the Ark and they monitor everything transpiring here on Earth. If and when the forces of evil act outside their permitted parameters, these other forces act to intervene, to curtail the illegal acts of the others and to restore balance. This “security detail” is still very much in operation and it is they who perform the Temple service, in their own way, in place of that which was done in the Temple by the High Priest. If it were not for these entities doing their jobs clandestinely behind the scenes of human awareness, none of us would be able to escape the subtle mental influences of the “others” who seek to subvert us for their own gain.

These entities, not being indigenous to Earth are a much older race than ours. They are what we would call more evolved and technologically advanced. However, their ways and means of interacting with nature is with a technology transcending our isolated dimension. These entities act in an interdimensional reality often at the level of what we call mental telepathy. There is nothing mystical or magical about this. It is just the way they are. It can be compared to human beings who can communicate with radios and by satellite, how this must appear to monkeys and primates. Can primates understand the nature of our human technology, how then do we humans expect to understand what we can call “angelic” technology. Being that these entities are real and subject to their own laws, values and parameters of natural being, in truth we might consider there not to be anything “angelic” about them at all.

Earth operates today for the most part under the influence of the Elohim level of Divine energy. This level is rather mechanical with operations being performed in accordance to natural law.

At this level, energy flow follows a preordained course, similar to the flow of a river. Just as humankind can come along and change the course of a river to harness its power, so too the entities of which we speak can harness the flow of life force energy and create a dam of it for their own usage. However, like waters of a river, life force energy is a finite commodity in this universe. In order to acquire it, it must be sought out, taken from its present location, and moved elsewhere. Therefore these entities knowing how humanity each has our individual share of Nefesh energy seek to siphon off from us what they can. Each of us is replenished to a point, similar to a cow replacing its milk after it has been milked. Thus these entities seek to corral us and in essence milk us. This is allowed and tolerated when the universe operates under Elohim power because this is within the context of natural law.

The YKVK level of Divine energy is a source far too potent for these entities presently milking us to tolerate. They prefer that we humans maintain our present level of consciousness and provide them with their nourishment. When, however, we human beings transcend our present limitations and acquire a deeper consciousness and awareness of our true essence and nature, the amount of energy that we draw to ourselves is far too pure and unrefined for these entities to assimilate. It is kind of like shining a bright light in their eyes, they shield themselves to prevent being hurt. All the while that we are like cattle we are at their disposal. Yet, once we become fully human we break their dominion and influence over us. The only way their power is broken is by our acquiring YKVK consciousness and this only comes about through Torah and mitzvot.

Between the days of Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur the Kabbalists use an amazing set of metaphors to describe for us how we take the steps to rise above our present state of limitation. The Kabbalists speak of our Higher and lower selves in symbolic terms. These two halves are called the male and female, the dominant and the passive, the unconscious and the conscious, the spiritual and the physical and the soul and the body.

All these metaphors apply and they are all speaking about the same relationship between the inner and outer parts of ourselves. The higher part is referred to as Zeir Anpin, the attribute of the human heart (and soul); the lower part is referred to as "his mate" Nok, the attribute of body. Thus together ZA and Nok come to represent composite humanity, united body and soul. The Kabbalists use the Biblical lesson about Adam and Eve as their metaphor to describe a profound transformation of consciousness.

In the beginning, when Adam was created, Eve was an integral part within him. "She" had no independent existence other than as one of "his ribs." Adam was then put to sleep, his rib removed and then Eve was built from this. This is a nice story on the surface of it; yet the Kabbalists reveal some very profound things here.

Adam is ZA and Eve is Nok, thus Adam is the heart of man and Eve is his physical form. In order for the physical form to come into its own, it must be removed from the influence of the unconscious heart/spirit and given an independent existence. Only then can there be a complete and balanced union between above and below. The Biblical story therefore explains why humankind had to descend to Earth and take on physical form. It is only in this way that we can become fully human actualizing our inner being and enabling it to properly manifest in

this outside, physical world. An individual can claim that he is whatever he wishes to believe himself to be, however, unless he actualizes it and proves it, then all unactualized thoughts are but mere dreams and illusions. Only one who does can be said to be.

On Rosh HaShana, we say that Imma, the Mind speaks through the shofar to awaken ZA the heart. At this time, ZA/Adam is not separated from Eve/Nok. In order to separate them and bring Eve into full active independent being ZA is “put to sleep.” During this period, a separation occurs enabling the independence of Eve/Nok. This again is a profound metaphor. In essence, the Kabbalists state that during this period of Eve/Nok’s separating from ZA, “he” is asleep and all the sefirotic (spiritual) “Mohin/brains” pass through “him” to “her” enabling her building.

ZA as we said is the metaphor for the inner and higher self, Nok is our conscious/physical self here on Earth. In order for our present selves to become fulfilled, Imma puts ZA to sleep and builds Nok with all the Mohin. The Mohin/brains are the spiritual powers that enable both the ZA aspect within us (the unconscious, higher self) and the Nok aspect (conscious lower self) to actualize. During this period of “slumber” which is also a metaphor for the time period of exile, Nok is built directly with all the powers (Mohin) originally designed for ZA. In other words, during the time of exile/slumber, the unconscious/higher self is circumvented and put to sleep. We are disconnected from our higher selves and its domineering influence arising from the unconscious. All Mohin (spiritual potential, insights and mental abilities) flow directly into Nok, our lower conscious selves.

This explains to us a profound psychological phenomenon. During that period which we call exile, we are in essence in psychological exile; we are cut off and detached from any type of psychic influence arising into consciousness from the unconscious. Instead of being intuitive, psychic personalities, we become instead completely rational and analytical. One might think this exile from our inner powers to be a bad thing, yet it serves a positive purpose. For all the time that ZA (the higher self in the unconscious) is asleep (disconnected), Imma sends all the Mohin (potentials of development) directly into Nok (our conscious selves) enabling our “building.”

All the time that we are disconnected from our higher selves, we are in a state of psychological exile. Nonetheless, we are still in connection with the transdimensional power of the Higher Mind within us. Instead of speaking to us through the language of dreams, metaphors and other expressions of the unconscious, we receive insights directly, enlightening us and enabling us to use the powers of our rational analytical minds to face life’s challenges and to overcome them without having to turn to psychic intuitive means. This process refines the mind and enables it to think clearly and act accordingly. This is the building and refinement of Eve/Nok.

When our conscious lower, physical selves are able to use the power of our minds to look at this world and take control of it rationally, this is what our inner self wanted all along and would have taught us to do, if only we had listened. Yet, because of our internal deafness, another course was chosen, our internal voice (ZA) was silenced (put to sleep) and we were given the opportunity to build for ourselves and receive thereby all the merit due for it.

This process of mental contemplations, of rational analytical thought, how I can change myself and make myself and my world better takes place over a period of time, ten days to be exact. Ten, as we know is the number of the sefirot. Therefore, between Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur there are ten days, one for each of the sefirot. On each day, starting with Rosh HaShana itself, Nok begins her separation from ZA.

These days we call the “days of teshuva.” Most often, these are referred to the days of repentance, but actually “teshuva” means return. These days are the period for our building ourselves, refining ourselves, for our using our human intellect and rational mind to look out at our world and ourselves, to recognize what needs improvement and change and to implement such changes. This is our return, to a better and higher way, one that was ordained for us from the beginning.

On Yom Kippur, the tenth day, we should have reached a total separation from ZA, the higher self, with all the powers of awareness and potentials inherent within the inner self now transferred and actualized into the lower conscious self.

Now Eve/Nok is complete and independent. Now the lower self has all the mental faculties it needs to integrate intuition and intellect into a proper balance of mental functioning enabling us to bring this physical universe into alignment with higher dimensions. In order for us to take one step out of this world and into the next, consciously and in actuality, we must take a small step to become like the denizens of that dimension. Unlike us, those that reside in that other dimension are not physical entities, therefore as we enter their domain in the mental realm, we take one small physical step to enable our bodies, to at least in a small way, reverberate closer to their frequencies.

We thus stop our intake of physical nourishment and allow our minds to control our bodies enabling us to receive nourishment of an energetic kind, without the bulk of physical form. In other words, we fast. As Torah says, “man does not live by bread alone.” We also live by Nefesh, the “living Word.”

The building of our lower selves, enables us to be as strong as our higher selves. This is the metaphorical union of ZA and Nok. This is the act of atonement, which we can also call, “at-one-ment.”

This is the act of the YKVK element coming down to Earth and becoming fully actualized in practical form. This is the meaning of the proclamation that YKVK is Elohim. We do not say that Elohim is YKVK; this would apply an ascent of the lower realm to above. No, no, no! This is not the message! The message is that YKVK is Elohim, above has come below and by doing so made below to be as powerful as above. No more separations and distinctions, below can now fully express its hidden potentials, without the limitations that came about due to the lack of clarity brought about due to being disharmonious with above.

Now below has its Mohin and is able to merge with above. ZA merges with Nok, the higher self with the lower self, Heaven with Earth, the spiritual with the physical. This is the fulfillment of creation, when Adam and Eve face one another, naked, and are not ashamed. This is the

meaning of Yom Kippur. It is a profound psychological transformation of the inner potentials of humanity; bringing them to the surface, enabling us to take our first steps into a greater, higher world, uniting that world with our own, for the betterment of both.

End Note: Pay attention, I have revealed here bits and pieces of many different secrets. If you succeed in putting them together, you will have learned a secret of tremendous power.

What Heaven Loves, the Power In Our Hands

Wishful thinking can lead to wasteful loss. Real planning is the prerequisite for real action.

Heaven judges matters of real importance. Heaven despises one who purposely does not distinguish between the real important, and that which is not. One who chooses valueless things cannot blame any other when he ends up poor and destitute.

Just thinking and believing is never enough. In the World of Action, the Presence of God is only revealed through proper action. It is not enough to be sorry for doing wrong. One must commit oneself to do what is right, to make restitution for what has been done wrong, and then build and create that which is good.

There are no magic tricks. There are no special prayers or ritual ceremonies. All these are performances. Heaven is not impressed with ritual performances, rather Heaven is impressed with unrehearsed, proper, righteous human behavior.

One can fast, but fasting does not impress Heaven. One can cry, but crying does not impress Heaven. One must act with resolve and discipline, to change wrong behavior, and turn it into right behavior.

Heaven is impressed with real, authentic and permanent change. But change must be for the better! And Heaven knows who is sincere, and who is a hypocrite. Heaven knows who is really trying, and who is just a lazy so-and-so. Heaven already knows who is blessed, and Heaven already knows who is cursed. Blessing and curse are always in our own hands.

Racists and chauvinists are cursed by Heaven. Anyone who thinks they are inherently better than anyone else is cursed by Heaven. Heaven has made each of us different, and therefore, each of us has our job to perform, and our destiny to fulfill.

The Sabbath cannot boast itself over the six day workweek. Each has its purpose. One cannot, and does not, exist without the other. Each is what it is, and each is not the other. All days and their purposes are created by Heaven. As it is with the individual days, so too is it with individual people. Let the wise understand from what is said here, what is not said here.

We all hope that Heaven will grant us our deepest desires. But why do we think that Heaven will indeed do so? We believe that if we believe, our faith should be sufficient for Heaven. We consider it righteousness to have faith in Heaven. These words are indeed true, but their application has to be understood and implemented properly.

Heaven does not promise to provide for us that which we wish or that which we desire. Heaven does not fulfill our every apparent need. Yet, all the while that Heaven is not giving us that which we think we need, Heaven is providing for us that which we actually do need. What we think we need and what we actually need are very different. Heaven knows the difference.

One who turns one's heart and will to Heaven, and says, "God, not my will, but Your Will be done," such a one is blessed by Heaven. Yet, such a sentiment cannot be expressed just with one's words, instead they have to be one's innermost truth, and desire.

Wake up each morning and let your prayer be, "***How may I shine the Light of Heaven this day? How may I today do what is right? May I be an agent of Heaven to shine the Light and do what is right, Amen.***" Mean this, and Heaven will indeed give you the many opportunities to fulfill this.

Heaven hates the superficial. Heaven loves the true and sincere. We choose to be either superficial or sincere. Our choices decide whether Heaven loves us or not.

When we resolve and commit to be faithful to Heaven, Heaven in turn commits, and is faithful, to us. This is called the being inscribed in the Book of Life.

Heaven desires for us to live, but we are the ones who must choose life. If we in turn choose death, Heaven allows us our choice, and holds us accountable for making it. We cannot avoid the consequences of our chosen actions. Heaven does not intervene to lift us up out of the holes that we ourselves have dug.

If we cry out to Heaven in true sincerity, Heaven will provide us the opportunities to help ourselves, but we must not fail to take advantage of the opportunities given to us by Heaven.

Heaven understands that we may be blind to that which is right in front of us. Heaven will help the blind to see. But Heaven despises the one who has eyes, but refuses to see. Such a one Heaven allows to stumble and to face the consequences of their self-imposed blindness.

Seek inner transformation. Become a better person. We are all on Earth together for a purpose. Each of us will one day stand before the Heavenly Tribunal and be asked one simple question, "***why did you not live up to that potential which Heaven gave you inherently.***" Woe to us on such a Judgment Day. What answer can we possibly offer as to why we did not live up to our best potentials?

Now is the time to contemplate these things, and to make whatever necessary changes, each of us has to make.

Heaven is watching. Heaven is listening. Heaven is waiting.

Do not keep Heaven waiting for too long, the Gates above do not stay open forever.

When we are with Heaven, Heaven is with us. When we stand in opposition to Heaven, Heaven stands in opposition to us. We never imagined that we have so much power in our hands and that our choices mean so very much!

Forgiveness 101: A Lesson in Common Sense

There is no forgiveness from God for those offenses that we commit against our fellow man. This is a foundation of Yom Kippur/the Day of Atonement.

If you have offended God, pray and repent. God will forgive you.

If you have offended, hurt, or otherwise harmed a fellow human being, pray all you want. God will not forgive you until you have appeased the one you have offended, and made restitution. This is the law of man, and the way of Heaven.

All too many people come into the High Holiday period with a subtle arrogance thinking that if, for a while, they adopt certain stricter religious rituals, they will somehow be impressing God, and soliciting Divine favor. Do we really believe that God is so petty, to be fooled by such a superficial, platonic show of hypocritical behavior? While most people will respond, no, in their hearts, they nevertheless believe, yes.

After the High Holiday/Succot/Simhat Torah season is finished, we settle back down to normal life. Is anything really different then? Have the blessings of Heaven showered down upon us? Have all our problems magically disappeared? Has God heard all our prayers, and is busy at work fulfilling them? Will our New Year really be so different, and better than the last?

We all have high hopes for the future, but how many have realistic expectations? We all are hoping for the best, but how many have made the commitment to also prepare for the worst?

When we say that, God will provide, what does this mean? How is God supposed to provide? Biblical and Talmudic examples teach us that we ourselves must prepare the vessel in order for God to fill it with Divine blessing. Yet, how many are busy at work making vessels, and getting them ready for Divine service?

The vessels of which I speak are not metaphors or symbols. I am speaking about real, practical, tangible items, arrangements, and other practicalities that each of us must make in our lives. If we want to be healthy, then we must live a healthy life-style. If we want to be wealthy, then we must make every effort to work hard.

Our actions, and our behaviors are the vessels that God will bless. The absence of the work of our hands, symbolically speaking, ties up God's Hands and prevents Him from manifesting Divine blessing. This is the law and way of Heaven. God blesses the work of our hands, and God helps those who help themselves.

If we want peace on earth, then it is we who must create it.

God will bless our endeavors, but it is we who must take the first steps. God will walk with us, but we must, nevertheless, get up off our lazy behinds, and start walking.

God is with us. We will never walk alone.

Then again, we must be with God. God will not walk alone either.

As individuals, each of us lacks the power, and ability, to change the world. So, why try to do the impossible? Rather than mourn over what we cannot do, we must instead focus on what we can do!

While we cannot change the whole world, we very well can change little pieces of it, specifically those within the orbits of our lives.

We can each make a difference by being role models of proper action, high morals, and impeccable character.

Talk is cheap, so shut up!

Don't instruct people, telling them what is right and what is wrong! What makes you think that they will listen to what you have to say?

Rather, lead by example, don't tell them what they should do, rather, show them what you, yourself, are doing!

Let them see, what they cannot hear. Sometimes, seeing is believing. When they see you acting right, they very well might mimmick you, and also do what's right. This is the old game of "monkey see, monkey do." So, make sure the monkeys see the right thing so that they will do the right thing.

Monkeys that do the right thing are no longer monkeys, rather they stand tall as sacred souls, human beings, created in the Divine Image. This is our destiny and our calling.

When it comes to repentance, and getting it right before God for the Day of Atonement, let us remember that this means getting it right with one another.

When we are right and proper with one another, and we walk the path of righteousness, God will then indeed bless the path we walk, the actions we perform, and the works of our hands.

This, and this alone, is true atonement, or if you will at-one-ment!

So, You Think You're Forgiven?

Think again if you believe that Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement will bring you forgiveness for all your sins!

This is simply not the case, and all your pious howlings will change nothing!

Here's the uncomfortable truth! The majority of "sins" that we commit on a daily basis are never forgiven by God. The vast majority of "sins" that we commit are not violations of this, or that religious ritual. Rather, the big "sins," the ones that we commit daily, are the dishonesty, immorality, disrespect, and maltreatment that each of us shows one another.

The great rule of the Day of Atonement is that God forgives all sins that one may have committed against Heaven, but the "sins" that we commit against one another are not forgiven by God.

When we offend, and harm one another, Yom Kippur does not, never has, and never will atone for these vile behaviors! So, while we may invest much time in prayer, we are ignored by Heaven all the while that we still act mean, cruel, and with disregard towards our fellow human beings.

Throughout ancient Israel the Biblical prophets would cry out proclaiming the sins of the people. They didn't bother with rebuking compromises in religious ritual, rather they cried out with harsh, and sharp condemnation of the immoral, impertinent, and outright evil behaviors of everyday people.

It was human violence, indifference, and evil that so angered the vengeful God. God acted without mercy to a people who equally acted towards one another without mercy.

If there is one thing that both God, and the universe reject it is the hypocrite. The hypocrite is the one who boldly proclaims one thing, but then arrogantly does the opposite. Today, especially in religious circles (but unfortunately not limited to them), hypocrisy runs rampant, like an out of control contagious disease. The fundamental fact is this, one who proclaims love of God, but at the same time shows disregard for fellow human beings is a religious hypocrite.

Religion (all of them) is about loving your neighbor (all of them, and not just members of one's personal community). If this foundation is lost, then religion has no basis upon which to stand, and it falls into the abyss of hypocrisy. And it is in this pit that all types of arrogance, racism, supremacist attitudes, and prejudice are born. These then serve as the sources of the evils that we perpetrate upon one another.

God allowed His ancient Temple to be destroyed because it was transformed into an empty shell, in which all the rituals of religion were performed, but without any of the proper intent, devotion, and respect towards humanity.

Proper behavior, and good character serve as prerequisites for the Heavenly acceptance of any religious behavior, and lifestyle. God is never fooled. Superficial religious observances mean nothing to Heaven without true internal, sincere devotion.

Now get this! True, sincere, internal devotion to God is only real in Heaven's eyes, when the individual acts with equal truth, sincerity, and respect towards one's fellow human beings. For in God's eyes, how we treat one another, is tantamount to how we treat God.

Although one may consider oneself to be righteous before God, God looks to see if such a one is righteous towards one's fellow human beings. If one is not a properly decent human being, then maybe one should not bother with observing Yom Kippur.

Indeed, one may even do oneself more harm than good in asking God for mercy, all the while that one shows no mercy to others. Nothing brings negative attention to one's behavior more than asking for something for oneself that one is unwilling to give to another. God rejects the hypocrite.

If one truly wishes to properly observe the Day of Atonement, and the fast of Kippur, then one had better get busy transforming oneself into a decent, honest, moral, and good human being.

One can fast, and pray all one wants, but if one leaves the house of prayer being the same cruel, mean, and rotten person that one was before one prayed and fasted, then one can rest assured that all one's prayers, and fasting were in vain, and were a complete waste of time.

Hypocrisy kills! Therefore, kill it before it kills you!

Yom Kippur is a chance for us to make a real difference, but this difference begins within one's own heart. So who is going to truly repent of all one's superficial religiosity, and get busy with real personal, psychological transformation, and become an honest, decent, loving, and caring human being?

The time is right, but how right are you?

The Secret of Forgiveness, for Yom Kippur

There is a secret to forgiveness. That secret is detachment. Whatever one emotionally attaches to oneself gets stuck to one's psyche like glue. Its very hard for God to take us seriously when we ask for forgiveness, all the while that we approach God covered with psychic sticky glue, along with all the garbage that gets stuck to us because of it.

The secret of Yom Kippur is simply to let go. And this is the hardest thing in the world. It is also the reason why so many peoples sins are not forgiven on Yom Kippur. It is not that God does not forgive the person, rather, it is the person that does not forgive him/herself, and therefore, continues to drag along through one's life all the glued on attached garbage that one should have peeled off a long time ago.

On Yom Kipper God forgives us all our sins. This means that God will not punish us for those things that we truly, and sincerely show remorse and regret over doing. But then we must equally make every effort to make right that which we have done wrong. God is on our side, hooray! But we still have left one evil enemy, and this is the one foe that even God does not defeat. This is the foe of individual free choice, and the personal right for one to embrace that which is wrong, and harmful. Even God cannot protect us from ourselves when psychically we chose to punish ourselves for wrongdoings glued to us, that God wants for us to have let go long ago.

When we hold on to old psychological baggage we are inviting down punishments upon our heads. When we fail to forgive, we are clinging on to the past. Such glue attaches very strongly to our souls. What gets glued to us weighs us down, and inhibits us from moving forward into a more promising, free future. There is no magic, or mystical way around this. The only way to secure our personal forgiveness on Yom Kippur is to ensure that each individual truly and sincerely forgives everyone else who has wronged them. This is the only way to break the bonds that chain us down, and connected to the cycles of revenge and restitution.

We must embrace and practice a fundamental principle of religion, which is that God is the true judge, and while we have forgiven others for the wrongs they have done us, this does not mean that their slates are all wiped clean. On the contrary, even when such people ask for forgiveness, they too are faced with a brick wall that can only be breached by sincere remorse, and every effort of restitution.

Needless to say, bad people do not repent, or feel sincere remorse. They have no sense of conscience, and therefore, continue through their lives hurting others. Why on Earth would any normal person want to be connected to such harmful persons, to remain attached to them emotionally, and psychologically in continuing cycles of recompense. It is better to let go, and let God.

This is God's universe. Let Him handle the wayward souls. We have to learn to cut lose, and move on. This is the secret of forgiveness on Yom Kippur. God forgives us, and we forgive ourselves. Without this dual process, Yom Kippur becomes nothing more than just another day,

and another meaningless ritual.

Putting aside religious thought for a moment, let's get psychological, and ask just how does Divine forgiveness actually work? We do not believe children's fairy-tales about there being actual, and real Books in Heaven, be they the Books of Life or Death. We do not believe that God has any kind of physical form, or in actuality acts like any kind of super-human being. All of our prayers saying over and over again how sorry we are for deeds that we have never committed really do not persuade God to forgive us for those deeds that we actually have done.

God is not a person like us. God is not pleaded with, talked to, persuaded or convinced like a fellow human being. Remember God is All, within all, and knows all. God knows us inside and out. God recognizes each individual's truth intent, or lack of sincerity. There is no fooling God, not on Yom Kippur, nor on any other day.

So, when we tell God how sorry we are, for this or that, and yet, at the same time, hold on to all kinds of psychic and psychological garbage, what do you think God actually sees in the person? Do you think God looks upon the false facade that a person presents when praying, and in public, or do you think that God sees one's true inner face, along with all the muck and mire glued on to one's soul?

Yom Kippur should be renamed, and called, "The Day to be Honest before God." God, honestly, always sees the truth within us. It is we who refuse to see the truths within ourselves. Yom Kippur is given to us not so much for God to shake His mighty Head saying He forgives us, but rather, that we should put aside all such myths and fairy-tales and recognize the truth of what it is that we really need to do to stop causing others, and ourselves further harm and pain.

We fast on Yom Kippur for a reason. That reason is to get us to focus on our inner selves, and not to focus on our outer, physical needs, like food. For one day, we are commanded to detach from the concerns of this physical world, and to look within.

Detachment! Here is that magic word again! This is the magic word that makes Yom Kippur work! Not only must we detach for the day from food, we must use this ritual act as the archetype for which it is meant. One day's detachment from food is a symbol to teach us to detach from all things that cause us emotional, and psychological harm.

This is why this is the Day of Forgiveness. This is the day that we must detach, let go, and let God. We must detach from all the garbage that clings to us, and forgive all others of everything. Let God deal with them, but let us be free of any "karmic" needs of attachment. Let our souls soar free!

We release ourselves from such "karmic" attachments, and our souls ascend free into Heaven, unfettered by all the muck and mire that seeks to glue us down, we achieve true atonement.

Remember, atonement is "at-one-ment," with God. Being one with God can only be accomplished by the soul that soars on high to be with Him. No one soars when they are

weighed down. To soar, one must let go. Those that do achieve atonement, and are written in the metaphorical Book of Life.

Contemplate these things as you fast on Kippur. Say all the prayers that you wish, or may be required to recite. Yet, keep in mind this, you will never fool God, you can only fool yourself. So, get real! Kippur is the right day to do this.

On this day we forgive others so as to be free from the contamination of attachment to them. Yet, let us also remember this. We must never forget what the unrepentant have done. Although we forgive, this does not mean that we forget.

We forgive in the heart, and remember in the mind. In this way, we safeguard ourselves to never again fall into the same pattern of mistakes. We never again allow ourselves to be harmed by another who we know is harmful to us. We bear no malice, but at the same time, we also do not walk blindly in foolishness.

We forgive others, and we forgive ourselves. We commit to living a better, wiser life, making better and wiser decisions. This is how we become “one with God,” by becoming better human beings. This is how we please God, and this is the true secret of Yom Kippur.

Now, in the wise words of Hillel, the ancient Sages, “go do it.”

May we all be inscribed in God's true Book of Life, this year, and for many years to come.

The Secret of Yom Kippur

Sha'ar HaKavanot of the Ari'zal

Yom Kippur – Lecture 1, 100C

Know, as we already have discussed regarding Rosh HaShana, that all the days of the year, by our physical eating and drinking and the blessings that we recite over our food, we draw down to Zeir Anpin (the six intermediate sefirot) and Nok (Rahel, the sefirat Malkhut) those (spirital) counterparts of eating, drinking, washing, perfuming, wearing of a “sandal”, and sexual intercourse from Imma Il’la’ah (The Supernal Mother, the sefirat Binah).

However, this aspect of physical eating and drinking comes forth from the external (face) of the Supernal Mother. Yet on Yom Kippur, Rahel, the Nok of Zeir Anpin (the mate of Z.A. i.e. Malkhut, as referred to above) achieves a special elevation in two different ways; one from the elevation of food and drink themselves, and secondly from the (higher) source that they are able to achieve.

The reason for this is that now, on Yom Kippur, Rahel has been completely severed (from Z.A.) and has received (all the powers of) severity (denim) that come from the “back side” (ahora'im) of Zeir Anpin, and they (the severities) have been “fragranced” and “sweetened”, and she receives them directly from Z.A. Himself. All this has been explained in his lecture on the Nisi'ra (the sefirotic separations of Rosh HaShana).

Now on Yom Kippur, She (Rahel, the sefirat Malkhut) needs to receive the sweetening of (Her) severities, directly from Imma Il’la’ah (the Supernal Mother), without the intermediation of Zeir Anpin (who is Her mate and husband). Therefore, She (i.e. Rahel, the sefirat Malkhut) needs to ascend specifically to the Supernal Mother, and (actually) to rise above Zeir Anpin. Being that She now does this, the sustenance that She now receives directly from the Supernal Mother is not physical from the external (face), as it originally was.

Now, She is (spiritually) nourished from the same source that the Supernal Mother Herself receives Her (spiritual) food and drink, washing, perfuming, wearing of a “sandal”, and sexual intercourse. Therefore these original five things (in their physical manifestation) are nullified on this day, for (on this day) they are coming from a much higher source.

Therefore what we receive of them is not their physical aspect, but rather (from) the secret of “breath” that comes forth from the “mouth”. It is from this “breath” that Rahel is now nourished on Yom Kippur. Therefore are we commanded to abstain from five things, including food and drink, for these are nullified from (Rahel) at this time of Yom Kippur. She is nourished from the “breath” of the “Supernal Mouth”.

Thus were five prayer services ordained to be recited on Yom Kippur, which are 'Arvit (the evening service), Shaharit (the morning service), Musaf (the additional service), Minha (the afternoon service) and Ne'ilah (the closing service) – these correspond to the five things, food

and drink, washing, perfuming, wearing of a “sandal”, and sexual intercourse; for the prayer services are the secret of the “breath” that comes forth from the mouth.

For this reason, on Yom Kippur we recite (in the *Shema Yisrael* prayer) “**Barukh Shem Kavod Malkhuto L’olam Va’ed**” aloud – the only time of the year when this is not whispered; for this recitation of “**Barukh Shem Kavod Malkhuto L’olam Va’ed**” is the rectification of the (sefirat) Malkhut, and being that She is now being nourished by the (Supernal) “Inner Voices”, therefore this verse is to be recited aloud.

There is also another reason for this, and that being because Rahel, now on Yom Kippur, takes Her already sweetened “five severities” (*gevurot*) directly from the Supernal Mother Herself, and not through the intermediation of Zeir Anpin, as we will explain later on with the help of Heaven. Therefore corresponding to them (the five severities) were the five abstentions ordained. This is also hinted to in the Holy *Zohar*, Parashat Pinhas 231B.

The Secret Power Within HaShem Hu HaElokim

One of the great proclamations made at the conclusion of Yom Kippur prayers are the words, **“HaShem Hu HaElohim”** (HaShem, He is G-d). At the surface level this seems merely to be a religious, cultural proclamation that HaShem, G-d of Israel is the only true G-d, thus implying the falsehoods of all the other world religions and their gods. Yet, Hebrew proclamations are built upon prophetic/Kabbalistic design. Nothing about them is so ethnic, simplistic and one dimensional.

The simple statement HaShem Hu HaElohim is not simple at all; and it is not mentioned in relationship to other religions or their gods. This statement is indeed the foundation of Torah, but so very few actually understand its meaning. Even fewer know how to transform a spoken statement into a vibrant force that can actually influence and change physical matter at its most fundamental levels.

Speech is sound. Sounds can vibrate matter at the molecular level. Thoughts are things; they are actual waves of energy. When thoughts can be focused, similar to the focusing of light, then concentrated thought can become like a laser beam with the power to cut and penetrate almost everything. When concentrated thought is channeled through the proper vibrations of sound, powerful results are achieved, results that have very material, physical manifestations.

The real Name of G-d, commonly referred to HaShem, as we know is YHVH. However, we do not pronounce this Name YHVH; instead we pronounce the Name ADONAI. This is not because of myth that we have forgotten how to pronounce the Name or that the Name is too holy to pronounce. We have never forgotten how it was pronounced and there are still those who properly pronounce it regularly in the course of their secret works. These are the ba'alei shem tov (masters of the good name).

The reason why the Name changed was because of the shift in the collective consciousness of the Israelite nation. They descended from being a people in their land, with prophecy and Temple down into being a people in exile without Divine direction, national unity and focus. The shift in consciousness caused there to be a shift in Names. According to Torah/Kabbalah, a Name is not just a word; it is an actual living entity. The Name YHVH is not just a word or name; it is a power sound, an actual conduit of living energy. When the Name YHVH is pronounced in a precise manner and chanted according to the ancient prophetic traditions, it can unleash tremendous forces that have powerful affects.

Without prophecy, Ark and Temple, the Israelite collective lost the proper forms through which the Name YHVH can be channeled. Today, while the masses no longer use the proper vessel of the letters YHVH to channel the Name's full force, the concentrated energy that goes into it can still be taped. The secret power in a Name is not just in its spoken form but more so in the concentrated mind/thought that channels into its recitation.

The Name ADONAI was chosen to replace YHVH to more appropriately reflect the nature of the shift in the collective consciousness of the Israelite nation. ADONAI translates as “L-rd,” however it means so much more. The Name ADONAI has the same numerical value as the word “Hekhal” (palace). A Hekhal palace is a domain of residence. A residence contains its owner, protects him from the outside and also conceals him from outsiders.

This physical universe of ours operates according to the laws of nature as ordained by G-d in the beginning. The Hebrew Name used in the creation story we know is ELOHIM. The numerical value of this Name is equal to the value of the Hebrew term HaTeva (nature). Thus the natural universe of physical form is the creation of ELOHIM. The laws of nature are the expressions of ELOHIM. ELOHIM is the force and power underlying the physical universe.

YHVH as a Hebrew word can be seen to contain the root verb “Hovey” (to be). In its basic tense, a Hebrew verb is passive, however when the prefix letter Yod is added to a passive verb base, it transforms the verb from the passive tense into the active tense. Thus the verb “Hovey” (Hey Vav Hey), with a Yod in front of it (Yod Hey Vav Hey, the holy Name YHVH) could be translated to mean “active being,” “being in action,” or simply “active existence.” This Name was not used to describe the physical creation and is only introduced later in Torah with the manifestation of the higher (Yetziratic) spiritual reality.

We thus have two parallel dimensional planes; one physical (in Kabbalah, Asiyah), operating under known natural laws and another (in Kabbalah, Yetzirah), not physical, operating under entirely different conditions. The natural universe is represented in Torah by the Name ELOHIM and the “supernatural” universe by the Name YHVH. The two universes operate parallel to one another and are supposed to operate and function in harmony with each other. The YHVH universe (Yetzirah) is the source and sustenance of the ELOHIM universe (Asiyah). Our physical universe (Asiyah) emanates out of the higher dimensional plane (Yetzirah) and is completely sustained by it.

When the order of creation is in proper balance, the YHVH universe flows naturally into the ELOHIM universe. In this relationship the physical universe materializes abundance in all its forms and everything is in blossom, harmony, balance and peace. However, the flow of the upper universe into the lower universe can be hindered. Natural law dictates that channels can be either opened or closed.

At Sinai, an inter-dimensional vortex was opened enabling YHVH to materialize in this physical universe in a form that could contain it and sustain it. This form is the Torah. The body of Torah is the mitzvot. When Israel correlates their collective mind to Torah they properly channel YHVH and enable its power and force to materialize in this physical plane and thus into the Name ELOHIM. This is the purpose of Halakha (the Torah way, commonly but limitedly translated as Jewish Law).

The Name YHVH was channeled originally through prophecy, Ark and Temple coupled with the pronunciations of the ancient ba’alei shem tov, who were the Biblical prophets and priests. When the nation’s deviant behavior caused a collective shift in the national consciousness, the power of YHVH was severely curtailed. It could no longer be properly channeled into the

ELOHIM physical universe. Thus, the vessels of channeling and reception were either destroyed or removed. We therefore lost prophecy, Ark and Temple. We were left in a mental and correlating physical place which we call exile.

There can be no redemption from exile until such redemption is properly carried out. The inner channels must first be restored before the external channels can be restored. For even if the external forms of Ark and Temple were replaced, they would still be nothing but empty hollow shells. This was the situation regarding the Second Temple in Jerusalem. Without the internal shift of collective national consciousness back to the supernatural reality of the Name YHVH, exile will continue, regardless of external forms.

Internal shifts in the collective national consciousness can be achieved through the focused concerted effort of those in the nation who can steer the collective in the proper mental direction. Only they can realign focus away from ELOHIM and the natural and restore it to YHVH and the supernatural, thus enabling both to properly realign, unite and flow harmoniously into one another. This is the true meaning of Teshuva (return, commonly understood to be repentance).

Now we can begin to understand the meaning of HaShem Hu HaElohim. This statement is no mere recitation of words; rather it needs to be an actual focus of consciousness that helps realign parallel universes.

When we recite the words HaShem Hu HaElohim, the sounds themselves need to be joined with intense mental focus. In Hebrew we call this Kavana (mental intent). When we recite the Name ADONAI, we must not focus on that Name but rather on the Name YHVH. ADONAI is the dwelling place, the palace, the Hekhal of YHVH. YHVH is concealed within ADONAI. Our mental focus is to make sure the two Names are perfectly united and that the YHVH energy is properly channeled through its vessel ADONAI. Thus, when reciting ADONAI we mentally visualize the Name YHVH and imagine its supernatural life giving energy flowing into the Name ADONAI enlivening it and enabling it to enliven our physical universe. YHVH is the inner conduit; ADONAI is the outer conduit.

This mental focus (Kavanah) is what we call in Kabbalah the Yihud Havaya/Adnoot. Havaya, like the word HaShem is a term used to call the Name YHVH. Adnoot is the term for the Name ADONAI. Yihud means union. The two Names together thus form a relationship of light and vessel or of soul and body. Again, YHVH is the inner conduit; ADONAI is the outer conduit. One is the source and strength of the other; one is the vessel and form of the other. One alone cannot be complete. A body without a soul is dead and a soul without a body is a ghost. Therefore when we pronounce ADONAI we contemplate YHVH. Without this there is no flow of energy and thus no manifestation of the Divine channeled through the recitation of the Name. Mind and speech must be joined together for one without the other is dead.

Havaya/Adnoot is the source of all life in the ELOHIM (Asiyah) physical universe. YHVH is the pure source that when it flows into this universe directly, without dilution in ADONAI, brings with it an abundance that can transform the very sub-atomic structure of all physical matter in the universe. In our present fallen state of exile, we cannot ascend to the proper level to

channel this flow undiluted. We channel it the best we can through the Name ADONAI. It is not perfect, but it is the best that we can do at present. And without this all life would cease to exist in this physical universe.

Havaya/Adnoot needs to flow in order for there to be life. And to where does it flow? It flows into the substructures of this physical universe, into the very Presence of the Creator underlying our physical reality. This is the source of natural law, represented by the Name ELOHIM. By channeling Havaya/Adnoot into ELOHIM we are essentially sustaining all physical existence. The indwelling Presence of ELOHIM in every sub-atomic reality that defines for it its natural laws is called in Hebrew, the Shekhina (the Indwelling Divine Presence).

When we verbally proclaim HaShem Hu HaElohim, we are doing much more than making a statement of faith. In our mental focus we are actually moving very subtle energy forces that themselves nurture life. Our statement is an actual act of providing nourishment for our physical (Asiyah) universe. We are focusing on the energetic reality (YHVH) of the supernatural source universe (Yetzirah) and channeling its sustaining flow (ADONAI) into a proper conduit of materialization (Havaya/Adnoot) and from the conduit out into the receptacle (Asiyah/ELOHIM/Shekhina/nature). While the words HaShem Hu HaElohim themselves are meaningful at the simple level; it is the properly placed mental focus on their real intent that unleashes real raw power that can have so many positive effects.

Now that we have discussed the Names YHVH, ADONAI and ELOHIM, let me turn momentarily to the additional letters that form the statement HaShem Hu HaElohim. The Hebrew word Hu (He is) is spelled Hey, Vav, Alef. The Name ELOHIM is introduced with a prefix, the letter Hey (the), however due to the nature of English grammar and syntax, we do not translate it. It would sound awkward to say, HaShem He is The G-d, so the Hey (the) is usually left untranslated. However, in Hebrew grammar, the insertion of this preposition is entirely accurate and proper.

The Hebrew letters that spell Hu Ha reside in between the two Names YHVH and ELOHIM. These letters, Hey, Vav, Alef and Hey numerically add up to the value of 17. This is the numerical value of the word Tov (good). It is no coincidence that this is found here. YHVH, though ADONAI, channels the energetic flow of the higher universe (Yetzirah) into the lower one (Asiyah). As I said above, this flow is the source and sustenance of all life in the physical world. This energy is not symbolic or mental in nature. It is a real, life-force, life-giving radiance (shefa). In Hebrew we call it Nefesh; in the Orient it is called by a more popular, more recognizable term, Chi. This is the Tov (good) that we channel.

The recitation of HaShem Hu HaElohim is not limited to Yom Kippur. In our regular daily morning prayers, it is also recited in very precisely placed section. When reciting the words, one should bear in mind that through the power of one's focus and concentration one can actually transcend dimensional boundaries, tap into higher energy sources and through the combined power of thought and sound actually serve as a conduit of life-force energy from one universe to another. This is precisely how we serve Heaven and in religious terms proclaim HaShem to be G-d.

Proclaiming HaShem to be G-d has lost much of its meaning over many centuries. In ancient times when the competition between mutually exclusive religious systems was vicious, proclaiming the religion of Torah over the other religions and other gods was a vital thing. Today, the majority of the world believes in a Supreme Being of one sort or another. To proclaim this is not controversial. To proclaim that there is One G-d over all is acceptable to most today, whereas at one time it was not. To proclaim that HaShem is the G-d of Israel and Israel alone, excluding all others is not the message of Torah and never was. Israel's message is that G-d is the G-d over all, without distinction or separation. Therefore the message of HaShem Hu HaElohim is a universal one that can be embraced by all humanity.

We need to learn to see beyond the limited focus of physical eyes and recognize the soul within the body. This is true of how we must interact with one another and this is equally true of how we interact with Heaven. Religious mythologies of separation must be relegated to the bookshelf of children's stories where they belong. Instead, we must focus on true and actual spiritual accomplishment and not just on philosophical religious rituals that look good on the surface, but are actually empty inside.

Only we can make the difference.

Succot in Kabbalah

INTRODUCTION

The hand of HaShem is truly wondrous. On Rosh HaShana, all life stands before Him for righteous judgment.¹ On Yom Kippur, we bow our knee and humble our hearts as G-d graciously bestows upon us His forgiveness for our many sins. Five days later, with the fullness of the moon, G-d now commands us to exit our own homes and to enter into His. G-d's "home," as we shall see, is the Succah.²

The Hand of G-d has wrought all this. From Rosh HaShana through Yom Kippur G-d's Left Hand has held us firm in the grasp of stern judgment. Yet, as soon as Kippur ends, G-d embraces us with His Right Hand and we enter into a period of joyous grace.³

As profound is the Hand of G-d, the Thoughts of our holy Creator are even more sublime. As G-d created man in His image, and as our hands only act out what is first thought of in the mind, so it is with our blessed Creator above. As it is below, so it is above.

Our actions are clearly the visible works of our hands. Yet, prior to manifestation of our actions, we think. What we think, however, prior to acting, is concealed. Our thoughts are only revealed

¹In my previous 2007 essays on Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur, I explained the astronomical details underlying this metaphorical language. This essay on Succot was written a number of years ago (2003) when I still was accustomed to explain Torah matters within the accepted religious language of metaphor and archetypes. These notes will serve as my commentary to my own writings. They will serve to explain the true human, psychological and psychic meanings underlying the religious Kabbalistic metaphors of Succot. The concepts and rituals associated with this period describe movements in human consciousness and how these shifts are to subtly influence our physical actions and thus bring practical and relevant change into the real world.

²Aside from the mystical language used shortly to describe the succah, the reason underlying why we are supposed to live in one of these temporary booths, built to precise specifications, is to teach us a psychological lesson, one that is ingrained directly upon the unconscious/psychic mind. Essentially, the purpose of Succot is to assist us in remembering that Heaven is ultimately in charge of everything here on Earth. Regardless of how much we build and alter nature, nature is still our lord. We are part of this world and can never detach from it (in life). We sometimes forget this basic truth. After the cosmic influences of the star alignment descend upon us and after our endeavors to take a step up into Heaven, Succot is not the time for us to bring Heaven down to Earth. This can be done all too easy conceptually, however Torah is not interested in concepts, it is interested in actions. We can think all we want about how Heaven is ultimately in charge, however when we physically leave the comfort of our homes and dwell instead in a booth exposed to the elements, we immediately begin to feel the natural world all around us, unblocked by the safety of the walls of our homes. We begin to feel the need for Heaven to look after us. This is not just a thought; it is a feeling, one that penetrates deep down into the unconscious. This solicits the change within us and why we have to do specific things physically instead of just think about them.

³Left and right hands are metaphors used to describe aspects of consciousness during specific times. When we speak of the left hand, we are talking about a time of conservation, focus, restriction and discipline. When we speak of the right hand, we speak instead about expression, outgoing, ascension for the sake of bringing down, and the expression of those things that the left hand has provided.

by our speech or action. As it is below, so it is above. The Thoughts of G-d are concealed from our eyes. They can only be uncovered when G-d wishes for them to be so.

When we perform His sacred mitzvot, we are acting out G-d's desires for us. Yet, underlying the ordinances of Divinely ordained actions lie the concealed sacred Divine Thought. Concealed within the commandments themselves, within the very words that spell out the commandments and the very letters that form the words are concealed sacred hints as to what is in the Mind of G-d, and why He commanded us to perform these specific mitzvot of Succah and the four species at this specific time.

The details of the secrets of Succot fill many pages in the writings of the Kabbalists. Specific details defy translation due to the many complications of attempting to explain the profound Kabbalistic spiritual concepts. English and other languages simply lack the proper words that can be used to properly communicate what it is that the secrets of the Torah truly relate.

Although we may be somewhat handicapped in our Hebrew scholarship, we are not left completely empty handed. Although not everything can be brought to us in translation, there is still that which can be. The rest of this essay will just touch the surface of those things concealed from our eyes, covered with letters and numerical values.

THE SUCCAH

The secret of the Succot holiday is to be found in the word Succah itself. Spelled with four Hebrew letters, just like the holy Name YKVK, the word Succah indeed conceals the holy Name YKVK within it. The numerical value of the word Succah (Samekh, Vav, Kaf, Hey) is 91. 91 is a sacred number in Kabbalah. The two letters Kaf and Vav in Succah numerically equal 26. This is the numerical value of YKVK and where this Name is concealed within the word. When 26 is subtracted from 91, the remainder is 65, another significant Kabbalistic number. 65 is the numerical value of the holy Name Adonai. Together, the word Succah spells out these two sacred Names. Yet, these two Names are much more than mere holy words. These two Names share a special and sacred relationship.

Adonai is the Name we use to call upon HaShem. YKVK though is the Name how it is written. YKVK is in mind whereas Adonai is in speech. Herein lies the secret. The sacred Name YKVK expresses the concealed latent potential within G-d, whereas the Name Adonai expresses an aspect of that potential. When combined therefore, YKVK and Adonai express the union of the Divine potential and manifestation of that potential.

In the realm of the sefirot, the Name YKVK corresponds to the six sefirot HaGaT, NaHiY (hesed, gevurah, tiferet, netzah, hod, and yesod). Together these six are called Zeir Anpin, ZA, the "Short Face." ZA is that "Face" of G-d unseen in our universe, yet is the source of all things happening here. This "Face" of G-d is what is "seen" in the Heavens. The "Face" of ZA is centered on the sefirat Tiferet, which is the supernal Heart and source of the holy written Torah.

The name Adonai, on the other hand, relates to the sefirat Malkhut, the holy Shekhina. The Shekhina is also called NOK (the feminine), the mate of ZA. It is through the Shekhina/Malkhut

that ZA is manifest here in our physical universe. The Shekhina is the life force that gives rise to all aspects of form in the physical universe. The Shekhina is that aspect of G-d that dictates to everything what it is supposed to be. The Shekhina is Force underlying the laws of nature. The Shekhina creates nature by serving as the conduit for ZA. As such, NOK is the proverbial mate of ZA. The two must be in proper union for the sake of the continuity of the universe. Without the union of ZA and NOK, our universe would revert back to the cold primordial soup void of any life and consciousness.

ZA and NOK (feminine, mate of ZA) must be in a state of continual union in order for the supernal abundance of Divine energy to flow into our universe. Life is vibrant and ever-flowing, so is the holy Torah. As ZA ordains the general forms of all what is to be, NOK provides the details. As it is above, so it is below. This is the secret of the written and oral Torah. ZA manifests the written form of the Torah, etched and engraved within the holy letters. NOK breathes into those letters and gives them their meaning and parameters. As all Benei Torah know, it is our sacred oral Torah that gives form and substance to the holy written Torah. The two together are like man and wife, incomplete one without the other. As it is below, so it is above.

In Kabbalah, ZA is also referred to as the Holy One, blessed be He. NOK/Malkhut, as we have said is referred to as HaShem's Shekhina. The union of ZA and NOK is thus the union of the seven sefirot that unite the Active/Giving (male) and Passive/Receiving (female) principles in creation. This is also referred to as the union of the spiritual realms of Heaven and the physical realms of Earth. Here on earth this is manifest in the form of the union of the written and oral Torah, Thus the union of the Holy One, blessed be He and His Shekhina is the whole purpose of creation and the reason why Benei Yisrael were given the obligation of observing mitzvot. This profound concept is subtly revealed to us within the very letters that spell the word Succah. This concept of universal harmony and continuity is the underlying "Thought of G-d" why He commanded us to dwell in Succot for seven days.

The Succot holiday lasts for seven days. These seven days correspond to the sefirotic unity of the six sefirot of ZA and the sefirot Malkhut that is NOK. These seven days unite the supernal sefirot and radiate upon us their influence. Yet, as with all things in the physical world, one must be in the right place at the right time in order to receive that which is to be received.

THE USHPIZIN

The right time is the seven days of Succot. On each of the days the radiance of one of the seven sefirot is manifest to us. Thus, on day one the sefirot hesed is manifest. Day two, the sefirot gevurah is manifest and onward through all seven sefirot. Representing this manifestation of sefirotic energy, there has developed the Succot tradition of welcoming the Sheva Ushpizin (the seven guests). These are the sacred souls of the seven fathers of the Jewish people, each one of whom embodies one of the sefirot and its energy. On each night of Succot, we invite the appropriate "guest."

This invitation is much more than merely symbolic. An actual essence of the soul of the Ushpin actually comes to us when he is invited. Indeed, a special place (a chair) is actually prepared for

the reception of this presence. The essence of the souls of Avraham, Yitzhak, Ya'akov, Moshe, Aharon, Yosef and David come to us and bring with them an element of the manifestation of the sefirot hesed, gevurah, tiferet, netzah, hod, yesod and malkhut. The essence of these Ushpin guests and the sefirah energy they bring with them is absorbed into our souls, causing us great spiritual elevation.

An Ushpin can only manifest at this special time of the year, the full moon of the seventh month. The moon is the symbol of Yisrael. Only when Yisrael is in her fullness can her fathers come and bless her. Yet, the blessing that comes in this time can only come into the proper receptacle. This receptacle is the Succah.

THE SKAKH

As we learned above the Succah is the secret of the union of ZA/YKVK and NOK/Adonai. This union is brought about through the medium of our action of dwelling in the Succah (the receptacle of the union) for seven days (of the sefirot). The Succah itself, as we know is a temporary dwelling. Of the laws that define how a Succah is to be made (found in the oral Torah, which itself is a manifestation of NOK), one of the most strict is the law of the Skakh, the Succah roof.

The roof of the Succah must be somewhat open, so that through the roof, made of all natural earth grown products, one can still see the stars. As we sit in the Succah and we look up, we see the Skakh roof made of elements of the earth, and at the same time, we see the stars of Heaven. We thus remember and more so, we experience how it is our One G-d who created both controls both. We experience how both Heaven and Earth are in the Hands of our Almighty Creator. We recognize and feel in our bones, as the cool evening breeze passing through the Succah reminds us, that we are but transitory creatures here upon this earth. We come to experience how truly our physical homes, our fates and our fortunes are not so much under our personal control as we might think. The Succah reminds us that we are in G-d's Hands and not just in our own.

In order to properly observe the mitzvah of the Succah one must be well versed in the Laws of Succot. A tent is not a Succah; neither is just any other outdoor temporary dwelling. One must consult a competent Orthodox Rabbi to make sure that one's Succah meets the Halakhic requirements and thus can serve as the spiritual receptacle as we described above.

THE FOUR SPECIES

Dwelling in the Succah these seven days performs a profound spiritual service. Yet there is more to this special time than the Succah. There is also the mitzvah of the Arba Minim, our requirement to take hadasim (myrtle), aravot (willows), a lulav (palm) and etrog (fruit) and "wave" them before HaShem during our prayers. This ritual also contains within it many sublime secrets, most too profound to be translated, yet, there is enough that we can discuss and ponder.

The four species are:

1. myrtle (hadas, spelled hey, dalet, samekh),
2. willow (aravah, spelled ayin, resh, bet, hey),
3. palm (lulav, spelled lamed, vav, lamed, bet) and
4. etrog (spelled alef, tav, resh, vav, gimel).

The species themselves correspond to the seven sefirot that are manifest on this holiday. Three hadas branches are used. These correspond to the three sefirot hesed, gevurah and tiferet. The two aravah branches correspond to netzah and hod. The lulav corresponds to yesod and the etrog to malkhut. The six branches are held in the right hand and the etrog is held in the left. Torah law based upon the Kabbalah dictates that when we hold the four species they must be held together with the etrog in the left hand touching the other species in the right. The Kabbalah is emphatic that the two never be separated during the times of prayer and the hakafot.

In the letters of the names of the four species, we have revealed to us an element of their secret nature and how they too serve to create the unity of ZA and NOK thus maintaining the flow of blessing from Heaven to earth.

The final letters of each of the four are samekh (numerical value of 60), hey (numerical value of 5), bet (2) and gimel (3). Together these add up to 70, the numerical value of two important Hebrew words, sod (secret) and yayin (wine).

Wine is always the symbol of blessing and joy in Torah tradition. This is why wine is the prime element in kiddush, havdalah and every simcha (joyous occasion). We always celebrate over a full cup of wine. The four species too are like our kiddush wine for the holiday. With them do we celebrate the union of Heaven and earth, spiritual and physical. With them do we celebrate the sod, the secret of the union of ZA and NOK concealed within these traditional ritual observances. We celebrate that G-d has revealed to us His inner intentions for the mitzvot, that we recognize that our observance is no mere symbolic gesture, but our actual participation in the process of creation and the restoration of the state of harmony and balance between the worlds. All this is hinted to with four simple letters. Yet, this is not all.

The initial letters of the names of the four species (hey, ayin, lamed, alef) numerically equal 106. 106 is a special number, the value of the phrase recited daily in the Shema Yisrael prayer "b'khol levavekha" (with all your heart). This signifies that one who takes the four species and waves them before HaShem in the prescribed Halakhic fashion during these days is thus fulfilling HaShem's command to us to love Him "with all our hearts."

106 is also the numerical value of the word "hamelukha" (the kingship). When one performs the waving in accordance to Halakha (the laws of the oral Torah) one is proclaiming one's acceptance upon oneself the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven. Indeed, the Hebrew word for yoke (ohl, spelled ayin vav, lamed) is also 106.

106 is also the numerical value of the phrase "higiyon lev" (understanding heart). Understanding is always said to be an attribute of the heart and not the mind, as it is written in

the prayer of Eliyahu “and the heart understands.” One who observes this sacred mitzvah of the four species cultivates an understanding heart with which one will be able to understand the secrets of the Torah. This in itself is the definition of beauty, the Hebrew word of which is “yofi,” also numerically equal to 106.

If we add to the numerical value of 106 the number of the four letters themselves we will have 110. This number is the numerical value of the phrases, “benei hayil” (children of power), “hakhamei lev” (wise of heart) and “HaShem tov u’metiv” (HaShem who is good and provides). All of these point to the matter that by observing this sacred mitzvah properly according to Halakha, one adorns the Shekhina with glory (the unity of ZA and NOK). Such ones are truly children of power and wise of heart. To these special children, HaShem is indeed good and provides for them great abundance.

The observance of this special mitzvah of waving the four species is the source of spiritual life. Indeed, the name lulav itself is numerically equal to 68, the value of “hayim” (life). When we wave the four species, we wave them three times in each of the six directions of the earth, south, north, east, up, down and west. We repeat this procedure four times during the Hallel prayer. Each cycle thus contains 18 waves. 18 is the number of “hai” (life). Four times the 18 equals 72, the numerical value of the word “hesed” (mercy).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we see that the Succah and the four species are powerful acts pregnant with meaning and real power. When we perform these sacred mitzvot in proper form and in enlightened spirit we set in motion a series of spiritual occurrences far beyond what our minds can imagine. We create a conduit of potent spiritual energy that comes down to us here on earth. This occurrence is celebrated as a separate event and holiday. This is Hag Shemini Atzeret, the eighth day. On this day, the union of ZA and NOK are complete. On this day, they ascend to the spiritually highest lofty places in the invisible worlds of Atzilut.

May HaShem bless us all to participate in these sacred mitzvot and participate in bringing about the sacred supernal unions.

HOSHANNA RABBAH IN KABBALAH

The Secret of the Seal and the Shadow

On the seventh day of Succot, we have a special celebration called Hoshanna Rabbah. Of the entire eight day Succot/Atzeret holiday period, this is the only day that includes a small remnant of Yom Kippur style penitent prayers. Of course, there are good reasons for this known in the Kabbalah.

Each of the seven days of Succot one of the seven sefirot becomes manifest. On Hoshanna Rabbah, the seventh day of Succot, the final sefirah Malkhut receives its influx from above. Corresponding to this, we perform the Hakafa circling of the Bimah (center of the Synagogue where the Torah is placed for reading) seven times, instead of just one time as performed on all the other days of Succot.

Hoshanna Rabbah is called the Seal (Hotem). It is on this day that the Heavenly edicts signed on Rosh HaShana and sealed on Yom Kippur are delivered into the hands of the angelic forces for their execution, be it for life or death, blessing or curse. Hoshanna Rabbah, therefore, is referred to as the second (or outer) seal (Hotem).

The Ari'zal explains in his Sha'ar HaKavanot, Inyan Succot, Derush 8, the secrets of Hoshanna Rabbah, the second seal of Malkhut and provides for us insight into an ancient custom how one can ascertain if one is destined for a good or bad end in the upcoming year.

In brief, the Ari'zal teaches us that the day of Hoshanna Rabbah is the date of the execution of the Heavenly edicts ordained on Yom Kippur. Now, one might ask, if an edict is sealed on Yom Kippur, why bother to wait the extra days until Hoshanna Rabbah in order to execute it? Moreover, what is the matter of this second seal and what is its relationship to the sefirat Malkhut?

The answer to these questions is as follows. We all know that the holiday of Succot/Atzeret is a time of great rejoicing. It is a time of the reception of the Divine mercies. During the days of Succot the supernal mercies concealed above are manifest and channeled into the worlds below, one day for each sefirah of the seven days (levels) of creation.

It is on Hoshanna Rabbah that the Divine mercy descends into Malkhut. Now, the sefirat Malkhut is an appellation for the lower worlds, including our physical world. It is on this day that the reception from Heaven reaches here. This reception however is not only of the Divine mercies revealed during Succot, it is also the day of reception of the Heavenly edicts of Kippur.

On Yom Kippur, during the final prayer of the day, the Neilah, the source of our souls, which is the Shekhina, NOK of ZA, also referred to in the Kabbalah as Rachel Imaynu Ikeret HaBayit (our mother Rachel, the foundation of the home), rises to the highest heights. At this lofty height, our souls receive atonement from HaShem and we are declared pure before Him. Yet, the forces of evil, the Klipot, are not unaware of our present lofty state. With their spiritual eyes, they can

see that our souls are full of pure spiritual energy. These klipot feed off this energy, it is their means of sustenance. They seek to steal it from us any way they can. Thus the moment Yom Kippur is over, the Klipot busy themselves to cause Benei Yisrael to sin again thus toppling our souls from our spiritual heights. In our fall, the pure spiritual energy within us topples and descends with us. In this way, the spiritual energy is thus brought into the realms of the Klipot where they can feed off of it.

Aware of the machinations of the forces of evil, HaShem devises a way to protect our souls from this onslaught. In order to protect the spiritual energy imbued within us HaShem places a seal around it, a powerful spiritual seal that the forces of evil cannot break. This seal surrounds the Yesod of NOK and its source is from Imma Ila'ah (the supernal mother, the sefirat Binah).

The Yesod is the sefirah of creativity and life force energy. Metaphorically, it corresponds to the genitalia in the body of men and women. The sefirat Binah corresponds to the mind and represents clear and lucid thinking within us. The seal (Hotem) placed around the Yesod from Binah is a clear and profound lucid thinking that enables us to recognize the machinations of the klipot. We have an innate ability during these days to recognize how the forces of evil might want to misdirect our creative or sexual abilities and pervert them to their own ends. During these days, we are immune from their attacks, if we so choose to embrace the immunity.

From Yom Kippur until Hoshanna Rabbah, this seal is firmly in place. Yet, just as this seal provides great spiritual insight and protection to those who choose to accept it, it also withholds and blocks this spiritual protection from those who have chosen to reject it. This is the nature of a seal. It keeps things from coming in and from going out.

On Yom Kippur, this seal is placed in the sefirat Yesod. Yet Yesod is still part of the Olam HaYetzirah. In other words, the Yesod and its seal are still part of the spiritual worlds. It has not yet manifested here physically on earth. It is experienced in the human unconscious rather than in the conscious mind.

All this changes on Hoshanna Rabbah. As we said above Hoshanna Rabbah corresponds to the Malkhut. Malkhut corresponds to the Olam HaAsiyah, the Malkhut of which is our physical world. On Hoshanna Rabbah, the day of Malkhut, a second seal is formed. This second seal brings down to earth the edicts previously sealed in the Yesod. Those who are sealed within the Yesod are "written in the Book of Life." Those outside the seal are "written in the Book of Death." On Hoshanna Rabbah, the day of Malkhut, that which has been ordained in Heaven finally reaches the earth for execution, be it for good or for bad.

HaShem in His great mercy has revealed to us the secret of Hoshanna Rabbah. This is why on this day, of all the days of Succot, we offer supplications of penitence. Maybe our repentance on Kippur was not sincere? Maybe we have not cleansed ourselves completely of our sins? Maybe we have some more soul searching to do, to rectify our character and our behavior? Maybe our sins has placed us outside the seal and not inside it?

Until Hoshanna Rabbah we have the opportunity to "open the seal" of Yeosd and enter within. Actually, the seal is never really opened, it is never breached. Rather HaShem miraculously lifts

up our souls and places it under the seal, rather than disturb its place. In other words, we have to move for the sake of Heaven. Heaven does not move for the sake of us.

On Hoshanna Rabbah, the Heavenly edicts begin to manifest here on earth. We are taught that the edicts arrive at the exact hour of midnight on Hoshanna Rabbah. This is the hour when the Moon, symbolic of the Shekhina, the source of our souls, shines brightest in the sky. Herein lies a secret.

As we know from the Torah, we are created in the “image of G-d.” The Hebrew word for this image is Tzelem. The word Tzelem (image) is related to the word Tzel (shadow). Thus within one’s shadow can be seen a reflection of one’s Tzelem. In practicality, this means that with one’s spiritual eye one can see reflected in one’s shadow an aspect about one’s spiritual connection to G-d referred to as one’s Tzelem (Divine image imprinted on one’s soul).

When one is “written in the Book of Death” on Yom Kippur, HaShem removes from such a soul His Tzelem image. Without the removal of this Divine spark within the soul, the angel of death would not have the power to remove the soul from the body.

On the night of Hoshanna Rabbah, from midnight on, we are taught one can go out into the moonlight and gaze upon one’s shadow. If the image of the shadow is complete, one can rest assured that the coming year will be one of life. However, if in the moonlight one cannot see specifically the shadow reflection of one’s head, this is a sign that one has been “written in the Book of Death” and that this year will be his last on earth.

The “head” of one’s shadow (tzel) is a metaphor for one’s Tzelem (inner Divine spark). Many actually go out and pay attention to their physical shadows, yet those with insight know that the “looking” is really an internal one. If one does attempt to view one’s physical shadow in the actual light of the moon, one must gaze on it with spiritual insight to attempt to grasp a glimpse of its spiritual essence.

Mind you, this check cannot be performed by street lights, city lights or any other man made source. The check must be done in an area free of all other light except moonlight. If it is a cloudy night, then simply there is nothing to be done.

Hoshanna Rabbah is our last chance of getting right with HaShem for the year. For although our edicts arrive here in the physical world ready for execution at the stroke of midnight, we still have until the morning hours to supplicate before our Creator and Judge to again plead for His mercy and to again turn from our wanton way.

The Ari’zal has also ordained for us a custom that assists us in our bond with HaShem in preparation for Hoshanna Rabbah. It is the custom (minhag) of the Kabbalists to stay awake the entire night of Hoshanna Rabbah to study Torah, just as is done on the night of Shavuot. In the first half of the night the entire fifth book of the Torah, Devarim (Deuteronomy) is read. This reading is done with specific design.

The Ari'zal explains in the Sha'ar HaKavanot using holy Names and their numerical values how Sefer Devarim (Deuteronomy) corresponds to the sefirat Malkhut. As such this book corresponds to the second seal of the Malkhut, the seal revealed on this night. Thus as a segulah (spiritual remedy) for the soul, the entire book of Devarim is read. The words of this book include within it a repetition of all the laws included within the others. Thus in Hebrew, Devarim is also called the Mishneh (the second) Torah (not to be confused with the oral Torah code by the same name by Rabbi Yehudah, or confused with the law code of RaMBaM also by this name). Indeed, both of these texts took their name from Sefer Devarim.

The word Mishneh actually means “the second.” Thus, it is the repetition or “second” Torah. As such Devarim also corresponds to the second seal, the seal of Malkhut revealed on this night.

Corresponding to Malkhut, the Bimah is circled seven times instead of the usual one time as in all others days of Succot. For on this day, the seventh day, the Malkhut receives all the spiritual influxes from all the upper sefirot. She not only receives her share (which could be accomplished in one circling), she receives also the full share of the others. As such, the Bimah (symbolic of Malkhut herself) is circled once for each sefirotic influence received on this day. This is the secret of the Ohr Makif (surrounding light).

There is yet to discuss one more practice unique to Hoshanna Rabbah, one ordained by the Biblical prophets themselves. All the days of Succot, we wave the four species before HaShem in our prayers. On this day, in addition to the traditional waving, after the morning service is finished, we have a special minhag to take five branches of willows (aravot) and strike them on the earth five times.

When we strike them we recite the words, “Havit, Havit, V'lo Barikh.” The purpose of this striking called the Havatat Aruvot is to neutralize the aspect of Divine Severity represented by the five final form letters of the Hebrew alefbet the MaNTzaFaKh (mem, nun, tzade, pey, kaf sofiyot). The MaNTzaFaKh are the forces of severity grounded within the sefirat Malkhut (the feminine principle). As today is the day of Malkhut, now is the time to neutralize the natural forms of severity and limitation to be found within her.

Instructions how to properly perform the Havata and the prayers associated with it can be found in any orthodox Succot Mahzor.

The day following Hoshanna Rabbah is no longer Succot. It is an entirely different holiday called Hag HaAtzeret, also known as Shemini Atzeret and Simhat Torah. This is the day of renewal. This is the day we celebrate the final seal of our judgements for good. On this day the supernal process began on Rosh HaShana comes to fruition with the supernal coupling of the sefirotic Faces of ZA and NOK. Because this is the day of continuity and life, it has been chosen of all the days of the year to both conclude and begin the cycle of Torah readings.

As the Torah never really ends or begins, so our relationship with HaShem is continual. We pass through many cycles in our relationship with our Creator, at times feeling close and at times feeling distant. Yet our relation with our Creator is like the Torah or like the orbit of the earth around the sun. Like clockwork we pass through times of enlightenment that are bright as day

and we pass through sad times where we feel lost as in the dark of night. Yet, cycles always flow, there is always movement. So it is with our souls before HaShem. We are always in a process of movement towards our own self-perfection, guided as we are by the invisible Hand of HaShem.

Moadim L'Simha and Hag Sameah to you all.