

B"H
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The Kabbalistic Psychology of Pesah

How the Mitzvot Serve as the Archetypes of the Collective Jewish Unconscious

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Introduction

Every year, at Pesah time, a unique vortex is opened in the time-space continuum, which enables a special type of Divine radiance to enter onto the Earth. This cosmic doorway is only open for a very short time, only for a few hours on the night of Pesah.

The Hagadah points out that "one who does not see himself as if he is leaving Egypt has not fulfilled his obligation in the telling of the story." The Exodus is not only an event in our ancient history. It is a continually occurring event, one that receives a dramatic boost every year on Seder eve.

The ancient Sefer Yetzirah, the master guide to understanding the structure of the universe states that there are three general realms referred to as Olam, Shana and Nefesh. Olam (world) refers to the dimension of space. Shana (year) refers to the dimension of time. These two form the presently known space-time continuum in which we live. Yet, there is the third element, the one most people have no idea as to how it connects with the other two. The third element, nefesh (soul) is the realm of the mind, i.e., thought.

Thought, i.e., mind power is the one dimension, which rules over the space-time continuum of Olam – Shana. Thus, it is through Nefesh, i.e., the power of the human mind that we are able to elevate and liberate ourselves from the constricting prison of our material forms. Through the power of TRUE mind, we can again experience what it means to be free souls; souls not in bondage to the limitations of a mind imprisoned by the sensorial senses.

The rituals of the Pesah Seder enable the TRUE mind to be released and to experience the rapture of spiritual freedom. Yet, in order for this to occur, the Seder must be observed properly, in all its Halakhic details. More than this one must activate the archetypes of the Seder by filling them with kavanot and meditation. This mental function of the mind enables the Seder and Hagadah to be transformed into a platform for spiritual, psychic ascent into the unknown realms of the mind.

Once the Seder has been completed correctly with the appropriate kavanot, one's soul is prepared to ascent on high on this Lil Shimurim (guarded and protected night).

Archetypes of the Mind

Now for a word about archetypes and the techniques of spiritual mind. Know then that there are two ways of thinking and communication. We human beings exist in and interact with our outside world through cerebral sensorial processes (seeing, hearing etc.). This interaction with external stimuli explains to us the world around us. Yet, there is another, entirely different world, one much bigger than our outside world. This world is the true domain of the Mind. This second world is the inner world of human consciousness, the realm of the imagination, feelings and thought. In this world things are very different than they are in the outer world. The inner world is only barely familiar to us. We experience it mostly through dreams at night. Upon awakening, we know we have experienced something, maybe even something awesome and profound. Yet, in a few moments, sensorial external reality dominates and the realm of the Mind is repressed into that which we call the unconscious.

Now, do not be fooled. Just because our awareness of the realm of inner space has been pushed deep within the recesses of mind, into the unconscious, do not think that it has lost its power of influence. On the contrary, the unconscious mind directs the conscious mind as the wind blow the sails of a ship at sea. The power and influence of the unconscious on an individual's conscious psyche is well documented in psychological literature, especially in the works of the Jungian school.

The power of the unconscious manifests itself in how we interpret the outside sensorial world. The unconscious dictates to us our feelings and our underlying moods and impressions. All areas of thought that are not completely and analytically rational swell up from the unconscious mind. Indeed, feelings by their very nature rise up from deep within us, from the depths of the unconscious mind.

The unconscious mind, therefore, is the proverbial rose-colored glasses which taint how we see and perceive everything in the outside sensorial world. We realize that all of our conscious thoughts are in one way or another tainted by some unconscious prejudice, preference or predisposition. Such taints are referred to in psychological lingo as "projections."

These projections act as veils that cover the true nature of a thing. We perceive our own self-imposed veils over a thing and usually never the direct, untainted knowledge of the thing itself, uninterpreted to us by some aspect of our own unconscious minds.

The holy Mekubalim (Kabbalists) have long known about the psychological problem of veiled perceptions in all areas of life. They even have their own name to describe these psychological veils of ours. The Mekubalim call them the "klipot," the shells.

The holy Mekubalim have taught us that the klipot of projection are a blemished form of mind. This state of affairs came into being as a result of Adam's sin with the Tree of Knowledge, Good and Evil. In essence, the eating of the forbidden fruit of knowledge caused there to be a blemish in the knowledge, i.e., the collective mind of mankind.

In the Kitvei HaAri'zal it is written that all souls were originally united as one grand super-soul. All individual souls today were originally component parts of the super-soul of Adam. Only as a result of the fall did the souls fragment and take upon themselves separate being and consciousness. Yet, deep within us, in that area of our minds cut off to us as a result of the fall, i.e. our unconscious mind, there is

still a remembrance of the original state of unity shared by all souls. In a way, at the deepest level of the human psyche, we as a race all think alike. In a way, at the deepest level of the human psyche we all communicate in the same non-verbal ways. There is a collective stratum in the levels of the unconscious. This is the residual memory of our long lost original unity.

The holy Mekubalim teach that it is the duty and destiny of each and every individual soul to remember from what part of the supernal body of Adam did his Neshama emanate. This requires of us to remember something deep within the unconscious. Now here lies the problem. How can we discover knowledge buried so deeply in the unconscious mind? We do not know what is there, or even where "there" is. It is a virtual impossibility for man to delve into the depths of his unknown mind, unguided and unaided. Such a search, without direction would be completely futile. If such explorations did prove successful in uncovering any enlightening information, rest assured that this epiphany did not come about other than by the direction and permission of your unconscious.

How then can man learn to navigate inner space successfully to the point where he can recognize his own source? How can we ever overcome the fall and descent into consciousness and the loss of our original stature of pure unadulterated mind?

Left to our own devices, we do not stand a chance. Yet, the Holy One, blessed be He, well aware of our fallen state and the inner workings of our conscious and unconscious mind has provided for us a means to accomplish a rectification of our fallen state. The Holy One has provided for us the roadmap, the set of directions to be followed. By doing so, we can restore that which we have lost. It should come as no surprise that this set of directions is none other than our holy Torah.

Torah is the owner's manual for the human race. The one who studies it and practices it acquires the title of being fully human. Those of us who fall short of Torah can wonder if we can truly call ourselves Adam (man) created in the image of G-d. For without the Torah to rectify our original image (stature), what we have left today is only a small remnant of what once was. Once we were called Adam. Today, only the choice few that achieve a Tikun of the sin of Adam can merit the title, "Ben Adam" (son of man). This was the title ascribed by G-d to the prophet Yehezkiel, the one who gazed upon the chariot and the Heavenly throne. It is this vision that made him to be a Ben Adam.

This needs to be explained. As mentioned above, there are two worlds in which we live, i.e., the inner unconscious world and the outer conscious world. We relate to each of these worlds through the means of communication unique to that realm. We communicate with the outer conscious world (and thus each other) through a means of communication created by the conscious mind, but totally unknown to the unconscious mind; this is the vehicle of language, the spoken word.

The unconscious mind, however, does not know of or recognize words. The unconscious mind speaks through the medium of pictures. These pictures are universal and are applicable to all mankind, according to each souls unique source.

To understand the matter of the modes of communication used by an individual unconscious to communicate with the unconscious of others, as well as with the conscious world, we must have a rudimentary understanding of the workings of the supernal sefirot.

The Workings of the Mind-Soul

To begin with, we must remember a great rule outlined in the holy Zohar. In the Book of Job (19:26), it is written, "in my flesh will I perceive G-d." This verse is understood as saying that by the examination of "my flesh" i.e., the inner dynamics and operations of both human biology and psychology, we are able to grasp an understanding of the macrocosm. In other words, the study of the microcosm, which is in our grasp, enables us to understand the macrocosm, which is not.

We cannot learn anything about the ten supernal sefirot of Atzilut by observing them directly, for we do not have the spiritual or technological ability to explore this dimension. What we can do, however, is examine and explore the ten sefirot of the Malkhut of Asiyah, (which construct the "image of Man") and from this mapping, superimpose our findings onto the greater picture of the universe. Indeed, Rabbi Haim Vital used this method throughout his writings to explain the sefirotic universes.

The human mind as we have discussed in divided into two sections, the conscious and the unconscious. The human brain is also divided into two lobes, the right and the left. Thinking and cognition is also divided into two different modes, the rational and the intuitive. Of the sefirot, two correspond to the head, Hokhma and Binah. Communication is also divided between words and pictures.

With all the ingredients here, we can now construct our model and see what it is that our Creator has formed. We have a conscious mind, the left lobe of the brain, rational thinking, words and the sefirah Binah on one side. We have the unconscious mind, the right lobe of the brain, intuitive thinking, pictures and the sefirah Hokhma on the other side.

Let's now add to this, we have an external physical world perceived by us through our senses and an internal spiritual world experienced through our inner archetypes. The physical world around us is seen to the eye and a spiritual world surrounding the physical is unseen to our eye.

Applying this last association to the above, we find that the conscious rational thinking mind of the left lobe of the brain, i.e., Binah deals with our outside visible physical world and communicates with it through the vehicle of speech and words. Our unconscious intuitive cognitive mind of the right lobe of the brain, i.e., Hokhma deals with our inside invisible spiritual world and communicates using pictures and archetypes.

Both of these realms are of equal importance. The human species was designed to exist simultaneously in both the visible and invisible realms. Each realm is governed by its own rules. Each realm is perceived in its own way. We human have needs that derive from each of the source realms. These include our physical needs for food and shelter and our "invisible" needs for emotional, intellectual and spiritual support.

Our needs, therefore, must each be filled in that way that is unique to each world. One will not find fulfillment from hunger with kind, emotional words, nor will one who is lacking emotional, intellectual or spiritual fulfillment be helped by merely being given a piece of bread.

We all know how to fulfill physical needs. We simply follow the laws of physical society and work to fulfill our physical needs. Let it come as no surprise that it is in this same manner than one's inner, intuitive, unconscious spiritual needs are also met.

Yet, how can we define what are our needs in an invisible and unconscious universe?

Indeed, this cannot be answered rationally, for the answer comes from the realm of the intuitive and psychic. The answer comes from Hokhma and not from Binah.

The intuitive Hokhma right brain unconscious mind is nourished through archetypal forms and images, such as art and music. The rational Binah left-brain conscious mind is "fed" with intellectually stimulating material such as science and math. We would no longer be human if we lost our need or appreciation of either. The pursuit after art and music, science and math, all of these are integral human needs.

In light of all that, we have explained until here, we can now begin to understand the psychological and mystical human need for archetypal ritual. It is the performance of ritual acts that are the archetypal, picture language of the unconscious mind, which by now, I pray you should know is synonymous with the human Soul (the Neshama).

We humans have the need to communicate with our physical world in a rational, verbal manner. Without such communication, we cannot come to provide for our physical needs and we thus suffer and possibly die from the lack thereof.

This same law applies to the spiritual world. We must speak the language of the Soul, i.e., the unconscious mind. We must enable it to communicate with our conscious selves by the only means available to it, i.e., through picture, archetype, ritual and symbol.

If we fail to provide for the needs of our unconscious intuitive, spiritual right brain Hokhma selves, then what suffers and can possibly die is our Soul; that most precious essence of our being.

Yet, as we have discussed above, our unconscious mind, our spiritual Soul is the dominant part of the human mind. It controls consciousness similar to the wind in the sails of a ship at sea. Yet, as any good (or bad) sailor can tell you, just because the winds are blowing does not mean that the ship is on the right course. Unless one practices the art of correct sailing, one gets serious blown off course. Unless one follows the rules of the sea, one can end up lost and worse, doomed.

What we learn from this is the importance of respecting the needs of the unconscious mind, the spiritual Soul. It indeed has a message to tell. It indeed has needs of its own. It is indeed, not only a part of us; it is the lion's share, the majority partner. Neglect the majority and it will be the minority that will suffer. Reject the needs of the unconscious and it will be the conscious mind that will suffer.

The Archetypes of the Mitzvot

This is the underlying meaning as to why the Holy One, blessed be He gave us specific ritual commandments to perform. It is these mitzvot that have to be performed precisely in a certain prescribed

manner that are the food of the Soul and the communications of the unconscious mind. Indeed the 613 mitzvot are the collective archetypes of the national Jewish collective super-soul. This cannot be denied and if one were to try to deny this, the peril would be to his own inner psychological stability.

Rabbi Haim Vital expounds on this point in his *Sha'arei Kedusha* (part 1). As there are 613 mitzvot of the Torah, so are there 613 corresponding parts to the Jewish soul (nefesh). If one lacks fulfillment of any one mitzvah, then his soul is blemished, i.e., handicapped.

When the Holy One, blessed be He gave to the Jewish people the ritual commandments of the Torah, He was providing for the unconscious spiritual mind-soul it's necessary nourishment. Only the 613 mitzvot can serve as the conduit for the reception of the Divine radiance necessary to sustain the soul. This is by G-d's design. He did this only for the Jewish people. For once the Jewish people were to achieve full balance between the three realms of space-time and mind, then they would teach this accomplishment to the nations, in the days of Mashiah.

It is no wonder then why the Jewish people have survived throughout centuries of horrible persecutions and exile. The reason is because our mitzvah performance has provided for us enough Divine radiance to maintain a proper state of psychic-psychological inner balance. This strengthened our inner resolve and enabled us to develop an almost psychic sense, an inner knowledge of truth, justice, morality and spirituality. This is what ensured our survival. This inner resolve within our unconscious spiritual mind-soul is the indwelling spark of the Divine, known throughout Torah literature as the Shekhina.

The Holy One, existing above time, space and consciousness knows well how to integrate all three realms of His creation. Thus we, the Jewish people, by walking in the Divinely ordained revealed plan, enable ourselves to become lords of time and space by being subservient to the power and needs of mind-spirit, conscious and unconscious, thought and spirit, rational and intuitive, Binah and Hokhma, word and archetype.

In spite of the fact that to the secular rationalist, the surrender of his intellect to a "nebulous" spiritual force is an offensive thing, nonetheless, the need to do so is not merely a religious one; it is a psychological necessity. Carl Jung, the founder of analytical psychology writes (CW 13,7), *"The intellect does indeed do harm to the soul, when it dares to possess itself of the heritage of the spirit. It is in no way fitted to do this, for spirit is something higher than intellect, since it embraces the latter, and includes feelings, as well. It is a guiding principle of life that strives towards super-human shining heights."*

Our subservience of intellect to spirit is expressed by our performance of the ritual commandments. Nowhere does this become more obvious and relevant than with Pesah and especially the Seder.

The Mitzvah of the Seder

Pesah is Jewish Independence Day. It was on this day so long ago in history that our ancestors were miraculously freed from our bondage to the Egyptians. The miraculous manner of our redemption is well known to everyone. What is not so well known is the psychological effect this redemption has had upon collective Israel, at the deepest levels of our collective unconscious.

The holy Mekubalim reveal to us that all Jewish souls, born and unborn, were redeemed and left Egypt along with our ancestors. We must understand that there is a unique relationship between souls born and unborn. We do not only carry the genes of our ancestors; we also carry their memories. This is the source of collective memories that bond a people (any people) as a cohesive group regardless of the passage of time.

The souls of us alive today were indeed in Egypt thousands of years ago. They were preincarnate within our ancestors. In other words, our souls were still unattached parts of the super-soul of our ancestors. As they left Egypt, so did we. Although later on in years our souls separated and incarnated individually, the collective memories of our past dwell within the genes that form the area of the brain that houses our unconscious. This then is reason for the telling of the Hagadah.

The word Hagadah comes from the Hebrew root "Hegid" (to tell). Thus, the word "Hagadah" can best be translated as "the telling." Yet, this telling is not simply a mere story about what happened in ages gone by. This telling is a reminder. It is a reminder as to where we are supposed to be now.

The telling (the Seder) is the archetypal story of the Jewish people and is ingrained within every Jewish soul. The purpose of the telling is not to remind us about the past, but rather to open our eyes about the present. The Pesah Seder speaks to us in the pictorial language of the unconscious mind-spirit. It is food for the soul.

The eating of Matzah and Maror and the drinking of the four cups of wine acts out for us a never-ending story. Performing a Seder in any way different or less than that prescribed by Halakha hinders the ability of the mind-soul, i.e., the spirit to be properly nourished from the Heavenly Source. If the soul starves, it is "I" who will face the psychological consequences. Yet, if we do things in the prescribed manner, by removing all hametz from our environment and observe the Pesah in accordance to Divine Law, then we enable our unconscious to express itself. We enable our unconscious to properly align our inner psychological turmoils. The mind can thus be restored to mental health. Life just got a little bit better on both an individual and collective level.

The message is clear: wake up sleeping souls, grasp your freedom. Grasp your freedom from that which imprisons your unconscious mind-soul and keeps you in bondage to this world and in exile from your true spiritual nature. Rise up and proclaim freedom, freedom from ignorance, from spiritual infancy, freedom from the stranglehold limitations of our sensorial senses, freedom to be what we truly are: multi-leveled trans-dimensional beings of both, spirit and body (ohr with an alef and ohr with an ayin).

*"It is, unfortunately, only too clear that if the individual is not truly regenerated in spirit, society cannot be either, for **society is the sum total of individuals in need of redemption.**"*

The Undiscovered Self, Carl Jung pg. 63

A Pesah Word for our Benei Noah Friends

The Pesah Seder and the following seven-day holiday serves as archetypes exclusively to the Jewish people. This special occasion was not a universal event experienced by all mankind.

This event was experienced by only one small nation. Only the nation of Israel have it ingrained in their collective psyche the archetypes of Pesah. Therefore, does HaShem Himself command no stranger, i.e.,

no non-Jew is allowed to partake of the Pesah. (*Ex. 12:43, RaMBaM, Pesah 9:7 states that this refers even to a Ger Toshav, the Biblical name for the righteous Gentile*).

The Pesah Seder is one of the few times when a Ben/Bat Noah cannot be invited to the Jewish home for the celebration. This is a literal fulfillment of HaShem's commandment.

I know of many dear Benei Noah friends who truly wish to participate in Seder activities. Unfortunately, being that they were not at the first Seder in the days of Moshe, they have no internal reference to psychically connect with all the later ones. For the Ben/Bat Noah to observe any semblance of a Seder would actually cause their souls spiritual harm (according to the laws of incongruousness).

Although, many Benei Noah feel "cheated" in that they cannot participate in Pesah, there are still other archetypal events that they can celebrate, Rosh HaShana (the New Year-Day of Judgment) being one of them. Even the Shabat can be respected as remembrance of the act of creation, as long as the Ben Noah does not refrain from doing work in the same way that work is forbidden to the Jew.

At Pesah (and later at Sinai) G-d chose the Jewish people to be His own. He imbued the Jewish soul with an inherent holiness. This is a gift from G-d not dependent upon the individual Jew. Whether the Jew act with holiness or profanity, G-d will cleanse his soul (through Hell if necessary) to fulfill His promise to Israel, that all Israel will have a portion in the World to Come (ref. Is. 61:1).

As for the Benei Noah, he/she too acknowledges G-d's Word and Covenant for the Jewish people. Yet, unlike the Jew, any acquisition of holiness on the part of a righteous Gentile is hard earned and certainly no gift. The reward for this will be great in the World to Come.

In essence, a truly righteous Gentile, who has abandoned the idolatries of the world's religions (by G-d's command) and lives by the high moral caliber of the seven universal laws, does not need a holiday of Pesah. Such a Ben/Bat Noah has no need of a collective memory of ancient archetypes because he/she created a life of emancipation right now.

This is the secret, while Pesah is a holiday which celebrates a psychic phenomena for us, the Ben/Bat Noah has their own "pesah" not on any specific day, but rather everyday, all the while that they live free of the fallen ways of the non-righteous Gentile world.