

# Ashrei Secrets, Pasuk 7

by HaRav Ariel Bar Tzadok

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In loving memory of Moshe Ben Chaim Alter (z"l), dedicated by his son Mr. Michael Alter.

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## Zekher Rav Tuv'kha Yabi'u W'Tzid'kat'kha Y'ra'ney'nu

*"They will relate the remembrance of Your great good and [of] Your righteousness they will sing." Psalm 145:7*

Some say there is no G-d, then they say there is no judge or justice on Earth or anywhere else in the universe. They say that all follows the law of the jungle. The mighty rule. The weak are hunted down, killed and eaten. The mighty become more and more cruel so as not become subject to the fate they impose upon others.

Woe to us that humanity is the smartest animal on the planet (or so we think). Because, think about this, just how smart is humanity if with all our intelligence all we can think about and accomplish is war after war creating greater and more destructive weapons until such a time that we annihilate ourselves from the planet. In spite of the hostility we see in the animal kingdom, not one species seeks to destroy itself. Yet, humanity is so self destructive. And we call ourselves intelligent? Something is missing here.

Survival is the most basic and primitive instinct in every species on Earth. As individual humans the survival instinct is as strong in us as in everything else. Yet, that is where the limits seem to be placed. For we seek our own survival and at the same time we seek the weakening if not outright enslavement or destruction of everyone else. Why is this so?

In the animal kingdom, predators mark their turf and safeguard their own and ignore the others. We humans on the other hand, secure our turf and then seek to conquer the turf of all others, enslaving them or destroying them along the way. This seems to be so unnatural and outside the realms of the natural world. Yet, this is the way of humans.

Humans do not act like animals! In many ways animals are smarter! Animals do not seek to destroy, whereas humans always seem to seek this. It is most unnatural. Humans therefore are most unnatural. The concept of the survival of the fittest is understood as an animal's struggle against nature and the elements. Man's struggle is always against himself. This is a struggle unique to man. Man does not seek to survive as the fittest, he seeks to conquer and make himself the only one.



No animal sees itself outside of nature. Every animal instinctively knows its place and its environment. The animal lives its life, fulfills its purpose and moves on. Humans on the other hand, know no place, know no boundaries and live and seek to kill, not knowing purpose. Man is thus outside of nature and not a part of it. We only need to see how we live in our nice comfortable fabricated houses, protected from the elements of nature for proof of this.

Man is divorced from nature, this was the punishment of Cain and all his spiritual children, those who seek to shed blood and live by their own law of the jungle. Although Cain's seed died in the flood, his spirit lives on amongst us to this day. We are all plagued by the spiritual seed of Cain, those who seek conflict, strife and bloodshed for no other reason than personal jealousy.

True, even those possessed by the spirit of Cain can repent and turn around to serve G-d fully as did Cain's brother Abel. But such a change and such service does not come easily to those who seek to conquer, dominate and master themselves over others. Yet, as hard as it is, it can be done, by those who persevere, sacrifice and surrender to Heaven.

After Cain killed his brother Abel, he did show remorse before G-d. G-d did not punish him with death but rather chose a more merciful punishment. Cain was to wander the land as an outcast, divorced from G-d, nature and natural law until such time when natural judgment would catch up with him and he would meet his fate. Legend tells us that he was killed by accident, in a hunting accident, when one of his own descendants mistook him for a wild animal and shot him with a bow and arrow.

While some might consider this harsh, G-d gave Cain time to contemplate his exiled state, to repent from his misdeeds and to learn from harsh reality that living with G-d and following His ways is certainly easier than living without Him. After Cain's death, a part of his soul was rectified and ascended to Heaven to serve G-d, but that seed of evil, imbued within him by the serpent in the Garden remained and continued to come to Earth to wreck havoc and create evil.

To this day, there are good souls and evil souls that emanate from Cain. The good souls of Cain look towards Heaven and remember the proverbial "hell" that G-d led them through in order to bring them back, to repent and to become righteous again. They are the ones who deep within their souls remember G-d's great good from ancient times. Many a preacher who preach G-d's word crying about about G-d's grace and mercy are fragments of the good within the soul of Cain. These souls relate to some deep, unconscious inner conviction how G-d is good and that no matter how bad things get or appear to get, nevertheless, somehow and in some way G-d will intervene and save the righteous, those who are willing to do what's right, no matter the cost or sacrifice.

The majority of good Cain souls incarnated into the tribe of Levi. They were the ones who stood by Moses at the time of the Sin of the Golden Calf. Later, it was these same Levites who sang Psalms in the Holy Temple. The Levites were physically strong (as was Cain) and thus merited to serve in the Temple in the performance of manual labor. This was their Divine service and this was their atonement for the spark of Cain within them.

After the destruction of the Temple, the Levites no longer sang there. Yet, since that time, there have been many singers and musicians who just feel to praise G-d in song from some deep unconscious place inside their psyches. These souls are also usually the souls of zealots, those who seek to promote righteousness, to defend the weak, and to defend all that is right and good. Instead of being jealous for themselves, leading them to violent crime, they are instead jealous for G-d, leading them to acts of self sacrifice and religious zeal.

Rectified souls more than any other appreciate G-d's great good. For this reason our Sages taught that the soul of a penitent (ba'al teshuva) rises to spiritual heights higher than those who have always been religious. The rectified know what it means to fall and to rise again, all in accordance to Divine grace. Greater righteousness than this there is not. For this they sing as is the nature of their Levitic souls. Levites are those who are attached to G-d.

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