

# Words of Kabbalah, Parshat Tzav

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These are the wise words of the Sages. Contemplate them and learn from them their overt and secret meanings.

## Kefitzat HaDerekh – Shortening the Way

*“Man is a ladder to all the worlds. As is known, he binds all the worlds [within him].*

*He has a [physical] body from this [physical] world. He has an animal soul (nefesh behemit), which is the evil inclination, due to the daemons who reside in the air. He has a thinking soul (nefesh sekhlit) from the Ophanim [angels of Asiyah]. He has a ruah (spirit) from the angels [of Yetzirah]. He has a neshama (soul) from the Throne [of Glory, the world of Beriah]. He also has a soul within the soul (neshama l'neshama) [a higher, unconscious self from Atzilut] that it related to the Shekhina (the Divine Presence).*

*Those who achieve [consciousness] of this [Atzilutic] level are called, “children to YHWH your God” (Dev. 14:1). [Yet], there are those who are only called “servants” (instead of “sons”). This matter is well known and publicized.*

*Now by this bond that is within a man, he unites all the worlds together. Therefore, [there are those] who desire that there should be in their hands the power of Kefitzat HaDerekh (shortening the way) by one of the powers that resides within.*

*There are those who shorten the way by subjugating the daemons. Thus we find with the first Kabbalists, such as Rebbe Eliezer from Germiza. He would make use of “the air of the daemons,” which the Kabbalists called, “use of the small breath” (see Pardes Rimonim 21:1). In times of need, he would shorten the way using them as intermediaries.*

*We find that he shortened the way when he came from his own country (Germany) to the place of the RaMBaN (Spain) to teach him the wisdom of the true Kabbalah.”*

Rabbi Hayim Vital, Ma'amar Psiyotav Shel Avraham Avinu, 75

## Kabbalah in Dune

Kefitzat HaDerekh (shortening of the way) is a concept that was adopted by Frank Herbert and adapted for his famous science fiction novel “Dune.” His version of the term is Kwisatz Haderach,” in the section of the book titled, “Terminologies of the Imperium,” (K), is defined as “shortening of the way.”

The novel Dune adopted many a concept which can be seen to have both Kabbalistic and Judaic connections. Herbert also had keen insight into the true nature of religion. Using the novel and its characters as his backdrops he offers us insights worthy of our attention.

*“Much that was called religion has carried an unconscious attitude of hostility towards life. True religion must teach that life is filled with joys pleasing to the eye of God, that knowledge without action is empty. All men must see that the teaching of religion by rules and rote is largely a hoax. The proper teaching is recognized with ease. You can know it without fail because it awakens within you that sensation which tells you this is something you've always known.”*

Dune, Appendix 2, Religion of Dune

### **Ben Ish Hai, Benyahu, Tzav**

*“Now, it is known that the Unity [expressed within] the verse Shema Yisrael (Listen, Israel, Deut. 6:4) has six words (in the original Hebrew). The Kedusha [prayer], 'Kadosh, Kadosh, Kadosh' has nine words (in the original Hebrew). Together, [these two] contain 15 words. Yet, we actually have 2 x 15 words. The positive [Biblical] commandment [to proclaim] the Unity is twice daily, (when we lie down and when we rise up). The Kedusha [prayer] is also recited twice daily, in the repetitions of the morning and afternoon Amidah prayer.*

*We have herein a subtle reference to the verse that says, “Truly God is good (Tov, spelled Tet, Vav, Bet) to Israel, to the pure of heart” (Ps. 73:1). The Hebrew word Tov (good) is spelled Tet, Vav, Bet, [the letters of which can be rearranged as] Bet, Tet, Vav. Bet, stands for the number 2, and Tet, Vav spell out the number 15, [so the word Tov can be seen to refer to the 2 x 15 words, mentioned above]. [There is thus] “Tov,” 2 x 15 for Israel.*

*However, God, who desires this, do so only for the pure of heart, for the one who recites the Unity [prayer] and the Kedusha with pure devotion of heart. Regarding this, it is written, “My heart overflows with a good (Tov) thing” (Ps. 45:2). This good (Tov) thing is [also a reference to the 2 x 15]. Yet, that which overflows must come forth from the heart. One's intent must be to unite the Holy One, blessed be He, [and His Shekhina], and not for the sake of personal reward. Regarding this does [the continuation of the verse] say, “I say, 'My work is concerning the king.’”*

*Therefore, with regards to announcing the future redemption it is written, “How pleasant upon the mountains are the feet of the bringer of good news, who proclaims peace and bears tidings of good” (Is. 52:7). This good (Tov) is [again a subtle hint to] the 2 x 15, [the words of the Shema and Kedusha]. For in merit of [fulfilling] these two commandments [within prayer], the redemption will come forth.”*

### **Ba'al Shem Tov, Tzav**

*“All who study the Torah of the sacrifices can be compared to actually offering a sacrifice (Menahot 110a). When a man intuits a word of [concealed] wisdom in the Torah, he is imbuing those words [of Torah] with enlightenment (mohin). Originally, the enlightened meaning (mohin) was concealed, cloaked within the very words. Now, he has undressed those words from their garments. They [the words of Torah] can now be revealed and grow. These are the adornments of the bride [the Glory of the Shekhina].”*

Also, when one speaks words of Torah in [the proper balance] of love and fear, he imbues those words with enlightenment (mohin). Therefore, all who study the Torah of the sacrifices can be compared to actually offering a sacrifice, because when he bonds with those words in [the spirit of proper balanced] love and fear, he then extends to those words [of Torah] new life.

Even if [one] is damaged because of [one's] sins, even so [the hidden wisdom that comes into the mind, revealing deeper secrets within the Torah, bring new life to the words themselves] because [the words of Torah] are the garments of the King.

... When one is sick in a certain part of one's body, one should speak, (learn about and verbally discuss) the subject of [the Ten] Sefirot that correspond to that [body] part.

... Any sin that a man commits by night, it is certain that he will [unknowingly and unwittingly] speak about it the next day [openly and] publicly. However, the [public] do not have the ears [the intuitive capacity] to understand [what is concealed under the surface of] his words. He himself is oblivious to what his own words are revealing about himself [and his hidden behaviors].”

### **Ya'akov Abuhatzera, Pituhei Hotam, Tzav**

“There are three things that are the best ways for a man to rectify himself, to atone for his sins. The three are, learning Torah, giving charity, and fasting.

Our Sages have associated these three things based upon their numerical values all being equal. “Voice,” (representing Torah), “Tzom,” (fasting), and “Mamon” (money, representing charity) all are numerically equal Hebrew words [their numerical value is 136]. This teaches us that each [of these three individually] can achieve atonement. Yet, when combined, the numerical value of the three (3 x 136) equals the value of the Hebrew word, “Zot,” (this, a mystical/Biblical metaphor referring to the Shekhina, the Divine Presence, the value being 408).

One who merits to perform all three [of these things] together, as one, accomplishes a level of return (repentance), of which there is none better. It is possible that King David was referring to this when he wrote, “This (Zot) is my consolation in my affliction” (Ps. 119:50). This is a reference to this specific “Zot”, which equals the numerical value of Kol (referring to the voice of Torah), Tzom (fasting), and Mamon (one's money that one gives to charity). It is these three that gave David his consolation in the afflictions of his sins.

Now, if one who is unable to perform all three of these, but can only do one, which one should he choose? The best is that one should chose the voice of Torah, for we find that the learning of Torah itself is considered to be of equal value to all the other [commandments]. “Learning Torah is equal to all” (Peah 1:1).”