



## *4 Audio Lessons*

# Four Lessons from the Torah of R. Avraham Abulafia

Taught by R. Ariel B. Tzadok

## Lesson Outlines

### **Lesson 1 – Introduction into the Abulafian Way.**

A review of the entire history of Torah mystical practices, starting with prophetic shamanism. The Biblical Prophets experienced parallel realities. Earlier understandings of this was astral travel, such as Enochian and Hekhalot literature. Later prophetic experiences were interpreted as exclusively internal experiences of the mind (RaMBaM). Experiential ascents continued through Talmudic times, and into the Maimonidean era (especially with the Hasidei Ashkenaz). Along came Abulafia and he developed a system of experiencing altered realities that did not include astral ascents as did the earlier school. Nevertheless, his path was experiential, even though it was also philosophical, based as it was on Maimonides. Later came the Zohar and the completely non-experiential teachings that were taught and received, without experience. Thus, as received these teaching became called Kabbalah, which as a school of Torah mysticism, was radically different from that which came before it. This class concludes with an introduction into the Abulafian techniques used to alter consciousness.

### **Lesson 2 – Active Imagination in Sefer Heshek.**

Abulafia's techniques need to be understood within the context of their operations. What they are-not helps define what they actually are, and what can be expected from their usage. Abulafia bases his techniques (herein) on the Name of 72. This Name is apparently not ancient in that it is not found in any of the earlier Hekhalot literature. The techniques are geared towards inner psychological revelations, as opposed to actual astral projection and ascent, the likes of which we see in the Hekhalot. Demonstration of the letter/vowel recitation. Visualization of the “inner man” a form of active imagination. Dialogue with the “inner man” a form of free association dialogue with one's own unconscious. How this technique was used by many great rabbis. This is the basis of magid meditation and is the source of the philosophers path of prophetic meditation. Subjective forms vary from person to person based on culture, time, and



other variables. This lesson outlines the practical system, how to use it, and most important, how to recognize and interpret the results that it manifests.

### **Lesson 3 – Angel and Mind in Sefer Sitrei Torah.**

Abulafia based many of his teachings on Maimonides' Guide of the Perplexed. This class introduces us to Abulafia's source material that emphasizes the true nature of both the absolute and the subjective mind, and its relationship to metaphysical (mystical) realities. Readings from the Guide on the nature of Mind, Angels and Sentience. Reading from Aristotle, the source of the idea of the existence of the absolute ideal that is the source of all subjective forms below. Abulafia correlates the Active Mind (Sekhel HaPoal) with such concepts as Metatron, the Ishim, and Ruah HaKodesh. This class is foundational to understanding how the system of meditative (mystical) ascent is in reality a psychological phenomena that transcends the limitations of individual human consciousness.

### **Lesson 4 – Secrets of the Kiddush Shabat in Sefer Hayei HaNefesh.**

Based upon his teachings in Sitrei Torah (Lesson 3), Abulafia elaborates on the role of angels in creation. Based on Maimonides, Abulafia states that everything in creation can be used as a messenger from God. This even includes natural forces. Everything created has within it an intense passion for its Creator. Abulafia implies that all forces and forms in nature has some semblance of sentience and consciousness, and that each can serve as an agent of the Divine Will. Is this intense passion and cosmic form of "love." Is love the universal constant. Can natural forces actually love? Abulafia discusses the verses in Genesis that we recite for Friday night Kiddush and explains the wording therein to refer to the three levels in creation. He relates the three references to work (melakha) to angels (melakhim) and offers some interesting insights. He also references the Sefer Yetzirah, and mentions the Teli (the devoted dragons) whose job it is to operate creation as the agents (angels) serving Heaven. This lesson is a classic example of Abulafian Biblical interpretation.

## **Course Details**

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