

KosherTorah School

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The Metaphysical “Science” of Creation
Sefer Yetzirah
the Classical Text explained in both its original Naturalist,
and later Kabbalistic meanings, and intent.
Semester 1, Spring 2017
An audio course in 13 lessons, taught by Ariel Bar Tzadok

Course Outline

Lesson One - An overall review of the text.

The overlapping of ancient schools from across the world. What is the Sefer Yetzirah? Who wrote it? Abraham, Jeremiah, Ben Sira, R. Akiva, or a later anonymous author? What is the purpose of a pseudepigrapha. Synopsis of the individual chapters. 1. Sefirot, 2. Letters, 3. Amesh, 4. Begeg Kaporet, 5. the Twelve, 6. the Outer World. Alternative meaning of “sefirot” referring to numbers, not emanations. The combinations of letters form all words in all languages. The relationship of the cosmological, astronomical, astrological and anatomical, and how this system is the foundation of holistic medicine, the likes of which were practiced in the ancient world, and even today in oriental medicine. The original meaning of the text was to teach Sodot Ma'aseh Bereshit, the secrets of creation. However, we find that these secrets may indeed take us into the realms of science and mathematics, more than into the realms of mysticism, and meditation.

Lesson 2 - The Three Sefarim.

What is the meaning, and significance of the number 32? More so what is “wisdom,” and why is it “wondrous”? What is the “engraving”? Why does the text elaborate ten “Names” of God, as opposed to one being enough? Reading from the commentaries of Sa'adiah Gaon, Avraham Abulafia, and the RaVaD. Reference to the Yod, the primordial form (golem), and its relationship to the concealed realms in the universe, and the mind. Understanding the relationship of the macrocosm, and microcosm. The Three Sefarim. Are they “book, reader and story,” or are they “letters, numbers, and creation.” Is there really a difference between the two? This lesson begins our journey into the wonders of the imagination, from which comes

forth all thought, and passion that are the building blocks of the inner and outer worlds. We conclude with a coded understanding of the text, discovering within it a hidden reference to the 42 Letter Name (of Ma'aseh Bereshit).

The class worksheet elaborates a uniquely Abulafian technique of intermingling a triad of renditions of the 42 Letter Name to construct a combination of letters that can be used for meditative, and/or contemplative purposes.

Lesson 3 - The Ten Sefirot and the 22 Letters.

The three Sefarim as perceived in different ways. The central role of perception, and how individual perception defines reality. This is the meaning of the 32 wondrous path, with the three Sefarim being imagination, contemplation, and implementation.

Mishna 2. The curious repetition of triads, three sefarim, three sets of letters, olam, shana, and nefesh.

The various ways of understanding “nefesh,” and its possible relationship to the Hiyuli, prima-matter, and its relationship to the concept of Adam Kadmon discussed in later Kabbalistic literature.

What are sefirot? What does the term, “bli mah” mean? Different perceptions of what exactly are sefirot.

The relationship of letters to the primal natural forces. Relationship to DNA. How all of creation is perceived and expressed through human communication with words and mathematics. How these are the actual building blocks in real-time, as opposed to creation through mystical, or magical means.

Lesson 4 - The Ten Sefirot in Abulafia, and Other Early Sources

Readings from the works of R. Eliezer of Germiza, R. Yitzhak of Acco, RaMBaN and R. Abulafia's commentary Gan Na'ul, with special elaboration from his book, Sitrei Torah on RaMBaM's Moreh Nebukhim.

What are the Ten Sefirot? There are two specific opinions, one very different from the other. This class covers the transition of understanding the sefirot cosmologically as infinite numbers, and into understanding them spiritually, as deeper, and deeper levels of human consciousness. The sefirot are the inner essence of the letters. This opens us up to discuss the relationship of force and form, (mind over matter).

This class enumerates Abulafia's understanding of the Sefirot, and their relationship to Divine inspiration. Abulafia elaborates on the power of the mind, and its relationship to the Shekhina, Ruah HaKodesh (Divine inspiration), the Active Intelligence (Sekhel HaPo'al), Metatron, the Ishim angels, and Malkhut/Tzedek consciousness.

Lesson 5 - The Covenant of the Ten and the Two Forms of Creation.

Creation is not metaphysical, supernatural, or magical. Meditation is for a purpose, to extract from the unconscious the creative idea and to materialize it into an appropriate physical form. This class discusses the relationship between the symbolic relationship of the hands, and the tongue, the toes and the sexual organ. All references to these body parts are understood as symbols reflecting a dynamic of interactions between one's inner creative power, and one's personal external expressions of said power. Religious

people create within the religious context. Artists, musicians, and scientists each create, in the same way, within their individual, relative fields.

This class also introduces Mishna 4, and the usage of the powers of the whole mind to test, and explore reality, with the intent to extract from the mind practical, and realistic forms to create. This instruction sums up in brief the entire purpose, and practice of the text.

Reference is also made of Abulafia's automatic writing techniques, and other meditative forms used by Rabbis.

Lesson 6 – Understanding with Wisdom, Being Wise in Understanding.

After outlining the creative nature of the Ten Sefirot in the previous section, this lesson teaches the student how to use the creative element through the power of oscillating thought.

Ten, and not nine, or eleven is discussed to question whether the Keter, which is above consciousness should even be considered as part of the thought process. Being that the collective Higher Self, the archetype Metatron is the Shekhina, and the Sefirah Malkhut, how and why is it right to include this among the Sefirot. Discussion of whether the Sefirot are part of God, or creations of God, and why this difference is important; a brief mention of the history of the Christian trinity, and how some see its relationship to the Sefirot.

The process of oscillating consciousness for the sake of intellectual revelation, and creation. How this is practiced through the means of testing, and experimentation. This lesson focuses on the text's practical instructions for expanding consciousness, and the procedures for establishing and maintaining mental clarity, and emotional balance.

Lesson 7 - The Amukot Depths

All the universe exists as a singular organism, yet its parameters are beyond the confines of human experience. Existence consists of time, space, and mind, referred to in this selection as the Amukot Depths. Each parameter can be compared to the circumference, and diameter of a circle. Where one begins, and where one ends depends upon one's point of reference. Points of reference need to be explored, and when done, one discovers the Depths of the reality of nature itself. Although the fullness of depths can never be reached one nevertheless walks the path, to eventually discover and experience the Singularity of the universe, that indeed guides all. In the Orient, the Singularity in nature is called the Dao, in our Torah, we call it the Halakha, and the Shekhina. How this is explored and experienced via letter permutation (Abulafian) techniques is discussed in this lesson. This lesson also combines the teaching of the Ari'zal with the original cosmological teachings of this text, as well as modern psychological applications, and insights.

Lesson 8 - Tying Down the Sefirot

This lesson offers practical instructions into the book's advice of strengthening, and expanding human consciousness for the purpose of altering our physical world. The sefirot of the mind need to be extracted from the unknown realm and into the known

realm. The insights of the mind need to be “tied down,” meaning properly anchored in the realities of the physical world, with the intent of transforming the physical world, as a flame transforms what it burns into heat and light. All existence is a singularity, this is agreed to by Maimonidean philosophy as well as Zoharic Kabbalah. Surprisingly, the two share very much in common from Grecian philosophical sources. Knowing the singularity of reality enables the individual mind to seek out how all things, everywhere fits into the greater whole. Also we discuss the nature of Zero, and the profound transformation needed for Zero to become one, and what this experience means in the mind of each individual.

Lesson 9 - Silencing Speech, Limiting Contemplation, Establishing Mental Balance.

Dealing with metaphysics can be a dangerous endeavor. No metaphysical revelation can ever be subject to scientific observation, therefore, all metaphysical speculation is imaginative in nature, and not necessarily rational. The danger develops when one misinterprets one's subjective metaphorical metaphysical understandings into objective, literal, physical truths. Confusing the metaphorical as literal is a serious problem facing all students of mysticism, be it Kabbalah, or other schools. This lesson addresses the Sefer Yetzirah's warning and advice as to how to properly explore metaphysical realities like the ten sefirot bli'mah. Practical examples are given to explain the relationship between pshat and sod, and many other issues related to certain Halakhic practices.

Lesson 10 - One. The Living God, Voice, Spirit and Speech.

Up until now, we have discussed the theory of the sefirot, now the text begins to reveal how they are to be experienced in real time, in the world (and not anymore as “blimah”). This class uses traditional Talmudic, and Kabbalistic terminology to introduce us to that which we call the Shekhina, the Presence of God in nature, herein referred to as Elohim Hayim. We describe the nature of the sefirah Malkhut, and its feminine nature. Yet, this nature is dual, male and female, two sides which create a concentric whole, like day and night, light and darkness, good and evil. Many examples are given to describe this relationship with references to the oriental philosophical concepts of Dao, and Yin/Yang.

The relationship of Voice to Speech. The revelation of the Voice at Sinai. How the commandments of Speech were heard in the Mind, while the Voice was heard in the ears. Unraveling the natural relationship of Light to Vessel, of Voice to Speech, through the power of the living Spirit, the Shekhina.

Lesson 11 - Two. Spirit from Spirit, the Merging of the Mind, Prior to the Word.

There is spirit, and there is spirit, there is Mind, and then there is mind. There is imagination, and then there is intellect. Spirit and spirit, one comes from the other, and the two are integrally bound as one. This class elaborates the metaphors used by our text to describe the processes of the human mind, and thinking process.

The terms “engraving,” and “carving” are used to describe processes of the intellect to construct and form clear, coherent thoughts that can properly, and successfully materialize into deed, through the medium of communication (in this case), the use of

letters that form words and sentences, and thus concrete and construct form to both ideals, and ideas.

References are made to correlate this material with another set of different metaphors used in the Lurianic system, but which is describing the same mental processes.

How the letters are used to create the forms through which we can describe and thus come to understand and explain every reality that exists. Abra'ka'dabra, what this really means, and how it is meant to be applied outside of superstitious magic.

An introduction into the concept of water from spirit, and the transition from the cerebral mind to the emotional "heart."

Lesson 12 - Three. Water from Spirit. Four. Fire from Water

The foundations of the lower worlds, symbolized as a ceiling, and a floor, connected by a wall. The power of the mind to construct reality. A discussion about the deeper layers of reality, and how one might access other real worlds that exist in parallel space.

RaMBaN's Hiyuli, the prima-matter, and what came forth from it.

An elaboration of what we call "Heaven," the domain of fire that came forth out of the primordial water, and a greater explanation of that which we call Heaven's messengers, angels.

A discussion of Ezekiel's chariot, and angels in general, and how they may be, or may not be actual forms of some type of matter as yet unknown to modern science.

The realms of thought, and emotion, and their correlations to the 42 Letter Name of God. An elaboration of its reality and its usage based on the teachings of R. Yitzhak d'min Acco.

This lesson includes a practical understanding of the expansion of mind and perception that shows one how to connect with beings from other worlds.

Lesson 13 - Five through Ten, the Permutations of Yod, Hay, Vav.

After outlining the upper worlds, the text closes the chapter, and its discussion about sefirot, with an elaboration of the dimensions in space. These are related to the letters Yod, Hay Vav of the Name of God YHWH.

Course Details

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