

ספר דבקות

דרכי הקצלב בפשוטות והבהירות באמתותי צפון רב

Sefer Devekut

The Book of Attachment (To G-d)

A Selection from the book, "Walking In The Fire"

**The Prophetic/Meditative Traditions (Kabbalah)
of Bonding With G-d**

A Work by
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Operations of the Mind/Soul and Its Cleansing

Introduction, Part 1 - The Concept & The Halakha

"And you who bond to HaShem your G-d are all alive day." (Devarim 4, 4)

"Respect HaShem your G-d, Him shall you serve, to Him shall you bond and His Name shall you praise." (Devarim 10, 20)

"You shall walk after HaShem your G-d, Him shall you respect, His mitzvot shall you observe, to His Voice shall you listen, Him shall you serve, and to Him shall you bond." (Devarim 13, 5)

These pasukim and others like it outline for us the Torah commandment to bond with G-d. Now, as one can imagine the idea of bonding with G-d is rather nebulous and subject to various interpretations. Yet, our Sages have been quiet precise in explaining to us the meaning of the bonding.

On one hand, being that G-d is called a Consuming Fire (Dev 4:24, 9:3), and one who draws too close to the flames can be burnt, one should instead bond with the Sages of Israel. For the Sages are bound to G-d through the Torah, therefore one who bonds with those who are bound with G-d are in a sense also bound directly with G-d.

The Kabbalah, while supporting the traditional view also expands on it and explains that everyone has the personal obligation to bond with G-d directly and personally. This then requires of the individual the development of spiritual skills and practices that enables one to have a direct personal spiritual encounter and experience with our blessed Creator. The methods and manners of such spiritual skills have long been an integral part of traditional Torah learning, at least in certain schools.

Throughout the centuries, literally since the days of Moshe Rabbeynu himself, prophecy and later Ruah HaKodesh was a daily spiritual occurrence. Even today we have those spiritually focused souls who as in days of old are inspired with a Divine impression enabling them to be in the presence of the Divine.

Yet, a point ever so subtly made in the Bible and expanded upon in later Torah literature is that one is not born a spiritual individual capable of direct contact with the Divine. Rather, one has to learn how to become spiritual. In order to accomplish this, in Biblical days there were schools for prophets.

In other words, one who sought to bond with G-d and experience the Divine presence had to join a school of fellow colleagues who under the direction of the experienced master prophet trained the novices in the arts and sciences of spiritual realities and the methods and techniques used to experience them.

This prophetic training program required of the novice prophet to adopt a rigorous set of training rules gearing at reorienting his mind and consciousness to cultivate within them the sensitivity of subtle spiritual realities unseen and unknown by the common person. Novice prophets were trained in the sciences of consciousness manipulations and alterations. They cultivated an awareness of the subtle nuances of spiritual forces that underlie physical form that cause the flow of all things here on earth.

In essence, the novice prophet had to learn to experience an alternative reality existing side by side with this, our world. The passageway into this alternative reality was no by some external means, but rather through a secret inner passage. The doorway to spiritual reality was through the inner recesses of the mind. Through the mind, also called the spirit (or soul), the novice prophet would travel and experience the other side of reality, learning its proper parameters, its delights and its dangers.

With accomplishment the novice prophets would be able to traverse the realms of the inner mind until he/she eventually achieved an experience of the outermost limits that human consciousness can perceive. It is at this juncture where the prophet can meet the Divine and have a personal experience with G-d.

With the destruction of the First Temple in Jerusalem so many thousands of years ago, the age of prophecy soon came to an end. The final prophets recorded their prophecies and thus ended an era. Certain doorways were now closed to the ascending mind. However, this does not mean that the prophetic mind would cease to ascend. Rather it just means that certain paths of ascent while still open, still will not lead to the successful communions that at one time were common. In other words, the paths are still open; it is just the door at the end of the path that is closed.

Since the days of the Temple, aspiring prophets have never been dissuaded from the lowered levels of accomplishment that the epoch of our exile has brought upon us. The same methods and techniques used by the Biblical prophets were still in use during Second Temple times, Talmudic times, Gaonic times, through the era and centuries up until modern day where they are still used today in small circles of spiritual seekers.

The methods and techniques used to expand human consciousness enabling it to experience and embrace spiritual reality have been well preserved in Torah literature. These techniques and their practices are considered vital because only they enable one to fulfill the important Biblical commandment (mitzvah aseh d'oraitta) of Devekut, bonding with G-d. This obligation is eloquently summed up in the following words by Rabbi Eliezer Papo in his work Peleh Yoetz, (Dalet, Devekut).

"Devekut (bonding) with HaShem is one of the 613 commandments. One must be bonded with HaShem continually, with great yearning, and with sparks of burning love. There is no greater attribute than this, for all things are included in it.

The difficulty in achieving it (devekut) is in direct proportion to its level of importance. All things follow after a person's actions, and in accordance to the efforts made in one's thoughts, speech, and actions, and how, on a daily basis, one expands and improves.

The one who sanctifies himself below, is sanctified by above (by HaShem), until such a time when that one receives a spirit from above which purifies, and sanctifies him.

One is obligated, in accordance to ones ability, to make all efforts to properly observe this mitzvah, at all times."

In light of the importance of this holy commandment and to fulfill the desire of the many who seek to walk the Torah spiritual path I will now begin to explain to you my readers the necessary elements that one needs to learn in order to know, understand and practice the spiritual arts of sciences of prophetic Devekut.

Introduction, Part 2 - The Context

The earliest prophetic literature clearly records the results of prophetic bonding; however, no mention is apparently made of any of the techniques used to accomplish it. Notice that I said there is no apparent mention, for although no clear instructions are given, subtle, concealed instructions are given nonetheless. Just as the Divine laws of the Torah are only outlined in the Written Torah and explained in the Oral, so it was with the instructions of the prophetic schools.

The Torah commands us to obey certain Divine Laws, to offer sacrifices, observe the Shabat, wear Tefillin and to do many other things. Yet, the written Torah texts never outline the details of how any of these things were to be done. Shabat, for example was such an important commandment that violation of it was punished by death. We have the example of a man going out on the Shabat day to pick up sticks; he is condemned and put to death for his transgression. Yet, nowhere in the Torah is it written that it is forbidden to pick up sticks on Shabat. Knowledge of this was clearly known, but it was never written down. As it was with the laws of the Torah, so it was with the "laws" of prophecy.

Prophetic traditions and techniques, like the written laws, conceals its details within the subtle nuances of the texts. There were many principles of how Biblical texts were to be properly interpreted. In Talmudic times, Rabbi Yishmael summarized these and enumerated thirteen principles by which written Torah was to be properly interpreted and laws learned from its texts. Just as the laws were learned from the subtle nuances of the texts so were certain prophetic techniques.

By no coincidence certain pasukim in their original Hebrew have a particular number of letters within them. Certain pasukim actually conceal within them codes which reveal to us the prophetic techniques. These secrets were well known to our Sages. Indeed, they said that the entire Torah is simply one grand Name of HaShem. Indeed, every letter in the Torah is part of a greater code. One needs a certain level of mathematical abilities in order to break this code. Certain pasukim have specific amounts of letters. This somehow creates a relationship between it and other pasukim of the exact same size.

Other times the initial letters of a pasuk add up to a certain numerical value that has a direct relationship with words of similar numerical value. Other times certain words in specific phrases begin with letters that spell out holy Names. All these codes and others like them provide for us the tools that the prophets used in their consciousness expanding exercises.

Yet, while the tools are clearly recorded for us in both the Torah and later prophetic literature, specific details of bonding exercises are nowhere to be found. The reason for this is simple. Like the Oral laws, the Oral Prophetic tradition was also forbidden to be committed to the written word. This great rule lasted throughout the days of both the First and Second Temples and was only changed only under the direst of circumstances almost 100 years after the Second Temple was destroyed.

While Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi committed the Oral Laws to writing in the Mishna, it was a Sage from the previous generation that began the writing down of the Mishna of the prophetic techniques of mind expansion. The great Sage was Rabbi Akiva. His great book, the first of many guides to the prophetic traditions, now known as Kabbalah was the Sefer Yetzirah. To this day, the sections of the Sefer Yetzirah are called Mishnayot.

The Sefer Yetzirah was unique in that it served as a textbook to mind expansion experience. In other words, it instructed people what there was to experience and how it was to be experienced. Most of these lessons are included in what today is referred to as its first chapter. The remaining chapters outline other techniques and spiritual lessons that only become intelligible and experiential once the lessons in the book are put to use.

It is however unfortunate that most studies and commentaries on the Sefer Yetzirah are totally void of the works original prophetic instructional intent. Few are the written works that explain the meditative

techniques outlined in the text. Of these, the works of Avraham Abulafia and Moshe Cordevero best capture the original meanings and practices of the Sefer Yetzirah. Yet, the works of these great Sages postdate the Sefer Yetzirah itself by almost one thousand plus years. Throughout all this time, a millennia plus, the original teachings were passed down in Biblical fashion, orally, from master to student. Like with Torah Law, prophetic techniques have mastered the passage of time intact.

Although the Sefer Yetzirah is the first of many texts to outline detailed prophetic techniques, there was also a wealth of another type of Torah literature also dedicated to this purpose. This other form of Torah literature followed along the path originally outlined by the Biblical prophet Ezekiel.

Ezekiel was unique in not only revealing what was his prophetic message; he also revealed his prophetic vision of the Heavenly Merkava chariot. This was a vision all prophets needed to perceive in order to descend to the depths of transdimensional consciousness.

The vision of the Merkava was a closely guarded prophetic secret. This vision was the passageway of the human mind into the higher realms of supernal Mind. Without accomplishment of walking this path, no novice would be able to achieve prophetic consciousness. In other words, revelation of the Merkava revealed that the mind of the prophet was properly aligned with the holy spiritual "frequency" and thus able to hear within the Voice of G-d.

Indeed, this was one of the tests used within the prophetic schools. For during First Temple times, there are reports that up to a million individuals were actively pursuing some form of prophetic training and experience. Anyone can come forward and say that G-d spoke to him or that he is relating a message from the Creator. Many can even disguise their delusions in many of the details of authentic practices. False prophecy and false prophets were a big problem during First Temple days. What enabled the master prophet to distinguish between the true prophet and the false was their accomplishment in achieving insight into the Merkava.

In Ezekiel's days, the First Temple was in demise. Indeed, it was destroyed during his lifetime. Ezekiel himself was one of the captives taken to far away Babylon. Yet, even there in Babylon, Ezekiel practiced his meditative techniques even as he learned and practiced them in the holy land of Israel.

However, prophetic tradition long held that the revelation of the Merkava and the visions of prophecy would not be experienced outside the Holy Land. It was thought that the connection between the people and the land was essential and without it, there could be no connection to G-d. While, this is indeed true, Ezekiel was shown by Heaven that a bond to the Holy Land can transcend the physical.

Ezekiel's revelation of change in accepted prophetic tradition was not meet with the warmest of receptions. The master prophets of old were well aware of charlatans making untrue claims. Yet, Ezekiel was G-d's chosen prophet. He certainly was no faker. Yet, how was he to prove this to the master prophets of his day? Such approval was vital for the acceptance of his prophecy and for the revelation of the word of G-d. Thus in order to prove his radical departure from accepted tradition, unlike any other prophet, Ezekiel wrote down the details of his Merkava vision.

The Merkava vision on the surface merely appears to be a description of what Ezekiel saw in his mind's eye (the known prophetic technique). Yet, the master prophets upon reading Ezekiel's words recognized within them the hidden codes of numerological significance. They recognized that what Ezekiel saw was indeed true and that he revolutionized the traditions of the prophetic school. Prophecy could be received outside the Land, within a certain context and within certain parameters.

It wasn't until over one thousand years later that Avraham Abulafia came along and revealed to us in writing just what those parameters are. And only many centuries after Abulafia came along the Ba'al Shem Tov who put these teachings into practice and taught a condensed version of them for the average layman seeking spirituality.

Ezekiel started a trend of recording Merkava visions. Although the spiritual doors to prophecy closed in the century after Ezekiel lived, many still followed in his path ascending above to whatever heights that were open to receive them.

Although the doors of prophecy were closed the doors of the Merkava were still open. Many made descents before the Merkava. Many ascended into the realms of expanded consciousness to explore the world of the angels and to commune with them. Many wrote books about their experiences and lessons. The one thing in common amongst all this body of Torah literature is that they all followed the prophetic code of concealment.

While words were committed to a page, they only served as map, to those who had the key to unlock their secret meanings. This body of Torah literature is called Merkava literature or the Sifrei Hekhalot (the books of the Supernal Palaces). Much of this material became the foundation of later Kabbalah and Zoharic teachings.

With these matters of history and context now understood, we can proceed to explore the realms of spiritual reality and how they are accessed by the expanded mind.

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Chapter One - The Beginning, Mental Isolation

Perceptions of spiritual reality must be looked at within a context. To begin quoting Kabbalistic texts and advice places us in the middle of this information instead of at its beginnings. In order to understand anything properly and fully one must begin at the beginning. Therefore, to the beginning we go, to the Bible, as we review the Biblical references to the prophetic schools and their practices.

Much material is written in post-Biblical Torah literature about the meditative practices of the Biblical patriarchs. The Talmud learns from specific pasukim how Abraham, Yitzhak and Yaakov all prayed set prayers at set times of the day. Needless, to say, the prayers of our Fathers were not the standardized prayers that we recite today. Indeed, our Fathers were prophets and their form of “prayer” in more akin to our present forms of meditation than to a mere recitation of words or supplications before G-d so common today.

With regards to Yitzhak, it is said that he would go out to “la’suah” in the field (Gen. 24:63). The word “la’suah” comes from the root “siah” and in Hebrew its most commonly used form is “siha” which means a conversation. In essence, the Torah pasuk was saying that Yitzhak would go out into the field to have a conversation with G-d. This is different from our modern understanding of prayer in that today although we talk to G-d in prayer; it is never really a two-way conversation, with us hearing in response the Divine Voice. With our father Yitzhak this was the difference; his “siha” with G-d was two-way. Therefore, his method of prayer required of him to somehow alter his consciousness to hear the Divine Voice speaking in turn to him.

This same type of experience is attributed to both Yitzhak’s father Avraham and to his son Yaakov. The Talmud in Tractate Berakhot, (chapter 4) uses these examples of the Fathers as one of the sources for the institution of the three daily prayer services recited by Torah faithful Jews. The specific details of how the Sages learned from the Bible that the Father meditated is not the topic of our present discussion, therefore I will not delve into that material. The interested reader can easily open up the Talmud Bavli, Berakhot 26b and study the pertinent material for oneself. Our purpose here is to study the meditative techniques of the Fathers, not in indulge in an academic overview of how this material was discovered.

Based upon the example of Yitzhak, and also clearly implied by the pasukim mentioned in the Talmud ascribing the prayers of Avraham and Yaakov (Gen. 19:27; 28:11), there is one common thread that unites all three. The uniting thread is isolation. In other words, whenever one of the three Fathers wished to commune with G-d, the first thing they did was to separate themselves from their natural environment and went into a state of seclusion.

Now, in spite of the fact that G-d’s glory is everywhere and can be found everywhere, nonetheless, the nature of the physical human mind is to place emphasis on physical things. We therefore often fail to see the underlying spiritual reality beneath the structures and movements of our natural world. In other words, the unaided human mind is normally incapable of recognizing the Divine glory throughout creation. This lack of insight on our part, the Kabbalists explain is due as a result from Adam and Eve’s eating the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. This metaphor is a symbolic rendition of an actual occurrence to the ancestor and founder of our race.

At one time Adam and thus the entire human race existed with a much broader scope of consciousness than we humans have today. In the words of our Sages, prior to the fall, Adam could metaphorically see from one end of the world to the next. In other words, Adam’s consciousness was grand enough to include and comprehend all occurrences in our multi-dimensional universe simultaneously, without anything being hidden, lost or confused.

Adam originally was using 100% of his brain / soul power. In modern terms Adam must have had an "I.Q." of at least 2000. We cannot even imagine what human consciousness would be like at that level of comprehension. This is what was lost by eating the forbidden fruit.

Adam and thus mankind lost the use of the greater part of the mind faculty. This lost faculty was not removed from us; rather it has simply atrophied from consciousness. That area of the mind which we no longer have conscious access to is called the unconscious. Prior to the fall, Adam's mind was never split. His conscious mind encompassed all that today we call unconscious. As such Adam was able to naturally experience the entire spiritual plane that exists parallel to and in conjunction with our own physical plane.

As Adam's children, spiritually blemished as we are with a split mind, we no longer have this natural insight into spiritual awareness. In order for us to consciously experience the spiritual we must return and use that section of the human mind that governs spiritual perception. Yet, this area lies deep within our present unconscious. Thus deep into the unconscious we must go. In other words in order to expand outward, we must first penetrate deep within. The only way out is from within.

This is no great secret. The Biblical prophets and the later Merkava mystics knew this reality all too well. Indeed, within Merkava literature, the meditative process to ascend into the spiritual realm is always referred to as a descent and not an ascent. Those who meditated upon the Heavenly Throne were said to descend before the Merkava, not to rise up and see it. The descent was the descent into the depths of the unconscious mind. Only from there was the access doorway to the spiritual world.

As an interesting footnote, in Talmudic days, synagogues were actually built to ever so subtly suggest this descent reality. Ancient architecture for synagogues showed that the center of the synagogue, the Bimah platform from where the prayers and Torah were read was actually built deeper into the floor, and served as the lowest point in the building, exactly the opposite of how houses of worship are built today. Indeed, when one was called to lead the congregation in prayer, one was said to "yored" (descend) before the Bimah. This term is still used today in most synagogues around the world, most likely devoid of its original meaning.

The descent into the unconscious is the necessary first step into the spiritual experience. Our Fathers knew this well, and thus sought to isolate themselves from their daily surroundings and obligations so as to create a conducive environment in which they could refocus their consciousness on inner as opposed to outer reality. This then is the purpose of isolation. Physical isolation was for the purpose of leading to mental isolation. Mental isolation is defined as the removal of the mind from the conscious external environment and allowing the mind to begin the exploration of inner space.

The practice of mental and physical isolation became known in later Torah literature as *hitbodedut*. The root word "boded" means isolated or alone. Due to the results of Adam's fall our human minds can no longer fully experience physical and spiritual reality simultaneously. While one is firm and clear in our minds the other seems dream-like and unclear. This is not only how the conscious mind experiences the physical, this is also how the spiritual mind experiences the physical.

The breach that has disabled our spiritual perceptions is rather severe. Only with the utmost of healing and rehabilitation can this breach be repaired. This is what the *devekut* bonding experience is all about. This was the purpose of prophecy and prophetic practice in the first place. Everything revolves around restoring what was once lost, only then do we seek to gain additional spiritual insights.

As important as the path of inner discovery is, our Sages warn us that exploring the inner mind of the unconscious cannot proceed haphazardly. Undirected plunges into the realm of the unconscious often lead to a forced integration between the conscious mind and certain surface elements of the unconscious. This is not a sought-after thing and in fact is often quite dangerous. When content is drawn up from the unconscious mind, it is not in the form of rational, logical information. Rather it is

still in its dream-like semi-solid” form. Unconscious material needs to be properly integrated within the conscious mind according to an ancient set formula. Otherwise the relationship of separation between the conscious and the unconscious is compromised. The results of this are that confusing unconscious material flows unrestricted into the conscious mind, causing a loss of distinction between inner and outer realities. This is the genesis of mental illness, and the cause of psychosis.

Not for naught have the Kabbalists throughout the centuries warned that the unguided and improperly trained student faces the danger of going insane. This warning should not be underestimated.

The paths and procedures of mental isolation and spiritual development was a training program brought down to our Fathers from the beginning, from Adam himself, as he received it in the original Book of the Angel Raziel.

Physical isolation is only the first step to achieving mental isolation. A quiet environment, seclusions from others and from all types of distractions is the necessary first step to successfully penetrating the inner mind. In the last century psychology has coined a term for this necessary personality prerequisite. We refer to this state of mind as introversion, and one who lives accordingly as an introvert. The value of this attribute in the pursuit of spiritual perception must not be underestimated. Present public nuances about introversion being an undesirable thing because it induces separatism must be totally rejected and ignored.

In fact, this separatism from physical distractions is what is needed in order for one to begin walking the path towards spiritual restoration. In a world that is today hostile to any true spiritual message and thus to spiritual pursuits, it is no wonder that the society in general and psychologists in particular look at the introvert with suspicion.

Regardless of political correctness or popularity, the one seeking spiritual truth must withdraw from the hustle and bustle of busy everyday affairs and isolate oneself physically and mentally, at least for certain set times of the day. This was the practice of our Fathers. They conducted their daily affairs with extroverted skill and then retired into introversion for their communion with our blessed Creator. The Fathers exemplified this harmonious balance and thus were chosen to serve as role models for us throughout the centuries.

I must emphasize that while the introverted state of mind is necessary for spiritual pursuits, one must also have an extrovert aspect of personality in order to balance it out. We do live simultaneously in two worlds, the world of the physical and the world of spirit. Therefore, we must have two aspects of human consciousness that enables us to bridge the two, balance the two and allow the two to maintain harmonious interaction, as it was in the days of Adam prior to the fall.

Prophetic training and devekut bonding meditation was predicated upon this balance. Only in this way is balance restored to both physical and spiritual. The physical world should not be viewed as undesirable or not-spiritual, for as we said above, the whole world (the physical included) is full of G-d's glory. The problem is not with the physical world, but rather with our lack of proper perception of it.

Mental isolation is a temporary state enabling us temporary access into the spiritual. On the other hand our physical extroverted state is just as much a temporary thing, meant to be interrupted at regular intervals. One can make a comparison of the relationship of the two to a breath, which includes two parts, the inhalation and the exhalation. One is the opposite of the other, yet both are essential for life.

Chapter Two - Hitbonenut, the Acquisition of Mental Isolation

Acquiring physical isolation is a rather simple process, one must simply go to a place at a time when one can be alone and unbothered. Yet, once one has changed one's physical environment, one's inner environment unfortunately is still all too full of mental noise.

In order to achieve inner mental isolation certain practices need be performed. These practices of silencing and focusing the inner mind enabling it to perceive inner reality are generally bundled together under the generic name meditation. However, in Hebrew, there is no one word for meditation. There are a number of terms used to describe specific techniques of meditation. All of these different techniques are used in conjunction with one another following a certain pattern to achieve the desired results of consciousness expansion.

Yet, prior to our delving into these specific techniques used to quiet and focus the mind, we must first understand the nature of the mind itself, its many parts and how they interact with one another. In earlier Kabbalistic literature the various functions of the mind, heart and body are referred to as sefirot. The term sefirot (sefirah in the singular) come from the Hebrew root "lispor", which means both to number and to count. It is also the root of the word "sefer" which is a book.

The sefirot are first mentioned in writing in the Sefer Yetzirah and are clearly stated to be ten in number (S.Y. 1:1). This number itself is of such great significance that the text emphasizes that ten is the number and not nine, nor eleven (S.Y. 1:4). The reasons for this emphasize will be explained as we proceed.

A sefirah simply stated is a specific aspect of the manifestation of the Divine creative process in creation. The complete image of the ten sefirot is said to be the metaphorical image of G-d in which man was created (Gen 1:26). Therefore, whenever Kabbalists speak about the sefirot, the talk always has dual meaning. The sefirotic interactions explain the workings of the universe at large and at the same time explain the workings of the inner universe, which is the mind and makeup of humankind.

Because we are created in G-d's image and that image is both our inner image and that of the entire universe, therefore as man explores inner space, he is at the same time exploring outer space. Thus by one expanding consciousness in an actual and honest way, man's understanding of the universe grows correspondingly. As we said earlier, Adam prior to the fall in Eden was able to see from one end of the world to another. In other words, the entire universe was comprehensively understood within his mind. We have truly suffered a great loss by "eating of the forbidden fruit," but let us take comfort in the fact of what it is that we have to gain, when we rectify matters according to the proper path, i.e., the Torah.

The sefirot are divided into two main sections. The upper three, which are sometimes four are referred to in later Kabbalistic literature as the Mohin, the brain sefirot, or if you will, the sefirot or processes of the mind. The lower seven sefirot are referred to as the Midot, the attributes of the heart. These seven are the bridge that binds the mind to the universe. Without them there is no creative process or manifestation of the universe. Corresponding to them was the world created in seven days. Prior to our discussing these seven, we must first now discuss the upper three that are four, the Mohin (literally translated as brains).

Kabbalistic literature discussed the three that are four sefirot of the mind in descending order. This is usually a rather organized way of presentation. I am however choosing another path. Rather than speak about from above to below in descending fashion, I instead choose to discuss this matter as how it is most easily recognized by us. In other words, I want to place emphasis on our topic, the acquisition of mental isolation. I want to discuss the sefirot as how they are easily recognized as aspects of inner space, as functions within the human mind. Therefore, I will begin our discussion with that realm of mind we know as normal human consciousness and from here we will descend into the depths of the

mind. This was the path of the Merkava mystic and the prophets before them. If it was good enough for them to follow, suffice it for us to do the same.

Normal human consciousness, the faculty of rational, intellectual thought, that aspect of the mind which focuses our attention on the outside world and enables us to comprehend it and interact with it corresponds to the sefirah known as Binah (understanding). This is the third of the three sefirot of the Mohin. The faculty of human thought corresponding to Binah is our conscious waking stream of thought. We will refer to this from hereon as Binah consciousness. It is always so full of movement and mental noise. Binah is like a pool that many water tributaries flow into. It is always busy, active, flowing and full of movement.

The last thing in the world that can be said about Binah is that it is isolated. Binah consciousness is the open road, the public market or as referred to in the secrets of Jewish Law, the Reshut HaRabim (the public domain). Everything takes place therein. Therefore, if one wishes to cultivate mental isolation one must move one's mental focus out from Binah consciousness and direct it towards another mental location.

Yet, once we leave the confines of comfortable familiar rational intellectual Binah consciousness we must enter into that unknown, frightening region of the mind known as the unconscious. This unconscious realm of the mind houses the sefirah Hokhama (as well as other attributes to be discussed later). We will discuss Hokhama and Hokhama consciousness in greater depth as we proceed. Suffice it for now that we refer to Hokhama and the descent into the unconscious by the metaphor Reshut HaYahid (the private domain). This is another term borrowed from Jewish Law that has Kabbalistic significance as does the Reshut HaRabim (public domain). One can only experience mental isolation (hitbodedut) with the Reshut HaYahid (private domain) of the mind.

To proceed along this path delving into the Reshut HaYahid without a guide would be a futile endeavor with one certain to get lost in the inner realms of flowing currents of conflicting consciousnesses thus facing all types of certain psychological dangers of encroaching mental illness. But we do have the guide to inner space; we do know where to go and how to get there. We have the map that guides us through the labyrinth streams of the unconscious. We simply follow the path of the sefirot. Yet, as we shall see this is much easier said than done.

The sefirotic path must not only be studied academically, one must also be able to embrace it experientially. Without such personal experience of the path, the academic model studied today by most so-called students of Kabbalah is sorely lacking in pertinent dynamic details.

The path that we follow from the conscious mind into the depths of the unconscious is outlined for us in the first chapter of the Sefer Yetzirah. Indeed, this entire first chapter was written to subtly provide meditative instruction, not only what to do, but also what to expect. After laying down the basic principles of the existence of what is referred to as the thirty-two paths (wonders of wisdom S.Y. 1:1), the fourth Mishna provides the following direction:

“Ten Sefirot without boundaries . . . Understand with wisdom, be wise with understanding. . . ”

The sefirotic concept “without boundaries” (blimah) need not be discussed at this time. Let us focus on the words following. “Understand (Binah) with wisdom (Hokhama) and be wise (Hokhama) with understanding (Binah).” The simple meaning of the text begins with Binah and shifts to Hokhama, then continues in Hokhama and shifts back to Binah. Herein then lies the secret of what is called in Hebrew, Sekhel Tenudah (oscillating consciousness).

There are many ways in which the conscious mind can delve into the unconscious. However, if one's desire is to penetrate into the depths of one's being, transcending the limits of self and to accomplish a bond with the Creator, then there is a precise way and method that must be followed.

Rational intellectual thinking corresponds to the sefirah Binah. Binah by definition means understanding. Binah is not the beginning of the thinking process, but rather its end. Therefore, the prophetic path in essence “reverse engineers” the thinking process from end to beginning in order to accomplish its desired task.

Sekhel Tenudah (oscillating consciousness) requires one to begin the penetration into the unconscious mind from a very specific point within the conscious mind. The rational intellectual aspect of thinking is activated to begin the journey. One thinks about a specific object or thing with exhausting comprehensiveness. Yet in order to accomplish this task of comprehensive evaluation, we must first master the skills of another type of meditative technique referred to as Hitbonenut, which means absolute contemplation.

Prior to our beginning our journey into the unconscious mind, one must first prepare the conscious mind for the trip. If the tool of penetration is not capable of making the descent, then all the efforts and meditative techniques will be of no avail. Prior to our understanding what it means to “understand with wisdom,” we must first understand what it means to “understand.” This is Hitbonenut.

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Chapter Three - Music as the Tool of Hitbonenut

The human mind has a relatively great ability to analyze a thing, once the mind focuses its efforts upon said thing. Here then lies the power of the mind. The power of human analytical thought is greatly empowered when said thought is focused. Thought can be compared to a light. When light is diffused such as in a light bulb, it spreads light everywhere in general and nowhere in particular. However, when light is focused as in a laser beam, its power becomes concentrated. With such focus the once weak light now has the power to cut through almost everything we know. Human thought operates in this exact same manner.

When our minds are focusing on our daily affairs, our thoughts flutter about from idea to idea. Like a butterfly fluttering by, our thoughts never stay still on any one idea for any length of time. Thus the mind in such a state is chaotic, always in a state of flux, and never still. In this normal state of fluctuating consciousness, no focus is ever acquired, and therefore no power of mind is ever developed. The majority of people live their entire lives like this without ever realizing just how far away they are from realizing their full human potential.

Hitbonenut meditation is designed to help focus the mind enabling it to concentrate its entire conscious force upon a specific thing. Aside from the extreme benefits to rational comprehension this provides, this ability of mental focus also is the necessary launch point into delving deep into the realm of the unconscious.

Mental focus is like gasoline to a car engine. One can have the fastest car in the world, but without gas even the slowest car in the world will run circles around it. So it is with the mind. Intelligence plays a minor factor here. The ability to focus can be practiced by both those of extraordinary and those of normal intelligence.

Focus of the mind enables one to experience pure contemplation. In such a state one can perceive information about the concentrated upon thing that is neither visible to the naked eye nor accessible by any other method. The reason for this is because when one successfully can focus the mind with proper power, one realizes that there is more to the thinking process than just a mere mental picture and the association of related learned facts.

True understanding of a thing brings into the realm of contemplation an emotional passion. In other words one who wishes to truly contemplate a thing must be motivated to do so. Motivation is an emotion. It is an attribute of the seven lower sefirot. However, the seven sefirot before their manifestation reside concealed within Binah, the mind. Emotions lie latent in the mind prior to their external manifestation. Therefore, one who wishes to delve into the depths of mind must be passionately motivated to do this.

This is why throughout the Bible G-d commands us to love Him with all our hearts (Deut 6:5) and to place His words upon our hearts (Deut 6:6). The heart in this case is the mind in Binah consciousness. Yet Binah consciousness is the focused mind that unites rational detached intellect with a very much attached passion to bond with the sought-after knowledge. This relationship of heart and mind is referenced in an old Kabbalistic prayer entitled, "The Prayer of Eliyahu HaNavi (the prophet Elijah) recorded in the Tikunei Zohar of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yohai. In simple terms, the prophet proclaimed, "Binah is the heart, for it is the heart that understands."

Indeed, the passion of bonding with knowledge is intoxicating and addictive. One who fathoms its secrets actually sublimates sexual libido energy and uses it to bond with the abstract concept within thought as opposed to a member of the opposite sex.

When passion is united with contemplation, one's thoughts focus to a point similar to the desire of a lover for his/her partner. This metaphor is well known to the Kabbalists (ref. Sefer Reshit Hokhma,

Sha'ar HaAhavah, end of chapter 4). When desire is motivating the thinking process all other faculties of the human sensory experience come into play to draw the individual closer to the desired object. In case of a sexual partner, one not only thinks about the other, but becomes enraptured by him/her. One smells their fragrance even outside their presence, one hears the sounds inside the recesses of one's thoughts, and one's vision is focused only upon the other. One can as if taste the other. This is the passion of love. It is what motivates the mind to contemplate. Without such love and passion for the art of contemplation, one will never succeed in these endeavors.

How does one cultivate such a passion? One might as well ask how one falls in love. Yet, there is a technique. One begins very gradually. One begins to contemplate the selected idea or thing. At first such thoughts might be boring and it might be hard to concentrate on just this one thing. Being that our minds are so accustomed to flitter about, it is rather hard to go against the grain and keep the mind focused on merely one thing. We begin by contemplating our chosen single item. In Kabbalistic schools the idea initially chosen to contemplate is either a specific pasuk from the TaNaKh that has personal meaning for the individual or more simply to focus upon G-d's Holy Name Y-K-V-K.

Aside from the letters themselves, the Kabbalists have written numerous works explaining how the Holy Name of G-d as revealed in the Bible is much more than a simple name like we all use. Rather, it is more accurate to describe the Holy Name Y-K-V-K of the Bible as a code encasing numerous meanings.

Step one in Hitbonenut contemplation on the Holy Name is to learn everything there is to learn about the Holy Name from all the books of the sacred Rabbis and Kabbalists. With this academic knowledge one can now think about what one knows. In one's mind one can start to put together all the different ideas that one has learned from various sources. One can take all the variant opinions and endeavor to see how they all fit in into a greater picture which is more than just the sum of its parts.

Once one begins to see connections and associations unseen by others, the mind develops a continuing interest in this process. Thus the mind wants to spend more time contemplating the idea or thing, drawing into the contemplative process more and more information, seeking to find pieces of a mental puzzle that somehow fit together to add greater depth to the ever expanding image now forming in the mind.

As this process proceeds one achieves insights (knowledge) about the contemplated thing that are unique. This is because one actually, as if to say, loves the mental concept, and can therefore know subtle nuances about one's "lover" that simply cannot be expressed with words. This passion of thought is still in the realm of the rational. It is still clear and lucid thinking. But as this process continues to its ultimate conclusions, it takes the mind far beyond the boundaries of consciousness. The passion is what drives and steers the mind as it jumps into the realm of the unconscious. Without the passion the mind would be lost. Therefore, maintaining the passion is essential.

Not all minds can generate passion simply as a byproduct of mental processes. Since Biblical days this truth has been known. Therefore, even in Biblical days, there was a technique used to "jump-start" the passion in the soul, so that when it was properly united with the associated mental concepts the Hitbonenut process would proceed. The Biblical "jump-start" method is still used today to alter consciousness, although most have no idea that it can be used to reach down into the inner mind as a guide along the spiritual path. The Biblical "jump-start" tool was music.

It is clear and mentioned a number of times in the Bible how when a prophet desired prophecy he would have music played for him. He would use the music to arouse his soul and let his mind contemplate what would become words of Psalms, the Holy Name Y-K-V-K or other holy Names (that we will discuss as we proceed). The music would "get him in the mood." Once he was in the "right mood," the music would cease and the prophet would then be able to proceed into the depths of the unconscious guided by his holy thoughts.

For centuries following the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem and the exile of the Jewish people from our Holy Land, this style of using music to achieve an altered state of consciousness has fallen by the wayside in Jewish mystical circles. Yet, although this technique has mostly been lost in Jewish circles, its practice did not end there. Centuries ago, about the time of the birth of Islam, when some bands of prophetic Kabbalists roamed about the Arabian Desert, they must have had chance meetings with certain groups of truth seeking Muslims. We see to this day that the Sufi Muslim mystics still use music as a meditative device in their meditations.

Although the exact historical connection has long been lost in the sands of the Arabian Desert, nonetheless it is clear that the Sufis learned their path from these Rabbis in ancient days who knew these practices well. Even centuries later, Rabbi Avraham, son of RaMBaM, in his book HaMaspeek L'Ovdei HaShem, makes mention of the Sufi practice and comments how similar it is to that used by the prophets and Kabbalists. He too recognized that somewhere lost in history that the Sufi fathers learned or copied some techniques from the holy schools of the benei neviim (students of the prophets).

Although the use of music as a meditative tool is a lost art to most modern Kabbalists, nonetheless there still remains a remnant of this original practice amongst certain Jewish mystical circles. In the 1700's, the Ba'al Shem Tov (Rabbi Yisrael ben Eliezer) began teaching a unique form of Kabbalah with emphasis on devikut bonding with G-d. His followers were called Hasidim and his movement Hasidut.

One of the techniques used by the Ba'al Shem to arouse devikut in himself and his followers was the singing of a Niggun. A Niggun means a tune, a simply melody, most often without any lyrics. Hasidim often would hum long and sometimes intricate tunes, and at other times simple and short tunes. Each tune served the purpose of arousing spiritual emotion within those listening. The Niggun indeed served then and now to arouse many to spiritual awareness.

However, the Niggun alone was never enough to accomplish what the prophetic Kabbalists had accomplished in the past. The Niggun in and of itself works wonders, but it is only a small part of the technique. Unfortunately, the followers of the Ba'al Shem Tov did not receive knowledge of and/or practice the other elements of the prophetic Kabbalah and were therefore limited in what they could spiritually accomplish.

Music is often vital for the first stage of meditation. However, not any or all music can be used in this endeavor. There is a certain type that works best and another type that serves an entirely different purpose. There is an old saying, "the right means in the wrong hands, causes the right means to work in the wrong way." At the same time there is music that opens one up to holy forces so is there music that can open one up to the most unholy of sources. One need just look to certain types of rock and roll music to see how true this is. The usage of music and how it affects consciousness bringing one to hitbodedut must now be explored.

Chapter Four - Using Music To Cultivate Subjective Perception

Perceptions of physical reality can be divided into two different streams of consciousness, the objective and the subjective.

Objective reality is that perception which is experienced by all and interpreted collectively as having a specific meaning. This is what most of us would call “real.” Subjective reality, on the other hand, is when the perception of a thing is interpreted in a highly individualized manner unique to the psyche (mind) of the individual at that moment.

Our present society is structured to place emphasis of legitimacy on objective reality, for it is only through having a concept of objective reality that we can have common ground for communication of a common reality.

While the need for an objective reality is self evident, one must never use this as an excuse to deny the existence and importance of subjective reality. It is through our personal subjective realities that each and every one of us uniquely defines and interprets all aspects of life and thus it helps shape us and define for us our individuality. Without a sense of subjective reality there would not be a sense of individuality.

Note: this is why certain types of political regimes and repressive cultures and societies always seek to place over-emphasis on objective as opposed to subjective reality. When everyone is taught to think the same, then everyone will also act the same. This is the master-plan for domination and control. Without a healthy sense of subjective reality, one is left with only a sense of being a meaningless part of a greater whole, with no sense of individual worth. This is the greatest of evils. This is mental slavery and the true definition of exile. This is exile from one's own self.

According to the Torah, one is encouraged with all earnestness to develop a healthy sense of subjective reality. In the words of the Ari'zal, the master of the later Kabbalists, he says that each and every soul has its own unique way of learning and understanding the entire Torah. As there were 600,000 foot soldiers who left Egypt in the days of Moses, so there is considered to be 600,000 source souls in “collective Israel.” Each of these individual souls has its own independent understandings of the Torah, for each of the four levels of Torah interpretation: pshat (simple), remez (implied), drash (moralistic) and sod (mystical).

While this great variance of Torah understanding opens up for us a myriad of wealth of Torah knowledge, this concept should never be used to justify understandings of the Torah which violate either the letter of the Law of the Torah or its spirit. In other words, this concept should never be used to excuse those deviant forms of Torah interpretation which by definition contradict Torah in the first place.

True Torah insights are what we call “hiddushim” (new insights). The reason why we have such a large body of Torah literature in all facets of Torah learning is simply because of this. Every Rabbi who seeks to bond with the Torah in truth is blessed with insights and revelations into it which are unique to himself and his personality. Thus whether he is writing a commentary to the Torah, Shulkhan Arukh (Code of Jewish Law) or a book on Kabbalah, his soul perceives insights that another does not. This makes the works of the individual Rabbis ever so valuable, for what one Rabbi might perceive, another one was not able to see, until he read the words of the first. In this way is the Torah made great and the minds of her students refined and sharpened.

With this introduction let us return now to our discussion of Hitbonenut mental concentration and the use of music to acquire it.

In order to be able to delve into the Torah and produce hiddushim (unique insights), one must be first able to focus one's mind upon what one is doing. No one with a disorganized mind will be able to delve into the depths of Torah and reveal her hidden treasures. Therefore an orderly mind is a focused mind. Music is a well known tool that enables the mind to acquire focus. Let us take a quick look at what happens in the mind as we listen to music.

Although we shall now discuss the affect of music on the mind, it is important to note that music is only one of many tools that can evoke the following sequence. One should keep this in mind and apply this lesson to all other tools of consciousness expansion.

When we think about a thing, we normally initially approach that thing from an objective standpoint. In other words we think about the thing as does almost everyone else. For example, when we think of an apple, we perceive it to be a piece of fruit, used for food, and either purchased in a store or plucked from a tree. This is an objective view of the apple.

Now, when music is played it arouses within us feelings. Our feelings attach to our thoughts and add to them another dimension of perception, specifically the subjective dimension. Thus, when I think about the apple, I think of a fruit. When I add feelings to the thought process, then I feel whether the apple is delicious to the taste or whether I do not like apples. My mind wanders from thinking about green apples which may be too soft for my tastes to crunchy red apples in which I delight.

When I start to think subjectively about the apple, many more cues about it come into play. I can sense its taste in my mouth and I can feel the delight of eating it. All this is not possible with objective thinking simply because everyone's subjective experience with the red delicious apple is different from one another. As it is with apples so is it with spiritual reality.

Music gets me to feel whatever is the topic at hand. Music adds dimension to the thought similar to the taste of the apple. The mood shifting affect brought about by music is well known to all. Yet, most never stop to analyze the affect as it is happening. It is however most interesting to observe one's own inner self and shift of focus.

When music is playing and one's mind is contemplating whatever topic, the music arouses the inner soul to release emotions; these introduce elements of subjective focus onto the objective element. One then begins to view the objective element, whatever it is in a more and more subjective light. In this way, one's knowledge of the thing now integrates both objective knowledge, which everyone knows, with one's own personal perspective which is unique to the individual. This is the process of Hitbonenut, comprehensive contemplation, where objective and subjective reality merge as one.

Do not underestimate the value of this merge, for it is one's subjective insights that expand one's objective knowledge over and beyond that of his fellow.

The Kabbalists explain the reason why music and even humming a tune has such a profound influence upon human consciousness. They remind their students that G-d created the entire universe through the process of sound waves. This is how the Torah is interpreted when it states that G-d created the universe through speech, as it says, "and G-d said, let there be . . . and there was." The speech of G-d is said to be made up of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew Alef-Bet. While each one has its unique name and sound, each one also has its unique tune or harmony.

In essence all of creation is one enormous harmony or symphony of Divine manifestation. When one hums a tune or listens to music one is in essence vibrating the fundamental particles of creation unleashing its elemental aspects. When this process is applied to a thought, one is in essence unraveling the finalized structure of that thought thus enabling the contemplator to investigate its inherent parts. This experience is most intoxicating for the mind. For the mind, created to think, is enabled with an

entirely “new” power to perform its tasks. This new power motivating the mind to think ever so deeper is passion.

In the prophetic / meditative tradition music was played to allow the mind of the individual aspiring to receive prophecy to cultivate a deep sense of passion for what it was he/she sought. It was by the power of the passion that drove the experience. However, it was the thoughts in the mind that directed the experience. In other words, drive and direction must go hand in hand. This is not an unknown lesson to us. How many would fill their car with gas and head out on a trip not knowing to where they are going or how to get there. Such a trip is a futile waste of time and energy.

Therefore once passion is ignited, once the mind can expand beyond the limitations of objective reality, once subjective reality can safely guide the way then one is indeed on the journey of a lifetime, a journey towards bonding with our blessed Creator.

The subjective impressions and perceptions in one’s mind guides and directs the conscious mind into the unconscious and steers it to where the mind needs to go within this uncharted territory. The topic of thought and the type of music arousing passion therefore play crucial roles in this transformation of consciousness. When one is able to think deeply, allowing full concentration of the mind upon the chosen item or thing, then the mind is clear enough to focus upon that thing and perceive it in the great depths of the “hiddush.” This then is Hitbonenut.

This is what the Sefer Yetzirah was meaning when it said to “understand with wisdom,” in other words to allow the integration of subjective reality alongside objective reality to enable one to penetrate into the first layers of the unconscious. Yet, this is only one of many first steps.

Once Hitbonenut concentration ability is achieved one has to be careful how to focus it. For once the power of the mind is tapped; it can lead one to the highest heights, or take one down to the lowest depths. Good and evil, fortune and ruin are ever present realities both objectively and subjectively. The mind of the aspirant must be able to know the difference between the paths that takes one to either the goodly heights or the evil depths. Initially it is impossible to distinguish the difference based upon objective reality alone. Even one’s subjective reasoning might be very cloudily. Therefore, in order to proceed, one must first make efforts to cleanse the mind of both objective and subjective garbage that clouds the mind and confuses the true inner path.

Chapter Five - Cleansing the Mind from the Dangers of the Klipot

Although music and similar motifs can be used to assist the mind in transforming perception from objective to subjective reality, there is still one major obstacle that will forever block one's path towards the ultimate bonding with G-d. This major blockage is the faulty faculty of the human mind itself.

The human mind in its present state does not integrate information in the lofty spiritual way it was designed by G-d to do. As our understandings of objective reality is limited by the parameters of our technological advancement, so is our subjective perceptions tainted by all too many things. Although each of us has our own unique subjective way of looking at the world, this highly individualized subjectivity is by no means a "free ticket" to experiencing G-d.

There is a serious amount of spiritual static and mental cloudiness in our individual subjectivities. Indeed, our individual subjectivities define for us the parameters of our minds. These parameters are necessary in order for us to exist as independent entities. This same necessary parameter of existence however also causes us to be filled with ideas, thoughts and perceptions that by definition are limited and thus by definition far from the absolute truth of G-d's Presence. These hindrances are what keep us from having true experiences of the reality of the Divine. In the language of the Kabbalah they are called the Klipot (husks, or shells).

By definition our minds are limited things. We do not possess at present the original Adamic capability of "seeing from one end of the world to the other." Even if we could, there is no guarantee that we would see all that there is to see and to perceive it accurately. The prophets of old were very well aware of this limitation. Knowledge of this spiritual handicap was incorporated into the prophetic training system alongside methods how to overcome it.

In the Biblical episodes of both Eliyahu and Ezekiel reference is made of the prophetic mind passing through these areas of delude subjectivity, referred to by the later Kabbalists as the Klipot. Knowledge of this is essential. For without proper warning and training how to overcome these Klipot, the mind of the aspiring spiritual seeker or prophet can be taken off course in the same way as a faulty compass can cause a ship at sea to end up far far away from its intended destination.

During the centuries when prophecy was a mainstay in the Jewish landscape it is estimated that there were literally millions of souls, men and women alike, who sought entry into the prophetic schools. During this period that prophecy was mainstream, unfortunately, so was its opposite, false prophecy an ever-present nuisance.

Walking the razor's edge of mind / soul refinement is no easy task. One or more shortcuts, or only one lesson learned or practiced improperly can lead one to perceive insights cloaked in holy garments, but nonetheless emanating from a very dangerous source. False prophecy and what could come forth from it was such a serious concern that G-d Himself ordered Moshe to proscribe in the Torah the death penalty for the false prophet (Deut. 13:1-6). G-d expresses that He has zero tolerance for the one falsely claiming to speak in His Holy Name.

Distinguishing between truth and falsehood has always been a difficult task. In order to enable us to do this G-d gave us His Torah, both Written and Oral to enable us to know what His Will is for us and what it is we are to do in life on a daily basis that will keep us on the straight and narrow path.

Yet, even when all the commandments of the Torah are scrupulously observed, and even when one's heart is in the right place, one can still nonetheless be deceived by the ever-so-present forces of evil whose sole intent it is to keep the human mind / soul from returning to its source. Why these malevolent forces are the way they are will be discussed in a later place. For now we must merely understand the nature of their existence and what we must learn to overcome their obstacles.

The true nature of malevolent forces are not experienced as little red horned demons with tails and pitchforks, but rather as complications and confusions in the mind. Whenever we endeavor to experience subjective reality, we find that our subjective perceptions of a thing are always tainted by a twisted understanding of our experience with that thing. Such was the case of the dialogue between Eve and the Serpent in the Garden of Eden.

The Torah story in Gen. 3:1-7 relates how the Serpent began a dialogue with Eve, which led to her eating of the forbidden fruit and her giving of said fruit to Adam making him eat as well. Obviously the story is a metaphor for a much more profound historical incident that occurred. One need not concern oneself with what kind of tree it was or what exactly was the forbidden truth. Our records of the incident describe the matter metaphorically, and only the Kabbalists went into great detail to describe for us the actually psychological / spiritual event as it actually occurred.

Regardless of the details, the one point of the story is clear; the Serpent did not deceive Eve by lying to her. He did not distort the truth at all. The Serpent was able to corrupt Eve by telling her the truth and allowing subjective experience to take sway over objective reality. In other words, the objective reality was indeed that the forbidden fruit looked delightful to the eyes. Eve indeed did desire to eat of it. Indeed Eve did desire that her eyes would be opened and that she would become like G-d. The Serpent used Eve's own desires against her and urged her on to follow her desires instead on following what she knew objectively to be correct. Her subjective perceptions of the forbidden fruit won out over her objective knowledge. She ate, we fell, we lost and the rest is history.

Subjective experience therefore must be put to the test to ascertain if that which is perceived can indeed be trusted. Prophetic training placed great emphasis on this aspect of the training. For without mastery of this most important subject, the aspiring mind / soul could be seduced as was Mother Eve with similar devastating results. We have recorded some of these results in the stories of the false prophets and prophecies recorded in the TaNaKh (Bible).

The aspiring prophet prior to his experience of objective spiritual reality would have to pass through the domains of the subjective mind with all its handicaps of unclear spiritual vision. Now remember, there is no spiritual experience without proper subjective reality. Therefore the refinement of inner spiritual vision that properly clarifies the difference between subjective perceptions from an improper source and those from a sacred holy source is paramount. Every prophet went through a mental procedure where in which his mind / soul would pass through these realms of the Klipot.

As mentioned above, we have two very specific mentions of this passage recorded for us in the Prophets, specifically in the stories of Eliyahu and Ezekiel. Let us take a moment to look at each one.

With regards to Eliyahu, we have a record of one of his prophetic experiences. It is written in 1 Kings 19:11-12, ***“He said, “Go out, and stand on the mountain before the HaShem.” Behold, HaShem passed by and a great strong wind tore the mountains, and broke in pieces the rocks before HaShem; but HaShem was not in the wind. After the wind an earthquake; but HaShem was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake a fire passed; but HaShem was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.”***

This small section conceals within it many secrets of the true prophetic experience. These details will have to be discussed later. As for now, let us simply focus on the three experiences recorded prior to Eliyahu hearing the “still small voice” of HaShem, these being the wind, the earthquake and the fire.

With regards to Ezekiel he too experienced a similar occurrence. In Ezekiel 1:4 it is written, ***“I looked, and behold, a stormy wind came out of the north, a great cloud, with flashing lightning.”***

Ezekiel experiences the same stormy wind as did Eliyahu, yet instead of an earthquake as experienced by Eliyahu; Ezekiel on the other hand experiences a great cloud. Afterwards Ezekiel experiences flashing lighting which is more or less the same thing as a fire.

These records were not haphazardly written as superfluous details. They were recorded as a warning to the students of the prophetic schools of what they can expect to experience. In essence these records of Eliyahu and Ezekiel were recorded to serve as training manuals for the aspiring students.

The record of the experience is clear enough, how to deal with the experience is not so clearly recorded. That information was considered a closely guarded secret and was not publicly revealed. These secrets can be found within the secret codes within the texts themselves, hidden within numerical values and certain holy Names codex formulas. Being that the details of this go beyond our present stage of learning suffice it for now that mention is made of their existence, further details that will be relevant to this work will be addressed at a later time.

The three experiences of the prophets Eliyahu and Ezekiel are how the TaNaKh (Bible) records the presence of the Klipot. Their presence is very real. Their danger is ever so present and real. This is why so many who delve into the unconscious and explore the untapped forces of the mind end up becoming seduced by forces of evil who possess them to use their new found powers to commit horrible acts of evil.

One must never underestimate the latent powers within the mind. One must never underestimate the powers of evil ever around us seeking to use and abuse such powers. This is why the prophetic path safely guards its secrets from falling into the hands of those so unequipped to deal with them. We have enough psychotics and perpetrators of evil who roam the world causing mayhem, bloodshed and all kinds of havoc because they believe G-d has spoken to them and told them so. We clearly see no such activity in the TaNaKh and therefore interpret such activity as the poison fruits of modern day false prophets.

Prior to our discussing any more specific techniques of prophetic / spiritual ascent, we must first address those matters which enable one to successfully make such an ascent. Without proper training and emphasis on the basics any forward movement would be unbalanced and would lead to an inevitable future fall, the results of which could be devastating to both the individual and all those around. Therefore, we must learn how to cleanse the mind enabling it to confront and overcome the Klipot in order that one may be able to fine-tune the proper spiritual frequency for advancement along to path of holiness towards true bonding with G-d.

In order to properly prepare the mind for prophetic descent into truly Divine spiritual objectivity the mind in association with the body must learn to cleanse itself from attachment to the Klipot. In order to accomplish this task we were given to mitzvot (commandments) of the Torah to perform. Aside from the practical everyday benefit the commandments of the Torah bring to human society, the many commandments of ritual nature also play a powerful psychological / spiritual role in the mind of the one observing them. The mitzvot themselves serve as archetypes, as images imprinted upon the mind, which enable the mind to sift through the Klipot and to ultimately perceive true spiritual reality.

We must now proceed to explain why and how observance of the Torah covenant is so vital for spiritual ascent. Faithfulness to the Torah covenant was the gist of every prophetic message. Let us now proceed to explain why.

Chapter 6 - The Holy Name, the Mitzvot and the Cleansing of the Mind

In understanding why G-d has commanded the Jewish people to perform specific ritual practices instead of just contemplating their philosophical and spiritual meanings, one learns a great lesson about the manner in which the human mind operates. Just as there are two general modes of perception, these being the objective and subjective, so too are there two general ways of the thinking process, one being rational and the other being abstract, (that is, from the point of view of the rational)

Rational thinking correlates to objective perception as it is experienced and interpreted equally by all. Abstract thinking however is much more nebulous and includes within it both emotional and spiritual content. The best example of the difference between these two can be the viewing of a painting. A rationalist views the painting and examines the types of paint and canvas used, whereas the abstract thinker is viewing the image on the canvas and its meanings, paying little or no attention to how it was formed.

While abstract thinking might sound individualistic, in reality, this is not always so. Indeed, in many, if not most cases, abstract thinking as highly individualized as it may seem actually follows a pattern that is held in common in the minds of most.

Abstract, subjective thinking differs from rational objective thinking in a very specific and significant way. Rational objective reality is usually communicated through the medium of sound and the spoken or written word. Abstract subjective thinking on the other hand uses pictures as its means of communication.

In essence, at some deep level of the unconscious mind, “a picture is worth a thousand words.” The picture language of the collective mind substructure is what is referred to in the language of analytical psychology as archetypes. Together these archetypes are referred to as the archetypes of the collective unconscious of all mankind. In order to understand the performance of mitzvot and the process of cleansing the mind the concept of “archetype” must be thoroughly understood.

Objective perception experiences external realities and artificially creates a common language of concept in order to communicate with others an expression of agreement. The vehicle for this is usually that of the spoken word. Regardless of language or translations, when we wish to communicate to another a concept, idea, or merely plain facts, we most often use words to describe it. Words, however are artificial constructs created by man as a description of a thing, yet those self same words may have absolutely nothing in common with the thing itself.

For example, we have a fruit that is red and crisp. We call it an apple. Yet, what does the word apple have to do with the description of the fruit itself? The word in and of itself does not add to our understanding of the fruit, nor will it describe the fruit to one unfamiliar with the word. Therefore, if one knows the fruit, the word used to describe it will make sense. If not, the word offers nothing to us to assist us in understanding its purpose. The word is an artificial construct created by us to represent the fruit that we call an apple.

Within the realms of the unconscious mind such applications of description follow an entirely different path. Human speech and language skills develop in us as we grow and mature in our objective external sensorial environment. Yet, they are not our natural and first form of communication that we were born with and use to experience the world while we are yet infants, prior to our mind separating into a conscious and unconscious. At the most primary and fundamental level of human communication, it is the picture, and not the word that is used to describe matters, experience things and to communicate.

The picture images used by the primary, fundamental mind are the archetypes referred to above. Psychological studies have shown that certain images in the mind are interpreted the same way by almost everyone. Indeed, many modern psychologists have documented the human need for symbolic

picture oriented communication and expression. This explains why we create logos, flags, and other images and rally behind their meanings. This also explains why we humans generally desire to belong to some sort of a group that is represented by such an icon or image.

This unconscious use of and need for abstract picture language is the basis of dream language and interpretation. Dreams, our Sages say, are messages from beyond the conscious mind. They compare a dream to a letter and say that a dream not interpreted is like a letter unread. Yet, as important as our dreams and their messages are, the vast majority of us, including psychologists are totally oblivious to their meanings at a conscious level. However, at the unconscious level our minds do comprehend the dream message and deal with it accordingly, many times in a way totally unperceived and unknown to the conscious mind.

When we dream we see what to our rational objective mind is a bunch of irrational and meaningless symbols and images. Yet, somehow this irrational mental experience deeply affects us and moves us in ways our conscious mind does not understand. This is because the communication at the unconscious level does not follow the same rules as that of the conscious mind. The archetypal symbols used in the unconscious speak to a deeper, more primary aspect of our mind / soul than that which our conscious mind is aware of or can even comprehend. Archetypes are the language of the angels and of prophecy.

Being that archetypal symbols play such an important part within the unconscious mind and within the spiritual world understanding their meanings should be pursued by all. However, here is where the problem lies. The unconscious mind and its ways and means of expression lie with the unconscious. This is such an obvious statement, true, but we fail to understand its significance. We cannot penetrate the unconscious with the conscious mind, this is a contradiction that cannot be. The only access to the unconscious is through oscillating consciousness that we have discussed in our previous lessons. The conscious mind cannot comprehend, nor grasp the unconscious because the unconscious as defined by the conscious is fleeting and in a state of constant flux. The Sefer Yetzirah states that it is like a bolt of lightning, here for a moment and then gone. Unless one knows how to grasp the moment, the moment is missed and gone.

In order to grasp this moment we must begin to put some pieces together. Within our unconscious mind ruled as they are by archetypal imagery, we also find that which we have been discussing the specifics of subjective reality.

Subjective reality, which adds depth and meaning to our objective perceptions also mold and shape the way our conscious minds receive and interpret the archetypes of the unconscious. Our subjective perceptions therefore while serving a vital role enabling us to reach out and experience objective reality in a deeper and truer way also at the same time clouds our perceptions and interpretations of the pictorial imagery that bubbles up from the unconscious mind.

Do not underestimate the danger of this limitation. For it is this handicap that forever keeps our minds imprisoned and separate from experiencing the true objective spiritual reality of G-d. This pitfall was the cause of false prophecy and many mighty ones have fallen into its snare. The Biblical prophetic schools developed extensive techniques of training the mind to differentiate between pure archetypal imagery and its true messages coming from sources in holiness and that which has come through what we referred to in a previous lesson as the metaphorical or archetypal storm, cloud and fire, the manifestations of the Klipot.

Without a sense of an objective marker, all unconscious archetypes remain a confusing jumble of imagery, felt deep with the unconscious, with all the connecting ramifications on personality and behavior, yet without any conscious, rational and objective meaning. An objective marker is a tool for the mind that enables the mind to focus on a spiritual objective reality. Like an anchor, the objective marker is used to hold the mind steady so that it is not tossed and turned by the archetypal storm that seems to appear whenever the aspiring prophet went into his prophetic trance.

The most basic and fundamental objective market used in the prophetic schools was simply G-d's holy Name Y-K-V-K. Whenever the prophet sought to delve into the realms of subjective perception, he knew all too well that such perceptions might be tainted and not clearly reflecting spiritual reality. The prophetic mind was trained to be well aware of the Klipot and how to overcome their snare, referred to as the storm.

Initially when the prophet wished to contemplate a thing using the Hitbonenut mode of thought, he would have music be played. The music aroused his soul with passion firing him up, enabling him to delve deep into subjective reality. Yet, wise as he was, knowing full well that not all subjective reality is to be trusted; the prophetic mind did not delve into the unconscious alone. He dived deep within by focusing his thoughts upon the Holy Name Y-K-V-K, attaching this Holy Name to the concept being contemplated.

The prophetic mind would actually perform a mental construct technique of knitting together the Holy Name Y-K-V-K with that which he seeks deeper knowledge of. The Holy Name Y-K-V-K acted as the stabilizing anchor to focus and guide his mind, whereas at the same time, the objective power of the Holy Name, connected as it is to G-d, served as a shining beacon, to blind the Klipot and at the same time allow the prophetic mind safe passage into the holy spiritual realms.

The Holy Name Y-K-V-K is still used today as the initial tool of choice for all aspiring to sincere bonding with G-d. Yet, the Name itself does not work in a vacuum. In other words, using the Name in and of itself will not generate the experience of holiness one seeks unless one's mind and body is enabled to receive it.

Knowing this all too well, our Creator placed within His Torah the entire structure of mitzvot that need to be acted out as a form of living archetypes. The mitzvot when performed properly not only create a harmonious society, but they also create a harmonious mind, one that can properly delve into the unconscious, experience subjective reality and naturally distinguish between the true and the false.

The mitzvot of the Torah, when performed properly with true devotion and intent have this awesome power of cleansing the mind enabling it for prophetic ascent. Without such a preparation all such ascent is not only dangerous, it is suicidal. The commandments of the Torah cleanse the body, the mind and the soul.

Fundamental adherence to G-d's revealed Will requires of one an act of surrender of the personal intervening will. This is the necessary first step for all who wish to approach the Divine in truth. Surrender of personal will removes the one single force of resistance that prevents spiritual bonding. When personal surrender is achieved, there then is formed a metaphor of empty space of sorts between the mind / soul and its source in the Creator. Then, like a vacuum, the properly trained and prepared aspiring mind / soul can be as if sucked into the higher realms of reality.

Mitzvot observance is the ultimate act of surrender of personal will before the Will of the Divine. By one being required to perform all kinds of rituals and to live with all types of restrictions, one learns control of one's desires. One also learns obedience, tenacity, loyalty and commitment. All these traits revolve around a single concept. They all sharpen the individual focus and cultivate discipline. Without this necessary personality of discipline and focus, even with the Holy Name Y-K-V-K as one's guide, one will still become lost upon the path. The wisdom of the old saying again rings true, "the right means in the wrong hands causes the right means, to work in the wrong way."

One must never underestimate the necessity of cleansing the mind and body prior to the prophetic ascent. One who is not properly prepared will never escape the forces of the storm, cloud and fire. We must now proceed to explore the klipot, what they are and how the mitzvot of the Torah protect us from them.

Chapter 7 - Review, the Power of Torah, & Passing Through the Storm.

Before we proceed to discuss the manner in which the human mind is trained in the prophetic schools to pass through the Klipah phase of consciousness known as the storm, let us first review a bit.

At first we learned that the point and purpose of Kabbalistic / prophetic meditation is to fulfill the Torah mitzvah (Biblical commandment) of Devekut, which is to bond with G-d. We have learned that this bonding is a “mind to Mind” bond of sorts. The mind / soul must penetrate the veils of physical limitation that block the aspiring prophet (or later day Kabbalist) from perceiving the surrounding spiritual, yet invisible universe of greater reality.

We have learned about Hitbonenut concentration and how music can assist the mind to acquire passion thus enabling it to delve deeper into subjective awareness. We have learned that the purpose of this technique and many others like it is for the sake of achieving a meditative state called Hitbodedut which is a state of mental isolation wherein which spiritual reality can be grasped by its own rules. We have learned how the mind is to shift between conscious awareness to subjective perception and back again in pendulum fashion following that which we called Sekhel Tenudah, oscillating consciousness.

We have learned that our conscious minds interact with our external physical universe, whereas our unconscious minds interact with the spiritual world through the powers of imagery and imagination. We have discussed how the imagery of the imagination is not limited to the mind of the individual, but shared by many. These images are called the archetypes of the collective unconscious. We have also learned that our inner subjective views of things as important as they are for they define our true definition and understanding of things might still nonetheless be tainted by so many numerous matters both internal and external to us.

In light of all these previous lessons, it is imperative that one now learn how to cleanse the mind of all its clutter and folly in order for the mind / soul to be able to receive a clear, fine-tuned and proper spiritual reception. Without this preparation, all meditative endeavors will end up in the Klipot and very far away from G-d the Creator.

Arousing the mind to passion focuses the mind. Yet, the focus of this focus will only be as strong as is the mind itself. For the majority of us this means instant failure because our minds have never properly developed enough discipline to be able to penetrate beneath the depths of anything, all the more so to seek our holiness. Thus we see many non-spiritual oriented individuals who become aroused by music only to find that such arousal leads to the pursuit of physical stimulation (sex, drugs & rock and roll). Without proper preparation such individuals will never be able to mature spiritually.

Even when one makes the effort to attempt meditation, all the while that one contemplates (meditates) upon a thing, with the mind focused upon that thing, if one’s inner subjective thoughts are somewhat skewed as a result of living the confusing lifestyle that we all lead, than even the most clearest of subjective thought will not bring us towards our goal of drawing closer to G-d. The bottom line is unfortunately rather simple. There is nothing we humans can do completely on our own to bridge the gap between our mind / soul (the true essence of what it means to be human) and our Creator. By ourselves we cannot return to the former glory mankind through Adam embraced prior to the debacle in Eden.

This state of affairs is by no means a mere religious or philosophical statement. One need just look at the entire course of human history to see that regardless of whatever heights human society has risen to, no matter how spiritual we have or have not become, human beings remain pretty much the same, regardless of how enlightened one’s society claims to be.

Yet, through all this pessimism there is a solution, there is a system that definitely works to break the chains of our mortal confinement. However, it must be duly noted that the keys that unlock the

shackles of our prison are not of this earth. Rather they come from extra-terrestrial origins. I am referring to the words of prophecy already received by Moses at Mt. Sinai 3300+ years ago and through the mouths of the other prophets ever since.

Whether we like to consider as such or not, those of us who accept the truth of the Torah (Bible) must admit that something not of this world made contact with us centuries ago on Sinai and gave us a manual of directions for the human mind / soul. This is why the Torah is of such paramount importance. Without the Torah there would be no communication possible with the giver of the Torah, which the Torah itself claims is the Creator.

Once a prophet successfully has made authentic contact with the Divine source, he becomes a conduit for channeling that source here on earth. Mind you, prophetic words are no mere words similar to those spoken by us. Each word of prophecy whether it was spoken by Moses or Malakhi originated from a place removed from our planet Earth. Each word of prophecy is a code far deeper than its plain and simple meaning. Thus when a prophet spoke his words were meticulously recorded, down to the correct spelling of every letter of every word. In Biblical days, the schools of prophets would then analyze the message to retrieve the hidden codes within it and use them for further prophetic ascents.

When prophecy was withdrawn from mankind soon after the rebuilding of the Second Temple, new messages and revelations ceased coming. Communications at that level of clarity and perception were broken off. In a way we abandoned, but not completely. We still had access to the keys that opened the doors that had been previously accessed, but no new doors were to be opened.

Although this might sound negative in and of itself it most certainly is not. The former doors are numerous and contain behind them the wealth of what our mind / souls needs in order to heal ourselves and restore our communications with our Creator. Therefore the most important of all Kabbalistic / meditative texts is none other than the Torah and the rest of the Bible, specifically the words of the prophets.

In order for us to properly proceed in our devekut studies at this point, we must proceed to explore the keys concealed within the words of the prophets that unlock the untapped powers of the mind / soul and enable it to connect with G-d the Creator and not with other forces of a malevolent nature.

The spiritual keys concealed within the Torah and prophecy have the power to repel the Klipot and to focus the mind on holiness because their origins are from the ultimate source of the human mind / soul essence, which is G-d. Being that the prophetic codes come from the source, they therefore act upon the source deep within the center of the human unconscious. From this center point of our unknowable essence the effect then rises through the levels of the mind / soul until they permeate our conscious minds and our external environments.

The entire Torah is considered one complete prophecy and therefore any and all of its words are considered to be a great whole Name of G-d. Indeed, the codes within the words of prophecies have always been referred to as Holy Names. They are not names per se as are our names. They are however the vessels through which the Divine becomes manifest. Therefore, as a vehicle of verbal expressions they are called Names because a name is a title used to describe a thing, so the prophetic expression is used to understand and thus describe G-d.

The entire Torah and words of prophecy are these types of Names. As one can clearly see the topics covered in the thousands of Biblical verses are numerous. Thus the question arises out of all the thousands of pasukim (verses) which ones should be used in the prophetic path? Is there any order? And what exactly is the manner in which they are to be used? What exactly are we supposed to be doing? These questions now take us to our present topic which is how to overcome the Klipot of the mind focus on true hitbodedut mental isolation and to focus on true and holy spiritual reality.

Our physical objective oriented minds are always such a busy place. Our attention flutters from one subject to another every few seconds. We never focus on any one thing for any serious length of time. We all know this to be true. And at the same time, we also know numerous ways of mental discipline and meditative techniques that can be used to help the mind focus. In light of this, we must ask, what is the prophetically described “storm” of the mind and how does one pass through it?

Indeed, many spiritual paths have encountered the storm of the mind and there are even those who have been able to pass through it. Such passage is not limited to the masters of the prophetic tradition. Unfortunately many of those outside the prophetic tradition who have accomplished moving beyond the storm penetrate only to the next level of Klipah known as the great cloud. In this state everything is uniformly cloudy. Many have made the mistake of identifying this cloud as the true state of mental “nothingness” sought after in the meditative state. Many have live their whole lives meditating upon the cloud, and never realize just how stuck they truly are. Yet, before we focus on the cloud, let us return to the storm and let how to navigate it in such a way that will also help us navigate the cloud.

The storm of the mind is actually a natural, biological response to the withdrawal of sensorial input from the brain at the outset of the pursuit of subjective perception. As a biological unit, our brains are “hotwired” to act in such a way to keep us focused on our external environments. Therefore, when our focus begins to drift away from this, our minds explode in a frenzy of activity to return us to the outside world. Even when we sleep our brains filter the incoming subjective messages and place them within the objective forms of our waking lives. This again is why dream language is so hard to decipher because it contains so many conflicting elements within it. Our Sages have long ago said that within even the most prophetic of dreams there is always a speck of falsehood therein.

The only way to properly ride out the storm of the mind is by a power recognized from within the brain and mind / soul themselves. The words of the Creator revealed through prophecy are also somehow hotwired into our systems and therefore can be used as the keys to open the system and thus enable our minds focused passage through the storm. Let me proceed by explaining the technique and then how it works.

Chapter 8 - Using Psalms and Prayers

The most simple and direct technique of using words of prophecy for meditation is something known by many. Simply all one has to do is read the TaNaKh and allow its words to arouse comfort within one's soul. Countless numbers have experienced the calming and therapeutic affects of simply reading one of the most beloved Biblical books, the Book of Tehilim (Psalms).

The first step to calming the storm of the mind is simple. One must be thrown a rope from the other side of consciousness and then let the Power of that other side guide you through the storming mind. The Power on the other side of consciousness of which I speak is the spiritual forces who serve HaShem as His agents. These are the words of the Torah (TaNaKh, Bible) themselves, that often are personified to us in the form of Malakhim, the angels. This technique of using words of Torah to focus the mind / soul is tried and true, although the malevolent forces of the evil side also throw their rope out to those trying to reach them.

When the mind enters into the state of the storm and thoughts and impression bombard the conscious trying to force it to return to awareness, the words of prophecy (in our example Tehilim) help calm the mind, comfort it and focus it. The soothing affect of the recitation of the words and verses give the mind something to focus upon mentally and to feel emotionally. In this way one is holding tight to a metaphorical rope as one is pushed around within one's mind by the gushing forces of the hale winds of conflicting thoughts.

Reciting the words enables the mind to focus and to withstand, but they do even more than this, they begin to carve a path, one that the mind can use to penetrate into the depths of the unconscious mind.

In order to understand this concept, I must quote a saying from the holy Zohar, the most important and authoritative text of the later Kabbalists. The Zohar (Ekev 73a) states that HaShem, His Torah and Israel and all one. This statement means that there is an integral connection between HaShem and His Torah and that this connection extends towards the mind / soul of collective Israel.

Understand that from a spiritual point of view that which emanates from a source always remains connected to that source, regardless of its distance in time and space. Whenever there has been a bond, the spiritual residue of that bond maintains attachments between the bonded things long after the initial point of bonding in time and space. These spiritual facts are even true here in our physical world in such a wide variety of relationships that it would require another book just to briefly mention them all. Let us take this spiritual law and apply it to our context.

As the Zohar quoted above states, the original Biblical Hebrew words of prophecy or those spoken in Ruah HaKodesh emanate from the specific Divine source of holiness. As such, regardless of how far they travel from their source, they are nonetheless connected to that source. Therefore, even if these holy words were spoken by G-d to a prophet thousands of years ago, in a place thousands of miles away, the distances in time and space have no effect upon the never-ending Divine power concealed within the words themselves. The holy words, therefore, are as pregnant with spiritual power as they were at the first moment when they emanated from the mouth of the prophet.

When we recite the holy words of Torah, the prophets or the Ketuvim (other scriptures) our recitation of the same words spoken or written by the prophet connects us with the mind / soul of that prophet, as he now abides in his spiritual abode which by not being part of our physical universe makes him much "closer" to our blessed Creator.

When we here in this world recite the words of the prophet or of the Sage, we are in essence bonding with the prophet or Sage himself in his present spiritual form in another dimension. According to the above rule, the words spoken by the prophet or Sage are still connected to him, their source, and the words also connect the prophet or Sage to HaShem who was their Original Source. Thus through the

words of the prophet or Sage recorded for us in the Torah (Bible) and even in the Talmud or Zohar, we connect spiritually to their authors and through the authors we connect to the Ultimate Author, the Holy One, blessed be He. This is how the student prophets of yesterday and the Kabbalists of today manage to maintain open lines of spiritual communication.

Getting through the entanglement of our confused minds is no easy task and is actually impossible without intervention from the spiritual force that resides outside of consciousness and our physical plane. Yet, merely reciting once or twice certain words from the Torah will not have the overwhelming affect of comprehensively cleansing the mind of years of garbage buildup. There is a great rule of Torah, "k'bolo Kakh Polto." As something is absorbed, so is it released. In other words, as our minds have become ever so much contaminated and confused over many years void of spiritual content, therefore correspondingly it will take much time and effort in order to clean up our internal mental messes.

There are a number of steps to be taken to clean up our internal mental messes. Some of these steps are small and relatively easy; others are more difficult and require much effort if not outright sacrifice on part of the practitioner.

Working at cleansing the mind begins with simple and easy steps. Our prophets and Sages were masters of the meditative path and thus over the centuries molded the observance of Torah Law, ritual and prayer to properly reflect certain spiritual values that enable all who practice them to take initial steps into spiritual awareness.

As we have mentioned in previous lessons, the commandments of the Torah (the mitzvot) are specifically meant to be actions performed by us and not just concepts to be contemplated. The reason for this is that by physically acting out a spiritual concept (which is what the Biblical commandments really are), we in essence manifesting that spiritual concept in physical form here on our physical earth.

The ritual acts of Torah observance serve as the vessels, and the vehicles for the spiritual components within them to manifest within the relative dimensions of time and space. Once manifest in our physical world by our performance of the mitzvot, the spiritual concepts contained within them, having their source in the Divine have now succeeded to travel from their Ultimate Source to their ultimate goal, which is being manifest here on earth at the hand of human beings. This in essence creates the metaphorical rope that now can connect the most mundane physical to the most sublime spiritual. Our spiritual connection thus lies before us.

One of the most profound mitzvot that was ordained by HaShem but formulated by the later prophets and Sages was the order of our daily prayers. Within traditional daily prayers there is concealed an entire order of spiritual service to the Divine that is patterned upon and spiritually reflects the ritual offering of sacrifices in the Holy Temple of ancient Jerusalem. In essence all those who recite their daily morning prayers are performing spiritually the same type of service with the same spiritual influence as did the ancient priests who stood before the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy Temple.

Remember the first principle of the Law of Connection (Hok HaKasher): what was once connected always stays connected (HaKashur Pa'am, Kashur Tamid). Therefore, when one today recites the Torah sections of the Biblical sacrifices and incense offerings one is in essence vibrating the spiritual component within these words and thereby causing the opening up of a channel to their invisible source in the higher planes. Regardless of one's level of devotion or intent, the mere recitation of the words of Torah begins a process that can possibly reverberate deeply in one's mind / soul. This rule hold true for all Torah observance.

In the Talmudic book of wisdom entitled Pirkei Avot, one of the great Sages Rebbe Meir is quoted as saying that one should observe the mitzvot of the Torah even without sincere devotion, for by doing so

sincere devotion will be cultivated. This must be understood within the context of the Law of Connection.

In our present physically oriented state of mind, spiritual components play a very small and insignificant role. Our Sages were very well aware of this state and knew that G-d would not intervene personally anymore than He already had to rectify this situation. HaShem has already given us the Torah, the words of the prophets and the council of the Sages. What more do we want? What more do we need?

The entire prophetic path is open before us, all of us, if only we make the efforts to walk down it. Realizing our lack of spiritual vision, guided by Divine direction, our Sages were directed to make our spiritual path easy to access. Our Sages therefore followed in the footsteps of the prophets before them and concealed within their words clues and codes how to walk the spiritual path. This is why our Sages are called the Benei N'vi'im (sons of the prophets). Although they are not prophets, they are their faithful students, and as such merited to be titled "sons."

As I mentioned at the beginning of this lesson, one of the greatest meditative tools ordained by our Sages was the recitation of Psalms. Every prayer service recited daily is replete with the recitation of different Psalms. The Psalms recited in daily prayer serve to maintain a spiritual connection in the mind / soul of the even the most spiritually depleted individual according to the principle outlined above.

For those who wish to delve beyond the beginning phases, our Sages have encouraged individuals to take up the Book of Psalms (Tehilim) and to read from them continuously. Indeed, the constant reading of Psalms can actually induce a trance like state for the reader. While in this trance state induced as it was by the Psalms, the mind / soul of the reader can travel into the inner space of the recesses of the unconscious and spiritual world, with the reverberations of the Psalms serving as one spiritual guide.

In actuality what this means is that when one directs one's mind in the direction of holiness, then the autonomous power of the Holy kicks in, takes control and begins to show the mind / soul lessons about spiritual truths that the individual upon recovering full consciousness can absorb and integrate into one's daily living. This is the way that spiritual concepts and forces become manifest here on earth. They become manifest through us. We become their vessels, all the while that we open ourselves up to do so.

This technique of Psalm recitation was actually used by the later Biblical prophets with some Psalms dating back to Moses. The words have their source in the Highest Holiness. Their mere recitation opens up great channels of spiritual influence to those who wish to embrace them and recite them over and above the required portions of daily prayer. With all this concealed potential, there are even more refined and greater ways to unleash their untapped spiritual power. That will serve as our next lesson.

Chapter 9 - Reshei Tevot and Cleansing the Mind

“Separate from evil and do good” the Psalm says. With all our efforts to use the Torah and its verses as a tool to navigate the unconscious mind, we must never forget why it is we are doing what we are doing.

The reason why the mind conscious and unconscious needs to be navigated by an external and objective force of kedusha (holiness), which are the words of Torah is because our minds are terribly filled with contaminated material that we have accumulated over a lifetime of harmful sensorial experiences.

In order for any meditative technique of holiness to be completely successful we must follow the advice and direction of the ancient prophetic masters. Their words are simple and summed up in the words of the Psalm quoted above. “Separate from evil and [only then will you be able to] do good.” Unless one takes the initial proper steps to help protect the mind from further contaminations all meditative procedures of holiness will be building upon shaky ground and will inevitably fall.

The human mind has been designed similar to a sponge. We are always in the process of absorbing from our environments whatever it is that we are exposed to, or better to say, what we allow ourselves to be exposed to. The greater part of the problems of human mental contamination is due to the fact that we open ourselves up to such contaminations, often warmly inviting them in and embracing them while we remain totally oblivious to the negative and harmful affects these experiences can cause for us either immediately or in years to come.

Whenever we expose our minds to certain types of television programs, movies, advertisements in signs, even songs we might hear on radio or in a recording, these make impressions that stay etched in our unconscious minds literally for the rest of our lives. This is no great secret.

Hypnosis has often been used to release long buried detailed memories of something that someone only barely remembers on the surface. How often has an adult been plagued with a nightmare in which one is being threatened or chased by a monster that one remembers from a childhood movie or cartoon.

The imagery is real. Its affects upon our unconscious are real. This is the force of the Klipot in active and actual operation. As long as we allow ourselves to be so-called entertained by these types of images, these self same images can serve as vehicles of contamination that cloud the mind and add to the terrible storms of inner instability.

The only solution is for one to “separate from evil.” Although not all television, movies and the like are bad, yet those that portray specific acts of graphic violence, immorality and other types of forbidden and horrendous behavior should be avoided like the plague. One must learn to guard one’s mind.

As is known, our Sages have long taught that the study of Torah is considered one of the most important mitzvot of them all. This is not just because we have a healthy respect for knowledge, but rather because the learning process in and of itself provides a tremendous strengthening of the mental analytical faculty, regardless of how much information is mentally stored or deeply comprehended.

One with a clear and sharp mind who knows how to question and investigate often has developed mental tools to be able to analyze fearful images and to see through them as being mere symbols and not the actual things they represent themselves to be. The dreams of the well-learned are sometimes much more quiet and calm than others who cannot control and understand dream language. Of course, this truly all depends upon the relationship of one’s head to one’s heart. This will be discussed in detail in its appropriate place.

The strengthening of the mind, however much it is sought will not be accomplished until one first removes that which weakens the mind. The logic of this is obvious. The practice of this however tends to be more difficult.

The storm cloud of the mind contains all the imagery both good and bad of everything that we have ever experienced in our lives. Often the images converge and instead of clear and coherent memories being brought to consciousness, we instead have a convergence of images, bits and pieces of different memories, merged now into one big giant image so confusing that it completely unsettles the conscious mind and disables it from penetrating further into the unconscious. Mind you, not all images in the storm cloud of the mind are negative.

All too often the images churning in the storm cloud of the mind are positive in nature, often about sexual encounters. As pleasant as these memories be, they still serve the same purpose to swerve the focus of attention away from the plunge into the unconscious. One must realize that the forces of the Klipot know well the old saying that “one can attract more bees with honey than with vinegar.”

As a rule, the forces of the Klipot attempt to distract the mind with enjoyable fantasies as the chosen method of distraction. Whatever it is a person desires and craves, it is images of these things that will cloud the mind and redirect one’s focus. If successful, the forces of the Klipot will navigate one into a mind set focused exclusively upon the attainment of physical pleasures. This distraction / temptation is most seductive and addictive. It causes more people to fail at true spiritual accomplishments than by trying to scare people away with fears.

As overwhelming as the obstacles before the aspirant truly are, we must never forget that such obstacles and the art of overcoming them are all part of the prophetic growth experience. Understand well that the forces of the Klipot do not act as independent agents of evil. There are no two forces in the universe dueling for rights to your soul. Such ideas and concepts are foolish fantasies.

As the Torah has so emphatically stated G-d is One and His Name is One. There is no duality in nature. There is only an ultimate singularity.

Understand from this then that the forces of the Klipot are only functioning as they were programmed to do. In essence, the forces of opposition in spiritual pursuits operate mechanically. They do what they are supposed to do. They have no mind or will of their own. They have no inherent interests in our success or our failure. Like a computer program they have been told what to do and they do so mindlessly.

This is the absolute truth that one must always bare in mind when facing spiritual opposition. The forces of the Klipot are as strong as one allows oneself to believe. Therefore it is imperative that one control one’s mind and control what one allows into one’s mind.

Often, when the mind is unusually weak, as is the case with so many in our present generation who have been poisoned by the popular media, the mere recitation of pasukim (verses) from the TaNaKh to cleanse the mind is not sufficient. There is another form of scripture recitation that serves to thwart the forming of concrete imagery in the mind. This abstract form of reciting Torah pasukim is like a “Torah concentrate.” It is smaller in size, yet contains all the more power within it. The technique I speak of now is called Reshei Tevot, which are the first letters of the words of a pasuk.

The essence of a pasuk can be grasped by the mind without the essential elements of its rational understanding. In other words there is power in the sound and number of the Hebrew letters in specific combinations over and above their meanings in specific words. This is just one of the many other ways that the mind / soul can use to reconnect with lost kedusha (holiness).

When we chant the Reshei Tevot of a pasuk with its proper vowels we are circumventing the standard rational imagery function of the mind from both its objective and subjective sides. The Reshei Tevot act as an abstract but this only applies when they are used in a proper way that enables their affect to overcome the imagery functions of the consciousness.

The best way to explain this method and process is to describe it in practice. For this I will now provide for you one of these special Reshei Tevot names. They are called names because all of the Torah (and TaNaKh) is one great Name of HaShem. Being that these Reshei Tevot are not specific Names, no extra kedusha is ascribed to them that would prevent us from using them freely. Therefore, it is permissible to chant them aloud, to recite them and to teach them in the same manner as any other section of Torah or TaNaKh would be similarly used. While there are exceptions to this rule with certain recognized Names, we will not be dealing with those specifics and thus the special laws of kedusha applying to them are not here applicable.

One of the greatest needs facing us today is to cultivate our inner spiritual ability of being able to perceive spiritual reality. To be able to sift through the multitude of conflict within our consciousness and to ascertain what it is HaShem wants from us at any given time in any given circumstance is of paramount importance. Therefore, let us begin with a special Name that when used correctly according to the procedures that I will now outline should enable to sincere mind / soul to begin to experience the inner spark of Divine light and direction.

Let us begin with a very special pasuk geared specifically for the purpose we have presently in mind. Remember, for every purpose there is a different pasuk and thus a different name. There is no such thing as a generic or general application of this technique. In order for it to work it must be focused precisely in the pre-set direction one has chosen.

Proverbs 19:21 states, "Many are the thoughts in a person's heart, but it is the council of HaShem that shall arise." In Hebrew the pasuk states Rabot Mahshavot B'lev Ish V'etzat HaShem He Takum. The Reshei Tevot of this pasuk are Resh, Mem, Bet, Alef, Vav (which needs to be pronounced correctly as a W), Yod, Hey, Tav.

Together with the vowels of the pasuk underneath each of these letters we have formed our special Name. It is pronounced **RaMa-B'IhWa-Yo-Hih-Tah**. The procedure to use for this name is summed up in the following steps.

1. The following procedure is to be performed twice daily, upon awakening in the morning, and before going to bed at night, each time for twenty minutes.
2. One can either lie down or sit up. Posture is of no concern, because focus must be centered exclusively on mental aspects.
3. One's eyes must remain closed for the entire session.
4. All feelings in the body must be ignored. Do not move for any non life threatening reason. Do not scratch, do not move around. Absolute stillness must be maintained for the entire twenty minute period.
5. Breathing style also is not important at this stage, just breathe comfortably.
6. Try to be in an environment where you will not be disturbed. Do not play music. Silence must be cultivated.
7. The name should be used as a whispered chant. What you recite must not be too loud, only just audible enough for you to hear your own voice.

8. You are to repeat its sound over and over again in your mind for the entire twenty minute period, without stopping.

If you fall asleep during the process do not be concerned. Your mind is not yet strong enough to focus on a single abstract thought for any length of time. In order to assist your mind to adjust, absolute silence and stillness is required. Although your mind will scream out for sensorial gratification, you must take the first steps of control and deny your bodily desires which interfere with the training of your mind.

“Many are the thoughts in a person’s heart, but it is the council of HaShem that shall arise.” Keep this pasuk in mind when chanting. The purpose of this chant meditative technique is to open up one’s heart to be able to recognize the “inner voice of G-d” and to distinguish it from our own ideas, feelings and desires.

Warning! This procedure should only be performed by the very sincere seeker after G-d’s wisdom and direction. This procedure must be followed regularly, twice a day, correctly according to all the above instructions. Results will be forth coming depending upon one’s discipline and commitment to G-d, observance of His mitzvot and to the rigorous performance of this exercise.

Begin this practice and become steady in its observance before you proceed into further sections of this work. What follows will be built upon this lesson; therefore mastery of the present material is required before one will be able to successfully proceed.

This concludes Part One of Sefer Devekut

For more related materials, please acquire the book,
Walking In The Fire
available on www.koshertorah.com