

# The Nature of Exile

## Part 3, Understanding the Kabbalah of Personalities

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In Kabbalistic literature, written hundreds of years before modern psychological literature, personality types were described in terms of the four Kabbalistic worlds. These worlds are not actual locations or places, but rather dimensions of perception. Each is said to be the domain of entities who exist within the reality of their given dimension.

The four world are Asiyah, the dimension of the physical, Yetzirah, the dimension of emotion, Beriah, the dimension of intellect and Atzilut, the dimension of the spiritual (psychic). Each of these are domains of orientation. Human souls emanate from each of these domains and by examining one's personality and orientation to life it can be ascertained generally from which "world" one's soul emanates.

A thorough review of personality from a Kabbalistic point of view would require a work far greater in size than these essays, so I will have to be brief explaining only the general principles and leaving out many of the details. The general principles are sound and all details can fit into them nicely.

### **ASIYAH TYPES**

Personalities that are defined mostly by their attraction to the simple and mundane regiments of life are categorized as Asiatic souls (physically oriented). This type of soul/personality type is the largest group of human souls and comprises most of humanity. Asiatic souls are not deep thinkers, nor are they deep feelers. An Asiatic soul is very body conscious and pays copious attention to appearances. This overemphasis on externals and superficiality are only a reflection of the lack of conscious depth within such individual souls. The depths are there, as in everyone else, but they are unconscious, "nistar" (concealed) as the Kabbalah would say, and in need of gradual revelation.

Asiatic types like things simple, direct and straightforward. They like to be told what to believe and rarely think for themselves. Asiatic souls carry out what they have been told because they believe fully that what they have been told is correct. Asiatic souls are good followers but they make lousy leaders. They make great foot soldiers, but they are not officer material.



Although they have feelings, they are never really expressed. Many times the Asiyatic soul is not even aware of the depths of its own feelings. Bottom line, Asiyatic souls are simple everyday folk, with emphasis on the word "simple." As such the majority of people today (amongst the nations and amongst the Jews) are Asiyatic.

Our sages called Asiyatic souls "Am HaAretz" (the people of the land). The Aretz (Land) spoken of corresponds to the Earth, the Sefirat Malkhut and the world of Asiyah. Although today the term Am HaAretz may be used to insult people, insinuating that they have no learning or culture, our Sages are emphatic that such a usage is offensive and wrong. It is most likely that those using this term in its derogatory form are themselves exactly like what they are accusing others of being.

According to the Kabbalah of the Ari'zal (Sha'ar Ruah HaKodesh), one who visualizes the Holy Name Y-K-V-K with black letters, like seen in a Torah or prayerbook, is an Asiyatic soul.

### **YETZIRAH TYPES**

One whose personality is driven mostly by emotions and feelings may be called a Yetziratic soul. Yetziratic souls/personality types see all life through the lens of their personal feelings. They are the kind who usually never say "I think" but rather "I feel." These are the types who only follow their hearts (emotions) regardless of the apparent consequences.

Yetziratic types are drawn to any expression that enables them to feel things deeply. Therefore, they are very much attracted to music and only accept learning that feels right and gives them a "high." Yetziratic souls embrace the physical through the domain of the emotional. The Sefirot of Yetzirah are six (unlike any of the other worlds); therefore the Yetziratic soul/personality is the most complicated. Yet, it is these same emotions, when properly balanced and aligned that give one the lift to expand consciousness to experience higher worlds. On the dark side, Yetziratic souls are the type most inclined to abuse drugs, alcohol and other stimulants; anything to get "into the mood" or to "feel good."

Yetziratic souls/personality types are the ones most drawn to any expression of emotional religion and superstition. Like their Asiyatic counterparts, they are not deep thinkers, but when emotionally inspired will embrace much so as to follow their feelings. Many religious zealots and over-achievers (makhmirim) are Yetziratic souls/personality types whose feelings drive them to embrace more and more religious practices because they make them feel something, either to feel more religious or to feel closer to G-d. Whatever the results, feelings are at the core. As such their religious stringency are expressions of their own emotional drives rather than sincere expressions of faith.

Many Yetziratic souls/personality types have been mocked throughout the ages, called to task for their emotional embrace of extreme religion and have been called Hasidim (pious), but not as a term of respect, but rather as a term of derision. Many of the original followers of the Ba'al Shem Tov were such Yetziratic souls/personality types and were called Hasidim in this derogatory light. Needless to say, the name stuck, although its meaning has been lost.

According to the Kabbalah of the Ari'zal (Sha'ar Ruah HaKodesh), one who visualizes the Holy Name Y-K-V-K with red (or green) letters is a Yetziratic soul.

### **BERIAH TYPES**

One whose personality is driven by intellect and the need for rational coherence may be called a Beriatric soul. Beriatric souls/personality types are the academics and the

philosophers. They love to think, contemplate, hypothesize and generally live life in the detached realities of their minds. They become so theoretical, that they easily become detached from the practical and the realistic.

Beriatric souls approach life as a intellectual puzzle or like a philosophical dilemma. This type looks at life and sees what it believes should be instead of actually what is. In Beriatric eyes, every view and course of action can be justified and rationalized within their minds. They can twist and turn any argument. In their minds they can turn day into night and night into day. Not for naught was the Beriatric level called in Torah the Tree of Knowledge Good and Evil. For Beriatric souls/personality types are responsible for the greatest achievements and the most horrible horrors ever accomplished by humanity. The mind devoid of attachment is a dangerous thing.

Beriatric souls/personality types are the deep thinkers and they can and do discover great things. Yet, Beriah embraces in thought only that which it can comprehend and adamantly denies the existence of anything outside its limited scope of perception. As such Beriatric souls/personality types consider it their obligation and purpose to guide, direct and teach Asiyatic souls, whereas at the same time they look with disdain at Yetziratic souls because of their emotional orientation and lack of intellectual attachment.

Beriah is detached intellect existing in its own “bubble” of reality, devoid of realism, and defines reality as what is thought should be as opposed to what is. Beriatric minds are often politicians and professors that have agendas to change the course of humanity. Because if a thing make sense in the Beriatric mind then those who do not see things their way are obviously wrong and inferior. Beriatric souls/personality types are often very over-baring, arrogant and conceited. They consider themselves superior to others due to their profound intellect. Often their conceitedness runs away with all logic and their agendas end up hurting countless others.

Beriatric types go to all lengths to rationalize and justify why it is they who are always right. In their eyes all existence is seen through the limited scope of logic. They can make themselves see whatever it is they wish as logical and making sense. In this arrogance lies their blindness and their weakness.

According to the Kabbalah of the Ari'zal (Sha'ar Ruah HaKodesh), one who visualizes the Holy Name Y-K-V-K with white letters, like seen in a Torah or prayerbook, is a Beriatric soul.

### **ATZILUT TYPE**

The final and highest type soul/personality type according to Kabbalistic definition is the Atzilutic soul. This can be categorized as one who is “spiritual.” Yet, this term “spiritual” is so nebulous and vague that is really does not have any real descriptive meaning, therefore, I wish to define it here in a very precise way. When I use the term “spiritual” I define it in the way traditionally used to by our Sages to describe Atzilutic traits. In modern terminology we can describe Atzilutic traits as being prophetic, psychic, intuitive, extra-sensory, clairvoyant or even supernatural.

The Atzilutic personality is characterized by a dominant introversion. The Atzilutic type recognizes intuitively that there is more to consciousness than meets the eye; therefore, this type is drawn to mental training systems, such as meditation, in the attempt to expand consciousness to perceive and comprehend beyond the limitations of sensory reality.



The properly trained Atzilutic soul can delve into the unconscious and tap into deep reserves of mental powers most often unknown to the conscious mind. By nature of its natural pursuits the Atzilutic personality comes into contact with domains of reality totally unknown and unknowable to the other personality types. As such Atzilutic reality is often considered “crazy” by the other personality types. We see from Biblical example that this was the case with the Biblical prophets. They were called in Hebrew “meshuga'im” (crazy) by those others who did not and could not understand them.

Atzilutic souls/personality types live to discover the higher realms of consciousness. As such their attachment to the attractions of this world is minimal. Atzilutic types take care of their Asiyatic physical needs, but only as needed. They tend not to care for emotional issues preferring to rise above them. This is the state of “hishtavut” spoken of in prophetic Kabbalistic and Hasidic literature.

Not all Atzilutic souls/personality types seek to walk the path of holiness. As the Kabbalah reveals there is even a “klipah-side” to Atzilut. There are those psychic souls who seek and then use the greater mental powers that Atzilutic consciousness brings for their own nefarious purposes. A Biblical example of this was Bilaam, who our Sages taught was as great a prophet on the “klipah-side” as Moses was on the “light-side.” Other similar examples have existed throughout history until today.

Not every psychic, occultist, wizard or witch is a phoney and a sham. The Torah would not have made being a phoney a capital crime. The fact that practitioners of such arts are considered so dangerous that their arts are forbidden at punishment of death should convince us that there is something real here; something real to be feared.

According to the Kabbalah of the Ari'zal (Sha'ar Ruah HaKodesh), one who visualizes the Holy Name Y-K-V-K with fiery white letters is an Atzilutic soul.

Like Beriatic souls, the Atzilutic souls have keen minds and can be well versed academically. Still, unlike Beriatic souls, the Atzilutic soul/personality types recognizes the limitation of intellect devoid of intuition (Binah without Hokhma). As a rule, Beriatic souls cannot understand or tolerate Atzilutic souls. This is the typical Pshat vs. Sod conflict.

One will notice that Ba'alei Sod (students of Kabbalah) never have a problem with learning and understanding Pshat; whereas on the other hand, Ba'alei Pshat (those who do not study Kabbalah) almost always have a problem with learning and understanding Sod. Correctly did the great Rabbi Eliyahu, the Gaon of Vilna state that the one who does not know Sod will never properly understand Pshat (Sefer Even Shelema, 8:21).

Yetziratic souls/personality types feel a sense of association and identification to the Atzilutic personality type and often confuse themselves as being such. The Yetziratic do not reject the Atzilutic but instead, try to imitate them, which unfortunately cannot be done. The Gemara refers to this when it said, “many have tried to be like Rabbi Shimon Bar Yohai but have failed.”

Asiyatic types look upon Atzilutic types with a sense of superstition. On one hand they view Atzilutic types with awe and then with scorn. After all everything the Asiyatic type holds dear, the Atzilutic type considers to be a complete waste. Atzilutic souls look to experience consciousness beyond the limitations of physicality; as such they come into contact with parallel dimensional realities. Being that these experiences are unattainable to all the other

personality types, the Atzilutic personality is often considered to be dealing with non-existing fantasies. Try as they may Atzilutic souls/personality types have a hard time making themselves understood by others who are different. Regarding the others, the Atzilutic soul/personality types quotes the verse (Psalm 92:7), "A boorish man does not know; neither does a fool understand this."

Now, human personalities/souls can never be easily and definitively defined or categorized. Every soul/personality is actually a composite of all four types. It is just that in every case, one domain (world) is always dominant over the others. Sometimes, even with one domain dominant the others can be active and functional. However, more often than not, when one domain dominates it is usually at the expense of suppressing the others. Thus we begin to see extremism in personalities (soul types) and that same psychological imbalance in favor of one domain at the expense of the others expresses itself in the social and political domains. This then becomes the psychological motivation underlying hatred, fear and prejudice that leads to all kinds of social injustices. The major cause of exile and all other types of human hardships revolve around our own inability to understand ourselves and others.

In the next essay, entitled, HOW TO ACHIEVE PERSONAL AND NATIONAL REDEMPTION, we will address what we can do practically to better ourselves and our lots to help make our final redemption finally a reality.