

Shavuot 5770

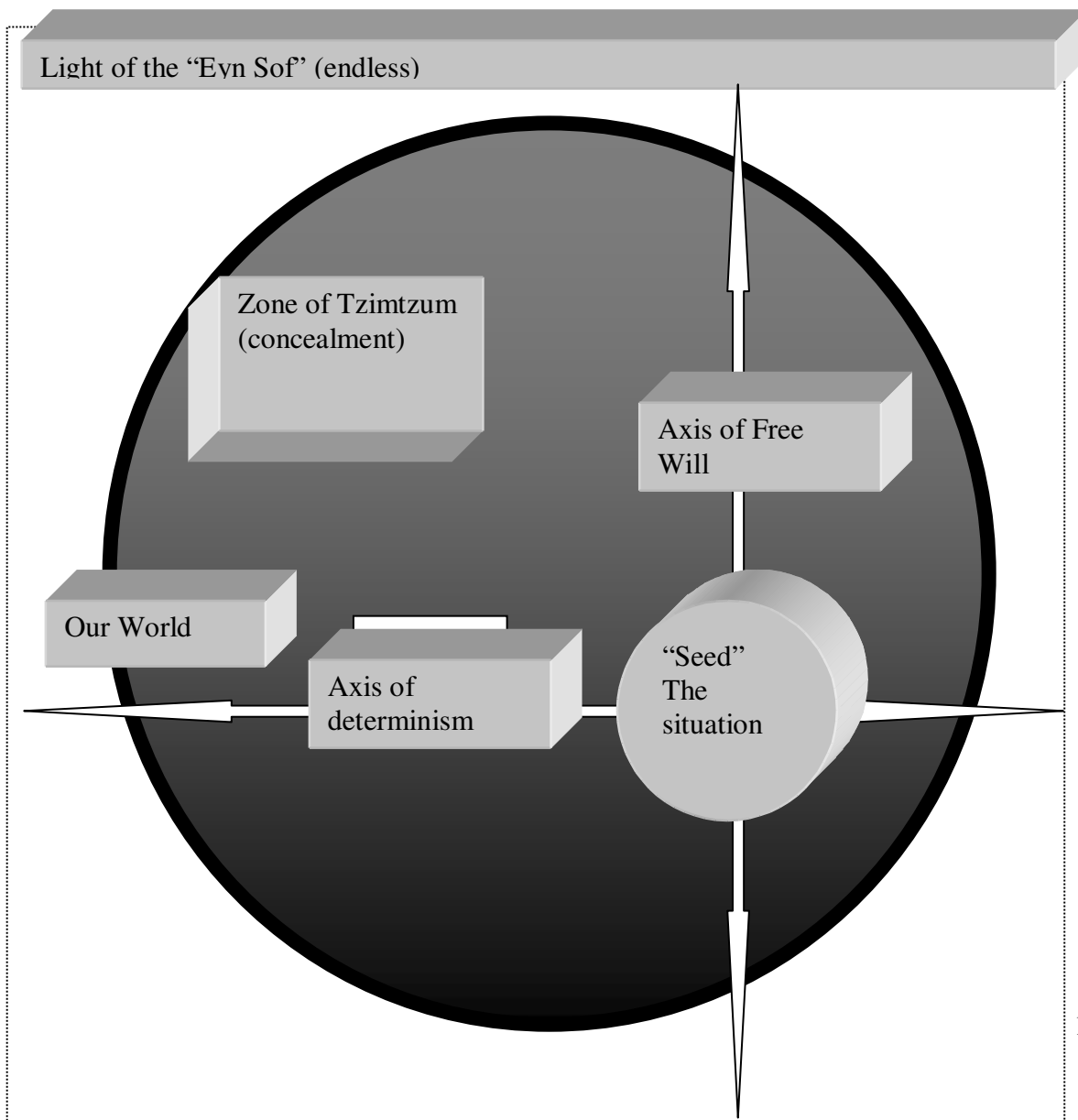
Chabad –Lubavitch of Riverdale

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Wed. 12:00 AM



From Hayom Yom¹ 28 Cheshvan: **The** concept of Divine Providence is this: Not only are all particular movements of the various creatures directed by Providence, and not only is that Providence itself the life-force and maintained existence of every creature - but even more, the particular movement of any creature is in general terms related to the grand design of Creation... The aggregate of all individual acts brings to completion G-d's grand design in the mystery of all Creation.

Ponder this: If the swaying of a blade of grass is brought about by Divine Providence and is crucial to the fulfillment of the purpose of Creation, how much more so with regard to mankind in general, and Israel (the people close to him)¹ in particular!

Hayom Yom Sivan 29: An Individual's avoda according to Chassidus: To accustom himself to perceive individual Divine Providence (*hashgacha p'ratit*), how G-d, in His goodness, renews the universe and all creatures every moment with His particular Divine Providence, which constitutes - to the exclusion of all else - the reality, life-force and sustained existence¹ of all creatures

Iggeret Hakodesh Epistle 25²

והוא בהקדים מאמר רז"ל: כל הכועס, כאילו עובד עבודת כוכבים ומזלות

And this [will be understood] by first considering the teaching of our Sages, of blessed memory: ז "Whoever is in a rage resembles an idolater."

והטעם מובן לידועי בינה

The reason [for this] is clear to those who⁸ "know un-derstanding,"

לפי שבעת כעסו, נסתלקה ממנו האמונה

because at the time of his anger, faith in G-d and in His individual Divine Providence has left him.

כי אילו היה מאמין שמאת ה' היתה זאת לו, לא היה בכעס כלל

For were he to believe that what happened to him was G-d's doing, he would not be angry at all.

ואף שכן אדם, שהוא בעל בחירה, מקללו או מכהו או מזיק ממונו

True, it is a person possessed of free choice that is cursing him, or striking him, or causing damage to his property,

¹ Compiled by Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, from the words of Rabbi Yoseh Yitzchak Schneerson of Lubavitch (1943)

² Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi (circa 1810)

and [therefore] guilty according to the laws of man and the laws of heaven for his evil choice.

The perpetrator for his part cannot plead innocence on the grounds that he is merely an instrument in the hands of Divine Providence.

אף על פי כן, על הניזק כבר נגזר מן השמים

Nevertheless, as regards the person harmed, this [incident] was already decreed in heaven,

והרבה שלוחים למקום

and ⁹*“G-d has many agents”* through whom He can act.

Anger thus remains unjustifiable. For the offended party is not angry that the other party made an evil choice; what angers him is the damage done to *him*. His anger thus results from his lack of belief that the true cause for his mishap is not a particular individual's evil choice, but a heavenly decree.

ולא עוד

And not only this, that a heavenly decree gave permission in principle and made it possible that he suffer injury,

אלא אפילו בשעה זו ממש, שמכהו או מקללו

but even at that very moment at which [the offender] strikes or curses him,

מתלבש בו כח ה' ורוח פיו יתברך, המחיהו ומקיימו

there is vested in him (in the offender) a force from G-d and the breath of His mouth, which animates and sustains him;

וכמו שכתוב: כי ה' אמר לו, קלל

*as it is written:*¹² *“For G-d told him, ‘Curse!’”*

והיכן אמר לשמע

Now where did He say so to Shimi? Where do we find it written that G-d told him to curse David?

אלא שמחשבה זו, שנפלה לשמע בלבו ומוחו, ירדה מאת ה'

But this thought that occurred in Shimi's heart and mind to curse David, descended from G-d, Who was thus responsible for such a thought entering Shimi's mind;

ורוח פיו, המחיה כל צבאם

*and*¹³ *“the breath of His mouth, [which animates] all the hosts [of heaven],”*

animated the spirit of Shimi at the time he spoke those words to David.

כי אילו נסתלק רוח פיו יתברך רגע אחד מרוחו של שמעי, לא יכול לדבר מאומה

For if the breath of G-d's mouth had departed from the spirit of Shimi for a single moment, he could not have spoken at all.

וזוהו כי ה' אמר לו בעת ההיא ממש: קלל את דוד * * *

(14) And that is the meaning of the statement, "For G-d told him (at that very moment when Shimi was speaking these words), 'Curse David!'"

I.e., G-d did so by providing Shimi at that time with life and the power of speech.

ומי יאמר לו וגו'

And who shall say to him, ["Why did you do so?"]"

וכנודע מה שאמר הבעל שם טוב ז"ל על פסוק: לעולם, ה', דברך נצב בשמים

The teaching of the Baal Shem Tov, of blessed memory, on the verse,¹⁶ "Forever, O G-d, Your word stands firm in the heavens," is well known:

As mentioned above in *Shaar HaYichud VebaEmunah*, ch. 1, the Baal Shem Tov expanded and disseminated the following concept that appears in *Midrash Tehillim*:

שצירוף אותיות שנבראו בהן השמים, שהוא מאמר יהי רקיע כו'

The combinations of the letters with which the heavens were created, i.e., the creative utterance,¹⁷ "Let there be a firmament..."

הן נצבות ועומדות מלובשות בשמים לעולם, להחיותם ולקיימם

stand and remain vested in the heavens forever, to animate and sustain them.

As the Alter Rebbe explained in greater detail in *Shaar HaYichud VebaEmunah*, chs. 1 and 2, this is also the case with regard to all created beings.

Wed 1:30 AM Innovative Preservation -The thought of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

1. *Excerpt from a letter by the Rebbe dated 24 Adar II, 5711 (March 8, 1951) ...I must therefore confine myself to a general comment with which I hope to illuminate your particular situation. My comment is based on the saying by the Baal Shem Tov--which my father-in-law, the Rebbe, would often repeat--that a person can derive a lesson in the service of G-d from everything he sees or hears about.*

As you are surely aware, the primary talent of an artist is his ability to step away from the externalities of the thing and, disregarding its outer form, gaze into its innerness and perceive its essence, and to be able to convey this in his painting. Thus the object is revealed as it has never before been seen, since its inner content was obscured by secondary things. The artist exposes the essence of the thing he portrays, causing the one who looks at the painting to perceive it in another, truer light, and to realize that his prior perception was deficient.

And this is one of the foundations of man's service of his Creator.

As we know from the Torah--and particularly from the teaching of Chassidism--the entirety of creation stems from the word of G-d,² and the word of G-d is what brings it into existence and sustains it in every moment of time. It is only that the divine power of tzimtzum (constriction) holds the divine life-force in a state of concealment and obscurity, and we perceive only its outer form (i.e., the physical reality).

Our mission in life--based on the simple faith that "there is none else beside Him"³ --is that we should approach everything in life from this perspective. That we should each strive to reveal, as much as possible, the divine essence in every thing, and minimize, to the extent that we are able, its concealment by the externalities of creation...

So one must take great care that secondary and external matters should not obscure the essentials of life and its ultimate purpose.

2. The following is a freely-translated excerpt from a letter the Rebbe wrote in the summer of 1963 to a leading American rabbi:

...Every generation has its particular quality, unique to its time.

In our generation, particularly in the last few years, we are witnessing a spiritual awakening, which is being called--though those who have called it so are unaware of the true significance of the term they have coined--"a return to roots." Regardless of how it is being currently understood, the quest to "return to roots" is, in essence, the soul's quest for teshuvah, for reunion with its source in G-d.

We are seeing this awakening primarily among the youth, who experience everything with a greater depth and a greater intensity. Young people also have no fear of changing their lifestyle, as long as they are convinced that they are being given the truth, without compromise and equivocation.

This is particularly the case with the youth of our country. In other countries, there is a double hurdle to be overcome: first one must uproot the false ideologies that have become ingrained in certain circles also among the younger generation, and only afterward is it possible to implant the proper ideas in their minds. This is not the case in this country, where the youth is virgin soil, if only they are given the truth in its purity. We have witnessed in actuality that those who are not intimidated and present the truth without equivocation, have been met with a true response among the youth.

I don't want to be critical, but I am forced to note that, to our great misfortune, this awakening has not been utilized, thus far, by those who purport to be the leaders and spiritual guides of their communities, certainly not to the extent that it could have been utilized.

Our sages have taught that "The deed is the primary thing." It therefore goes without saying that the purpose of my writing all this is not for the sake of discussion, but in the hope that you and your colleagues will launch a

broad and spirited effort to encourage this awakening and--most importantly--to have it translate into concrete changes in the day-to-day life of all those to whom this call can reach.

This is a matter of spiritual life and death. So one is obliged to do all that is in one's power, even if one sees but a small chance at success.

May the Almighty grant that our efforts should reveal and awaken the inner core of the soul within each of our brethren, which is ever faithful to G-d and is always desirous to fulfill His will. When we will each do all that is dependent upon us, with the confidence that we are acting as emissaries of the Almighty--and sound our call with words coming from the heart, which are guaranteed to enter the heart and have their desired effect--we are certain to succeed...

From the Rebbe's first Discourse – 10 shvat 5711 (1951)

"With this in mind, we can better understand the interpretation of the verse, 'I have come into My garden,' as 'I have come into My bridal chamber'; i.e., the Shechinah here speaks of its return to the original location of its essential abode -- in the midst of the nether beings.'

"The matter (i.e., the explanation as to why the essence of the Shechinah was specifically found in this world) is as follows:

'The ultimate purpose for the creation and progressive descent of the worlds is that `G-d desired to have a dwelling place in the lower worlds.'"

The Alter Rebbe explains this [in the following manner]:

"The ultimate intent of the progressive chainlike descent of the worlds is not the loftier worlds, since for them this constitutes a descent from the light of G-d's Countenance."

The ultimate purpose cannot possibly be remoteness from G-d.

As is well known, creation derives solely from the power of G-d's Essence, as is stated in Iggeres HaKodesh, in the Epistle beginning Ihu VeChayohi: As to G-d's very Being and Essence, Whose being derives from His own self and Who has no cause preceding Him, He alone has the power and ability to create something out of absolute naught and nothingness.

Thus, creation does not result from G-dly revelation, rather from G-d's Essence.

Hence it is impossible to state that the ultimate intent of creation was for the sake of the higher worlds, for even [the loftiest of them,] the World of Atzilus, is [merely] a revelation of that which had previously been concealed.

It therefore constitutes a descent from the light of the Divine Countenance, for when the luminous emanations of Atzilus were in a state of concealment [within their source] they were on a much loftier plane.

In addition, since these are merely degrees of revelation [i.e., glimmerings of G-d's Essence], we cannot possibly say that Essence exists for the sake of such revelations.

We must therefore say that the ultimate goal is this physical world, wherein -- as the Mittlerer Rebbe explains on this week's Torah reading (Parshas Beshalach), while comparing the higher worlds and this world -- it is felt that its being derives from its own self.

(This is as explained in the series of maamarim of Rosh HaShanah this year, in connection with the difference between created beings and [Divine] light: Light proves that there is a luminary; when we observe light, its very existence indicates and reveals that there is a luminary [from whence it emanates].

By contrast, [physical] created beings not only fail to reveal [their] Creator, they actually hide and conceal their source; moreover, they feel that their being derives from themselves, (and only reason dictates that this cannot possibly be so)).

Although this [perception of a physical creation that its being derives from its own self] is but its own [false] impression, nevertheless, the very fact that it is able to imagine that it derives from its own self results from its being rooted in G-d's Essence -- and His Being derives from His Essence.

It is thus understandable that the intent of creation is not the higher worlds whose purpose is revelation, but this lowly world -- that imagines itself to be not a [mere] revelation (gilui) but a self-sufficient entity (atzmi), whose being derives from its own self.

Through man's spiritual service in this world, subduing and transforming [the physical into holiness], G-d's Essence is revealed [in this world], in the world for the sake of which the worlds at large were created and for the sake of which they progressively descended.

Free translation of a talk given on 11 Nissan 5741 (1981)

Today's times are turbulent ones, with the world wracked by chaos and instability. Country after country is in the throes of revolution and civil war, and all over the globe mini-wars have erupted. No sooner does one crisis pass than another conflagration flares up. And this international unrest is matched by an alarming increase in crime, violent and senseless, in city after city. Individuals armed only with hand guns can plunge entire nations into turmoil, constituting an ever present menace to society. And with the frightening spread of nuclear weapons, the threat of a nuclear holocaust is no longer a mere nightmare, but a very real danger. Just one country, one group of men, one individual, desperate enough or insane enough, can plunge all mankind into total destruction. A gloomy scenario indeed, but in truth, the entire world is teetering on the

brink, playing some mad balancing act for its very survival.

In the midst of this stygian darkness, one beacon of light, one ray of hope, shines out as a possible, if not the only means of a return to stability. The great democracy, the United States of America, is a superpower, the most powerful nation on earth. Blessed with great natural resources, the U.S.A. has risen to a position of unequalled power and prestige with tremendous opportunities to influence other countries. The exercise of these opportunities can, if used properly, do much to reverse the world's slide into chaos and turmoil. The vigorous pursuit of peace, backed by the awesome power it possesses, will ensure success for the U.S. in this great mission. This is not an easy task. But the steadfast trust in He Who

delights in peace will ensure a true and just discharge of its obligations, and peace, true, lasting peace, will be attained. Unfortunately, however, there have been recent signs of a pro-isolationist sentiment in certain quarters. The argument, and it is an appealing one, is that the U.S. has enough problems of its own without worrying about the rest of the world. Weary of being the world's policeman, the wish to dissociate themselves from others' troubles is strongly tempting, and a spirit of self-interest dominates. Aside from matters concerning its own security, the argument goes, America should wash its hands of the rest of the world. There will be enough time to concern ourselves with others when our own affairs are in order.

Torah, however, teaches us differently. This is a land of vast potential, with the means to benefit the entire world. We did not create the vast resources which made this country so wealthy and powerful; G-d gave them to us. And it is not G-d's intention that they should go to waste. In a sense we have no right to ignore the opportunities so graciously given to us, no right not to use our potential to its fullest.

Ingratitude is a despicable thing; and to isolate ourselves would brand us as ingrates of the highest order, unmindful and unappreciative of the largesse so freely bestowed upon this country. Yes, we have an obligation to others. But it is also a privilege, a very great privilege, a global one, to utilize our influence to the utmost to correct the alarming state of instability and chaos, of growing violence present today in the world, and ensure true and lasting peace. But to maintain the power necessary for this most important task, the U.S. must remain independent of other countries. A nation that is dependent on others for its energy needs, finds its strength diminished and weakened. The crippling dependency on foreign energy sources, particularly oil, has sometimes prevented the U.S. from

following policies that are in accord with its ideals of justice.

But it need not be so. The U.S. does have the resources, and this country, with G-d's help, can be self-sufficient in energy. The problem lies elsewhere, in the failure to utilize G-d's gifts to their fullest. The realization that America's wealth has always been G-d given must inevitably lead to the realization that G-d will not now leave this country unequipped to fulfill its great mission of bringing good and peace to the world. The motto on this country's currency is "In G-d We Trust." We need but live up to it.

There are various sources from which the U.S. can derive its energy needs. Oil and coal alone, if properly developed, would not only provide the U.S. with all its energy needs, but other countries as well. But due to opposition in certain quarters, it will take time to develop these sources properly. And nuclear energy is potentially dangerous, as well as facing vociferous opposition. There is, however, one energy source which can be made available in a very short time. Solar energy is nonpolluting, cheap, and inexhaustible.

Already used in many countries, it can power individual homes as well as giant factories. The United States has been blessed with plentiful sunshine, especially in the south, and it is no great technological feat to transport the energy derived from it to other parts of the country. The entire United States, and indeed, other countries not so well blessed with sunshine, can have their energy needs met with the solar energy produced in the southern United States. The U.S.A. need but have the proper determination, brush aside all opposition, and very quickly solve its energy problems. Then, no longer dependent on foreign countries, it can utilize its G-d given assets to influence peoples around the world—to be productive, G-d fearing citizens.

This is a country which has traditionally been full of kindness and compassion to those less fortunate than itself. The determination to continue in this admirable work lends urgency to the necessity of utilizing all possible assets. We do this not for our own selfish, egocentric purposes; for G-d has blessed this country richly, and it is our duty to use those riches to their fullest good. With the independence and power thus granted to it, the United States can fulfill its role of bringing peace and stability to this sorely troubled planet. Starting with solar energy, the U.S.A. must quickly as possible begin its program of energy self-sufficiency.

Wed 6:45 PM - Radical Rabbis and Modern mystics

Thirty-Six Aphorisms of the Baal Shem Tov

1. Everything is by Divine Providence. If a leaf is turned over by a breeze, it is only because this has been specifically ordained by G-d to serve a particular function within the purpose of creation.



A manuscript written by the Baal Shem Tov

2. Every single thing that a person sees or hears, is an instruction to him in his conduct in the service of G-d.

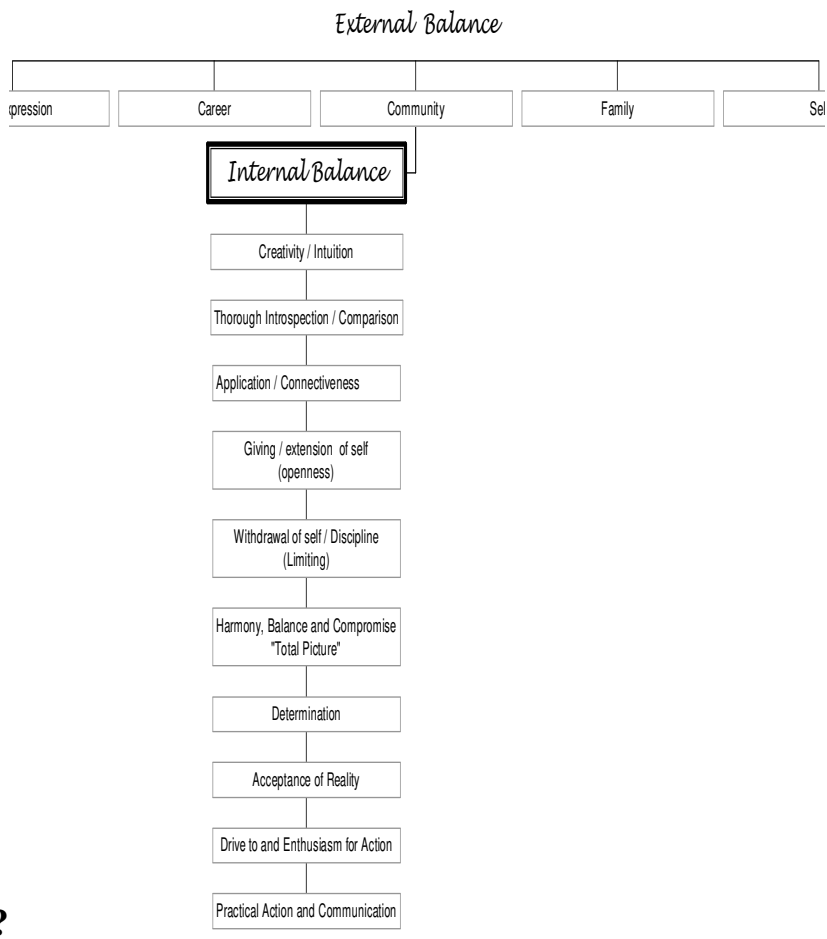
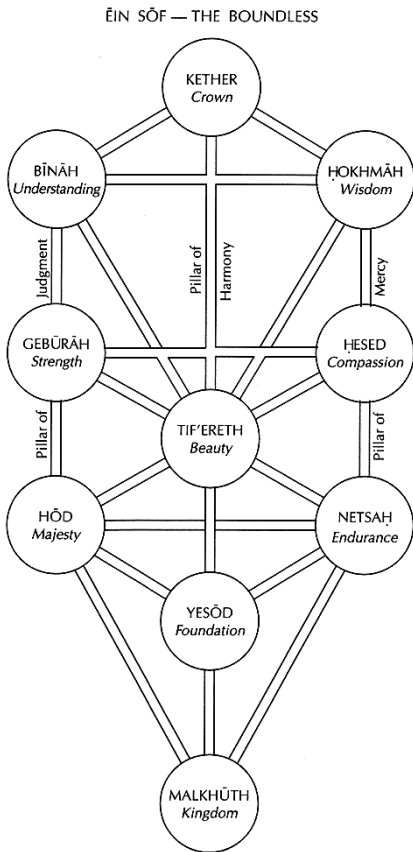
- 3. "Love your fellow as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18) is an interpretation of and commentary on "Love the L-rd, your G-d" (Deuteronomy 6:5). He who loves a fellow Jew loves G-d, because the Jew has within himself a "part of G-d Above" (Job 31:2; see Tanya ch. 2). When one loves a fellow Jew, he loves the Jew's inner essence, and thereby loves G-d.
- 4. To love a fellow Jew is to love G-d. For it is written, "You are children of G-d" (Deuteronomy 14:1); when one loves the father, one loves his children.
- 5. G-d's love of each and every Jew is infinitely greater than the love of elderly parents to their only child born to them in their later years.
- 6. A sigh emitted because of a fellow's pain, breaks all the impenetrable barriers of the heavenly "accusers". And when a person rejoices in the joy of his fellow and blesses him, it is as dear to G-d and accepted by Him as the prayers of Rabbi Yishmael the High Priest in the Holy of Holies.
- 7. The love G-d has for every Jew extends not only to the Jew's soul but also to his body.

- G-d loves all Jews without distinction; the greatest Torah genius and scholar and the most simple Jew are loved equally by G-d.
8. One must have total self-sacrifice and dedication for love of one's fellow, even towards a Jew whom one has never seen.
 9. "Torah that is unaccompanied by labor will ultimately cease" (Ethics of the Fathers 2:2). The "labor" of which the Mishnah speaks is the labor of loving one's fellow Jew.
 10. The three loves - the love of G-d, love of Torah, and the love of one's fellow - are indeed truly one.
 11. The Baal Shem Tov was orphaned from his father, the hiddentzaddik Rabbi Eliezer, at the age of five. The last words spoken to him by his holy father before his passing were: "Yisrolik, fear nothing but G-d alone. Love every single Jew, without exception, with the full depth of your heart and with the fire of your soul, no matter who he is or how he behaves."
 12. The Baal Shem Tov's love of a fellow Jew was beyond imagination. His successor, the Maggid of Mezeritch, said: If only we could kiss a Torah-scroll with the same love that my Master kissed the children when he took them to school as a teacher's assistant.
 13. A soul may descend to this world and live seventy or eighty years just in order to do a Jew a material favor, and certainly a spiritual one.
 14. It is written, "For you (the people of Israel) shall be a desirable land, says G-d" (Malachi 3:12). Just as the greatest explorers will never uncover the limits of the great and valuable resources which the Almighty has placed within the earth, neither will anyone ever discover the limits of the great treasures which lie buried within a Jew - G-d's "desirable land."
 15. Your fellow is your mirror. If your own face is clean, so will be the image you perceive. But should you look upon your fellow and see a blemish, it is your own imperfection that you are encountering - you are being shown what it is that you must correct within yourself.
 16. Our Sages have said that "Slander kills all three" - the subject of the slander, the one who relates it, and the listener. This is all in spiritual terms, which is more severe than physical murder.
 17. The wholesome simplicity of the simple Jew touches on the utterly simple essence of G-d.
 18. Cleaving to G-d is the master-key that opens all locks. Every Jew, including the most simple, possesses the ability to cleave to the words of Torah and prayer, thereby achieving the highest degrees of unity with G-d.
 19. The simple true faith of a Jewish man or woman that finds expression in their recitation of Psalms is the highest level of attachment to G-d. It arouses G-d's Divine mercies and provides succor to the one who recites these holy words in a spirit of oneness with G-d.
 20. "An angel of G-d appeared to [Moses] in a flame of fire amidst the thorn-bush; and he saw that, behold, and the bush burned with fire, but was not consumed" (Exodus 3:2). It is in the simple folk - the "lowly" thorn-bush - that this insatiable Divine flame is found, for theirs is an unquenchable thirst for G-dliness, Torah and its commandments.
 21. "And Moses said: Let me move from here..." (ibid. 3:3). Even a completely righteous individual such as Moses is not to be content with his spiritual achievements; he, too, must constantly ascend from "here" to "there."
 22. There are two levels in the study of Torah, Torah of the mind and Torah of the heart. The mind cogitates, comprehends and understands; the heart feels. I have come to reveal Torah as it extends to the heart as well.
 23. G-d commanded Noah to "Enter into the *teivah*" (literally "ark", but also "word"). One should enter into and cleave to the letters and words of Torah and prayer. This will protect the person and his entire extended family, enabling them to receive from G-d all their necessities.
 24. The Baal Shem Tov was very fond of light, and said, "*Or* (light) is the numerical equivalent of *raz* ('secret'). Whoever knows

- the 'secret' in every thing can bring illumination."
25. "Conceal shall I conceal My face on that day" (Deuteronomy 31:18). *Galut* (the Exile) is a twofold concealment, wherein the concealment itself is concealed. So great is this concealment, that one is not even aware of the concealment; one may even come to think of the darkness as light.
 26. "Shall a man conceal himself in hidden places and I will not to see him?" (Jeremiah 23:24). The Baal Shem Tov interpreted this verse thus: Should "a man conceal himself in hidden places and I" - i.e., he retains his ego, his "I" - then, says G-d, "I will not see him."
 27. "G-d is your shadow" (Psalms 121:5) - Just as a person's shadow entirely mimics his actions, so does G-d, as it were, entirely reciprocate our deeds.
 28. "Who alone performs great wonders" (Psalms 136:4) - All that G-d does is "great wonders." Most wondrous of all these wonders are those of which He alone is cognizant.
 29. It is written: "When you will see the donkey of your enemy collapsing under its burden, and you are inclined to refrain from aiding him, you shall nevertheless aid him" (Exodus 23:5). The Baal Shem Tov applied this instruction to the body and the material self (*chamor*, "donkey", also means "materiality"). Initially - the Torah is saying - you may see your body as your enemy, resisting your soul's objectives, collapsing under the "burden" of the mitzvot. You may therefore be inclined to fight the body by denying its needs and mortifying it. Says the Torah: You must aid your soul's "enemy". Purify the body, refine it, do not break it.
 30. "Seek peace and pursue it" (Psalms 34:15) - One must seek and pursue means of making peace and establishing harmony between the material world and the G-dly life-force that vitalizes it.
 31. "The earth shall rest a sabbath to G-d" (Leviticus 25:2) - Give earthiness a rest; permeate it with the sabbath of spirituality and holiness.
 32. "Your beginning shall be small, and your end shall flourish exceedingly" (Job 8:7) - Small and inauspicious beginnings are often crucial for the person to flourish exceedingly in the end.
 33. The Torah (Numbers 33) enumerates the 42 encampments in "the journeys of the Children of Israel who came out of Egypt." Each and every one of us goes through our own personal forty-two journeys in life, beginning with our "exodus," our birth, passing through the many way-stations in our lives, and concluding upon reaching the promised celestial "Land of Life."
 34. Tishrei, the month of the new year, is blessed by G-d Himself, on the Shabbat of Blessing, the last Shabbat in the previous month of Elul. With this power, the people of Israel bless the other months eleven times a year.
 35. It is written, "You stand upright this day before the L-rd your G-d" (Deuteronomy 29:9). "This day" refers to Rosh Hashanah which is the day of judgment. Yet you remain standing firmly upright, meaning you will be vindicated in judgment.
 36. I asked the Moshiach, "When will you come?" and he said to me: "When your wellsprings shall spread to the outside."

Wednesday 820PM – What Can Kabbalah do for

Chart 1



me?

Figure 1

* * *

The Alter Rebbe now concludes what he began to elucidate (in ch. 51) concerning the statement of the *Yenuka* in the *Zohar* — that the light of the *Shechinah* which shines above the head of a person needs oil. The *Yenuka* concludes, “...and these are good deeds” — the oil is the performance of the *mitzvot*.

In chassidic literature, however, oil traditionally refers to wisdom. What is the connection between the performance of *mitzvot* — and wisdom, which is called oil?

The Alter Rebbe explains that the light of the *Shechinah* must garb itself in wisdom, which is oil. For (as previously explained) wisdom, or intellect, is the vessel and “garment” for the light of the *Shechinah*, which is — *Chochmah* as it is garbed in Torah.

Yet, in order to *draw down* the light of the *Shechinah* so that it will shine upon the divine soul of the Jew, more than oil is necessary; one must also have a wick. Oil is transformed into light through the medium of a wick. It is the wick, which itself is burned, which keeps the fire from being extinguished.

In spiritual terms the wick refers to the vivifying soul which provides the person with physical life. This wick is burned through Torah and *mitzvot*. Just as the physical wick burns and is annihilated by the fire, so do the garments of thought, speech and action of the vivifying soul become burned in the light of the *Shechinah* through the Torah and *mitzvot* which a Jew studies and performs.

It is for this reason that the oil must also consist of “good deeds,” *mitzvot*, which have their source in G-d’s wisdom; Torah alone (even though it is itself wisdom) does not suffice. For only through the action required by the *mitzvot* will the light of the *Shechinah* be drawn down into the wick — the vivifying soul. This is accomplished when the vivifying soul is burned thoroughly in the light of the *Shechinah* which shines on one’s head.

וזה שאמר הינוקא, דנהורא עילאה דאדליק על רישיה, היא שכינתא, איצטריך למשחא

And this is what the Yenuka in Zohar, quoted in ch. 35, meant when he said that “the Supernal light that is kindled on his (the Jew’s) head, namely, the Shechinah, requires oil,”

פירוש: להתלבש בחכמה, הנקראת שמן משחת קדש, כמו שכתוב בזהר

that is, to be clothed in wisdom, which is called “the oil of the holy anointing” — and “holy” signifies Chochmah, or wisdom, as is explained in the Zohar,

Thus, the light of the *Shechinah* which is upon one’s head is in need of oil, i.e., it must be garbed in *Chochmah*, for that is the vessel for the light of the *Shechinah*. The *Zohar* then quotes the conclusion of the statement of the *Yenuka*:

ואינון עובדין טבין, הן תרי”ג מצות, הנמשכות מחכמתו יתברך

“and these are the good deeds,” namely, the 613 commandments, which derive from His wisdom.

Torah, which is itself oil, does not suffice; there must also be good deeds — the performance of the *mitzvot*, although they are only drawn down from wisdom.

כדי לאחוז אור השכינה בפתילה, היא נפש החיונית שבגוף, הנקראת פתילה על דרך משל, כי כמו שבנר הגשמי האור מאיר על ידי כליון ושריפת הפתילה הנהפכת לאש, כך אור השכינה שורה על נפש האלקית

Thereby the light of the Shechinah can cling to the wick, i.e., the vivifying soul in the body, which is metaphorically called a “wick”. For just as in the case of a material candle, the light shines by virtue of the annihilation and burning of the wick turning to fire, so does the light of the Shechinah rest on the divine soul, which is the candle (“The soul of man is the candle of the L-rd”),

על ידי כליון נפש הבהמית והתהפכותה מחשוכא לנהורא וממרירו למתקא, בצדיקים

as a result of the annihilation of the animal soul and its transformation from darkness of kelipah to light of holiness, and from bitterness of kelipat nogah to sweetness of holiness, in the case of the righteous — for tzaddikim (as mentioned in ch. 10) are those who transform the essence of the animal soul, its intellect and emotion, from evil into goodness and holiness,

או לפחות על ידי כליון לבושיה, שהן מחשבה דבור ומעשה

or at least through the destruction of its garments, which are thought, speech and action — which previously were garments of the vivifying soul, which is a soul of kelipah,

והתהפכותן מחשך הקליפות לאור ה' אין סוף ברוך הוא, המלוכש ומיוחד במחשבה דבור ומעשה של תרי"ג מצות התורה, בבינונים

and their transformation from the darkness of the kelipot to the Divine light of the Ein Sof, which is clothed and united in the thought, speech and action of the 613 commandments of the Torah, in the case of the Beinonim.

Beinonim, as explained in ch. 12, do not transform the essence of the vivifying soul into goodness and holiness. Only the soul-garments of thought, speech and action are transformed to goodness through being utilized for the thought, speech and action of the Torah and the *mitzvot*. In this sense the wick of the vivifying soul is annihilated, and is transformed into the light of holiness.

כי על ידי התהפכות נפש הבהמית, הבאה מקליפת נוגה, מחשוכא לנהורא וכו', נעשה בחינת העלאת מ"ן

For as a result of the transformation of the animal soul, originating from kelipat nogah, from the darkness of kelipot, to the light of holiness, and so forth, there is brought about the so-called "ascent of the feminine waters" — the spiritual awakening on the initiative of the recipient, which in turn causes an arousal Above,

להמשיך אור השכינה, היא בחינת גילוי אור אין סוף ברוך הוא, על נפשו האלקית שבמוחין שבראשו

to draw down the light of the Shechinah (not only like the oil of *Chochmah* and Torah which is but a *vessel* for receiving the light of the *Shechinah*, but actually drawing down the light of the *Shechinah*), *i.e., revealed light of the Ein Sof, over one's divine soul* principally dwelling *in the brain of the head*.

This is why the *Yenuka* says, "The Supernal light that is kindled over one's *shead* requires oil," for the light that is over one's *head* and "intelligence" is in need of the oil of the "good deeds."

ובזה יובן היטב מה שכתוב: כי ה' אלקיך אש אוכלת הוא

Thereby one may clearly understand the text,¹⁰ "For the L-rd Your G-d is a consuming fire,"

Just as fire can only catch on an object when that object is being consumed by it, so, too, regarding the light of the *Shechinah*. In order for G-d to become "*your*G-d," illuminating the Jew's soul, there must be consumption by fire — burning and annihilating the wick of the vivifying soul, so that this soul of *kelipah* be transformed into the fire of holiness.

וכמו שכתוב במקום אחר

as is explained elsewhere¹¹ — that only when a Jew succeeds in nullifying himself to G-d in a manner where he ceases to exist as an independent entity, and is consumed in the flames of G-dliness, — only then will he draw down upon himself the light of the Shechinah.

Thursday 6:45 PM- Dreams, Coincidences, and Insight

Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 30a

הרי שהיה מצטער על מעות שהניח לו אביו, ובא בעל החלום ואמר לו: כך וכך הן, במקום פלוני הן, של מעשר שני הן - זה היה מעשה, ואמרו: דברי חלומות לא מעלין ולא מורידין.

If one felt distressed over some money which his father had left him, and the dispenser of dreams appeared to him and named the sum, indicated the place, and specified its purpose, saying that it was [for the redemption] of the second tithe — such an incident once occurred, and they [the Rabbis on that occasion] said: Dreams have no importance for good or ill.

From Tanya Chapter 29

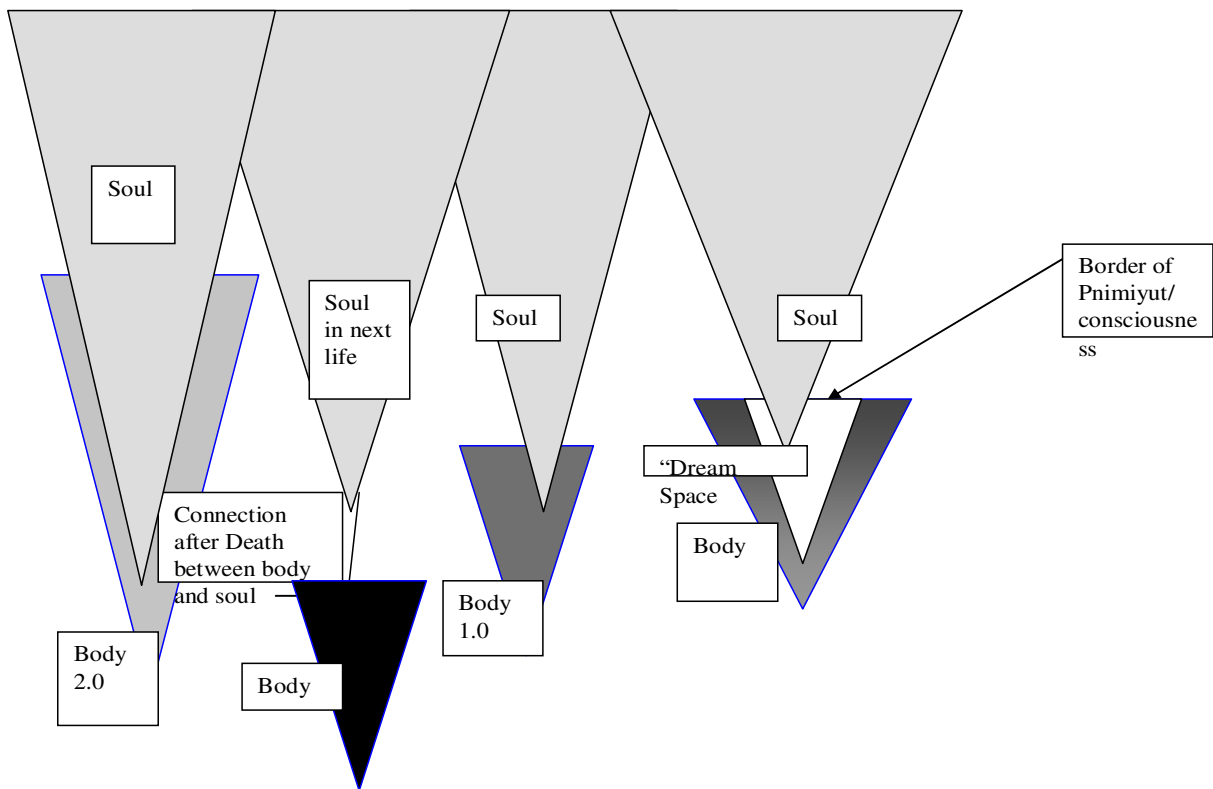
עוד ישים אל לבו רוב חלומותיו שהם הבל ורעות רוח, משום שאין נפשו עולה למעלה, וכמו שכתוב: מי יעלה בהר ה'... נקן כפים וגו'

Let him further consider his dreams in order to humble his spirit; for one may learn more about himself from his dreams than from his waking, conscious thoughts. *For the most part, they are “vanity, and an affliction of the spirit,” 16 for his soul does not ascend heavenward during his sleep; since it is written: 17 “Who shall ascend the mountain of the Lord?” — meaning, in our context, “Whose soul shall rise heavenward while he sleeps, to see and absorb matters of Torah and holiness, which will in turn be reflected in his dreams?”* And the next verse gives the answer: *“He that has clean hands and a pure heart” — implying that the soul of one whose hands and heart are not pure, does not ascend, and that is why his dreams are a patchwork of vanity and foolishness.*

ואינון סטריין בישין אתיין ומתדבקן ביה, ומודעין ליה בחלמא מילין דעלמא וכו', ולזמנין דחייכן ביה ואחזיאו ליה מילי שקר, וצערין ליה בחלמיה כו', כמו שכתוב בזהר ויקרא דף כ"ה עמוד א' ועמוד ב', עיין שם באריכות

Furthermore, *“those originating from the 'evil side' come and attach themselves to him and inform him in his dreams of mundane affairs... and sometimes mock him and show him false things and torment him in his dreams,” and so on, as stated in the Zohar on Vayikra (p. 25a,b). See it there discussed at length.*

We thus see from the *Zohar* that one may evaluate himself by studying the content of his dreams. Thereby, he can humble his spirit even if he finds himself free of sin, and in this way he may crush the *sitra achra* within him, as explained above.



8:20 PM – Inner Prayer

Chassidic Discourses

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn of Lubavitch
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Chapter 1

ואתה קדוש יושב תהלות ישראל

“And You, Holy One, are enthroned upon the praises of Israel.”¹

This is to be understood according to the following *Midrash*:² “Rabbi Shmuel said, ‘Whenever Jews praise G-d, His holy presence resides among them.’ ”

While still a student of the *Maggid of Mezritch*, the *Alter Rebbe* (author of the *Tanya*) heard his master relate a tale of his master, the holy *Baal Shem Tov*. Before the *Baal Shem Tov* became famous, it was his custom to wander from town to town and village to village. He did so because one of his methods of Divine service was to ask all Jews, men and women, young and old, how things were going. He would inquire after their health and their

children's well-being, and whether they were making an adequate living.

He was most gratified to hear the loving praise with which the men, women and children replied to his queries. They would employ expressions of praise, such as: "Blessed be His Name"; "Praise the L-rd"; "The loving G-d", "May the loving Creator continue His benevolence"; "The sweet Father sustains us, praised is His Holy Name, blessed be He and His Holy Name;" "He is the true healer of the ill," and other similar expressions. Men would answer after their fashion and praise G-d for the health of their families and for their sustenance. Women would respond in their fashion, praising G-d for sustenance and children. Children would praise G-d in their own way, thanking Him for having given them parents who provide for all their needs and teach them Torah.

In the various cities, towns, villages and hamlets that the *Baal Shem Tov* would visit disguised as a simple villager, he would seek the opportunity to contact simple folk, men, women and children. He would meet them in the synagogues, in the streets, in their homes, stores and workplaces. At all times and in all places the *Baal Shem Tov* centered his discussions on the people's health and sustenance. His holy intent was to elicit their praise of G-d, as mentioned earlier.

It once happened that the *Baal Shem Tov* visited a certain town and, as was his habit, strove to make Jewish men, women and children meritorious through their praise of G-d.

In that town there lived a great Jewish scholar who for the past 50 years had studied Torah day and night in abstinence and holiness. He would sit garbed in *tallis* and *tefillin* until the late afternoon, fasting until after the evening prayers, and then breaking his fast with a crust of bread and some water.

When the *Baal Shem Tov* entered this great scholar's "seclusion chamber" in a corner of the synagogue, he inquired after the man's health and as to whether his needs were being met. The recluse, seeing that the *Baal Shem Tov* was garbed like a simple villager, ignored him. The *rebbe* repeated his questions a number of times. Finally the great scholar became angry and motioned to the door, indicating that the *Baal Shem Tov* should leave.

Said the *Baal Shem Tov*: "Rebbe, why don't you provide G-d with His sustenance? You will G-d forbid make Him hunger and He will depart from the world."

The scholar became bewildered on hearing what he thought was a simple villager speaking about seeing to G-d's needs. The *Baal Shem Tov* read the man's thoughts and said to him: "Jews exist by virtue of G-d's sustenance. What sustains Him? This is answered by Dovid in *Tehillim*, where he says: 'And You, Holy One,' what is Your sustenance? 'He sits,' i.e., He is sustained, 'by the praises of Israel' by the Jewish people's words of praise for their health and sustenance."

For these words of praise, G-d repays us with children, health, and ample sustenance.

Tanya Chapter 12

כי אם בעתים מזומנים כמו בשעת קריאת שמע ותפלה

Only at specific times do the faculties of the divine soul hold undisputed sovereignty over the *Beinoni* with the animal soul having no effect whatever on him, *such as during the recital of the Shema or the Amidah.*

שהיא שעת מוחין דגדלות למעלה

At this time [of prayer], the Supernal Intellect above is in a sublime state — it is a time of great spiritual illumination in the higher spiritual worlds;

וגם למטה היא שעת הכושר לכל אדם

likewise below — in this physical world — the time [of prayer] is propitious for every man to ascend to a higher spiritual level.

שאז מקשר חב"ד שלו לה'

Then, during the recital of *Shema* or during prayer, [the Beinoni] binds his CHaBaD — his intellectual faculties, consisting of *Chochmah, Binah* and *Daat*— to G-d,

להעמיק דעתו בגדולת אין סוף ברוך הוא

meditating deeply on the greatness of the blessed Ein Sof,

ולעורר את האהבה כרשפי אש בחלל הימני שבלבו

and arousing through this meditation a burning love [of G-d] in the right part of his heart; for, as explained in previous chapters, meditation on G-d's greatness arouses the love of Him within one's heart.

לדבקה בו בקיום התורה ומצותיה מאהבה

This love, in turn, leads the *Beinoni* to desire to cleave to Him by means of fulfilling the Torah and its commandments out of love.

The realization that only the fulfillment of Torah and *mitzvot* will fulfill his desire to become one with G-d channels the *Beinoni's* love into a desire to observe Torah and *mitzvot*.

שזה ענין המבואר בקריאת שמע דאורייתא

This arousal of love for G-d, and its accompanying resolve to adhere to Torah and *mitzvot* and thereby to cleave to Him, is the essential subject of the *Shema*, which Biblical (deoraysa) commandment enjoins us to recite;

וברכותיה שלפניה ולאחריה שהן מדרבנן הן הכנה לקיום הקריאת שמע, כמו שכתוב במקום אחר

likewise, the Rabbinically ordained (derabbanan) blessings preceding and following [the *Shema*] are a preparation enabling us to fulfill [that which we recite in] the *Shema*, as explained elsewhere.¹

ואז הרע שבחלל השמאלי כפוף ובטל לטוב המתפשט בחלל הימני מחב"ד שבמוח המקושרים בגדולת אין סוף ברוך הוא

At such time, during the *Shema* or prayer, when the love of G-d burns in the heart of the *Beinoni*, the evil in the left part of his heart (the animal soul's principal area of manifestation) is subjected to and is nullified before the goodness (i.e., the love of G-d) that spreads into the right part of the heart, where the divine soul is manifest, from the CHaBaD faculties in the brain which are bound [in meditation] to the greatness of the blessed Ein Sof.

Contemplating G-d's greatness with the three intellectual faculties — Wisdom, Understanding and Knowledge (*CHaBaD*) — arouses and diffuses a love of G-d in (the right part of) the heart. This arousal of love causes the evil of the animal soul to be nullified in the good of the divine soul now pervading the heart. During the time of prayer, therefore, when the *Beinoni* arouses his love of G-d through meditation, his animal soul is inactive, and he feels no inclination for physical pleasures. Thus, during prayer the *Beinoni*'s divine soul is his “undisputed sovereign,” as the Alter Rebbe stated above.

The Discourse “Adam ki Yakriv” in Likutei Torah: Adapted by likuteitorah.com

The *raison d'être* of our lives as Jews is that the G-dly soul should prevail in its struggle with the competing tendencies of the animal soul. This is accomplished when the *Nefesh ha-Elokis* contemplates the unity of G-d, as expressed in the *Shema* prayer (“Hear, O Israel, G-d is our G-d, G-d is One”); done seriously, this naturally leads to a genuine, heartfelt love of G-d that even the *Nefesh ha-Bahamis* shares – as the *Shema* continues, “And you shall love G-d ... with [both] your hearts.”

Of course, it is quite a job to transform the *Nefesh ha-Bahamis* itself into a soul that loves only the G-dly in life, and follows the dictates of the *Nefesh ha-Elokis* in whatever it does. To this end, our sages arranged our prayer service to include the *Shema*'s two introductory blessings, for these prepare the way for the transformation of the animal soul. Specifically, the introductory readings before the *Shema* discuss how the heavenly hosts all sing G-d's praises and proclaim their abject subjugation before Him. The *ofanim* and the holy creatures (*chayos hakodesh*) – the spiritual source of the animal soul – also engage in this praise and subjugation, and reading of this in prayer, and taking its message to heart, affects the earthly manifestation of these spiritual levels: it helps the animal soul as we know it within ourselves to likewise become subjugated to G-d. This is in accordance with the principle that to have a meaningful effect upon something, one must address the matter at its root, not merely superficially – or, in Kabbalistic terminology, “judgments cannot be ‘sweetened’ except at their root.”

And, in fact, the successful “conversion” of the animal soul uplifts the G-dly soul as well, as hinted in Ezekiel's vision, wherein the heavenly creatures were carrying aloft the throne. For as we have explained, the “creatures” represent the spiritual source of the animal soul, and the “Man” on the throne carried aloft is the source of the G-dly soul.