

**TAMING  
THE RAGING MIND**

**105 Jewish Meditation  
Techniques & the Mystical  
Experiences They Can Produce**



**TAMING**  
**THE RAGING MIND**

**Awareness Meditation**  
**Explained**

BY

**Gutman Locks**

Approximately one half of the present publication was first printed in 1997 as "The Raging Mind."

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Second Edition 2009  
24 Chabad, Old City, Jerusalem  
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Also by Gutman Locks:  
Spice of Torah Gematria  
There Is One  
Coming Back to Earth  
From The Old City

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## FOREWORD

Awareness Meditation (AM) is the process of repeatedly returning the consciousness back onto a chosen subject. Its goal is to reveal the hidden nature of Existence, in particular, one's own being.

Herein are explained many meditative techniques and some of the mystical experiences they can produce.

Be aware, sometimes the answer is so simple few can see it. Then, when the fog does burn away it returns so very quickly. Such is the path that takes an entire lifetime to walk.

The One who put you here will guide you. Be diligent. Listen and watch carefully. You will find your way.

Gutman Locks

Old City, Jerusalem



## ONE

### **Why Meditate? An Overview of Meditation Techniques**

The mind receives the seemingly constant stimuli from the senses and presents these to the "I." The "I" is also called the self, witness, or viewer. By paying attention to the mind's presentation, the "I" is in effect pulled along a stream of consciousness, much like a child is drawn to a television screen. Day after day, year after year, the person struggles with the life story he sees on the screen before him, without pausing to ask: "What is the nature of the information I am receiving? Is this really my story or am I wrestling with a fictitious story that I, or even someone else is making up? Is this the only way to see the "movie" being watched? What is my (and not the stimuli's) true nature? What, if anything, have I come here to do? What is consciousness made of?" Such questions will not be easily answered by looking at the apparent "outside" sources that are being screened before the mind's eye. Answers to these types of questions come from very fine, subtle, "internal" awareness.

One way to loosen the attachment to mental and sensory input is through meditative techniques. These practices can help one detach from, and begin to still, the raging mind. When the mind is somewhat stilled, one can gain a wider perspective. When we see the raging inputs are merely a small portion of the band of consciousness, they become less compelling. Then the spiritual perspective can be more readily recognized.

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### **Three Aspects Involved In All Meditation**

Meditation involves three distinct aspects: the Meditator, the Vehicle of Meditation, and the Subject Meditated upon. These aspects are also called: the Identifier, the Identifying and the Identified; or the Self, the Willing (using the mind), and the World; or the Knower, Knowing, and Known;<sup>1</sup> or the I, Mind, and Field. The meditator is the I, the Self. Meditation is the process of directed thoughtfulness. The meditated upon is the chosen subject.

#### **The Individual Self**

THE TRUE OBJECTIVE OF MEDITATION IS TO REALIZE THE ACTUAL NATURE OF THE SELF AND THEREBY REALIZE ITS "RELATIONSHIP" TO THE CREATION AND TO THE CREATOR. This relationship is somewhat analogous to the relationship between thinker and thought, thought and deed, glove and its fingers. When this relationship is understood, the intellect can more easily rule the heart.

#### **The Mind**

The instrument of meditation is the mind. The mind acts like the focusing mechanism of a camera, indifferent to the object it reflects, but simply judges according to its inventory of experiences. Its nature is to be consistently active. Even when the "I" is not paying attention, such as in deep sleep or moments of concentration on emptiness, the mind stands ready to spring into action, to transmit its impulses and to have them received. Its task is to keep functioning under every circumstance, whether it is being fed information from the internal senses or from other external sources. Mind is neither good nor bad, but rather actively categorizes the information it receives based on its past and present associations. The

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impulses it receives are what put it into function, and this functioning is its being. When still, there is, in effect, no mind, just brain. Without input, all is still and unmanifest, like a computer program that is not being activated, or like an empty mirror.

When the Self, the Attentive, is left undirected it will float along with few (if any) objections, going just about wherever the mind leads it. This is in fact what it does during dreams; passively watching and reacting to whatever it sees, but rarely disturbed enough to awaken. By exerting strong effort the sleeper can in fact direct and change the dream or force himself to awaken from even the deepest, most alluring trance.

### **The Subject**

The individual's conception of the subject he is meditating on will determine the type of meditation. IT IS CRUCIAL TO CHOOSE THE PROPER SUBJECT TO MEDITATE UPON, AS THIS WILL HAVE AN IMMENSE EFFECT ON HOW THE MEDITATOR DEVELOPS.

The most common form of Jewish meditation is prayer. The structured prayers found in the traditional prayer books have been arranged with great depth and hidden purpose. These subjects are not merely the simple literal subjects they seem to be. For instance when saying the prayer, "God of Abraham God of Isaac, God of Jacob . . ." the mind should first focus on Abraham's major characteristics, trying to understand how he stood before the Master of the Universe. Here, one must take on the understanding of the role of the "Friend of *Hashem*" ('Hashem' is the Most Holy Name of God; literally, the Name) whose tent is always open facing every direction ready to welcome all guests. This will develop similar characteristics in

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the meditator, who will be imagining the greatness of the Unknowable according to Abraham's frame of reference.

Then move on to the concept of "God of Isaac." How did Isaac exist before Hashem? What characteristics does he personify? Isaac willingly offered his very life as a sacrifice to Hashem. The Heavens opened up, revealing to him such brilliant Holiness that his eyesight was weakened. How can the meditator open up to such light? What changes must come in order to reach such a cherished state? By placing one's mindset into this position, one will view the Unknowable from a different perspective than when one was identifying with Abraham.

Then move on to the understanding of "God of Jacob." Jacob constantly wrestles with his evil inclination, preventing it from going out into the world unbound. He escapes this struggle only when overcoming and realizing that he is, in fact "Israel." What must the meditator's experience be to experience the characteristics of Jacob? How does Jacob understand the Unknowable?

### **Active Versus Passive Techniques**

Active and passive are generic terms that can be applied to either Jewish or non-Jewish meditation techniques. Each method has its inherent advantages and its weaknesses. Ultimately, we will see that these two apparently opposite and seemingly exclusive systems can be incorporated as stages in the same process.

#### **Active**

When the understanding of the subject is purposely deepening, expanding, and causing the mind to engage an ever-

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evolving concept, the meditation is called active. The mind is actively trying to expand its knowledge of the subject.

There are numerous proper subjects for this type of practice. For instance one may wonder: Where is the Unlimited? Thinking this concept through will force the mind to conceptualize an ever-increasing area. Each time the mind rests at a specific location, logic must expand that limitation. Active meditation will safely and slowly bring the meditator to the desired goal of clarity, understanding and enlightenment.

Two familiar Jewish sources exemplifying this type of meditation are: "And Isaac went out to the field to meditate . . ."2 and, "Arise, go up to the House of God and dwell there."3 According to our Sages, this means to focus the mind on Hashem. Walking in the field and focusing on an ever-deepening subject indicates the meditation is active.

With active meditation, most of the new information realized is produced when the mind delves deeper and deeper into the subject; thinking, straining, trying to come to clearer perception. As one gains even a small amount of new information, there will be a reappraisal of all previous conclusions, which in turn produces additional, new conclusions on varied subjects.

### **Passive**

When the perception of the subject of meditation is still, such as when one meditates on the breath, or on a flame, or on consciousness itself (thereby skirting subject matter entirely), such meditation is called passive. In passive meditation the mind does not try to expand its understanding of the subject. Rather, when the mind goes running along its normal path chattering about its experience, the meditator simply and

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CALMLY returns his concentration back to the subject of meditation. Do this over and over again without trying to increase your understanding of the nature of the subject until it seems there are still pauses unattended by the viewer (meditator).

How long and how far the mind will stray before you remember to return it to the subject will depend on your experience, mood, environment, even diet, among other factors. Trying to stop the mind's flow of information will actually increase its force, since the thoughts used trying to stop such a flow actually increase the mind's strength.

Passive meditation can produce results very quickly, but it can also be quite dangerous. One never knows how long it will take to make rapid progress with this type of meditation until one practices it. Some people take years, while others can accomplish rapid progress in mere days. If you use this method of meditation, it is highly advisable to have an ETHICAL and EXPERIENCED, sensible guide to answer your questions and to explain the meditation experiences. This will remove almost all danger from this type of meditation.<sup>4</sup> Without such a well-respected person for a guide, one could very easily misunderstand the mystical experiences that this type of meditation produces. Many have quickly come to believe that their appointed mission is to walk about in flowing white robes, an open umbrella overhead, calling out; "Awaken! The Time is Now!"

Some excellent sources recommending this type of meditation are: "(If) a word is worth one coin, silence is worth two."<sup>5</sup>; ". . . there was silence. Now the king is coming,"<sup>6</sup>; "Commune with your heart upon your bed and be still."<sup>7</sup>; "The *Chanukah* lights are to be looked at only."<sup>8</sup> In these sources we

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see silence, stillness or light as the subjects. These are unchanging subjects, and the hope is not to gain deeper understanding of them, but rather to experience what will happen when we still the mind by simply focusing on them.

### **Mystical Experiences**

A natural process occurs within the human mind when it is strongly held on a singular subject. DEPENDING ON THE SUBJECT MEDITATED UPON, THE INTENT AND THE PREVIOUS BACKGROUND OF THE MEDITATOR, many unexpected wonders can occur. Vivid lights, music that brings ecstasy, intense fragrances, voices that sweep the soul into uncharted realms, mystical powers, “unnatural” abilities, “celestial” knowledge, all seemingly beyond the normal limits of human dimension, suddenly rush to the mind. To the uninitiated, these may seem to be messages from God. To the experienced, they are wondrous growth experiences, naturally flowing from the subconscious to the conscious mind. These experiences not only remind the limited consciousness that there is a Great and Holy perspective beyond its current memory, but they actually flood the mind, elevating it to a new and higher degree of awareness. But far more important than these mystical experiences are the increased understanding and the natural development in behavior that these experiences should impart.

THE PARTICULAR INTENTION THAT IS MOTIVATING THE MEDITATOR WILL GREATLY DETERMINE HOW THE MEDITATION, AND THEREFORE THE MEDITATOR, SPIRITUALLY MANIFEST. If the meditator seeks an empty nothingness, this will be the discovery. When one seeks Holiness, Holy experiences will come. Even as daily, mundane

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life continues, so will Holy life go on. After such an experience, the meditator will begin to realize that the mundane world is actually Holy. Affixing the attention to a subject nullifies the mind to that particular subject. This allows, invites, and causes that specific subject to fill not only the mind, but then to extend into the physical world.

### Passive and Active Techniques Explained

There can be many variations and depths of passive meditation. One may concentrate on a written word, such as a Name or Holy concept. Large, embellished calligraphy featuring Holy Names and concepts are frequently found in Jewish places of prayer, especially in the *Sephardic*, and in the traditions that stress the Mystical aspects of Torah. These make excellent subjects for meditation. The huge Name "HASHEM" in the middle of a poster is fine for passive meditation and the sentence in which it is written reads, "I place HASHEM before me always,"<sup>9</sup> which is an excellent subject for active meditation. Passive meditation draws the mind back again and again to the letters spelling "HASHEM." The concentration is drawn back onto the letters without trying to understand their meaning, but rather merely adhering to their shape. While active meditation also brings the mind back again and again to the subject, it constantly tries to understand the ramifications of Hashem being "placed before me always."

"Placing HASHEM" before you is to realize that you are standing in the Presence of God. According to the Sages, this means God is before your very eyes. Where exactly is "before your very eyes?" On the very surface of the eyeballs. God is right there. The root of the word HASHEM means TO BE or EXISTENCE. In this meditation, not only do you realize that

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Hashem is always before your physical body, but that He is also directly in front of your mind, within your consciousness. This brings the awareness of looking at God as if in a mirror held but a fraction of an inch in front of your eyes, or even on the very surface of the eyeballs, or closer yet, between you and your mind. From there you will see that it is HASHEM who is the only one that is in fact existing, and it is this Existence that is forming you who are now trying to mentally conceive IT.

With passive meditation, the mind is trained toward calm emptiness. Although the immediate objective is not to increase perception, this still occurs. Once the mind stills somewhat, natural information that was always present, but unrealized (because of the normal mental distractions) can now be seen. As the mind spends more concentrated time on the subject, additional information about the subject, or about the process, or even about the one meditating will be realized.

Also from a mystical perspective, as the mind approaches stillness, new, deeper intuitive awareness and previously unheard of experiences and information come to the consciousness. It is with passive meditation that most of the startling, unusual meditative experiences occur. What are they? Are they visions from God? Since all valid practice must have as its goal some type of improvement, how do these experiences lead to a better life? For one thing, when they occur the individual becomes immediately and vividly aware of Revealed Holiness. For some easily satisfied seekers, this in and of itself is reason enough to spend years searching. But there is much more to be gained from calming the mind. When one sees through the veil of confusion and realizes the actual nature of reality, life changes greatly. There are numerous techniques that can help to accomplish this.

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### The Senses As Meditation Tools

The five senses can be used as vehicles of meditation. Each sense has unique characteristics that can be taken advantage of in order to concentrate the thoughts and calm the mind.

#### Smell

Incense was an integral ingredient of the service in the ancient Temple in Jerusalem. This service was particularly dear to the priests who performed it, because from this work they were assured riches.<sup>10</sup> The sense of smell has been the least abused sense we have. Because we normally pay the least attention to this sense, it is the easiest to become attracted to. Seemingly without reason certain smells are pleasing and draw our attention while others are extremely offensive and drive us away. Not only in Jewish tradition is incense a major element of the worship service, but also in ancient and current Eastern and Western religious services is incense commonly found.

Man has always stuffed his senses seeking satisfaction, but compared to the other senses, the sense of smell has been relatively ignored. This affords a great opportunity. As the tiny odor molecules enter the nose, the mind quickly recognizes their presence. It judges and categorizes, trying to associate this aroma experience with any similar experiences it may have in its inventory. It then continues indifferently along its way, unconcerned with the havoc its judgment may have left in its wake. But even a very mild fragrance can be a useful subject of meditation by directing the awareness back to the fragrance again and again. Do this gently, yet persistently when the mind seems to have finished processing the fragrance and insists in moving on to more "exciting" stimuli.

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A fragrance that is particularly pleasing can easily be attached to. First, empty the lungs of all air, even squeezing them flat. Then, with your hands cupped around the source of the pleasing fragrance, bring it near to your nose and pull in a slow, long, deep breath, drawing the fragrance far deep inside. Draw it in smoothly and totally. Allow the chest to expand to its fullest capacity, mindlessly adhering to the fragrance. At this moment your concentration is singular. The fragrance is all there is.

Although we say, "I smell the flower over there," what actually occurs when we smell is that tiny, unknown molecules radiate from the flower, float over and enter the nose, where the sense of smell reads and communicates its findings to the individual through the mind. The mind analyzes, evaluates, and judges the experience. Is it pleasant? Is it dangerous? Is it clean? Do I want more or do I want less of it?

Often the mind will judge something as pleasant or unpleasant not by the specific object itself, but by what occurred when the person first encountered that object. For instance, if as a small child your parents took you to a grand outdoor market and you had a wonderful time. While you were there you noticed the overwhelmingly pleasant aromas coming from the rows of herb shops. When you smell those herbs again many years later, after you have completely forgotten that experience, you will feel good without knowing why. You associate these aromas with the secure and happy feelings you had when you first experienced them walking hand in hand with your loving parents. But now, you do not consciously know why you feel so good.

Trace the path of the fragrance that comes from the flower through the air to the tip of the nostrils. Follow it into the nose

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as it travels with the air further into the lungs. When the fragrance passes the sensing devices in the nose, its recognizable distinction is served up through the mind to the "I." Follow this flow backwards from the "I" who instigated the meditation, back through the mind, nose and onto the flower again, and then forward back from the flower to the "I," until you see all this is a constant stream. And as with any constant, when you touch any of it, you are touching the one IT.<sup>11</sup> The stream is one. Even though one end of the stream is not the other end of the stream, the entire stream is one.

### Sound

A sound such as a *Chassidic* melody (*nigun*) can spiral the consciousness upward by following its music, reacting to its mood. In fact, "Music is the pen of the soul."<sup>12</sup> A *nigun* has two distinct characteristics. First, there is the obvious physical sound. This is pleasing and attracts the consciousness like a moth is drawn to a flame. The moth comes even from afar wanting to see what this attractive light it senses is. As it draws nearer, it finds itself dancing around the warm desirable glow, drawing closer and closer. This attraction of the soul to the music can be utilized, ridden upon like a bird on a gust of wind by exclusively holding one's attention on it. Once the intellect decides to follow such a path, its main job, discernment, is finished, and now the work is merely adherence to this pleasant sound. Adherence is primarily a singular task. The melody alone is an adequate subject for meditation. The mind stills as the melody takes it along its pleasant path; normal daily woes fall from the forefront of consciousness and relaxation replaces tension.

A single note can also be used as a meditative subject. Pluck a string over and over again, at first fairly quickly, and then as

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the mind begins to adhere, slow the plucking more and more. The agitations of the mind become paced by the sound, and even more so by the lengthening silent spaces in between the plucks, until it approaches stillness. In stillness, the Oneness can most easily be recognized. In stillness there is no apparent movement. Movement requires distinction, duality. In silence, the soul seeks unobstructed, reaching farther, scanning freely, for in silence, there is nothing to distract, nothing to which you can attach. When the great yearning produces the intense scream for complete adherence, the scream that is completely silent will come.<sup>13</sup>

Mystical silence is not like the silence of the deaf. With the deaf, there is sound, but the ears cannot hear it. Neither is it the silence of the mute. The mute cannot speak. Their silence comes from a limitation. Nor is this silence like the emptiness of a physical void. The mystical silence is so rich and full it is overwhelming.

An exercise that helps train the mind to listen for this mystical stillness is to sit in a very quiet place and try to listen to the silence as if there were some sound present that you are not yet able to hear. After some time, cup your hands around the backs of your ears, even bending them forward as if straining to hear something very faint. The volume level of what you thought was silence will increase substantially. It will now seem much easier to hear the "silence" since it is much louder. Now, slowly reverse the process. The volume will all but disappear. Replace your hands slowly and follow the natural reaction of the sense of hearing to the volume change. With the volume of the "silence" being slowly increased and decreased, the distinct participants in listening become more evident. Not only does the sound become louder but the

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distinction between mind, sound and listener also becomes more apparent. This will train the mind to listen more intently and to begin to recognize what is the nature of one who is listening.

The opportunity in silence is vast. When first “hearing” silence, the realization is so startling that it can be compared to a loud, sudden clap of thunder. The experiences that come from this type of meditation are entirely directed from within the meditator, from the unique needs of that particular soul. When meditating on sounds, however, the results can also be affected by the content of a particular sound. If the sound is meaningless, such as a tuning fork, the meditation will be completely passive and the experience will be determined by the individual’s characteristics.

But when meditating on a nigun, or sound with content, there is an additional opportunity for a much deeper communication and elevation. These Chassidic melodies were never intended to be mere tunes. Each came to satisfy a particular spiritual need. Each is an outward manifestation, expressing a very deep feeling that is coming from a greatly elevated soul. If one will sincerely empty oneself of personal desires and sing these melodies with openness of heart, the singer will become an actual vehicle for this spiritual feeling. He will become the musical instrument that is being played by the Rebbe whose tunes they are singing. The spiritual status of that Rebbe, his place in the world, both physical and spiritual, will come through and even shape the singer. The Rebbe’s message will actually pass through and spiritually form the singer. He will be elevated by the spiritual pattern that is now funneling and orchestrating his feelings. This is a great

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opportunity to intimately experience the depth and blessings of the great Rebbes who lived, even long ago.

### **Taste**

Few things in the world occupy the average person's concern more than the sense of taste. Yet, who can say what it is? How does it really affect us? Its obvious purpose is to protect life; warning, encouraging, moving one in certain directions. But today, taste has become the very purpose of life to many people.

Take a large crystal of salt and place it on your tongue way back inside, away from the area that reads salt. Nothing much happens. Now, slowly move it toward the front of your tongue (which does communicate salt). "SALT, SALT," the tongue calls out. What route does this announcement take? Trace it. To whom does it report? How am I actually affected by salt; both before it touched the salt spot and after it touched it? The salt, on the inside of the tongue and on the tip of the tongue were doing the same thing to me. Yet when it reached the front of the tongue, I became aware of it. What is the nature of the attraction it has me experience? What area of me does it really affect? What is doing what to what? Why do African children react to salt with the same intense desire as Western children react to sugar? Am I trained, addicted, or am I in control? Am I a servant in this house or am I its master?

### **Touch**

Like all sensory experience, when you touch an object, what is felt is "felt" not where you touch the object, but rather in your mind. The object communicates its nature to the fingers. The finger receives these impressions and sends its reaction to them on to the brain. The brain then informs the broader system what

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and where is being touched. But it is the mind that is the key player in the sense of touch, not the skin. When someone touches something very cold thinking that it is hot, they will “feel” their fingers burning and quickly pull them away. The mind believing the fingers were being burnt causes the individual to react to the cold as if his skin was experiencing hot.

One reason a warm tub of water is so relaxing is that it replaces the mind's normal daily worries, insisting it apply a larger portion of its capacity to the pleasant heat surrounding the body. This is, in effect, the process of passive meditation, but instead of the meditation being practiced by the mind repeatedly directing its attention onto the subject, here the subject is being repeatedly brought to the consciousness physically by the unusual temperature of the water.

### **Sight**

The sense of sight is the sense we rely upon the most. We learn the most about the world from this sense, yet the vast majority of people completely misunderstand it. If asked to point to where you see these words that you are reading, you would most probably point to the page in front of you, however this is not true. What we really see is the light traveling from the sun at a speed of 186,000 miles per second, reaching the object we are looking at, bouncing off, and taking with it an image of that object. The light brings the image over to the surface of the eyeballs, turns it upside down, proceeds through the retinas and on into the brain. Deep inside the brain, in the back of the head, it projects the image to an area close to the top of the cortex, and it is only here that we finally see a picture of what is in front of us. Instead of pointing to the page in front of you, you should have pointed toward your eyes, or toward the

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back of your head. We never get out of our heads, not for a moment.

We have no visual depth perception at all. We laugh at the limitations of a bug traveling along a huge wall, while ignoring our own shortsightedness. This bug cannot see beyond its touch. It has absolutely no idea of the possibilities around it. The exquisite, vividly radiating blue bug, does not even know it is blue. Nor do we see our true nature. Of the myriad options, we see but the tiniest ray. Nature compensates for our lack of depth perception by making everything seem to get smaller as it moves away and larger as it draws near. But in truth, everything remains the same size. We do not see the objects themselves. We see signals arranged in our head, translating a reflection of the object's physical appearance.

When we look at an object, the vast majority of what we think we see is internally generated. We make this picture up from our personal, intimate consciousness. How we experience these objects is not a universally shared experience. The mind applies its own individual opinions to the visual experience and then leads us to believe that our internally created conclusion is really what we are seeing. Actually, only a small percentage of what we mentally experience has anything at all to do with the visualizations, the external stimuli.<sup>14</sup> If so, what is really going on? Even more importantly, do I really exist?

Accurately understanding this phenomenon substantially changes our attitude toward the physical world and therefore our behavior in it. If all we know of this external, physical world are small dots viewed upside down, deep inside the head, need we be so attached to these things? When we are not so attached to the stimuli rushing in upon us, we can more easily step back, detach and look, trying to understand the

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nature of the one who is looking out at the world from behind the mind.

If satisfaction comes solely from recognizing the presence of certain patterns in the brain, then whether these patterns are produced by the actual physical object being present, or merely by the mind imagining that they are present will make little difference in the degree of mental satisfaction. Thus, while the body might be physically starving, if the mind is being “fed” the pattern of eating, the individual will not want food. Although actually starving, he will not think to go out into the physical world to seek food. Likewise, if the individual can satisfy any of his most intense cravings by understanding what it really takes to satisfy them, what it is he really requires, he will not need to go out into the world and spend many hard years trying to collect the physical objects.

Recently, scientists attached an electronic stimulation device to a rat’s brain. They then activated the rat’s mental pleasure center when it walked out into the open on a bright day. This is something that rats would normally avoid doing, but since this rat was receiving mental pleasure from the electronic stimulation when it went into the open area, it lingered there.

Once man understands that patterns alone cause mental satisfaction, he will also realize that, when possible, it is easier to let go of the desire altogether. This creates an even greater degree of satisfaction as the individual realizes the already-satisfied peace within.

Using the sense of sight as a vehicle, any meaningful object, such as the *tzitzit* (fringes)<sup>15</sup> can be a useful subject of meditation. The subject here is a physical object that is merely focused upon without trying to understand the concept that the object represents. As the mind wanders from gazing at the

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object, thoughts of the nature of the object may well come to mind. This will remind you to bring the concentration back to the physical object itself. Or, as the thoughts wander from the fixed gazing, they might go on to consider the higher nature of the object, namely, the meaning of the fringes, or still higher, on to the Nature of the One Who commands their use. Thus, the meditation started with a passive technique, simple gazing, and then as the mind moved away from this confinement, it went into an active form of meditation, deepening understanding.

However, meditating on less tangible subjects (such as light) will lead the mind more directly to the intangible.<sup>16</sup> The mind realizes what it “sees” by absorbing and imitating according to its capacity. This communicates the nomenclature of the subject, so it can be somewhat experienced. Thus, meditating on light causes the mind to experience and radiate light.

Even subtler are the distinction-less meditations such as bringing the concentration back again and again to the Place that fills and surrounds all matter. Although the subject here is unchanging, and even though the initial objective is to simply hold the attention on it, still, the individual’s understanding of the subject will change. This is especially true as the appreciation and awe of Place dawns. The Place Itself does not change. Bring the attention back again and again to this most subtle subject. First, look at the Place in front of you. What do you see? If you say that you see the table, book, walls etc., then you are not looking at the Place, but rather, you are looking at the things that are in the Place. Instead, try to imagine unlimited area or try to understand one of the characteristics of Place. For instance; It is Endless, Uniform, the Common Denominator, etc. When you realize the nature of Place, you will see trying to adhere to Place is like trying to reach to touch

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all of your skin, all over, all at one time. This is something you need not try to do, since you are already doing it. Likewise, the way to adhere to Stillness or Place is to just BE. Both passive adherence to a holy subject, and actively seeking deeper perceptions bring Awe and Understanding. Or, the meditative response may be silence.

### **Mind-Altering Drugs**

Trying to train the mind can be quite tedious. Progress may be very slow. The goal of removing the mind's persistent delusions can seem unrealistic, unattainable. Certainly, the vast majority of people who begin the path of meditation become bored or frustrated and quickly abandon it. Due to these inherent obstacles, many people longing for a shortcut have tried to bypass the difficult process that meditation requires and have instead tried to experiment with mind-altering drugs. The switch seems quite logical since both experiences are so mind centered. Both the meditator and the experimental drug user enjoy the unusual mental experiences that can come from either path. The meditator searches through the vast space that the mind presents to him and so does the drug user. But the thinking is that the drug user gets to ride on a rocket ship while the meditator barely moves along, floating in a mere rowboat.

The experience of mentally traveling through this inner space gives rise to the mind-altering drug users' exclamation, "Far out!" as they are flung further and further out, away into their imagination. The further out, the more significant the "trip," i.e. "far out!" If the trip went so far out that you could no longer see where it started from, it would be "out of sight!"

Any reluctance or fear of this artificially-induced thrust out into the inner space, any attachment that inhibits or "drags" in

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any way the hurled-upward and outward explosion, is a “hang-up,” and the solution to these “hang-ups” is not to analyze them, which merely locks you into that lower place, but to completely “let go” and to allow the consciousness to continue soaring until the full force of the powerful surge dissipates. Any one so “attached,” unable or unwilling to let go, will be forcefully “ripped off” from his mental composure and will be entirely “blown away” by the intense acceleration the drug's “rush” produces.

After the zooming through space subsides, the individual tries to readjust to the startling information he has just experienced. But then the rush returns and forcefully takes him back up again. If he is not ready to go back up again, if he is not willing to give up EVERYTHING, family, love, being, but wanting instead to rest for a moment to catch his mental breath, yet the surge still comes, then the trip turns into a definite “bummer!” He tries desperately to cling to his familiar sane mental frames of reference, while the drug insists on his streaking through “infinite” uncharted space. Or, when all is going all right, and the mind's interesting scenes keep flying by as you are coasting along like a record needle huddled into the record's groove, without even having to make decisions, then everything is “groovy.”

Although there can be valid therapeutic benefits to some of these drugs when properly administered (i.e. they can unglue even the most stubborn, completely stuck personality or perspective,) still they can be quite dangerous, as they are able to produce extreme, possibly harmful experiences to the unprepared mind. It can take YEARS to straighten out a false concept accepted while hallucinating.

When a magnifying glass is held up in front of someone, the

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distortions it produces can easily be put into perspective since the glass magnifies only the small area that it covers. The person can see the surrounding areas from his normal, unmagnified perspective so the magnified area can be understood. However, when the magnifying glass is put right in front of the eyes, thereby distorting the entire view, it is much more difficult to put the experience into perspective. The viewer may become confused, disoriented. Still it is possible to rationalize what is happening and become comfortable even with the distorted view. But if the magnifying glass were placed between the person and his mind, his entire being would become distorted. In such an experience the parameters of logic and categorizing fail and it becomes a "free-fall" experience. This produces both the euphoric roller coaster effect of the drug and its danger.

Certain addictive drugs produce a false sense of increased clarity. Since they so radically skew the mind, they can also produce creativity. Also, these drugs may require larger and larger doses to produce the same effect. This is the reason why so many young, popular entertainers overdose. The drugs "tweak" the mind, which produces a "high," but this comes by burning up some of the system. Longtime abusers of these types of drugs will have a pallor, a dead glow, as if coming from a dull fluorescent light bulb.

Each of the various types of drugs causes a specific reaction; some are intentionally elevating while others actually pull the users mentally down. Some specialize in colorful hallucinations while still others produce feelings of love or "mellowness" toward all. However, the major lure to drugs for the spiritual seeker is that some of these drugs seem to increase the user's concentration which allows him to elevate his consciousness so

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he seems to see the normal environment from an apparently higher, more spiritual perspective. But, what is actually happening is that the drug lowers the individual's discernment level, making him more easily satisfied with the mundane. This fools the users into thinking they are advancing while actually they are merely playing with the lower world.

Also, drugs that elevate moods when used often lower moods below the normal mindset when they are not being taken, so a dependency develops. These lower moods may manifest as increased irritability, frustration or even depression.

The final judgment on such drug use is that after the trip is over, at best you come right back to the place you started from and if you want to advance from there you still must do the work that you tried to avoid.

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## TWO

### What makes Jewish Meditation Unique?

The question could be asked: "If it is proper to meditate on a meaningful object, what is wrong with those who meditate on idols?" These forms are meaningful to them. And if our meditating on form can bring us to higher understanding, isn't this what they are saying about their idols? They say, such and such an idol is merely the personification of a certain attribute or characteristic of their god and those fierce dragons they depict and the many-armed creatures are just picturing man's moods. And when they meditate on that form, it brings to their mind "higher thoughts." So what is the difference between meditating on a meaningful form, such as the fringes, and meditating on an idol?

The answer is the following: It is true that in some meditations the Torah suggests a form to meditate upon, such as when (referring to the fringes) it says, ". . . and you shall look upon them . . ."17 Yes, the fringes are being used as a reference to meditate on and to go even beyond. But we are not attributing a personality to the fringes, nor are we praying to them. We are not saying the fringes are a form of god. Yes, there are holy objects, such as a Torah Scroll. Holy objects exist and should be revered. Deities do not exist and should not be revered. The meditation subject becomes very dear to the meditator. When a personality is attributed to a meditation subject as is done when meditating on an idol, that personality will become adored, worshiped, even prayed to. No healthy

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person would attribute a personality to a scroll, or to a fringe and certainly they would not pray to them.

### **Jewish Vs. Eastern Meditation**

What is the difference between someone who, using Jewish techniques, goes off and sits in a cave meditating for many years (as some famous Jewish teachers have) and someone who, using the Eastern techniques, also sits in a cave and meditates for many years?

The person following the Jewish techniques might be meditating on light or on the underlying emptiness from which all creation is being formed, and the person following the Eastern techniques might also be meditating on light or on the vast emptiness.

The source of the Jewish meditation techniques can be traced to Abraham, and some of the Eastern meditative techniques can also be traced to Abraham. Abraham sent these teachings to their land (the land of the East) some four thousand years ago with the sons that he had with a concubine.<sup>18</sup>

Both meditators go up and down, both see great wonders and deep darkness, both experience great highs and great lows. So does it matter which techniques you use?

The difference is; THE EASTERN MEDITATOR WILL RECEIVE ACCORDING TO *HIS* INTENTIONS, WORDS, AND DEEDS, AND THE ONES WHO FOLLOW THE TORAH'S METHODS WILL RECEIVE ACCORDING TO *THE TORAH'S* INTENTIONS, WORDS AND DEEDS.

If one meditates on a lofty subject, such as visualizing the All as the Universal, Unchanging, single One, but still keeps an

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idol of any kind to adore, he will most certainly corrupt his spiritual path. An idol is a limited, formed particular within the all. The formed particular will not lead to the Universal, formless, Creator. It will merely burn its form onto the mind of the meditator. Worshipping form contradicts the lofty understanding that the All is all-inclusive and unlimited. Instead, this adoration claims that there is uniqueness to that particular idol. The worshipper concocts and attributes this uniqueness to that particular form.

Or, if despite one's lofty insights that his meditation brings, he clings to immoralities thinking that he is above the limiting restrictions that common decency instills, he will fall lower and lower into the deepest pits of hell. His meditation will throw him down and down deeper again. Then suddenly he will be raised up seemingly into an ecstatic high, but this high will only be into a bright, brass dome. His highs will never get beyond this closed metal ceiling. He will go up again and again into its blazing glare, each time thinking that again he has found his spiritual goal. Its glare will convince him that he should continue on in his service despite his being deeply immersed in sensual immoralities. His lows will be substantial. His idols and immorality will prevent him from getting past the restricting concepts that his idol stood for.

Although his techniques might produce visions and wonders that glitter brightly, his highs will be limited by his principles. When he seeks "emptiness," he will conclude, "all is emptiness." If he reasons all he finds is finite and changing, therefore there must not be an Unchanging Infinite, or if he says; "I have found nothing eternal in all my searching, therefore it must not exist," or bows to "nothingness" and ultimately concludes that even he himself does not exist, he will

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receive what he intended to find. All these are common conclusions reached by meditators today.

THESE CONCLUSIONS ARE NOT INHERENT IN THE MEDITATION TECHNIQUES BUT ARE REACHED SOLELY BECAUSE THEY ARE INHERENT IN THE MEDITATOR'S INTENTION. These students are taught such principles when first learning their technique of meditation. They look for these conclusions. No one can say: "I did not find it, therefore it does not exist." No one can say: "Someone told me, 'No one exists,' therefore, there is no one." The accurate conclusion will not be: "Reality is an empty meaningless illusion," nor is it "a dance raised up by a magician's stick."

Or, if a seeker of the Nations (a non-Jew) lives a righteous life, he will be counted among the few true, righteous people of the world. He will receive an excellent share in this world and a share in the World To Come.<sup>19</sup>

### **Torah vs. Eastern Religions**

The word religion comes from the Latin *religare*, to reunite. Indeed, it is from a feeling of perceived separation that religions are born.

It is not the intention here to discuss in depth the many great differences between Torah and the various religions of the East. However, the truth that is found woven within these religions can make them very enticing. All religions and philosophies have vast written and oral teachings. Also, there are many different schools of thought within each of them, each with substantially different attitudes about essentials; so to pick any single principle claiming it is the basic truth of that religion can always draw argument. Still, the following can be considered backbone beliefs of these religions, as quoted from

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one of their "scriptures" or from a currently favored leader. These particular religions have been chosen because of their recent popularity in the West and their focus on meditative practices.

**BUDDHISM:** "Buddhist practice leads to a recognition that one's own being is merely a mind-body process. There is no one behind it, nothing to do, nothing to get."<sup>20</sup>

**TAOISM:** "The Tao (The Indefinable), produces (begets) one, the one produces two, two produces three, and three produces all beings."<sup>21</sup> "The Primary One was divided into two opposing forces, eventually to be reunited again."<sup>22</sup>

**HINDUISM:** Hinduism, (*Brahmanism*), teaches man to worship the sun and moon, and also the "many millions of gods."<sup>23</sup>

"All paths lead to the same place."<sup>24</sup>

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On the surface these might somehow seem to make some kind of sense, or even appear to be esoteric statements carrying a deep hidden truth. But the conclusions reached by following these principles are disastrous. Those who say, "There is no one existing behind reality," are in fact saying that there is no one existing within reality. Since they meditate with the intent of "finding nothing," this is exactly what they find: nothing.

"The Unknown produces the one, which produces two . . ." is a philosophy of "Partnership," for the Indefinable creates the "one" and then the "one" goes on to produce the many. Thus they are looking for more than one creator, more than one power, and an IMAGINED, irreconcilable separation between

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the Indefinable Creator, and the definable creation. This limits the definable from ever being the Indefinable, and sees the distinctions within creation to be actual separations.

Although at the most esoteric level, Taoist writings claim that the Creator is one and that all of the spirits, deities and such that they pray to are merely depictions of aspects of that one, this is certainly not what has been believed and practiced by the followers of this religion throughout its history. Powers, deities, ghosts are their lot. "Humans were believed to get cooperation from unseen powers when in harmony with nature."<sup>25</sup> From its earliest roots, Taoism writes of, ". . . ghosts, and deities, and wives of deities . . . immortals . . ." <sup>26</sup> and of "god."<sup>27</sup> A philosophy based on the "One being divided into two opposing forces" understands the Whole is made out of Its parts. In fact, there is only one underlying force. Traditional Chinese philosophy ascribes Taoism to ". . . the I Ching (book of changes) . . . ostensibly a book of divination, . . . soothsaying."<sup>28</sup> Taoism is ". . . a reinterpretation of an ancient unnamed tradition of nature worship, divination,<sup>29</sup> and magic."<sup>30</sup>

Praying to stars, or to a person, or to any created object, is simply primitive. Whatever the rationale, it is behavior that comes from extremely limited thinking, and invariably leads to the basest immorality. One common rationale is: "the idol represents a certain aspect of god and since god is beyond man's ability to perceive, man needs this form to worship instead." Or, "if you can't get to the King, at least you can get to one of his princes. Or, "without the sun there would be no life here, therefore the sun is worthy of worship." All mankind is made in the "image" of God.<sup>31</sup> God is accessible to each and every one of us. There is no need for an invented, created form

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to intercede. Worship of form merely leads to the continuation of this practice. It does not lead to the recognition of the One formless God which is the goal.

Since the concept of monotheism has become readily available throughout the world, the teachers of the idolatrous religions have been forced to rephrase their beliefs. So today, we find Hindu Swamis teaching their students to worship the forms of demigods and incarnations of gods and such, while still claiming that they are teaching a monotheistic religion. As with Taoist teachers, their rationale is that the idols and demigods are merely depicting aspects of the one overall God.

Compare these sayings to the famous Chassidic master Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev's simple, clear teaching: "THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO REALIZE IS GOD CREATED ALL AND HE IS ALL."<sup>32</sup> "He is all," completely transcends those limited beliefs. Not only does this explain that there is an Existence behind the creation, it says that there is an Indweller within it. And in fact, these two AND the entire universal "mind-body process" are actually a simple One. It is God, who is Existence, who is dwelling in all, as all. Not only did the Unknowable create creation, He is still creating it right now. He alone is creating it and He is making it out of Himself. Creation is but a tiny ray of a ray of God's Presence in which he is disguising Himself, by wrapping a facet of His Endlessness within distinctions of colors and forms, which are also made of Him.<sup>33</sup>

### Eastern Idolatry

The different outcome of these religions' doctrines and the Torah's is enormous. Being guided by such Eastern teachings, meditation will lead to nothingness, partnerships (believing in

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more than one force in the Universe), endless dualities, or even to the worship of many gods. As opposed to these, the Truth is a spiritual pleasure that brings the simple recognition of a Single, Endless One.

Although some of these religions claim to be "no-god philosophies" or "ways of life," when they filter down to the practitioner, religious ceremony and the grossest forms of idolatry are almost always present. For instance, it is not uncommon to find Buddhists praying to the man Buddha, or Taoists talking to ghosts. The typical Hindu believer has a statue in his home that he bows down to each day and about which he says, "This is my god." He is not saying this is merely a representation of his god (which would also be gross idolatry), but even more primitively, he believes that the statue is his actual god. He is worshipping form and physicality (matter). "It is a common misunderstanding among Buddhists that the Buddha is a god rather than an enlightened man. Devotional attitude is reinforced by various rituals performed by the monks . . . exorcisms, shaman practices. In each country, Buddhist practice has incorporated elements of rites from other religions and early animist roots."<sup>34</sup>

Even the most renowned Buddhist teachers retain some of these religious practices. These practices lead to the worship of many gods, forces, angels, demons and the like, or to "nothing." For instance, a Buddhist text from over 2300 years ago, the "Dhammapada," often refers to the place and characteristics of the many gods.

The Dalai Lama, one of today's most popular Buddhist leaders, explains that there are "many gods in [his] country," and that his "home province is the home of one of the most important deities."<sup>35</sup> Recently, in the United States, this

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internationally respected Lama gathered some 50,000 people, who paid fifty to sixty dollars a day, to watch him make a drawing from colored sand which was to be gathered up and placed into a body of water. From there "it would reach all bodies of water in the world and would remove violence by being an offering to the god with four heads and twenty-one arms."<sup>36</sup>

Walking barefooted on red-hot coals is a common practice to demonstrate a Buddhist's degree of devotion or concentration.

Buddhist monks try to generate an aura of stillness and detachment even as they move through busy cities. This comes from many years of full-time practices. They will walk, almost gliding along, trying to maintain stillness and aloofness from their surroundings. Although claiming to teach the "center" path, asceticism is a frequent conclusion to their "don't move" and "no self within" philosophy. Following such advice generally results in an empty or aching perspective.

Asceticism is not a recent spiritual innovation. Its roots can be traced back to a few generations after Noah. One of his descendants, Yoktan, fathered an entire nation of ascetics who went naked and were only interested in death. They settled by the "eastern mountain."<sup>37</sup> According to the historian Josephus, they dwelled by the Cophon River in India. In Arabian tradition, these are the Kochton who founded Yemen.

To the very opposite of this, the Torah insists on both physical and spiritual growth. This requires making a family and contributing to the world. In order to do this the seeker must engage the world and its many daily details. This requires more than simply concentrating on the singularity of breath or

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emptiness. This entails recognizing distinctions and taking actions and not mere rejection. The Torah stresses; "Open for Me an opening the size of the hole in a needle and I will open for you an opening as wide as the entrance to the Temple," and "When man sanctifies himself below, God sanctifies him much more from above."<sup>38</sup> Thus, Torah insists that man be mentally and physically engaged in elevating this physical world, while the East advises, "Leave the planet like you found it." In fact, "Don't move."

One Buddhist meditation technique is to retain pain as a mantra. They do this by not shifting their aching bodies to relieve a painful, stiff meditation position. Focusing on this pain, they ask, "What is it that really needs to move?" They are striving to understand the nature of the physical and mental reality, while teaching "Let go," in order to gain "insight" that will confirm their fundamental principle: "All life is transient and suffering and there is no self." Their conclusion is: "Life is merely a mind-body process, enacting without an 'I' or Self within." A driverless carriage?

The Buddhist technique of almost exclusive focusing on the transitory nature of matter leads them to make such outrageous, sweeping statements as: "There is no boy. There is no girl, merely this process."<sup>39</sup> Of course, the distinctions of "boy" and "girl" are valid perspectives and do in fact exist. But, these Buddhists are so attentive to their goal, i.e., the common, underlying, unmanifest, they try to somehow ignore or minimize the ALSO EXTREMELY ESSENTIAL MANIFEST MULTIPLE perspective.

A typical Buddhist passive "walking meditation" technique is to count your steps, or to watch your breath. Both of these methods are designed to simply detach one from the normal

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mental struggle by focusing on a meaningless subject. A recommended Jewish passive walking meditation technique is to try to concentrate on the One, Common, Universal Place. Although both are passive techniques, since the Jewish method has a subject with deep content, not only will it bring about detachment from the daily mental agitations, but it can also result in the revelation of Glory.

Buddhist meditation teachers also utilize “color wheels” and other hypnotic devices, however the preferred, more esoteric Buddhist technique is to engage the intellect (called “insight meditation”) favoring active over purely passive techniques.

One of the more famous Tibetan Buddhist practices is to make a *Kalachakra*. This is a sand *Mandala*, which is an intricate painting that can take several skilled monks a number of painstaking days to create. It is made with colored sand and usually depicts a graphic symbol of the universe, perhaps a circle enclosing a square with a deity on each side. After it is completed, there are religious ceremonies and then the painting is destroyed. This symbolizes the impermanence of all things.

To the beginning seeker such an impressive service might seem wise. But this world, although temporary, is of great value to us. It would be physically and spiritually wasteful to disdain the creation by stressing its fleeting nature. Rather, we are to love the creation<sup>40</sup> and we must try to be fruitful<sup>41</sup> while we are here.

The major living Hindu idol today lives in South India. His devotees call him “Baba.” He is a little old, gray-haired man who wears a dress, reddens his lips, and sexually abuses his “prettiest,” young male devotees! When questioned about this

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strange behavior, he explains that he is; " . . . purifying the young men," and "You cannot judge a god incarnate, since his actions are beyond the normal person's understanding." Yet, he claims over sixty million devotees worship him every day!

His great attraction is that he gives devotees objects he seems to materialize by merely waving his hand. He looks at a person and says, "You like books, diamonds?" and then waves his hand and brings forth a wonderful book or a beautiful diamond. He confides to his closest devotees that he does not actually materialize these objects, but rather he has them physically stored in his "storeroom" at another location and he has a "spiritual messenger" who brings them to his hand when he waves! This he does openly today in India. Homosexuality and magic are often found together, as they were in ancient Egypt.<sup>42</sup>

A popular sect of Hinduism operates many *ashrams* (camps)<sup>43</sup> in the West, where the highlight of their public, frenzied, worship service is feeding physical food to an idol. When pressed, they confide the idol "eats only a little bit of the food it is offered." These spiritual evils come, even though the sect may also have many proper intentions combined with their improper intentions. For instance, many of these sects insist on physically healthy diets and exercise, speaking softly, cleanliness, no drugs, etc., yet since they have an underlying false premise, these seemingly proper qualities merely disguise the falseness and act as lures.

"All paths lead to the same place." This idea comes from the analogy of many different paths going up a mountain. It is applied to the various spiritual paths, teaching they all will succeed since they all go up. "Although the many mountain paths rarely cross, still, they all lead to the top of the mountain."

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This idea might be true if, in fact all paths actually do go up, but indeed they do not.

### **Analogies and Symbols**

To be effective, analogies and symbols must be cleverly designed to depict the concept for which they stand. For instance, the question mark (?) is a description, a map of its meaning. The dot represents the point from where you are looking and the hooked shaped line symbolizes the road ahead. You can see for a short distance in front of you because the beginning of the path is straight but then comes the bend in the road that blocks your further vision. Beyond this you cannot see. Thus the question: what lies ahead?

Religious symbols are also specifically designed to illustrate their most essential principle. For instance, Buddhism was founded in the East and is based on meditative techniques. Fittingly, Buddhism's most common symbol is a statue of a serene-looking Oriental man sitting in meditation.

Christianity's most basic teaching is "God is three: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." Most Christians assume their symbol, the cross, is a reference to the crucifixion of their religion's founder. But archaeologists say the apparatus used by the Romans in that age to execute their criminals, looked more like T-shaped beams, with a step for the person to stand on. Some say it was a single shaft. Although today's most common version of the cross does remind Christians of their founder's execution, the actual reason it is used as the almost universal Christian symbol is to symbolize their belief in a "Trinity," one shaft sprouting three ends.

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Hinduism's most common symbol is a Sanskrit letter spelling the sound of their universal mantra, "Ohm." This mantra is first found in the Torah as one of the seventy-two three-letter Names of God, "Aleph Vav Mem." This Name was brought to India by the sons of Abraham, as is explained in many places.<sup>44</sup> Hinduism is flooded with pictures of their many gods and demons, each more fierce or more loving than the next. A sub-sect within Hinduism, which is based on sexual energy, fittingly uses a phallic-shaped shaft protruding from the middle of a round, lipped dish as their symbol. Fertility cults use a statue of a realistically rendered erect penis as their most descriptive symbol.

Taoism's black and white circle describes its basic teaching: "The one is two opposites that must come together in harmony for there to be peace."

According to most authorities, ancient Jewish Temple music did not utilize harmony. Harmony occurs when two (notes) come together making a new combined sound which is a pleasing arrangement of its parts. This is opposite to the Torah's most basic teaching. Judaism has been symbolized by the six-pointed star since the time of King David over 3,000 thousand years ago.<sup>45</sup> This design explains the most basic principle of Torah: although there are six very distinct, even opposite directions, they are all ONE. This ONE is single. It is not made up of parts.

### **Combining Meditation Techniques**

Almost all religions have some meditative practices. Certainly those listed here teach such techniques as color wheels or "insight" meditations, chanting sounds or names of deities while counting on a string of beads or with a rosary, or

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simple contemplation. Such techniques have been developed to train the practitioners to detach from the entirely physical perspective and to try to become aware of a spiritual perspective.

Meditation techniques may be combined in many ways. For instance, when reciting, "Hear O' Israel the Lord our God, the Lord is One," concentrate on the meaning of each word, trying to gain deeper and deeper understanding of each concept mentioned. Then after the final word, rest in stillness as the silent witness. During the first phase of this meditation the mind is instructed to delve deeper and deeper, thereby expanding its understanding. This phase is called active meditation. In the second stage of this technique the mind is silently witnessing the result of its previous activity; therefore this phase is called passive meditation.

In fact, most meditations will contain aspects of both active and passive meditation. For example: when concentrating on a fixed object, such as a Name, the continuing effort to adhere (that is, to bring one's attention back again and again to the subject) is a passive technique. This aspect is passive since the purpose of trying to adhere is not to expand your understanding of adherence. Yet it also has an active aspect, for the mind will be actively engaged trying to learn how to overcome its natural tendency to wander. In true active meditation, the understanding of the subject (and not just the adherence process) will be changing. The phase of mere prolonged concentration on the subject is passive meditation.

As the mind adheres to the subject, deeper insight into the actual nature of the subject, or of the meditator, will surface. These insights can come either from investigating the nature of the subject, or from merely stilling the mind and simply

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concentrating on the subject without trying to understand it at all. In silence, even the slightest ripples are seen. By increasing one's perception, one sees through the false or shallow perceptions previously maintained. This produces a more accurate understanding of reality.

The deeper insights may arise simply because the mind is being directed to look at the subject longer, thus learning more about it. Here, the added information comes from spending more time on the subject.

Or, realizations may come about since the mind's constant chatter is being ignored. This allows single-minded attention to be focused on the subject, which will help to reveal the subject's true nature. This new information comes from the enhanced concentration, which the lack of distractions produces. These realizations may come instantly, without requiring a long period of practice.

Also, most mystically, as the mind approaches stillness, intuitive resources surface revealing the deeper nature of the subject or of the meditator. This type of realization is the most wondrous since it is entirely unexpected and its source is completely unknown.<sup>46</sup>

If the entire sequence of the realization process is understood, the logical steps leading from one stage to the next will be apparent, but while he is experiencing stillness the meditator does not see how these new realizations surface. They just "pop" into his consciousness so he experiences them as "intuitive," ascending into the known from the unknown.

During the moments of consistent adhering, the meditation is called passive. Adhering leads to clarity, which brings deepening perception. In the stage of deepening perception, the meditation is called active. Active and passive are merely terms

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utilized to describe different phases within the same process and are not to be considered different methods of meditation.

It is extremely difficult to hold one's attention on a single, unchanging subject. Do not expect to be able to do this for more than a few moments. When the mind does affix onto such an unchanging subject, the meditator will soon find himself in deep concentrated awareness, or in extremely vivid meditation dreams. The experience of deep concentration may be likened to the state of consciousness one experiences during the moment just before falling asleep. At this moment, there is awareness of both the wakeful and the dream states, along with great detachment. The more experienced the meditator, the sooner he will reach this stage. It is not unusual for a long-time meditator to merely focus on his subject of meditation for a scant second or two before falling into concentrated awareness or vivid dreams.

Those who wish to engage in passive meditation, but find it too difficult, should begin by employing various concrete subjects. For instance, begin by looking at a Name of God. As the mind wanders, if you cannot easily bring it back to the Name, watch your breath for a few cycles, and then as the mind rebels and refuses to be so restricted, go back to the Name.

A productive method is to start with a passive technique. As the mind calms or leaves the subject, try to understand the depth of the subject, thereby shifting to an active technique. Then shift back to the passive technique. This method can bring rapid results. If the subject is without content, such as a crystal or a meaningless unwavering sound, the meditation will be completely passive since there is no desire to understand the subject at all. When the subject has content, such as a Holy Name, consciousness, or Place, even if the intent is to use solely

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a passive technique, as the mind runs it will also run to the content of the subject, making the meditation active.

A single mental image can be held before the mind's eye for only an instant. A physical image (such as a written Name) can be gazed at for a long time, but the mind is only able to concentrate on that subject sporadically. It runs back and forth to varied mental subjects even while still physically focusing on the physical image. This is the reason why the subjects of even passive meditation should ideally have rich content, so as the mind runs, it may run to the content of the subject, and also bring the benefits of active meditation.

From the mystical perspective, while the mind is focused on a subject, it becomes nullified to that subject. This results in the nature of that subject filling the mind. If the subject has deep spiritual content, such as Place, not only will the "physical" characteristics of the subject fill the mind, but also the underlying, mystical, spiritual characteristics of the subject will fill the mind. This occurs even though the meditator is totally unaware of the mystical aspects of that subject. So, as the meditation begins, the subject is merely the conceivable aspects of Place, but as the meditation succeeds, the Glory of what the Place actually is will be realized.

Gazing at the brightness that surrounds the upper portion of a flame, although seemingly without content, will train the mind to search for the Holy Light. It does this by exercising and thereby teaching the mind to move from a most subtle subject (the colored edge of the flame) to an even subtler subject (the colorless brightness that surrounds the upper end of the flame).

Passive techniques will bring about the most unusual phenomena, but for great, lasting gain there must also be a deepening of understanding. Such experiences as visions with

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dazzling colors, exquisite musical sounds previously unheard of, or voices accurately predicting the future are not uncommon to the intense, long-time passive meditator. These attractive phenomena that come about mostly from passive meditation can be wonderful learning experiences. They can greatly encourage the meditator, but they must not be allowed to distract you from the goal of realizing the true nature of reality, especially of the self. In fact, they should either be completely ignored or taken as a sign of progress. At some point, both passive and active methods will come to the identical conclusion: the meditator, the meditating, and the meditated upon, are all a simple One.

As you become more aware of the intricacies of your mind, you may begin to see unusual, subtle things. For instance, when looking out at the world, you may be able to see the sense of a "face" or "personality" being "formed" right in front of your eyes. It seems to be looking back at you; this is "the accuser!" It is an entirely mental image that your mind projects. It can be seen with the eyes open or closed, in front or at either side of the mind. Usually it is more easily seen when looking out in front of you while you are concentrating on, or staring at, something.

This function is called the conscience. Some people get so wrapped up in this aspect, that they see this to be an actual "devil" that is attacking them from within. This will most often happen with the very charismatic Christians, the most crazed of the *Sadhus* (Hindu ascetics), experimental drug users, and longtime meditators who have yet to understand the workings of the mind.

Actually, this is merely the function of the mind that has been created to reflect back to the self exactly what the self is

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projecting, in order to guide the self back to the place it, in truth, wants to be. When recognizing this while the eyes are open, the physical, external worldly view is seen as the backdrop to the internal, mental image of the “accuser.”

To be more specific, as you look out at the world from your normal position of consciousness, from the place you seem to reside in back of your eyes, not only will you see the physical world in front of you, but also, superimposed like a film placed between your mind and your eyes, will be the sense of a form that the mind labels as a “personality,” a formed (although actually not) appearance, seemingly looking back at you. This “personality” expresses distinct dissatisfaction, presenting a character exuding questioning disapproval. It does this by expression, without words. This is the conscience, accusing, asking, “What are you doing? What have you done!?” It is in fact, an expression of the self mentally taking “form.”

This is similar to a thought that becomes a word, only here it is even subtler as the mind seems to form a thought into a hint of a “face.” The mind labels this shape to be a personality that reflects back to the self, questioning the expectant result of the self’s thoughts or actions. This is very subtle, but it is definitely here.

When you raise the seat of consciousness above this perspective, mentally moving the place from where you are looking, higher up in the head, up even just a little, the accuser perspective will disappear, seeming to dissolve and the consciousness will move toward, or even into light. If it is difficult for you to raise the seat of consciousness, try “edging it up,” side by side. First move just a little higher on the right side of your head, then a little still higher on the left side. In this way

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“walk” your way up a little at a time. You need not go far with this to accomplish the result.

Remember, your “accuser” is also here for a good reason, and ultimately what it is indicating to you may have to be dealt with. The wise person cherishes criticism.

Again, when you look out at the world, you see more than its physicality. You also see hints, analogies, things that are very close to other things that are familiar to you. The physicality is but the springboard from which the mind takes off. As essential and basic is the physicality, so too is the understanding of the physicality. How we understand the physicality, will direct how we live our lives. We then, in fact, go on to make the physical accord with our understanding.

### **Turning Inward**

The spectrum of the mind's consciousness can be likened to a planetarium, with its black velvet ceiling and seemingly endless space stretching in every direction of imagination. This gives a sense of outward area, with the mind endlessly scanning its infinite possibilities. The consciousness probes like a spacecraft seeking in the depths of its universe, sweeping, watching, finding the most unusual of creation.

Or, instead of sweeping outward into the vast inner space, the direction of consciousness can turn inward back onto itself, steadily moving toward the Place of the emanation of consciousness, onto the very I, the Being Itself. Or, the mind can choose whatever fantasy it wishes; now floating in space, now eating ice cream. But the awareness will seem either upwards and outward into the varied imaginative space away from the place of I, sensing a seeming other-ness, or it will be directed

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inward, moving closer and closer onto the very being itself. *Being* is the existence. *Being* simply *is*, without effort or even understanding, merely being itself as it is. In fact, THIS IS THE GOAL, but the individual seems to first need the struggling search. Only then does he realize this most simple of understandings. Once the Common Denominator, *Being* is recognized, all will be seen to be One Being. This is Enlightenment.

This exercise attempts to bring the awareness back onto the point of the mind's initial stirring into mental activity. This is done by tracing the thoughts back to their source. The source here is the point where the mind first moves away from simply being. This exercise of seeking the source of thoughts instead of scanning in the mind outward, that is, into the mental activity itself (i.e. the thoughts), is in some disciplines called "centering." Here, the idea is likening consciousness to a sphere with the original vantage point being its center. The further away from this point, the more the scenarios vary and the more rapidly do they seem to move, while nearer to the center, there is more stillness. A simple way to begin is to silently say the word "I". As you say it watch the mind, first seeing or hearing the mental image of the word. See the thought come and go. First pay attention to the place in the mind where you realize or see this thought. Now, say it again and search deeply for the point of its creation. Where did it come from? After you try to draw your mental conclusion to this question, think the word again. Then, again. Do not do this quickly over and over again as if it were merely a mantra, but rather after each time you say it, make an effort to search for the path that the thought took. Try to go back to the exact area of the mind from which it emanated. Go back still further until you come to will, for surely your will to think this word had to precede the creation

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of the thought. Go back even further, and attempt to approach the “location” of the one who is will-ing. Continue doing this until you simply Be.

Some meditators use the mental exercise of repeatedly sweeping away the cluttered thought patterns in order to empty their minds. In Eastern disciplines, this exercise is called "wiping the slate" or "polishing the mirror." The mind is likened to a mirror because its nature is to reflect back to the individual exactly what the individual is projecting onto it. If you take time and have patience, you can understand much more of how the mind works. Learn from a fisherman who is trying to free his snagged line. He cannot see where his hook is caught or what is holding it. He knows to pull gently to avoid further imbedding the hook. He tries to move the line, either by sweeping it from side to side, or by letting it loose to run free, or even quickly jerking on it. Likewise, even though you cannot see the source of the changes in the mind, still you can look carefully, learning its nature by watching its workings. If need be, tug a little here, move side to side there. See its response. From where are these thoughts coming? From the diet, the deeds, the DNA? Who is actually in charge of the events I am experiencing? What am I? What is It? Who is directing this ship I am attached to, riding upon? Is it the self or is it the senses? Look closely at the mind. You can analyze its nature and thereby begin to overcome it.

An excellent exercise for releasing a “stuck” mental perspective is to concentrate on water within water. Visualize two bodies of water, one small and one large with the smaller body located within the larger. See your mind to be the smaller body of water that is floating deep within the larger body of

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water. Concentrating on water within water brings the realization that both waters are actually their single common denominator, the one water. In this exercise, the first body of water represents the individual's image of self and the second larger body of water represents his physical surroundings, i.e. the world. Conceptualizing water within water simply melts the mentally conceived, "separating" barriers. As the mental separation between the waters dissolves, the consciousness of these distinct subjects flows uninterrupted. Water within water is then seen to be simply one water. Herein we see constancy. In constancy, stillness is recognized. In stillness clarity can come. "And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide water from water."<sup>47</sup> Originally, all of the creation was merely its simple common denominator. Then, this common denominator was divided into the distinctions that we experience now. Although the distinctions are real, the Creation is still its basic, single common denominator.

### **Eastern & Torah Techniques May Seem Alike**

Do not think that since Jewish and non-Jewish (particularly Eastern) disciplines sometimes use similar techniques, therefore both practices will arrive at the same goal. There are many practices that both Torah and Eastern religions seem to have in common, such as using both active and passive meditation techniques. Also, both use chanting, repeating a Name, dancing, concentration on a difficult if not impossible subject, watching the breath, fasting, and meditating on light. However, since the intentions are different, the attainment will also be different.

For instance, the use of silence as a meditation tool is not only an ancient Jewish technique, but it has also been an indispensable aspect of some ancient non-Jewish meditations.<sup>48</sup>

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Still, even with what seems to be an identical subject, the usual result of the Eastern practices is the instilling of an imagined "other"; some form, deity, spirit or godhead that is entirely other than the meditator. This is very common even though these Eastern seekers are meditating on silence. The practitioners of the more esoteric systems who use silence as a meditation tool frequently come to believe that all existence is an illusion or that the creation is actually "nothing."

Frequently in these disciplines, the object meditated upon or even the practice of meditation itself comes to replace the original goal of realization, and now that form or practice becomes the goal. Although these may occupy the meditator for many long years, none produce a satisfactory, lasting solution. To be lasting, the solution must include not only what appears to be "other," and what seems to be "no-thing," but it must also include ALL EXISTENCE. This must include even the one who is meditating.

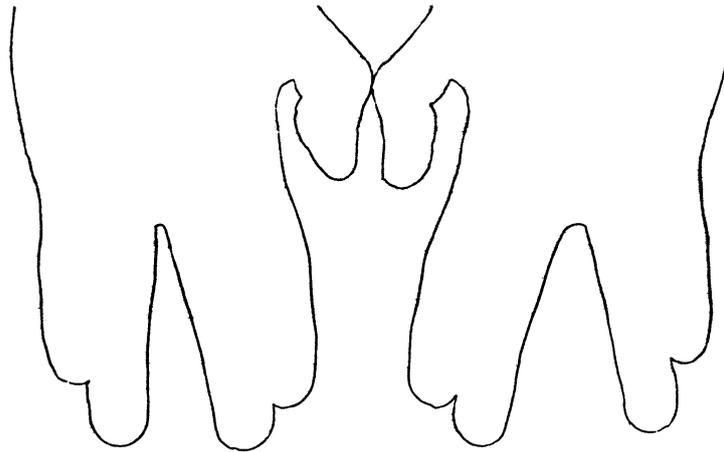
Thus the sin of idolatry: idolatry attributes divinity to a created other, an idea, object or person, and then convinces the devotee it is beneficial to pray to this created object. Although obviously the idol itself is powerless, the new devotee begins to see occurrences in his life that he now attributes to his worship of that idol. It is not uncommon for people to pray to famous singers, politicians, and the like, and to then attribute miraculous healings to them. This spiritual poison is more deadly than any form of physical poison. Physical poisons can be rendered impotent by dilution, 1 part poison within 60 parts water, or if need be, 1 in a 1000, but spiritual poison can never be rendered impotent, no matter how many good thoughts and deeds surround it. In fact, the good has now become harmful, since it disguises the evil and entices the innocent seeker.

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### Transcendence

To be eternal, the desired realization must not only include all things, but it must include all times. Not only must this realization, when it comes, be from now on, but to be eternal it must have always been. That is, even now while you still think you have not yet realized it. This realization can come through the process of transcendence. Here, we are discussing the broadening of perspective. We begin with a lower or narrower perspective, and then elevate our perspective by engaging a higher perspective, that is, moving to a less gross perspective.

To illustrate: the Torah commands the Priests, "And they shall place My Name upon the children of Israel . . ."49 This is referring to the blessing the Priests are commanded to give to the tribes of Israel. At this time, they are instructed to lift up their hands, forming their fingers into an extremely unusual pattern. According to most opinions the hands are held in this manner:



Since these instructions command the Priest to hold up his hands in order to "place My Name" upon the Children of Israel,

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we assume the position of the hands must spell one of the Holy Names. With some depth of study, we can realize which name is being spelled. It is formed on three transcendent levels.

The lowest and closest to our daily outlook is the perspective of physical creation. This is represented by the ten fingers. The ten fingers are a created, fixed obvious fact in the formula. We cannot alter this. They are already dictated and we are merely recognizing what is already found. Also, the Torah's description of creation<sup>50</sup> states that the world was created with ten utterances.<sup>51</sup>

The next, higher, more subtle perspective is that of formation. Here we do not encounter a new creation, but rather the Priest merely forms the creation that was already given. The already created fingers are clearly formed, purposely drawn into four distinct groups. Here again is an obvious fact: there is a distinct grouping of four. We have moved from the perspective of creation, to that of formation.

Next, is the highest perspective, the mystical unmanifest, the Ayin (a mystical concept referring to the state of existence before physical distinctions were created and is still underlying all distinctions now). Here, the empty space that neither creation nor formation touch, the empty area around the thumbs and in between the index fingers, is read. This is reminiscent of the angels who read not only the black letters inscribed in the Torah, but also the empty space that surrounds them.

The space reads: "Shin" (ש), clearly and beautifully written in the emptiness. "Dalet," the purposely-arranged four groups of fingers, (dalet is the fourth letter of the aleph bet, therefore has the numerical value of four), Yud, the ten fixed fingers (yud

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is the tenth letter of the Aleph Bet, therefore equals ten). This spells: Shin (written in the emptiness), Dalet (the four groups of fingers), Yud (the ten fingers): "Sha-da-i," the Holy Name signifying Almighty. Here, the Name (and therefore the Priest's blessing) is being brought down from the highest unformed mystical **emptiness**, through the lower perspective of **formation**, and then onto the still lower aspect of physical **creation**.

### Eastern Mantra Vs. Torah Repetitions

Some great Jewish mystics have recommended a system that, on the surface, seems to be similar to Eastern mantra meditation. But the Jewish method of combining Names, or a single Name and varying its vowels, although repeated many times, will always have an underlying lofty concept which that particular name stands for. The Eastern mantra technique teaches the meditator to say a word or sentence over and over again. The hope is to produce a trance-like stupor by breaking down the mind's restricting logic, or to merely block out normal mental activity.

A more productive method uses repetitions not only to break down the restricting logic and to block out normal mental activity, but, more importantly, it forces the meditator to search for the deeper, actual meaning of that word.<sup>52</sup>

Unlike mindless, constant sounds, listening to the Shofar (the ram's horn, sounded on the New Year) will bring Awe.

Definitely do not meditate on idols or names of idols or any type of "representations" of "deities" or "powers," "energies" or the like. The form meditated upon can become a permanent placement in front of the mind's eye. It can appear as if imprinted in front of the physical eyes, even when not

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meditating. This experience will become greatly disturbing and can take difficult years to erase. So great is this mistake, the Torah insists upon covering the eyes when proclaiming “. . . GOD IS ONE.”<sup>53</sup> What is sought is formless, and concentrating on form will only take you away from this truth. Referring to the highest Revelation shown to the Jewish People the Torah warns: “remember you saw no manner of form.”<sup>54</sup> This is an essential difference between authentic meditative practices and idolatry. Form cannot become the goal.

One such corrupt practice that is taught in India claims that lying dormant in each person is the “serpent power.” The proponents of this serpent power teach that the spiritual objective is to awaken this power, raising it up from the lowest areas of the physical body, forcing it up from the base of the spine to the highest point on the top of the head. According to this teaching, awakening this power will cause related mystical experiences as it rises. At the lowest, it evokes sexual intensities: at the highest, there is light and individual “god-realization.”

They also teach that once you have gained discernment of the true knowledge of right and wrong that the guru will teach you, you will attain “god-realization.” You will realize “you are god” and will “attain immortality.” “You will not die.” This dangerous practice can in fact produce extremely strong sensations, visions and even strange powers. Using this technique, the meditator will experience endless highs, and bottomless lows. At each high he will experience more and more vivid glory, and then immediately he will be thrown down, with each lower depth bringing darker and darker sorrows. The more of these experiences he has, the more convinced he becomes of his imagined uniqueness. This conviction will become ingrained. This makes it even more

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difficult to get beyond the limitations of form and “other-ness,” beyond the ups and downs.

All people are unique, but he has entrapped himself by overemphasizing the importance of his uniqueness. The Torah specifically warns against this practice.<sup>55</sup> Indeed it is the SERPENT in the Garden of Eden who coaxes Eve saying; if you eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, “. . . you . . . will become as God . . . and you will not die.” The serpent was chosen for its role because its forked tongue warns that it is lying. Proper meditation techniques bring the realization, that ALL is God, and not just *you*.<sup>56</sup>

The feeling that this energy has raised can come from things other than spiritual practices. For example, it is not uncommon for individuals who undergo great fear, stress, headaches, fevers or the like, to also report such occurrences. Sometimes, after their ordeal, they will demonstrate some unusual, seemingly unnatural power, such as, “reading” the thoughts of others.

Related to mantra meditation is chanting. This method of elevation is common throughout the world, from the most primitive aborigines to the Jews from Yemen. All chanters chant praises to, or about, their particular spiritual concepts. Interestingly, the same tunes (but with different words) might be used in wildly varying cultures and traditions.

For instance, the peyote American Indian culture when ingesting their hallucinogenic mushrooms also uses one of the common repetitious melodies chanted by the Jews of Yemen when chanting the Book of Psalms.

The melodies sung in the ancient (now destroyed) Jewish Temple in Jerusalem are said to have funneled down to today’s Gregorian religious service.

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Chanting is merely verbalizing the meditative process. Because it is sung aloud, this method demands greater attention. It takes energetic breathing, voice, and a certain amount of attention to continue this process. The mind cannot ignore such strong input. Forced to pay more single-minded attention, it can be swept along into the deep breathing rhythm. Released from the normal perspective, there is calm. While riding on the chant's steadiness, an opportunity occurs.

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## THREE

### **The Four Basic Perspectives, The Four Holy Cities, & Four Moments in Time**

**W**hen we look at an object, although we normally see merely its physical aspects, these physical characteristics are simply the physical representation of its spiritual characteristics. Both physical and spiritual are manifesting according to their nature, in the same place and at the same time. The goal of transcendence is to move the awareness from the lower physical aspects to the higher spiritual aspects. This process does not change what we are looking at, but merely changes the way we are looking at it; that is, our perspective.

For example: touch your forefingers to your thumbs, forming two circles. Line these two circles up on a small target, as if they were the sights of a rifle. Hold one circle about two feet from your eyes as the front sight, and the second circle about a foot from your eye as the rear sight. With only the right eye open, look through the circles, lining them up onto the target so if you would "fire" the rifle, you would surely hit it. Now, **WITHOUT MOVING YOUR HEAD OR ARMS** close the right eye and open the left eye, and now looking through the sights "fire" your rifle. Would you hit the target? If you followed these instructions carefully, nothing seems to be lined up now. Therefore you could not possibly hit the target. But if you did not move the circles, then the rifle is still in the exact position it was when you saw everything was lined up. So of

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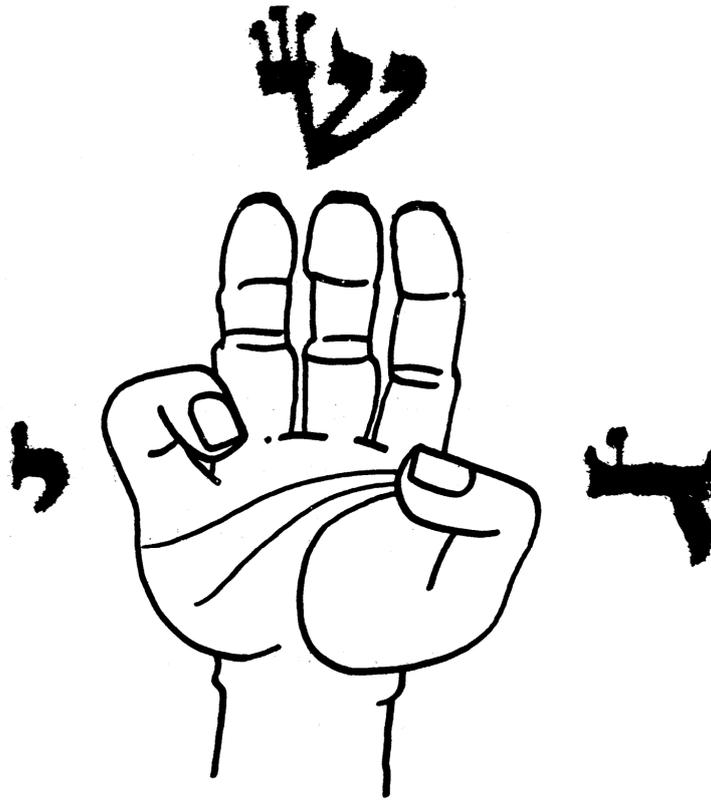
course you would still hit the target even now. Although, when only the left eye is open nothing seems lined up, it is only your eye that is no longer in line. The rifle and target are unmoved. You did not change what you are looking at, but merely the way you are looking at it.

Perspective changes are simply shifts of focus. In Torah study there are four basic perspectives; the literal, the hint, the allegorical and the mystical foundation. These may also be applied to daily life by interpreting things in either a literal, hinting, allegorical, or mystical manner. For instance, one can speak of one's wife as either Woman, Other-Half, Mother, or as the *Shechinah* (God's Presence). The view we normally take is solely the literal perspective, but we can also look at the physical reality and see it as a Hint of what is actually happening. We can go on to realize that all of creation is also an allegory, a parable explaining the purpose of existence. Finally, we can realize the Mystical Foundation that surpasses all our expectations. All this while looking at the same spot at the same time.

Perspectives can be changed in more ways than transcending (i.e. from creation to formation to the unmanifest), or by varying angles (i.e. looking first through one eye and then the other eye). The shift may be even less complicated, a simple horizontal shift; for instance, moving from normal writing with pen and ink, to writing by shaping the fingers.

When saying the prayer "Hashem is One," the eyes should be covered. This is to emphasize God is not limited by form. There is a custom to hold the fingers shaped like the Hebrew letters, Shin, Dalet, Yud, spelling one of God's Names.

### Chapter Three: The Four Basic Perspectives



Project with your mind a shin-dalet-yud shaped beam emanating from these positioned fingers. Place the fingers of your left hand in a corresponding left-handed shin-dalet-yud shape so that the "beam" coming from your right hand matches up with the shape of the left hand. Raise your hands facing each other with the "beam" radiating between them. Move your hands so that one hand is on each side of your head and the "beam" passes through your mind, eradicating and supplanting thought.

Hold your hands as in the Priestly Blessing (pictured on page 60 above). While keeping the fingers so positioned, fold

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them so the palms are facing each other and almost touching. Keeping the fingers formed into the four groups, touch the fingertips of the right hand to the fingertips of the left hand. Draw the thumbs in between the palms, under the finger's canopy. The thumbs should be held back to back with just the knuckles touching. Raise your hands until they are a little above eye level. Look inside, in between the palms, under the canopy. You will be reminded of the *Cherubim*, the Holy Angels who stand above the place where Hashem " . . . will meet with you there and speak with you there."<sup>57</sup>

### The Four Holy Cities

As perspectives can be shifted "vertically", i.e. from creation to formation, so can they be intensified. For instance, one can utilize the uniqueness of a specific place such as each of the four Holy Cities in the Land of Israel. Each city relates predominantly to a specific element: Sefat, high in the mountains; Tiberias, on the shore of the Lake Kinneret; Hebron, the resting place of our Fathers; and Jerusalem, the site of the Holy Temple where the daily offerings were offered up on the burning altar. Each city's Holiness is revealed through its specific element: air, water, earth, and fire. This fact can be taken advantage of by physically going to each of these Holy cities and meditating there on that particular element. Meditate passively, by merely mentally gazing on that particular element without trying to increase your perception of its nature, and also meditate on it actively, trying to perceive how the One, Indivisible One is revealing Its Holiness there more vividly either as air, water, earth, or fire.

## Chapter Three: The Four Basic Perspectives

### **Sefat**

Sefat residents are particularly aware of the special quality of the air in their city. Not only is it so clean, but it also has a unique elevating quality. High up in the mountains, this uplifting air has given birth to the world's greatest mystics.

### **Tiberias**

The Torah is likened to water.<sup>58</sup> There are several reasons for this. Water (rain) comes from the higher and proceeds to the lower. It runs downhill. The Torah brings the higher, spiritual knowledge down to the lower, physical realm and then the teacher who is "higher," teaches this knowledge to the "lower" student. Life cannot survive without water. Jews will not survive as Jews without knowledge of the Torah. Water whether it is frozen or heated will expand. Torah, whether it is learned with a cold intellectual approach, or a warm spiritual approach, expands the student's knowledge and opportunity for spiritual ascent. The Oral Torah, the Talmud, was finally written in Tiberias, located on the freshwater Lake Kinneret.

### **Hebron**

The graves of the Jewish ancestors are in hilly Hebron. There is nothing more important or unique about this city than the burial cave. Earth is the foremost element to the dwellers of Hebron.

### **Jerusalem**

In Jerusalem, there is the intense fire of Holiness. Often, even first-time visitors become immediately aware of the spiritual Presence here that is unlike anywhere else in the World. This feeling extends and radiates throughout the land of Israel at large and even beyond, but here it is the strongest. The

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residents of Jerusalem are especially aware of the unique light that radiates from this spiritual fire.

The following are specific meditations dealing mostly with the element that is appropriate to each of the four Holy Cities. There are also many individual spiritual sites within these cities, each to be meditated upon according to its uniqueness.

### **Sefat Meditation**

In Sefat there are special experiences of Holiness at the burial places of the righteous teachers of Kabbalah (Jewish Mysticism). Learn one of the teachings of each rabbi while meditating by his grave. Be particularly open to the characteristics that teacher was known for. There is the famous mikveh (spring) of the Arizal, and in nearby Amuka, a remedy exists by the grave of the mystic Yonatan ben Uzziel which is reported to help bring marriage. There are also the forests in which one can be alone. Each place has its unique light to give. All these are spiritually beneficial, however, meditations involving the element of air will be the most successful in Sefat.

Air is the only element that cannot be recognized by any of the five senses. When it is pure, it cannot be seen nor will it have a smell. When it is still, it makes no sound. Even when it is being moved as wind, it is not the air that we hear but rather the force pushing the air into things. It has no taste and what we feel when it is cold is the temperature of the air not the air itself. So air falls into the category of things that we can know only indirectly, that is, by experiencing what they do. Thus, it is fitting that the most subtle, mystical, hidden aspects of Torah have been revealed in Sefat, the city of air.

To meditate on air, see that it is uniform, unchanging, consistently filling not only the atmosphere, but also all matter.

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Each time your mind wanders, bring it back to this entirely unformed element. This practice will prevent your mind from focusing on the distinctions in the environment and bring it toward the underlying common denominator.

### **Tiberias Meditation**

The element associated with Tiberias is water. The hot springs of Tiberias are famous around the world. Sitting in this hot water, or by the huge freshwater lake, meditate on the nature of water. In the hot springs the temperature of the water can be used as a strong reminder to bring the awareness back to this subject. Also, gazing at a large body of calm water will calm the mind as it reflects the water's uniform nature.

### **Hebron Meditation**

Man's body is made from the element earth and it returns to earth when we are finished here. But our earthly lives continue even after we are gone.

In Hebron, sitting above the burial cave of the Fathers and Mothers is the best place in the world to meditate on their lives, on how we, in fact, are their legacy. See how we emulate them and that, in fact, we have inherited both their physical and spiritual DNA. Understand that not only do we look somewhat like our ancestors, but to some degree, we also act like they did. Know that we are in-between these ancestors and our descendants. See how we are being molded by who they were and even by what they did. Realize that our descendants will be directly affected by the way we live our lives, how our likes and dislikes are taught to our children and then to some degree these teachings will be passed on. See that just as we do not know our great-grandparents at all, neither will our great-grandchildren know us. Recognize that there is a long chain in

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which our lives are but a small link. And finally, realize how soon it will be that we too will be returning to the earth.

### **Jerusalem Meditation**

There is a strange saying that, "A Jerusalemite cannot be a true Chassid." To be a Chassid is one of the highest spiritual positions a Jew can attain. He loves and believes in his Rebbe, the holy *Tzadik* (a completely righteous person), and leads a pure and holy life. But for those fortunate enough to dwell in Jerusalem, the Light of the Holiness radiating is so strong that it overshadows even the Rebbes. This radiating Light is likened to fire. Fire is the highest of the elements. While water and earth fall when placed in air, fire rises, always striving to go higher. The Holiness that this spiritual fire manifests is a constant reminder of the ever-Present Holy Master (the Source of all) so evident right here to delight in.

Although the Holiness of Jerusalem can be felt throughout the entire city, it is most evident on the Temple Mount and by its Western Wall (the Kotel). The unique spiritual feeling of Jerusalem radiates from this area. Most Jewish sources forbid or greatly restrict going onto the Temple Mount today due to its special Holiness, and to the general state of spiritual uncleanness that this generation is experiencing. The Kotel, however, is completely available. Sitting by the Kotel during the quiet hours of the day is perhaps the finest place in the world to meditate, contemplate, or pray.

Whatever your effort in spiritual growth can accomplish during the busy hours of the day, it will accomplish twice as much during the still hours, and whatever growth you can accomplish in a "secular" environment will be more than doubled in a holy one. Cherish these holy places and treat them with great respect and they will reward you many times more

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than your effort. When you are sensitive to the holiness found in these places, as you spend more time there you will experience increased holiness. Conversely, if you are insensitive to the holiness at such places, the more time you spend there, the chances are that you will become even more indifferent or even disrespectful.

Some of these sites may seem to have no spiritual history at all. For instance, in the Old City of Jerusalem there is an ancient cistern (presently sealed up under a modern apartment building) hewed out of the bedrock. There is a strong feeling of calm that emanates here, so strong in fact, that even non-seekers were taken by the meditative mood that came upon them when they were able to visit this seemingly secular archaeological site.

### **Elements and the senses**

As we have just seen, each of the four holy cities manifests its unique holiness predominantly through its particular element: Sefat through air, Tiberias through water, Hebron through earth, and Jerusalem through light or fire. Each element relates to a particular sense: air to the sense of smell, water to taste, earth to touch, and light to sight. But there are five senses. So where is the fifth sense, the sense of hearing, utilized to manifest holiness? This is the Temple Mount. The holiness that was revealed on the Temple Mount, when the Temple stood, was revealed through all of the senses: the sense of smell was activated by the incense that was offered on the incense altar, the sense of taste by the tastes of the offerings that were eaten there, the sense of touch was made evident by the earth under the bare feet of those who walked there, the sense of sight by the fire on the altars and the revealed Presence of God that was evident there, and the sense of hearing was

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engaged by the sounds of the Levites playing musical instruments and singing the psalms that accompanied the offerings. The holiness of the Temple Mount includes and surpasses the holiness manifested anywhere else in the entire world.

### **Holy Sites**

At specific holy sites, especially the graves of certain righteous people, clear spiritual feelings can physically manifest. These feelings will be strongly evident for some people in some places, while totally nonexistent in other places. The feeling may be one of a general awareness of lightness or joy, or even a very specific "buzzing" felt on a certain area of the body. This experience sometimes gives rise to the mistaken belief that there is a special "energy" radiating from the site. Some even call these places, "energy centers."

However, what usually is happening is that the static from the normal, busy city life is being overwhelmed by the nature of the site. Its impact may be recognized because of its historical or visual uniqueness. This leaves the individual acutely aware, and especially "tuned in" for such special feelings that arise there.

For instance, right now you are not aware of the feeling of the temperature of the air that is touching the back of your hands. But it is there. As you become aware of it, you realize it is a very strong feeling, and you might even wonder how it is that you were not conscious of such a strong feeling before. Actually, the mind is somewhat aware of all of its feelings at once, but it only focuses on one feeling at a time. When one or two of the senses are cut off, the remaining senses increase in

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importance, commanding more attention, and seemingly increase in proficiency.

However, keeping all these possibilities in mind, quite often certain sites will manifest a particular, and quite palpable, spiritual feeling. Some experience these feelings more in one of these sites than in another, according to the individual's specific spiritual needs. This experience has led many to make the serious mistake of praying to the person who is buried there rather than to God. Prayers can be made in the merit of the righteous, or that the righteous should "intercede before the Heavenly Throne," as the Zohar suggests, but not *to* the righteous.

### **Four Moments in Time**

As we can take advantage of the uniqueness of varying physical locations, so too can we take advantage of different times. In fact, each day and certainly each holiday has some particular spiritual quality that can be revealed best by utilizing the appropriate service designated for that particular time, or for that specific remembrance. The following are just four examples of specific times that obviously have unique meditation opportunities.

#### **After Sabbath**

After Sabbath has departed, the soul might naturally feel apprehension or sorrow. The leisure of Sabbath has left and we are about to return to the problems of the week. The prescribed customs for these moments are designed to prevent such apprehension and sorrow. Music, mysticism and storytelling are stressed. Any of these thwart sadness. At this particular

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time, the most appropriate, and therefore the most successful meditations, will utilize both music and lofty thinking.

### **Passover**

During the holiday of Passover, the meditation that best draws out the uniqueness of the holiday will come when tasting matzah and the other traditional Passover foods. Try to understand the reasons these particular foods were chosen for this holiday. Each food teaches its unique lesson by its history and by its particular taste and texture.

Matzah is the type of bread that we ate while we were fleeing from Egyptian bondage. That is its historical message and one well worth meditating on. See and appreciate the freedom you enjoy. The spiritual aspect of this flat bread can be seen in its lack of leaven. To be proper matzah this is the strictest requirement. The matzah is not allowed to rise. Each hand-baked loaf of leavened bread will look somewhat different than every other loaf. It will be unique. Both matzah and leavened bread are made of the same basic ingredients, flour and water, but yeast is added to the loaf. Yeast creates a gas effect that puffs the dough up and gives the unique form to the loaf, while the matzah remains flat and nondescript. This puffiness is likened to ego. Each of us is made out of the same basic ingredients, but it is our ego that insists we are unique. To go out into freedom we must deflate this ego and see ourselves to be the flat basic ingredients that we are made of.

In order to celebrate the holiday of Passover properly, we are enjoined to remove all of the leaven from our house. "Our house" refers both to our physical house and to our mental house; the mind. This turns cleaning the house into a spiritual exercise. After the cleaning is finished, there is a custom to check if indeed all of the leaven has been removed by searching

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with a candle, a wooden spoon and a feather. When first cleaning to remove the leaven, we use the largest, toughest tools, such as big brooms, metal scouring pads, strong soaps and large dust pans. Then, as the cleaning process proceeds the tools become smaller and subtler; sponges, dust cloths and the like. Then for the final check, we use a small wooden spoon as a dustpan and a feather for a broom. This process teaches us how to search for the leaven in our minds. While searching for the problematic ego, quite often a major personality problem stands out and we resolve to remove it. But don't be so quick to finish the search. Look deeper. Go into the very corners of your mind with a candle to light up every nook and cranny. Use the softest broom of all. Sweep around. There usually are some very subtle problems stuck in the corners that you did not see.

### **Sukkoth**

By far the best place to meditate during the holiday of Booths (*Sukkoth*) is in the booth itself, which is the essential aspect of this holiday. The essential part of the booth is the upper covering. This commandment is one of only three out of the entire 613 commandments that we submerge our entire bodies in.<sup>59</sup> The Booth's "roof" is likened to the "Clouds of Glory." Sitting in the booth and concentrating on "Clouds of Glory," returning the concentration back again and again to the mental and physical image of the covering as radiating Glory is a most appropriate meditation for this time of the year. Use your normal meditative technique, but adjust it to take advantage of the unique surroundings designated for that particular holiday or for that time of the year. Finding spirituality is finding something that already exists here in this world, but that is currently hidden.

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### **Purim**

As all holidays, the holiday of Purim comes to stress a specific teaching. Purim's subject is hiding. First, the story of Esther, which is the story of Purim, is the only book of the Bible that does not explicitly mention God's Name.

Next, we see that garments are a central theme in this book. Garments are used to cover the body in order to protect or hide. The King's wife was commanded to appear without garments - that is, totally revealed. When Mordechai heard news of the evil decree that was to destroy the Jewish people, he sat at the gate dressed in garments of sackcloth. When Queen Esther heard that Mordechai was dressed in sackcloth, she sent him proper garments. When the King wanted to reward Mordechai he dressed him in royal garments. What the story of Esther has come to teach by stressing garments is best understood with a parable:

Once, there was a holy king. This king was not just an ordinary king, however regal an ordinary king might be. Rather, this king demonstrated his royalty by exuding a wondrous feeling of bliss that radiated from his presence. This feeling was so strong and so enjoyable that when his subjects would be invited into the king's palace for a feast, they would say, "This feeling coming from the king is so wonderful, if only there could be more of it." Then they reasoned that the only thing stopping the king's bliss from entirely filling the room was that their bodies took up so much space. So, they decided to shrink in order to leave more room for the king's bliss. And they did just that. They shrunk and sure enough there was more bliss in the room. They enjoyed the additional bliss so much that they shrunk again, and then there was even more bliss. This felt so wonderful that they shrunk even further, and

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there was even more bliss. They kept doing this again and again, shrinking and shrinking, until finally, they completely disappeared.

Well, this left the king with a quandary. "I want to enjoy a feast with my subjects, but every time I invite them over," he complained, "they disappear on me. I want to eat and drink with my friends, but everyone I invite into the palace evaporates right before my face. I don't want to eat and drink all this food by myself. Wait a minute, I know what I can do. After all I am the king so I can do what ever I want. I'm going to apportion myself around the banquet table. I am going to take small portions of myself and form these individual portions into different people, and on each person I am going to put a distinct mask. Each portion is going to see itself solely as the person that its mask depicts. And this mask is going to be stuck on each portion so that they will not be able to remove their masks for the entire time of the party. Oh, maybe some portions will be able to sneak a peek from time to time, but for the most part the masks are going to be permanently fixed. Then what a party it will be. There will be eating and drinking and grand entertainment with everyone ordering whatever they want, and everyone eating whatever they order. Then, at the appropriate time, at the end of the party, when the feast is over, the strings holding the masks on will be loosened and each portion will be able to lift off its mask. Then everyone will see it was really only me sitting there the entire time.

This is the hidden story of Purim. This is the reason we wear masks and costumes on Purim, hiding our true identity. The truth is, only the King is here. This is the central theme of this holiday so it is also the most appropriate subject for meditation at this time. Try again and again to concentrate on the meaning

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of this story during the holiday of Purim until you can finally peek out from under your mask.

### **The Spiritual Search**

Of those very few people in any age who have realized that they have lost their sense of being, that they do not know who they are, and are now driven to search, so very few of them ever reach the lofty goal. Since we are so tied to the necessity of providing for our basic needs, we are not really free to search full time, but if the physical requirements are provided, the full-time intense spiritual search can begin.

It is natural to search first in front of your eyes. After all, this is where you are directed. This is what is before you. It is also natural to search the most obvious places first, that is, the most pressing and material, and then, move on to the more subtle; from the material to the transcendent.

Where does one look when one realizes the present experience is insufficient? What is missing that I should even want to look? Without a sense of lack, there will be no search. The wind, or the television, will dictate where the precious path goes. But, am I not fed? Clothed? I have no great physical pain. There are no evident immediate attackers. Why even bother to look? Yet, there seems to be something missing, something lacking; and while I somehow know it is not, still I do not know what it is. And certainly, I do not know how to approach it. How am I to understand a dream I have dreamed that is now forgotten? Who can even remember the question? Can the finite ever grasp the Infinite?<sup>60</sup> This becomes the search. The moment. The reason. The frustration. From books and philosophies, to caves and deprivations. Fasts, intensities, laying on thorns, and tears. Then, by Grace, after all the visions,

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faltering understandings, falling and getting up again, the fortunate few finally see. The tree sees the forest. The finger sees the hand.

### East, West & Torah

If the i can see the I, and it is all ONE I, what difference does it make if one discovers this truth from the precepts of Torah, or if one travels to the East and studies there? What is the difference between the “Unio Mystica” experience of the Christian mystics, the Nirvana Enlightenment experience of the Far East, the god realization of India, and the Torah’s “*Ruach HaKodesh* (Holy Spirit)?” One is One.

The answer is the following. The gentile Prophet Balaam also spoke with God.<sup>61</sup> In fact, in some ways his prophecy was even greater than that of Moses our Teacher.<sup>62</sup> Even though he communicated with God, even though he could ask and be answered by the ONE God, still he continued in his evil ways of cursing instead of blessing. He had the power to do either.<sup>63</sup> Balaam and his benefactor could have chosen to bless themselves, but instead they preferred to curse their enemies. If the practice is spiritually immoral, the result (even when “successful”) will reflect this immorality and will generate physical immorality. It will end up in torment.

Still, it can be confusing even for an experienced seeker when he sees some of these practices also leading to the realization of ONE. Since strands of truth are found woven among their idolatries, these practices might very well lead to the One. Yet, they who have found the One through spiritually corrupt means, commonly use their lofty understanding for entirely personal ends. For instance, they frequently raise

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themselves above the community feeling that their very realization frees them from common, moral restrictions.

The Zohar relates<sup>64</sup> that Rabbi Abba, a great Talmudic sage, came to a city of the People of the East. He saw their mystical books and stated that their techniques were very similar to the mystical teaching of the Torah. For instance, both teach WHEN ONE MEDITATES, WHAT RESULTS DEPENDS ON THE INDIVIDUAL'S WORD, DEED, AND DESIRE TO ATTACH. And through these he brings down that side to which he becomes attached.

Rabbi Abba told these People of the East that although their books were very close to the teachings of the Torah, since their books also had many practices of idolatry, they must be kept away from or they would confuse them. The truth that is found within these books was handed down to them by the sons of Abraham who were sent to the land of the East thousands of years ago.<sup>65</sup>

Some of the names of these sons are still prevalent in India today. For instance, one of them is named Sheva.<sup>66</sup> *Shiva* is one of the three main gods of India. Another son is called Ashshurim. Rashi explains that this name means a camp. In India today a guru's camp is called an *Ashram*. Another son is Aveda. The Indian scriptures are called the *Vedas*. The religion of the Hindus is *Brahminism*, which is named after Abraham. One of the definitions of the name Hindu is "from the river." "Hebrew" means having passed over the river. However, the teachings these sons of Abraham brought with them were corrupted when they were mixed with the local practices of idolatry. This makes it very easy to get confused since the good thread, the truth that is also there, is woven throughout their

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teachings. This enlightening truth makes their religions very attractive, but because of it they come to trust their lies.

### **False Teachers**

Today, there are many false meditation teachers misleading millions in the name of realization, while they gratify their lowest animal inclinations with the grossest forms of darkness, lies, and adulteries. They openly practice such gross materialism, blatantly, yet millions follow them. This is in fact the lure. One can believe he is seeking the highest, and yet feel free to practice his lowest.

### **TM**

One such popular system is called "Transcendental Meditation." It was due to the help of the extremely popular music group, the Beatles that the Transcendental Meditation system was firmly established in the West during the 1960s. Today the TM organization claims several million followers. The organization is headed by an Indian guru called by the title "*Maharishi*, Great Hindu teacher of mysticism." The T.M. teachers stress, especially to newcomers, that TM is not a religion, but is rather a "mechanical method of meditation designed to attain universal consciousness." In truth, they are teaching thinly veiled Hinduism. They employ many Hindu religious practices, such as bowing down to pictures of the guru's guru (whose name means, "the god who removes darkness") and offering flowers, incense, fruit, water, white handkerchiefs and burning camphor. When asked if these are religious acts, they say they are merely "signs of commitment." These acts are called *Pujas* (worship services).

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A guru teaching Hindu mantras and Hindu techniques while claiming not to be teaching Hinduism is like a Catholic priest teaching "rosary" and claiming not to be teaching Catholicism. If the initiates understood the meanings of the Hindu chants and mantras they are given when they are initiated, very few would be foolish enough to call over and over again, "Thank you O' deity of the master's master, who taught him these methods and chants!" Certainly they would not be paying many hundreds of dollars to learn Hinduism.

In fact, the initiation ceremony itself is a Hindu worship service taken from the Vedas, their sacred books. During this service, as the teacher intones the Sanskrit chants praising the deity "*Vishnu*" (the "god of conservation") and its incarnations on earth as "*Shree Ram*" and "*Krishna*," a noticeable feeling of calm and lightness comes upon the chanter and then somewhat radiates to the new initiates in the room.

These teachers are taught to speak to their new students in scientific terms (such as "reduces blood pressure," "brings calm") and to completely avoid any words that would expose these practices as religious (such as "inner peace" or "spiritual presence"). At the conclusion of a several month intensive "teacher's course," the new teachers are taught a number of general mantras and how to assign these to their future initiates. They are told that these are merely sounds with no meaning. Although this is true for some, a number of them are actually the names of deities and incarnations such as "Ram." They are instructed to issue these mantras secretly, so no one will learn another's mantra, nor how they are assigned. Which mantra is given to which person is determined by the initiates' age; so for instance, all initiates between the ages of thirty and thirty-five will receive the same mantra.

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Although many stay with the “movement” as teachers for more than twenty years, chanting their various mantras many hours a day, NOT A SINGLE ONE HAS EVER CLAIMED TO HAVE ATTAINED THE STATED GOAL OF “UNIVERSAL CONSCIOUSNESS!” Instead, they are satisfied with the “good” feelings of lightness and calm that usually come when they chant the Hindu chants.

Remember, if there were no apparent benefits to idolatrous practices, no one would be doing them; but here TM is claiming all the physical and mental benefits that come from meditation come because of TM’s (Hindu) techniques. These feelings are seen as evidence that all of TM’s claims are true, and the cherished goal will also be attained; but it never is.

Despite their vehement claim not to be teaching religion, they state that their wisdom comes from the Vedas, which are “the four canonical collections of hymns, prayers and liturgical formulas that comprise the earliest Hindu sacred writings.”<sup>67</sup> As mentioned earlier, one of the children of Abraham who was sent to the land of the East was named “Aveda.” It was from Aveda that the “Vedas” began and later, after being mixed with the local animistic religion, became the foundation of Hinduism.

“Transcendental Meditation” also has an “advanced *Sidhi* program” where they boast that for a handsome fee, they will teach the new initiate to levitate. They openly claim they will show the novice how to obtain the heights of meditation and this will be proven by their ability to actually raise their bodies off the ground. This, they claim, is proven by the numerous photographs they produce, showing their meditators actually floating in the air. How can such a thing be? Many thousands of people are paying thousands of dollars to learn the “deepest

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secrets of mysticism." Can such proof be wrong? Recently in Canada, the courts forced members of this branch of this group to pay a \$100,000 fine to an individual who sued them for false advertising when it was determined those pictures were taken of people who were leaping in the air by pushing their knees against the mats. Yet to this day the "T.M. Society" claims millions of believers who profess to have accomplished such great feats as manipulating the international stock markets by meditating.

"Sidhis" are the unusual powers that can come from extremely intense spiritual practices that invariably entrap the seeker in lower level objectives.

### **Powers as a Trap**

Although there are many who say these powers do not exist, they do in fact exist. They are mentioned in the story of Abraham's sons who were sent away to the land of the East.<sup>68</sup> These powers still exist and are available to the unsuspecting or egotistical seeker.

A recent example is the case of a non-religious young Israeli man who some years ago became interested in the physical postures taught by the Hindu books on Yoga. He became quite adept at these exercises, doing them for many hours every day. After a while he realized that if he wanted to truly master these techniques, he would have to travel to India to find a Guru and learn from him the true secrets of the art. He arrived in India and worked very hard under his Guru's supervision. He became one of the Guru's very best students.

After some time, he was amazed to hear his Guru tell him; "You are a Jew. You must return to your own land and follow the ancient religion of your fathers." One of the central books of

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Hindu scriptures, the Bagavad Gita, tells the story of a prince who was from the warrior class. This prince was orphaned as a child and was raised by his uncle. He loved his foster family and was horribly saddened when a war broke out between his natural clan and his foster clan. Dismayed, he threw down his weapons and decided he could no longer be a warrior. He approached a certain "god-head" who told him; since he was born into that warrior class it was his natural and religious duty to fight along side of them against his foster family. He had to follow the ways of his birth class. From these teachings some gurus have learned to tell their Jewish devotees to return to Judaism, *but*, when they return, they are to take some of the Indian teachings with them.

This young man returned with a "gift." This "gift" is bringing him many students and even fame. He first called himself "Master", and then "Rav" (Rabbi). His meditation centers gain more and more devotees. What he teaches is a fusion of Judaism and Hinduism that he calls, "Classic Kosher Yoga." This includes keeping the rules of Sabbath while practicing Indian yoga postures. They also study Jewish religious texts and Hindu religious texts. He and his students meditate using Hebrew words and Indian concepts. Pictures of famous rabbis and pictures of Hindu gods hang on the wall. Perhaps he believes he is doing good for the world bringing these two religions together.

His "gift" is demonstrated when his students sit in his center meditating. He walks up quietly behind them and blows on the back of their heads. Many of them, even new students who have never been there before, collapse onto the floor! They are told that this is a "very good sign that the person's meditation has reached the level of *Ayin*, the unmanifest." This,

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in fact is a worthless experience that does nothing to elevate the student's awareness. The student has gained no clearer understanding of how to lead his life. There has been no experience of higher consciousness. What does happen is that such experiences merely attach the students to the "master" believing if they stay with that "master" they too will receive a wondrous power.

As for the one who has such a "gift", the more amazing the power, the more difficult it will be to get rid of once he realizes his "gift" has trapped him. Although it is not yet obvious to the man in this story, a teacher is supposed to pick up his students, not knock them down.

### **Indian Gurus in America**

It is quite common for gurus and other Eastern teachers to travel to the West in order to gather students and especially to gather their wealth. One such famous Indian guru was driven out of India in the 1970's on corruption charges. He then set up his headquarters in the United States and took over a very small town in Oregon. He gave himself the title "Bhagwan" which means lord. He quickly became very popular with the Hippie generation. Thousands of his devotees dressed in all red clothing and hung pictures of him around their necks. The man's main attraction was that he taught everyone should do whatever they want. Sexual freedom was a specialty of his, teaching his students to engage in free sex. He collected a large number of Rolls Royce automobiles that he rode in a few minutes a day. Although he had almost two hundred of these brand new extremely expensive cars, it was not enough for him. He openly stated that his objective was to collect 365 of them so he could ride in a different one each day of the year. He taught that "all life is a cosmic joke" and that everyone should be

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absolutely free. In the early 1980's, his cult tried to poison thousands of residents of Dalles, Oregon with a strain of Salmonella bacteria in order to subvert a local election!<sup>69</sup> Although he has been dead for many years, his followers still try to spread his teachings.

### **Rebirthing**

There are dozens of very popular meditation systems in the world today that teach corrupt and dangerous forms of meditation. One such group combines certain Yoga principles and an intense breathing technique.<sup>70</sup> Their teachings are designed to appeal to the "New Age" subculture. The main technique is rapid, shallow chest breathing with concentration on the nose and central upper chest. The followers of this system claim that one hour of such exercise results in cleansing of the physical, emotional and spiritual blocks that came when that person was born, or from negative experiences that he may have gone through since then. This groups' ultimate goal is to become so purified that they will actually be "reborn" while still in this lifetime. The founder of this movement states that due to his many years of practicing this technique he became senile for one year and has since recovered, and this is a sign that he has become immortal. He claims that one of his fellow teachers also became senile and now has recovered so she too has become immortal. They say that when they die they will take their bodies with them.

If such a primitive idea as immortal bodies were true, the result would be eternal duality. In this case, he and his co-worker would go on forever, thus teaching there is more than one Eternal Being. Their meditation method simply produces classic hyperventilation, which brings emotional rushes and hallucinations, and is very dangerous. Such rapid, upper chest

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breathing results in panic attacks, emotional instability and trances, among other obviously undesirable symptoms. Yet, they have attracted many hundreds of ardent followers who pay large fees to become teachers of their system. These teachers are called “re-birthers” who have gone on to teach thousands this dangerous technique. And now they and their students work very hard each day trying to become senile so they too can become immortal!

The immortality of the soul stems from its being an actual portion of the One Eternal Being above.<sup>71</sup> It is the One who is eternal, *not* the individuality of the soul. The distinctions of the individual soul and certainly the distinctions in the much lower, physical creation are temporary. For a deeper understanding of the relationship between the soul and the Eternal, see section, “The My, the Mine and the I,” in Chapter Nine below.

The reason for listing these few examples here is not merely to point out the immorality and corruption that is commonly demonstrated by “Eastern spiritual teachers”, but to warn the seeker that many even very intelligent, wealthy, and sincere people can fall into the most absurd traps.

### **Buddhist cults**

The largest Buddhist cult in the world is called the “Soka Gakkai International.”<sup>72</sup> They claim millions of members mainly in Japan, Korea and Brazil but also in the United States. Their main teaching is, “Worldwide Peace through Individual Happiness.” During the 1970s and 1980s this cult had tremendous appeal to the American Hippies and then later to the “Yuppies”. The cult leaders claim that chanting *to* a scroll that contains certain ancient Chinese characters will attain this great world peace. The cult members are told that the

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characters on the scroll symbolize the law of the universe, but actually they depict such things as the sun, moon, stars, and a Buddha representing the “great true enlightenment.” Interestingly, they even have a character that refers to the “God of the Judaic, Islam, and Christian religions.” They chant in an ancient, Sanskrit Chinese dialect that is no longer spoken. The practitioners, rarely, if ever, understand the words they are chanting, nor can they read the characters on the scroll.

Although world peace through individual happiness certainly sounds like a pleasant and ideal path, the actual result of these practices is that they produce extremely egocentric, angry people. This anger is created by their intense stressing of the individual’s own happiness. This results in selfishness instead of selflessness. Then when someone tries to leave the cult, messengers from the cult come to sternly warn them that if they do leave horrible things will happen to them.

This cult, and indeed virtually all cults, experience additional problems that almost always surface within their leadership. When an individual or a small group of individuals have the blind confidence of their followers, especially when they are secluded from the eyes and opinions of non-cult members, morality can sink very quickly. Generally, this will become evident in their handling of money, sex or drugs. Certainly, sexual misbehavior is commonly found in all cults that insist on celibacy. Celibacy is an unnatural restriction, and power corrupts.

## Taming The Raging Mind

## FOUR

### Ancient & Modern Techniques

While there are meditative techniques that are ancient, some have been recently improvised. For instance, many disciples of the practice of meditating on “nothing” believe this is a fairly recent innovation, while some believe its roots date as far back as 2500 years ago with the founding of Buddhism. In fact, this practice is much older than Buddhism. It was disdained by the Prophet Joshua some 3,300 years ago, who wrote; “. . . we are not like the Nations who bow down to nothingness . . .”<sup>73</sup> Trances and fire-walking are very old, yet still commonly practiced today. An unusual twist to trance meditation is found in South India and Sri Lanka, where the participants climb trees and amazingly jump from thin branch to thin branch, swinging high above the ground. Trances are a common element in magic and obviously are to be avoided since they take away the mind instead of improving it. Magic is like a mirror. In a mirror, the left appears to be right. So does magic do this to the truth.

Some recent variations of meditation include using an electronic pulse, or sweat-reader that feeds back to the meditator his direction and progress. An “innovative method” of releasing emotionally is called “Chaotic Meditation.” And it certainly seems chaotic when the meditator screams as loud and as much as he can, while he thrashes around on the matted floor.

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Some of these methods have now funneled down to the sciences. For instance, electronic feedback techniques are being used to teach disabled people alternate nerve routes to regain the use of their limbs, and for epileptics to avoid seizures. "Chaotic" techniques have been used by psychologists to release patients' pent-up frustrations. The usefulness of such techniques and devices in awareness meditation is questionable. Meditation is a simple discipline that trains the individual to concentrate and to develop spiritual awareness.

As the mind develops, so must the character, or one may find oneself developing into a dupe or a demon. This lack of moral development is seen in the charismatic, hypnotic, magnetic, mesmerist, cult leaders who convince their devotees to kill themselves.<sup>74</sup>

These innovative techniques, if they can help develop concentration, are not necessarily intrinsically negative. However, look carefully at what teachings surround the technique. See if they facilitate the recognition of the individual's responsibility that must come with true understanding.

In a recent development, scientists are now able to map the brain with a brain-imaging machine while the person is meditating.<sup>75</sup> The brain scan shows the effect of concentration on the area of the brain that controls the feeling of separateness and individuality. As the meditator's concentration increases, this "orientation area" of the brain "cannot do its job of finding the border between self and world."<sup>76</sup> When the concentration is deep, that area of the brain is not being engaged. The result is the feeling of oneness with the environment.

Before the development of synthetic tranquilizers, doctors would recommend sea voyages to the mentally disturbed. This

## Chapter Four: Ancient & Modern Techniques

treatment did more than simply remove the patient from his antagonizing environment, as a visit to a cabin in the woods would also accomplish this. The real benefit came from the mind having nothing more to see day after day than the flat, smooth water and the constant, calm sky. The patient's mind absorbed the calm surroundings and this calmness filled his consciousness, which then became his personal experience. By the time the ship landed, he felt much calmer. This is, in effect, the process of meditation.

When looking through an agitated bottle of water, the view of the far side seems jumbled and the viewer in turn, feels jumbled. As the water stills, the view becomes clear and the viewer, restful. In this restful moment, clear understanding can surface, and the true nature of the Self, the Mind, and the Viewed can be realized. Ultimately, any type of meditation, when successful, must bring the lofty understanding that these three, as is all existence, are actually ONE.

### **Some Practical Dos and Don'ts**

The quiet, early hours before sunrise are the best hours for meditation. Not only is the physical world peaceful, but also the spiritual world is awake and anticipating.

Having a regular time and place helps because these prepare the mind.

Do not meditate while the body is sick or needs rest. Although meditation seems restful, it is very intense.

Sit or walk in a place where you can turn your attention inward.

## Taming The Raging Mind

Both Jewish and Eastern sources advise against meditating near running water. The reason for this is that running water is a remedy for insomnia, having a rhythm that lulls the mind to sleep. It does this by simulating and thereby suggesting the process, which the mind undergoes as it falls asleep.

When a troubled person cannot fall asleep, it is because he will not disengage from his mind's insistent concerns. The mind is very content to have his undivided attention and takes advantage of the situation to thrash him over and over again with all sorts of problems. In addition, as the individual becomes agitated, even small concerns now loom large and give him reason enough to stay awake in order to rehash these woes. He becomes so agitated that he cannot let go. In order to fall asleep the individual must finally accept that all of his thoughts are like so much water flowing under the bridge, having come from somewhere upstream and now having gone somewhere downstream. Like a witness watching from the bank of the river, he must realize even the dirtiest water does not reach him. This is how flowing water affects the insomniac.

Although it is best to meditate in a place where you do not hear the disturbing voice of another person, nor even a bird,<sup>77</sup> you need not completely divorce yourself from the world. But obviously, the fewer distractions, the better. Sometimes earplugs seem to help, but when possible, it is better to meditate in a natural environment. The most efficient earplugs create an artificially intense experience. Meditating in such conditions can bring headaches.

Avoid agitations, such as stimulants and noisy places. Also avoid anything that may induce numb sleep, sluggishness, trances, or stupor.

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It is best not to meditate in a room where someone is sleeping. A sleeping mind projects its sleepiness and this will affect the meditator.

Avoid medications and certainly the so-called recreational drugs, hypnotic techniques such as constant unvarying sound, gazing in a mirror reflecting the sunlight into your eyes, and endless repetition of meaningless mantras. These can make you unconscious, or turn you into an almost helpless witness to "endless" dreams. Listening to a constant sound can bring a surprising, uncomfortably loud version of that same sound screaming back at you. This is especially so if concentrating on the ringing sound within the ears and particularly the left ear. The goal is not to destroy the mind, but to be vividly conscious.

Healthy meditative techniques also bring about a dream state. These dreams are vivid learning experiences, wherein the subconscious is brought to the conscious. This is not to say that these other, mind-numbing techniques have no value. For therapeutic purposes, they can produce desirable results. For instance, when it is beneficial to be unconscious, listening to a constant sound can achieve this. Concentrating on unvarying subjects can produce results rapidly, so progress should be monitored carefully as they can take the mind away instead of waking it up.

Walking-breaks every so often will ward off sleep. Drinking water and certain teas can increase concentration or at least be calming.

Tight clothing can be a subtle, yet substantial hindrance. Such items can leave deep impressions in the flesh when they are released. We are so used to the feeling that we are not consciously aware of it. However, subconsciously the mind is

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being drawn to the sensation. Also, this impedes the healthy flow of blood, which restricts the natural flow of oxygen.

If you want your hands to be together, do not interlock the fingers as this causes needless stress. Also, this is a position taken when one is being judged.<sup>78</sup> Jewish mysticism explains that holding your right hand over your left generates kindness.

Feet are best flat on the floor, or in any comfortable, non-stress position. A most intense position recommended when saying Psalms, which was used by Elijah the Prophet on Mount Carmel, and occasionally by the Sages in the Talmud, is to crouch with your face in between your knees.<sup>79</sup>

Face toward Jerusalem. Bring this awareness into your meditation. All Jewish prayers from all over the world are said to first go the Jerusalem before ascending.

The Prophets would play on pleasant sounding musical instruments to bring them to the joyful and calm frame of mind needed to receive prophecy. Although many say the age of prophecy has passed, we can still move in that direction.

A happy state of mind will enhance success while sorrow prevents it.<sup>80</sup>

For some, meditating before sleep impedes rest since it increases active clarity when one simply wants sleep.

### **Absorption**

In an effort to deepen the meditative experience, some insist upon almost complete isolation: huts on mountaintops, caves in the wilds, special retreat centers where interaction is withheld. Such intense isolation will produce results quickly, as there are few distractions. However, it can also produce extreme feelings of individual uniqueness. This can become so exaggerated that

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the individual may now insist on no longer being touched by anyone. This is not without reason. Each person radiates his individual feelings. Even physical objects broadcast some type of spiritual radiance since all objects have a soul. This exchange is much stronger when touching them. Certainly, this projecting of one's self is even stronger for living beings. When a great, righteous person touches someone, he transmits the way he feels. This is a warm, light, open feeling. The receiver will feel a nice sense of wanting to increase his giving. This is also true for a disturbed person, who equally transmits his peculiar feelings. A sensitive person will not want to be touched by such a person. We are warned to "not even look an evil person in the face."<sup>81</sup> In fact, when a spiritually sensitive person looks at a drugged person, he will feel nauseous.

Thoughts and feelings exist. Do not make the simple mistake of thinking that since these are not tangible, they do not exist. The intangible are also objects in creation, and as such, radiate their nature. To the average person, this seems to be sheer nonsense. Since he is so strongly entwined in his own feelings, he does not feel anyone else's radiance no matter how strong it is, and will even scoff at such an idea. But to the spiritually sensitive, this can be a source of bothersome discomfort.

Given the realities of change in sensitivity that can come about with increased awareness, still, do not allow yourself to become overly sensitive to a normal environment. For instance, such sensitivity may manifest as an overstated concern about environmental pollution. Even the act of seeing people can become a source of difficulty as the individual experiences "absorption" from others, their feelings and characteristics, etc. Indeed, some of these feelings are genuine, albeit extremely

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exaggerated. When an entirely righteous person experiences “strange” thoughts, they are attributed to those people who are standing close to him.<sup>82</sup> This is said of completely righteous people since such strange thoughts are obviously coming from the outside, but this phenomenon also happens to average people.

Recently, a new Jewish student of meditation had a long, involved conversation with a Christian with whom he felt some empathy. After the discussion he sat and meditated. He was startled to see a most vivid vision of a “holy mother holding a baby” pop into his mind. This subject was not even discussed with the Christian, and certainly this known Christian image was not something the Jewish student would normally visualize in his meditation, but since this idea was an important image cherished by the Christian, it radiated from him.

This is the nature of sensitive people. Still, seeking complete isolation to avoid this absorption can magnify the phenomenon even more, to such an extent that it can render the practitioner irrational. One meditator who isolated himself on an Hawaiian island for an extended period of time used to wear a gas mask when he had to come into town because of pollution he perceived there.

Interestingly, the flow of thought goes in the other direction as well, with the spiritually sensitive or intense person broadcasting his thoughts and feelings to those around him. This is a very good reason to cling to righteous people and to avoid the company of wrongdoers. The receiver may experience these thoughts and feelings as if they were his own thoughts, or as if he heard the other person speaking to him. This form of communication transcends all language differences. The various languages have developed in order to

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express thoughts and feelings. Mental communication preempts the need for language with words by directly communicating the feeling itself. This feeling is experienced by the receiver, who then goes on to understand that feeling, in his own word language.

### **Scheduling**

How many minutes or hours per day that a person meditates will be determined by the individual's need. Some recommend intense meditation once every few days,<sup>83</sup> some specify an hour before prayer,<sup>84</sup> still others say an hour before and an hour after prayer, plus the three hours of daily prayer, totaling 9 hours a day.<sup>85</sup> Minutes or hours, days or years, is determined by that soul's capacity and ripeness.

### **Eating**

Concentration is sharper on an empty stomach. Not only does the digestive process disturb meditation, but also meditation disturbs the digestive process. After eating, the body must engage its digestive responses and meditation slows these. Also, food is grounding and causes sleep.

### **Fixation and Headaches**

Do not strongly hold your attention on any object or concept rigidly in a particular place in the mind. Some people in their eagerness to engage meditation hold their concentration on the mental area directly in front of the mind's "eye." Trying to concentrate on such a subjectively chosen, and specifically located spot can produce a mental knot. This creates stiffness that reflects back onto the meditator and may cause severe headaches.

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Rather, meditate passively by gently watching, looking, or witnessing the subject. This does not mean there is no place for intense fixation and concentration as a method of elevation.<sup>86</sup> When meditating actively, one can try to strongly affix his attention onto his meditation subject, (i.e., the concept he is trying to delve into). However, it is not recommended to strongly hold the concentration onto a specific physical area of the mind. If the mind is wild and you do not know where to begin, as each scenario flashes into the mind, simply think, "I see that," and then wait. Repeat this calmly, until you can merely observe without commenting.

### Meaningless vs. Meaningful Subjects

#### Crystal vs. Place

As previously stated, even in passive meditation, the subject should be such that when the mind returns to talking, it will bring the meditator to Holy thoughts. Meditating on a meaningless object, such as a glass, will not do this.

The mind reflects whatever it is contemplating. Therefore, crystal gazing will calm the mind as the mind imitates the nature of the crystal. Once the mind is calm, it can sense intuitive information more easily. This is a well-known technique often associated with those who predict the future or do other mind-developed "wonders" such as manipulating the wind. Gazing at the fingernails can also accomplish this. Actually, what is happening is the manipulator is being manipulated by his own desire. The person who wishes to develop such "wonders" gets so caught up in this desire that it drives him. It becomes his purpose in life and he will try anything that might bring him to this goal. His desire has become his master.

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The desire to acquire such “wondrous” powers comes from a wish to demonstrate proficiency or expertise in spiritual ascent. Almost always, this is merely the meditator’s ego trying to convince others that he is advanced.

Rather than meditating on a meaningless object such as a glass, choose a subject like LIGHT or PLACE. By meditating on the nature of LIGHT, PLACE, ALL ONE, ALL OVER, ALL, including the view and viewer, the mind will finally come to see reality as one constant expanse, witnessed silently. This will bring awe. Then, as the mind goes on to function in its conversation, it will be talking about the wonders and Holiness of the PLACE. Meditating on PLACE, as opposed to nothingness<sup>87</sup> will bring with it understanding of God. Meditating on mere nothingness will bring detachment or an increased sense of the individual’s unique presence in the world. This ego entrenchment comes about as the meditator becomes impressed with just how deep his realization is.

Obviously, this is opposite to the goal. *Sefer Yetzirah*, one of the oldest mystical texts, attributed to Abraham (4,000 years ago) explains the proper process most clearly:

Bridle your mouth from speaking  
and your heart (mind) from thinking,  
and if your mouth goes to speak,  
and if your heart (mind) runs,  
return to the Place . . . <sup>88</sup>

The text reads, “return” to the Place, and not “go” to the Place. This directs the seeker back to his natural self, back to his resting place, his point of emanation. This place is reached by relaxation, and is both the place he is coming from, and the

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place he is in, even now. But now he is experiencing the activities, the agitations, forgetting his still being.

A good exercise that will help you to better understand Place is to physically look at any specific area. That specific area is merely a portion of the entire creation. We create the limits of that specified area by mentally defining its borders. Now spread those mentally defined borders, first east and west, then also north and south and then up and down. Do not forget to include the area behind you and even through you and not just in front of you.

Or, look at the place to your left front. Then look at the place toward your right front, then the place to your rear left side and finally at the place that is located to your rear right side. See that these are four distinct and individually defined places. Then imagine you are lifted up above the place where you are standing, as if hovering above these four places in a helicopter. Look down at these four places from that vantage point and you will easily see that, in truth they are a single continuous, seamless place. Obviously, this one continuous place also sweeps up and down and right through you. Holding your attention for even a brief period of time on the ONE constant Omnipresent Place; up, down, all around, quickly dissolves ego-consciousness.

Or, try to understand the ultimate conclusion of such a statement as, “. . . the whole earth is full of His glory . . .”<sup>89</sup> “The whole earth” includes your neighborhood, your house, the room you are sitting in, your body, your mind, your thoughts. Even your very being must therefore be full of His glory.

The Talmud warns,<sup>90</sup> it would have been better not to have come into this world, than to look upon four things: “What is

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beyond the highest? What is beyond the lowest? What was before creation? What will be after it is all over?" These times and places are not within the human experience. To concentrate on them would bring the mind to imagine an unreal subject. This imagined reality would become the meditator's mental reality, which would in effect take him out of the time and place to which he has been sent. It is here that we must find our solutions since this is where we have been placed.

Instead of trying to concentrate on unknowable subjects, pick subjects that will explore the mystical yet not remove your frame of reference from this world. The most traditional subjects of meditation, as taught by the greatest mystics, are the "Deeds of Creation"<sup>91</sup> which explain the secrets of existence, and the "Chariot of the Prophet Ezekiel"<sup>92</sup> which explain the secrets of spiritual elevations. There are many books written about these two subjects.

### **Meditating on a Flame**

If you wish to meditate on a flame, olive oil makes the steadiest and clearest light but any still flame will do. To watch the various colors in the flame is one option, but do not concentrate on any single color. Rather, concentrate on the clear light that radiates just above the crown (top) of the flame. This is like the Pristine Whiteness that comes before coloration.<sup>93</sup> It is sometimes called white, but it is not. It is clear. Clarity has no color. It sparkles, radiantly. It is translucent without form, while color, even white, is opaque and therefore somewhat formed.

Certain Eastern practices often produce the mental experience of a particular shade of light, which at first is mistakenly called white. The light is experienced not only in the meditator's mind, but also long-time meditators in the room

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and, if it is strong enough, even untrained people, will be able to see it radiating around the meditator's head and upper body.

Some Tai Chi practitioners deliberately try to generate a blue light to show the energy moving throughout their body. They do this to demonstrate their degree of proficiency. They manifest this blue light somewhat like a ball of light held between the palms of their hands as they practice their movement meditations.

These light experiences are also the source of the "halo" symbol commonly drawn around the head of a picture of a person to identify him as a "saint." Initially, this light seems like steel white in color. Since it is light, it is at first very attractive, but later its heaviness becomes evident. It is then seen to be a shade of blue.

Although the East Indian discipline claims blue to be the highest color,<sup>94</sup> Jewish sources write that blue is actually the lowest color.<sup>95</sup> It is even called the sick color that must be avoided when appearing in dreams.<sup>96</sup> The Torah and Eastern teachings on this subject are absolutely opposite. This is not an insignificant difference. What you seek in your meditation will depend on which system you follow. If you do experience such a vision, where you end up will certainly be affected by which path you trust. For a deeper understanding of the blue light and its danger, see the discussion on the rainbow in the section, "Beware the Dangers of Successful Meditation" in chapter eight. Interestingly, the effect of blue on the individual is commonly known, even in secular culture. Depression is also known as the "blues," and films designed to arouse lust are called "Blue Movies."

### Experiencing Lights

There are many meditation experiences involving light. Some are elevating and some are not. In one experience, the light appears to the mind as a beacon, as if it is a spotlight coming from somewhere above. Its ray sweeps the spectrum of consciousness, and as it sweeps it eradicates. When the beam reaches the place of individual identity, awareness of "individual-ness" ceases and there is only this awesome light. Then as the beam continues on its way, the perspective of individual-ness returns leaving the meditator wondering, "What was that light?"

When a meditator sees a Great and Holy Sight, such as the Revelation of God's Presence, or a Revelation of the Messiah, the Glory that accompanies the vision is called light, but it is not a light at all. The vision seems to be radiating, sparkling clear light, but more accurately, it is a revelation of His Glory. Glory is the "natural" majesty that accompanies Holiness. The Glorious "light" heralds the vision; it is not the subject of the vision. It is brilliant, entirely clear, uncolored Holiness. Then, as a result of having seen the vision, this light radiates somewhat from the one who saw it. Moses glowed so strongly after speaking with Hashem that those around him were frightened.<sup>97</sup> Why then is It called light? This term is used in order to describe the experience in human terms.

"Seeing" His Glory is not seeing Him, but it is like seeing a radiating garment of the Holy One (as if this could be). Explaining that the light is not the vision itself, one source writes; "(even) The light is a stranger in His house."<sup>98</sup> The relationship between this type of Revelation and Glory is somewhat similar to the heat that radiates from a flame. Heat informs us that the flame is present. There cannot be flame

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without heat, but the heat is a mere radiating aspect and result of the flame. It is not the actual flame.

### **Breathing Techniques**

#### **Watching the Breath**

If you choose to watch your breath, do so actively, by understanding that Hashem breathes the breath of life into the body: “. . . and Hashem breathed into man’s nostrils the breath of life and the man became a living soul.”<sup>99</sup> As you watch the breath, try to realize the ramifications of God breathing His breath into you. The Torah is speaking of an ongoing process, not merely an historical event. What is actually happening when we breathe is that God is breathing His breath into our lungs. Think of yourself as the recipient of mouth-to-nose resuscitation. The recipient's life-sustaining breath is coming from the lungs of the resuscitator. Now listen as the first two letters of *Hashem* (a four letter, two syllable Name) are actually the sound of the breath coming in, and the last two letters are pronounced by the breath going out. One source recommends using the vowel sound “ee” for the first syllable and “ah” for the second.<sup>100</sup> Now the meditation becomes passive. Listen silently.

#### **One Breath**

As the mind runs from being directed toward the breath, see that the air, which fills the lungs, and the air being expelled back out of the body, is actually a single air that fills the lungs and surrounds the body. See the breath in and the breath out as one continuous breath of air, or two phases of one breath. In and out. Or, as the mind wanders, try to understand who is meditating. What is the relationship between the meditator and

the meditated upon? You will find that just as what seemed to be two breaths are really one, so too are the meditator and the meditated upon actually one.

### **One-Nostril Breathing**

A most effective breath technique is to breathe in, first through the right nostril only. This is done by gently closing the left nostril with the little finger of the right hand. Using the little finger not only requires the least movement, but also this can form the fingers into a Holy Name right before your eyes (see page 69 above). The intake should be slow, steady, l o n g, expanding not just the stomach, but also the chest to its fullest capacity.

When fullest capacity is reached, pause briefly, and then close the right nostril with the thumb and release the left nostril to begin the slow exhale through the left nostril only. The exhale should slowly empty the lungs completely, gently pushing the lungs into complete emptiness.

When the expulsion is complete, but before the body begins to shake, pause briefly with the left side still open and still keeping the right nostril closed, and then slowly and easily begin to retake in the air from the left side only.

When the lungs are filled to bursting capacity and the chest and stomach are fully expanded, pause briefly, and then switch the fingers. Again, the little finger closes the left nostril and the thumb releases the right side as the slow, steady exhale begins through the now open right nostril.

When the lungs are empty, almost collapsing, pause briefly, and then while the little finger continues to close the left nostril, again return and begin to draw back in through the right side

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only, slowly drawing in, up to the body's fullest capacity. Again, when the lungs are full, pause briefly.

The thumb then gently closes the right nostril and now the slow, steady, exhalation through the left nostril begins emptying the lungs until they almost start to shake.

Repeat this technique over and over again. Its slow rhythm, with its intense moments at each end, almost bursting full, and then almost shaking empty, cause the mind to quickly lose its normal sense of personal being. What you thought the I was, is now gone. This exercise can be an effective pre-meditation warm up to bring the mind and body to calm.

### **One Nostril is More Open**

When doing this exercise, you will notice that one nostril will be more open and clear, while the other will seem somewhat stuffed, swollen almost shut. If you cannot easily distinguish between the open and closed sides, push the tip of the nose gently up. This will magnify the difference. The sides will reverse from time to time, making the opposite nostril now clear. As a method of "mindfulness" some people try to keep track of what times, or for what reason, the sides switch.

### **Inhale and Exhale via the Nose**

Slow, deep breathing will help calm a racing mind. It also delivers an increased amount of oxygen throughout the body, which is especially appreciated in the brain. Breathing in through the nose filters some of the impurities from the air. This also brings the outside, cold air closer to body temperature before it reaches the warm, tender lungs. It is best, although at times more difficult, to also exhale through the nose, as this will make the breathing in and out more uniform and will also help

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remove the dust particles just breathed in. Half of deep breathing is deep exhaling.

### **Releasing Tension**

Often, tension around the ribs or under the arms will restrict deep breathing. This can be released easily by “spreading” the tension to the area around the entire chest and back as you inhale. This will allow the chest to expand and contract fully with each breath, instead of pinching the rising and falling stomach against the bottom of the rib cage.

### **Breathing Cautions**

While breathing deeply, be careful not to hyperventilate. Do not breathe in merely filling the chest as this can lead to hyperventilation. The stomach should also be filled and emptied with each breath. After taking in a deep breath, do not hold it in, nor out, for a long while as if under water. If you choose to include these pauses, be sure that the shutdowns are carefully limited. Although holding the breath for longer periods of time is considered to be advanced in the East, its dangers might outweigh its advantages. Doing this excessively can cause you to become unconsciousness.

When doing this deep breathing exercise you may feel an area of your body that is tight and refuses to stretch as much as you would like. Do not try to use retained breath as a tool to press against such a troubling spot, thinking to dissolve it. This may seem to be a quicker alternative to slowly releasing the tension around the trouble, but it is not. It may throw the mind into Vast, Dark Emptiness, and the body into violent spasms! If this should ever happen, be calmly aware, relax and it soon stops. Do not stand for a while, nor stand quickly for a long while after such an episode. Such an undesirable experience, if

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calmly observed, can be a source of rapid growth. The individual clearly sees how he is but a rider in the body. However, such extremes are dangerous, and this danger can be accumulative, for each time it might take less to bring on spasms, and they may last longer. Deep breathing should be smooth, quiet, effortless, and should soon disappear from the awareness.

### Techniques of the Eye

#### Gazing at the Nose

Related to breath meditation is watching or gazing at the nose. The Talmud recommends that when “afraid of your own evil eye,” look at the left side of the nose.<sup>101</sup> Gazing at the tip of the nose is a well-known technique taught in the East. Pictures and statues of men practicing Eastern meditation are often made with their eyes fixed in this position. Watching the world through normal vision forces the meditator to engage the world around. Thus the natural, animal inclination can imagine what it sees is its own, to do with as it pleases. (For this reason, some Chassidim look only at the ground directly in front of them when walking in the public area.) With the eyes fully closed the same thing can happen with the thoughts pulling the meditator into their world. By watching the nose, the meditator will be detached from both of these perspectives, and will be constantly reminded to concentrate on the chosen subject.

Whereas the Talmud suggests this as an emergency technique to be applied when needed, the East suggests long periods of meditating in this position. Some Eastern ascetics will hold their eyes in this position all day long. This intense practice is effective, but must be guarded, as it can quickly take

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the meditator out of the world (mentally), instead of teaching how best to live within it.

### **Breaking an Attachment**

There is a useful practice that can be employed when you find yourself staring at something you should not even be looking at. If left unchecked, the animal inclination would glue the eyes onto whatever it imagines it could possibly gain any type of satisfaction from. It is very detrimental to allow this to go on. Every moment locked in such a position increases the damage to the spiritual being. This is like burning an image onto a metal plate, which will surely come back to haunt and will require much work to repair. To break even a very strong attachment, simply lift the eyes, even a fraction of an inch above the compelling subject. The evil side is not so tenacious when its prey is not being taken entirely away, when it will still be able to see at least some of its desire. The fixation will be broken at once. Now that it is broken, it is easy to choose to go on and not to return to the attachment. This need be employed merely momentarily.

### **Underwater Meditation: The Mikveh**

A very intense place of meditation is under water. Here, the recommendation is a kosher *mikveh* (pool of water), one that fulfills in all its details the requirements satisfying the laws of a proper pool of spiritually cleansing water.

There are two distinct perspectives to which one must pay attention: the physical and the mental. First, the gathering of water must be completely kosher. It must satisfy the rules in even their minutest detail, such as type and depth of water. By fulfilling the strictest laws as to what constitutes a kosher

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gathering of water, the water will not only be physically cleansing, but it will spiritually cleanse. This will elevate you to a higher, more pure state of holiness. Each detail is essential. Without any one of them, the mikveh is not a mikveh but merely a gathering of water, so submerging in it is to no spiritual avail. Once the mikveh is filled, many of these physical requirements are not even discernable. So what difference does it make if for instance, the water came from a natural source, such as a spring, or if it was merely drawn from a faucet?

When we satisfy all of the physical requirements laid out by the Torah, we not only enter into the physical water, but we now also come under the umbrella of the Torah's thousands of years of tradition. We join the many millions of previous Jewish seekers who also knew that the gates to elevation open not by our physical effort, although this is essential, but by Grace from the One Above.

With underwater meditation, of course, there is no air. We cannot breathe. This cannot be ignored. The mind does not go about chattering as it does in a normal situation. There is no choice. We must go up or die. All of our attention, all of our being recognizes it must coordinate in order to accomplish our single, most pressing need: air. There must be air for life to exist. Yet, here we have none. Instantly, all of our resources cooperate to accomplish our primary goal, air. Herein lies the secret of this meditation. Under water, the need for air is so pressing and the amount of time available to accomplish the goal of the meditation is so short, it is easier to be single-minded. In the same way we assemble all of our resources to direct our attention to survival while under water, so too can we compel ourselves to assert all of our energy toward recognizing the One. Under water, there is no choice. There is

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only one direction. Only one answer is possible. We have to concentrate quickly, for we must go up soon, or die. So can we direct all our will toward recognition of the Holy One, or cease. Such is the practice of meditating under water.

### **Asceticism and Sensuality**

#### **Staring at the Sun**

Ascetics in the East will stand in, and even stare at, a blaring sun to drive their mind from this world. Today the sun is especially dangerous, most specifically to the skin and eyes. Still, if you wish to do this practice then stand with your legs spread and your back to the sun. Now bend forward until you can gaze at the sun from in between your legs. The eyes will be more comfortable, shaded, not so forced upon. Instead of this intense practice, try sitting with the eyes gently closed facing the early morning sun. You can use the bright warmth to draw the attention to single-mindedness. Relax here for a while before meditation.

#### **In a Thorn Bush**

Probably the most intense meditation of all comes while standing on one foot, virtually naked, with the entire body stuffed inside a large thorn bush! The thorns are very long and very sharp. If the meditator falters even the slightest, if he moves but a fraction of an inch in any direction, he is stabbed many times by the hungry thorns waiting next to his skin. His blood seeps. He quickly shifts his weight back away from the punctures. But if he moves too quickly, too far, he will encounter many more thorns waiting on the opposite side. This is not only a forced method to gain concentration, since he must pay constant attention to his flesh and its proximity to the very

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sharp daggers of thorns, but more so, the intensity of the situation actually brings the consciousness higher. After all, there is little more pressing than the immediate problem of keeping his blood inside his body. This most real demand forces single-mindedness. Single-mindedness squeezes the consciousness upward and he will experience a rush up with its almost immediate influx of light, and detachment. From there upwards it depends on the individual's present place in the ladder of escalation.

Such excessive techniques are substitutes for mental determination. This same degree of intensity can come from an unwanted drop of water slowly and excruciatingly trickling down the side of your cheek. An individual can set his mind to any course. What is amazing is that the vast majority decides not to set any course at all, but rather relinquishes their choice of direction and merely flow with the tide.

Asceticism is not what is normally found lacking on the spiritual path, but often joy is. Many ardent seekers see that the spiritual path is so very difficult and that most of mankind's happiness is based on gross, selfish, fleeting things, so they assume that pure joy can only come after they have attained the spiritual goal. This kind of thinking merely adds an additional handicap to the already extremely difficult path. Instead, there should be joy in seeing the design and intricacies of creation. It is so grand and so wondrous. The wise seeker should be able to see joy in the process that life must go through, and joy even in its struggle. Yet so many serious seekers opt for asceticism. This, despite Holy Joy being the quickest and easiest way to the greatest and most lasting success.

Similar to the excessiveness of the ascetic is the sensualist who seeks to maximize his physical pleasure. He hunts for

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what he believes will bring the greatest taste experience possible. Usually he ends up with precisely designed wines and savory foods. He concentrates on taste much like a meditator concentrates on his chosen subject. He pays the strictest attention to his taste “meditation”, hoping to experience the minutest distinction between this grape and that. His obvious failure is that he seeks a fleeting sensual experience. His is but a momentary, sensual joy, with no purpose beyond brief, immediate physical pleasure. The evasive nature of sensual pleasure is that its frail presence lasts but a single moment. Yet, he goes through all the expensive anticipation and exercise, merely to experience this extremely brief physical sensation that imparts no lasting benefit, no enlightenment at all.

### Peripheral Trips

Often meditators will take on various peripheral trips that seem to make sense. Some do, but most do not. The list of “alternatives” is quite long. For instance, healings and calmness coming from carrying certain colored or precious stones in little pouches around the neck, wearing specifically colored clothing, sitting inside a triangle, sweat lodges, prayer beads, mantras, complete avoidance of synthetics, food combinations, health foods, vegetarianism, veganism, fruitarianism, fasting, astrology, rearranging furniture, palm reading, . . . and on, and on, almost forever. Do not invent a new religion.

The following peripheral trips can lead to either enlightenment or confusion, depending on their use:

### Group Visualizations

Some try group visualizations, wanting to increase the intensity of their experience. If this works and **BRINGS HEALTHY RESULTS**, use it. Often people are very taken by

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the pervasive spiritual feeling that can manifest at even a very secular music festival. This can happen when a large number of people come together, stressing certain feelings in common. This group-inspired feeling can be directed toward the good. But even in a group, the truth is, we are alone. We were born alone, and no matter how many people stand around when we die, we will die alone. There is One, Who Is Alone, and there is no one else.

### **Astrology**

Astrology is the study of the position of the stars and planets especially at the time of a person's birth to reveal important fixed characteristics that were born into that individual. There certainly is some truth in this, however the big mistake of this forbidden practice<sup>102</sup> is that it can cause man to forget that he has free will. This means that although astrology can reveal inborn characteristics or propensities, these are not necessarily true for future acts. If each individual born under a certain sign would be destined to fulfill the qualities specific to that particular sign, there would be no free will. The Torah strongly refuses such teaching as defeatist and instead teaches that each of us is in complete control of our destiny, and that by turning from error, by returning to righteousness, anyone born under any sign can completely erase these signs and in fact be born anew.

To learn about the unique traits you possess, the problems you face and their solutions, study the Torah portion read on the day of your birth. Each day, throughout the world<sup>103</sup> a specific section of Torah is read. This section defines the day you are born. Study it carefully to learn of the episodes pertinent to your particular life experience. Train your children

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early in life to recognize and manage their specific characteristics.

Also, the day you were born may be the anniversary of a great person's birth or passing. This righteous person's spiritual characteristics somewhat permeate that day, and will often be manifest more in people born (even many years later) on that day. Search this potential to discover the tools you may have been given to help you to accomplish your specific purpose in life.

### **Names**

Ancient Jewish sources teach that a moment of Divine Inspiration is given to parents when they give their children Hebrew names. These names will to some degree reflect the nature of the child being named. People wanting to learn more about themselves should study the meaning and history of their names. Most often, Jewish children of European descent are named after a recently deceased member of the family, while quite often those of Sephardic descent are named after a living relative. This child will inherit certain characteristics of that person, and should try to develop the good qualities and avoid the negative qualities that that person was known for. The Biblical character who was the first person to have that name is the original personification of certain traits. These traits are to some degree found in all people who share that name.

Also, Hebrew letters have numerical values. All words with the same total numerical value have some underlying similarities. Studying the words that have the same numerical value as your name can reveal something about your life.<sup>104</sup>

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## FIVE

### Body Movements & Positions

Man's activities may be divided into three categories; thought, speech and deed. The organ of thought is the mind, of speech is the tongue and lips, and of deed is the body, primarily the hands and feet. These categories form a progression from the very subtle level of mere mental impulses to the less subtle level of physical sound waves, and then on to the more gross physical level of bodily movement.

To some degree thought must precede and direct both speech and deed. We assume that we understand something about the mental state and therefore the inner being of a person by appraising the speech and deeds that his mind projects. As the mind shapes the speech and deeds of a person, so does the process work in reverse, with his deeds and speech shaping his mind. This is the main rationale for prayer, not to change the unchanging Creator, *but to change the inner being of the person who is praying*. Just as prayer and guarded speech affect the inner being, so do actions. Two examples of actions that obviously affect the inner being are sharing and stealing. As the person engages in either of these acts, his inner being will take on the characteristics of either a generous or a callous person. But even seemingly meaningless actions can affect the mental state of a person, such as rhythmic exercise. Here the slow, rocking movements reflect back onto the mind so it will be influenced to also slow down.

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### Eastern

Meditations involving movements or postures, although ancient, have only recently become popular in the West. These are usually associated with religions such as Hinduism (Brahmanism), which teaches postures canonized within the branch of its religion called Hatha Yoga, or Taoism that teaches Tai Chi and Chi Gong movement meditations.

As previously stated, where meditators end up depends almost entirely upon the intentions they stress. Although current Hatha Yoga proponents like to say the postures are merely physical with absolutely no religious overtones, this is simply not true. These postures are integral to and an almost inseparable branch of the religion of many gods, Brahmanism. For instance; a very popular Hatha yoga position is called, "salutation to the sun." Many thousands of Westerners do this every day without realizing that actually this is a form of sun worship! The majority of serious yoga students, impressed with the new awareness these meditative postures produce, go on to study Hindu texts and follow their teachings. They adopt Hindu-related customs, such as their incense, beads, posters, clothing, myths, and go on to live their spiritual life as a Hindu.

Taoism is more subtle, teaching that there is a highest Indefinable Creator. Yet, its constant stress is on the two opposites, and how these two must come together in harmony for there to be peace; Ying & Yang, white and black, male and female, etc. Its symbol, a circle half black and half white, depicts this philosophy. Practitioners are mindful of the distinctions, the opposites, and concentrate on these. They conclude these are the two components or forces that must come together to make up the entire one. Their result is exactly what they were taught when they began: duality. The one is not made of the

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two. The opposite is true. The two are made of the one. The pie is not made of its pieces, but rather the pieces are made out of the pie. To succeed spiritually, it is the One that must be focused upon and understood, not the opposite distinctions found within it. The belief in more than one power leads to the invention of many deities or demigods.

What makes these Eastern techniques so enticing is the thread of truth remaining in them from the sons of Abraham. For instance, Taoism teaches, "The Creator is Indefinable." Buddhism stresses that "There is no separate self" and man should have "compassion for all beings." They also speak of trying to gain awareness of the "Great Void." Hindu scripture quotes one of their deities saying, "I am in everything and everything is in me."<sup>105</sup> All these are truths floating in the grossest idolatries. "All the good of the wicked is harmful for the righteous."<sup>106</sup> These truths entice and therefore lead innocent seekers to also accept their deities.

Interestingly, even the Eastern martial arts are not without deities and powers. This information is completely hidden from the newer students and is not revealed until they attain great proficiency. For instance, a Karate student will not learn of these powers until he reaches the very advanced level of fifth degree black belt. At that stage he will be taught that there are "spiritual powers" that can be called on for assistance in his martial art.

The physical postures and movements of yoga and Tai Chi, **IF COMPLETELY STRIPPED OF THEIR RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE**, can be very beneficial. But wrapped in practices of "serpent power" and "dualities" they become subtle and dangerous. Even books and other tokens of these religions should not be kept. A "scriptural" book of yoga will

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typically be dedicated to the “divine lord of the serpents of the fearsome hood with many eyes!”<sup>107</sup>

Correct mystical teachings explain the world is suspended on a serpent-like creature called the “Teli.”<sup>108</sup> Some, depicting this literally, imagine a physical snake or embryonic-like creature stationed under and upon which this globe is hung! Hindus, Buddhists, and Christians write of an actual spiritual snake, a poisonous creature, with great, if not total, control over this world or at least certain planes of this world. Some, such as certain Christian sects, believe that God gave this world over to the serpent to rule.

The concept, “This world is hung on a serpent,” is teaching that our worldly perspective, our very experience, is sustained by duality. Be careful, this warns, this duality is a snake that lies. We see the many as only many when in truth the many are also one. This mistaken belief is the serpent functioning. Its lie is enticing. It draws even the most pure-minded toward the entirely physical perspective, blinding them to the single most basic truth.

Dangers from these practices and philosophies are many. For instance, when they are followed, even without religious intentions, and practiced sincerely with intensity, unusual states of consciousness can overtake the mind. Such phenomena as automatic speaking and automatic postures can and do happen. In India these are called *Mudras* and *Bindus* and are considered signs of great advancement. They can lead an individual to act out complicated and difficult postures he has never even seen before. This automatic behavior occurs without his conscious willing and can happen even while he is standing in a crowded line at an international airport! The experience is one of sensing a spiritual warmth, somewhat blissful, leading

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certain areas of the body into particular movements. The mind willingly gives in by letting go, thus allowing this gentle movement to continue and build. Giving in increases the warmth and single-mindedness making these postures relaxing and comfortable. Resistance would feel cold, as if a great opportunity would be lost, a definite "letdown." Leaning into the warmth feels as if you are being moved from "above."

Still, the practice of concentration while bending and stretching is certainly beneficial. These types of exercises afford the opportunity to slow down and realize the moment. This is a tremendous advantage in becoming aware of stillness and attaining concentration. Healthy concentration exercises will lead to proper breathing habits and often to a greater awareness of one's surroundings, especially such intimately experienced aspects as diet and pollution.

### **Torah Movement and Body Postures**

Rather than forming the body into meaningless positions, forming it into the shapes of the Hebrew letters will lead to more than just the posture-related benefits. When the body is spelled into a Name, the Holiness of that specific Name radiates throughout the body. While the body is so shaped is the best time to concentrate on both the letters of that Name and on its particular meaning. Entire concepts can be spelled out by molding the body in various positions.

When you come to the limit of your ability to bend and want to stretch even further, do not push against the painful area. For instance, if while kneeling you try to put your head in between your knees and halfway into the bend you feel a restricting tightness, do not try to push through the pain. Stop there, or even back off a little. Take a slow, deep breath and

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again bend back as far as you were able to comfortably go. While still there, lightly pushing against the limits of your position, release the tight area by slowly spreading the tightness away from its center. Do this while breathing in deeply and then, while slowly exhaling, gently bend deeper and deeper. Once you get as far as you can go, breathe slowly and deeply, and realize you are writing the letter *Peh* (प) with your body. Meditate on each of Peh's definitions. (The following definitions are ordered by importance as listed in the lexicon.)<sup>109</sup> Realize you are being formed into:

Here (*Po*)  
Breathing (*Pe*)  
Blowing  
Blow Away  
Scatter Like the Wind  
Side  
Quarter of the Heavens  
Corner of a Field  
Extremity of the Beard  
Mouth to Mouth  
Without the Intervention of Anyone  
With One Mouth  
Unanimously  
Mouth  
Edge  
Entrance  
Portion  
Word  
Command  
Having Many Edges  
As You Are

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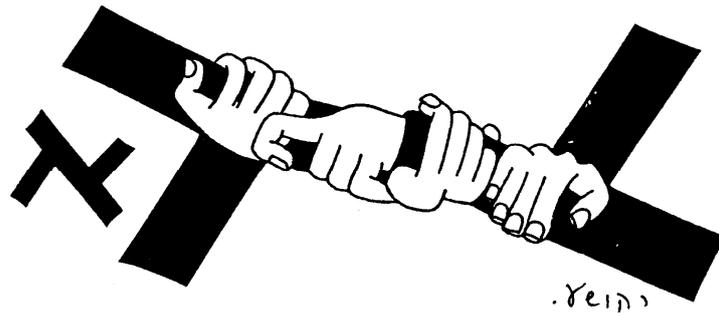
You are folded into a message. This message tells of a path that starts at the very place where you are, and then moves out to the furthest heavens, and then back again explaining how your mouth affects the being that you are. All this while still being as near to you as your **breath**, which is **blowing away**, and being **scattered like the wind** to every **side** and **quarter of the heavens**, and filling the **corners of the field**. From the farthest **end of the heavens** back as close as the **extremity of your beard** then coming even closer, until now being **mouth to mouth** as the **ONE without the intervention of anyone**, even as **one mouth, unanimously**. Your mouth is an **edge** of you. This is the **entrance**, what comes in and goes out from here is your **portion**. Your **word, commands, all having many edges**, all saying, **AS YOU ARE**.

It is an excellent exercise to place your head between your knees while lying on your back. Draw your knees up over your head, trying to bring them to rest on the floor, one by each ear. Here, gravity is helping to force the body to bend, which leaves you free to concentrate on releasing. Breathe deeply while drawn into the shape of the letter Peh. Take this journey concentrating on each definition as you pass through that stage, journeying back into yourself.

Done properly, this exercise has many mental and even physical benefits; such as improving concentration, making the body agile, and curbing appetite.

Beneficial results also come, but to a lesser degree, from shaping the fingers and arms into Hebrew letters spelling out Holy concepts. More than one person can join to form letters. For instance, two people linking arms can form an "aleph," one:

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The body movement meditation most beneficial to the entire person is dance. Beyond intellect, free flowing dance is the quickest method of spiritual advancement. Deep, inner feelings express themselves, moving the entire body. The soul urges the body to dance. The body in turn releases its stress, which lessens its pull on the soul. This allows the soul to soar. The most well-known Chassidic master of our age, the Lubavitcher Rebbe said, "Dance is the highest form of worship," and "What we try to accomplish by prayer on the New Year, fasting on the Day of Atonement, feasting during the holiday of Booths, we can accomplish more by dancing in joy over the giving of the Torah."

Holding the body in a specified physical position to facilitate mental awareness should not seem strange to you. In fact, this system is well known, albeit mostly forgotten, in Jewish tradition. For instance, the proper position for prayer is to hold the hands, right over left, close by the heart, with the feet firmly together. This is the position of a humble person making requests. But why is this position chosen and not any other number of positions that could also be called humble, for instance bowing? The answer becomes evident when we say the "*Kedusha*."<sup>110</sup> This is the prayer of angels,<sup>111</sup> and we are

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imitating these holy angels who stand on one leg, (signifying that they have no free will) with their wings lying at their sides. And we, when we say, "Holy, Holy, Holy . . ." and look down at our bodies, see our two legs together as one, and our arms are folded at our sides, shaped like wings.

### Spinning

Another old and interesting method of meditation comes while physically spinning. This method has recently been made popular in the West, mostly by the Dervish or Sufis. These are the students of the more mystical branches of Islam. Here, they perform an elaborate, twirling dance costumed in flowing robes, assuming supportive postures with outstretched arms. Twirling and twirling defeats the mind's constant attempt to engage secular matters.

One frequently recommended Sufi method of meditation while twirling is to visualize a vertical axis through the center of the body, from the ground up. At first, one imagines the diameter of this axis being spun around to be about the size of a barber pole. As one continues, imagine the axis to be the size of a broomstick, then a fishing rod, then the fishing line, then a hair's breadth. Finally one imagines he is inside the hair and, at last, occupies no body, space, or time. This exercise has a name that means "hearing," but is more accurately translated as "turning inward."

Or, when spinning, one can simply gaze at a fingertip, which appears stationary in relationship to the viewer. This will prevent dizziness.

Round and round one twirls, physically spinning while experiencing a still mental center. Everything whirls by as they

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release their normal perspectives and stresses of life and attempt to come to trance. Any daily pulls that would come to mind at such a moment are instantly dismissed, seen simply to be ridiculous. Twirling and twirling, they try to free themselves from normal body consciousness and thereby, hopefully, see beyond.

The *sadhus* are the mystical students of abandonment within the Hindu tradition. They desert normal life through any method possible: severe deprivations, laying naked on cactus, giving up speech and writing, giving up a permanent home, walking endlessly without setting direction or goal, drugs. . . whatever comes to hand. They forsake society, and recklessly fling themselves into what they hope is the lap of god. The ones who go the furthest away quickly abandon society's normal responsibilities and privileges. They become indifferent, glazed over, entranced, otherworldly. Their experience intensifies on certain occasions, such as upon seeing an advanced "teacher" or being among many pilgrims arriving at a "holy" site, holidays, or such.

Sadhus do not purposely prepare themselves for spinning by assuming certain postures or costumes and only then beginning to spin as do the Sufis, but rather they begin to spin at times when a blissful, forceful feeling overtakes them and automatically leads them into the spin. Spinning and spinning, they experience an increasing degree of bliss, as they gaze at the tip of their nose in order to mentally stay in the center and maintain balance. They are not consciously, purposely spinning themselves, but rather the energy comes upon them from above and automatically moves them into the spin. Then, after moments or hours, when they are finally exhausted, they collapse, tingling in sparkles of bliss, their skin feeling as

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though they had just come out of a very hot bath. They now radiate this feeling to those around them. This can be likened to the behavior of small children, especially autistic children, who find themselves at a loss for the moment. They might be reaching for some different feeling, or they might purposely begin to spin as if wanting to do something interesting. Perhaps they are trying to relieve themselves from a boring or disturbing thought.

Spinning, by itself, although perhaps excessively severe, is not necessarily negative. In fact, such an experience can be a calm automatic release of a normal difficult headspace. The mechanical aspects are like any other, wherein the only question becomes: does it work? Does it bring you to a higher, clearer understanding? This is true of the physical aspects of spinning. As for the religious or philosophical aspects that surround these teachings, they bring only dread and self-punishment. They are of no use to the spiritual seeker. The vast majority of the honest ones who use (or are used by) such techniques are simply fooling themselves. They are like the hallucinating drug user who is startled by his immensely important discovery. He writes it down knowing it will reshape the world's thinking, only to find after his hallucinations have subsided that he has written just two words, "Peanut-butter." Success in spiritual life must ultimately be measured by success in physical life. These are not two lives, but merely two perspectives of the one life. The successful spiritual attainer will have a successful family life, a peaceful home, and a practice that enhances, not destroys society.

### **Trying to Get Higher**

All religions teach techniques that produce certain uplifting experiences, feelings of approaching a higher realm. Besides these meditative body movements and positions there are

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many other techniques taught as well, such as fasting, chanting, and devotional attitudes. For instance, in the Hindu tradition, cows are imbued with a certain degree of holiness. After all, the thinking goes, they only give and take merely their barest necessities. When a devout Hindu feels momentarily elevated from some practice or occurrence and the rush is strong enough to drive him to act upon his elevation, as an expression of thanksgiving for the revelation, and if a cow happens to be present, he will jump up and run over to the cow and actually kiss the cow on its lips. This is in fact an ancient form of idol worship.

All religions report ecstatic experiences. A “god-intoxicated” Hindu could be blissfully dancing down the street singing the praises of his idol one minute, and then a few minutes later find himself standing on his head, hands clasped in the air before him, venerating his idol, while his head is buried one foot deep in gravel!

Christian monks often wore horsehair shirts next to their skin to constantly remind themselves of suffering, using pain as a mantra.

### **Bodily Functions**

When one relieves himself through a bowel movement, there is a joyful release. If enough attention is paid to the brief moment, when this relief is experienced, an emotional rush is also experienced. Not only is the physical body relieved, but also there is also a momentary emotional uplifting. This joyful feeling can be exaggerated to the point of idolatry. One of the oldest forms of idolatry is “Baal Peor.”<sup>112</sup> (Today, in Spanish, *peor* means the “worst.”) To worship this idol the devotees actually relieved themselves in front of this statue. Some say

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that the original worship service created such a blissful state that the devotees could not control their bowels. The name of the place where this form of idolatry was practiced was called Shitim. There are Indian Gurus who claim that the sign that your meditation has reached the highest possible level is that you lose control of your bowels while you are meditating.

Sneezing is the opposite type of body function. With good reason, the ancients were quite impressed with the common sneeze. Before Jacob, the father of the tribes of Jewish People, there was no sickness in the world.<sup>113</sup> When a person was about to die they did not first get sick as is common today. They simply sneezed and with their sneeze did their life leave their body. This is recalled today, as it is impossible to sneeze while keeping the eyes open. For this reason, people are accustomed to saying, "be well" or "God bless you" when someone sneezes.

As a sneeze begins to build up strength within the body, trace its progress. From where does it start? When do you first recognize that a sneeze is building up? From where and unto where does this identifiable feeling travel? Feel its presence as it develops stronger and becomes more urgent, until at last it becomes entirely uncontrollable. First there was merely a hint that a sneeze was coming. It becomes stronger until suddenly it became insistent. As it builds in strength, it finally reaches the irresistible, unstoppable tickle in the nose that forces complete surrender. At last it explodes into the violent expulsion of air and being, rushing out through the mouth and nose, relieving the unrelenting tickle that brought it about in the first place.

The energy controlling this feeling and its delicious release can be compared to a giant ocean wave the surfer tries to ride. The consciousness can glide along this powerful tickle and even its violent rush, experiencing a free ride, momentarily

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undaunted by any and all of the daily worries that plague it. Who can be concerned with even the most severe personal problems while in the middle of the extremely explosive rush caused by a furious sneeze? Ride this energy to its fullest extent. Relax, flowing with and not resisting the loosening expansion. Flop limp from the neck or even from the waist up. Who sneezed? Was it just the body? Where was the I in the middle of the sneeze? Learn from this experience that you need not be so attached to the daily perspective. See how momentarily, a mere tickle eradicated all normal fixations. If a simple sneeze can wipe out the entire daily perspective, how fragile are we here?

As much as man has been enthralled with physical power, he has also been enthralled with emotional and spiritual power. Whatever primitive man could find that would cause even the slightest elevation in mood was considered spiritual, mystical, holy, and was somehow incorporated into his form of idolatry. From frenzies and trances, to hypnotism, and drugs, from asceticism to self-flagellation, even as low as the worship of human sacrifice, man is always looking for some way to elevate the mundane.

### **Stillness in Motion**

Low pressure repetitive acts such as sharpening a knife, mixing ink from charcoal, or sewing (for an experienced tailor), can be used as effective meditative techniques. (These activities are unlike high-pressure repetitive acts, such as baking Passover matzahs. While baking matzah, one must be so intensely aware of what he is doing he may in fact become anxious.) As the mind and body coordinate to smoothly guide the knife's edge, passing over the flat surface of the sharpening stone again and again, a certain stillness can be experienced in

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this constancy. In stillness the Truth is most readily found. It is as if besides the consciousness focusing on the knife and stone, there is a broader, overseeing consciousness, seemingly stepped-back, witnessing the entire process from above.

This can produce the intuitive feeling of being both in, and in between, the moment(s), present, and yet detached. Although the action is continuous, and the person must surely stay attentive to the sharp knife, in the constancy of the movement, stillness can be realized. This is not to be confused with hypnotic techniques that cloud the awareness or lessen control; on the contrary, while doing the above-mentioned acts, the individual is acutely aware and in complete, almost mystical control.

One of the obvious extra benefits to these types of techniques is that when you have finished meditating, not only are you more aware and more calm, but you also have a sharpened knife. Indeed meditative practices can be likened to sharpening a knife, with the mind being the knife, the will the hands, and the subject the stone.

When a passenger sits in a train traveling sixty miles per hour, although the train is moving very fast the passenger can sit there absolutely still. Likewise, the soul can be seen to be a passenger in the body and although the body is racing through its day, the individual can realize that he too is merely riding along with the body and in fact is resting there absolutely still. Although we normally identify solely with our bodies, the truth is that the body is merely a garment that is wrapped around what we are. The garment is always changing, but our identity is the same throughout our lives. At the end of our lives we will drop our changing bodies, but our unchanging souls will go on.

## Taming The Raging Mind

When you focus upon your soul, you can sense your still being even while the body is moving.



Birds soaring high overhead  
floating on an invisible wind  
stand absolutely still.

### **Sexual Meditation**

Combining both the “serpent power” discussed in Chapter Two and the repetitive acts meditation are the infamous techniques of Tantra Yoga. These are the practices recommended in India that are called sexual meditations. Here the sharpening stone is the sexual union. The hope is that, as with the sharpening of the knife, the sexual act can be used as an insistent, repetitive tool of meditation, or even that powerful sexual attraction can be used to thrust one’s awareness

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upwards. Invariably, the thrust is downward, back into the most base, physical experience. The hope is to mentally distance oneself from such a demanding impulse, as if riding on a huge instinctive wave, involved just to the edge of the sensual experience, enough to feel its pull forcing the mind and body to yearn toward it, but still staying aloof enough to avoid being pulled down into delicious surrender, climax. This is somewhat akin to the surfer's wish when riding a giant wave, hoping to saddle its amazing power, hurling himself timelessly through space, yet not being pulled into it. But the result of this type meditation is that while the meditator rationalizes spiritual ascent, he is actually satisfying his lowest, most base animal impulse. It is a trap.

Many practitioners of this form of meditation claim to be celibate. This is simply a lie disseminated to the public. Privately, these individuals fall again and again to the natural pull of sexual pleasure, either self-induced or with one or many partners, of either gender! The secondary hope is, if completion cannot be avoided, then at least while the body is pulled into its compulsion, the consciousness can step back, detached, as if unconcerned, and in this most extreme moment realize great detachment. Again, this invariably is a tool that entraps the all-too-willing fools. Do not waste your precious time and life energy on such subterfuge. Not only do such practices NOT lead to the precious goal, they take the practitioner even farther away, far into the physical. Besides the fact that these practices merely increase the physical attachment to the body, which is the opposite to the goal of meditation, there are also the spiritual problems that are inherent in wasting one's semen. The Zohar considers the willful misuse of sperm worse than murder since a murderer kills another man's child but this person kills his own. <sup>114</sup>

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In proper mystical teachings the relationship between the seeker and the Sought is often likened to sexual union, such as in the Zohar, or the Song of Songs. There are numerous parallels, such as the overwhelming nature of Revelation. When one has such an experience, there is no doubt as to the desire of the person having the experience. It is to keep that revelation in the forefront of his consciousness as long as possible, that is, to cleave to the experience. The truth and glory that are realized at that moment are entirely overwhelming and the individual instantly and blissfully surrenders. Even though the exact nature of the Revelation is completely unknown until it is experienced, the truth that is revealed at such a moment is already known to the soul. It is embedded from its experience before it was incarnated. To uncover this truth is truly a most basic underlying need. The soul is entirely spiritual, so its inherent nature is to elevate.

The nature of Revelation is to be first dormant, then all of a sudden INSISTENT, desiring the Greater to entirely consume the lesser and then having the two be experienced as one, already melted, merged, demanding surrender, etc. All this could also be said of the sexual union.

The sexual union, the physical act itself, is certainly an opportunity to realize the ever-Present nature of the ONE. Any act is an opportunity to reveal the One, and all the more so, an act of unification. This is especially true, since the sexual experience is so overwhelming, the ego and definitely the lesser, entirely imagined worries, cannot transcend its moment. The climax is a physical release, which INSISTENTLY draws the mind with it. The release that Revelation brings is not merely the lower physical and mental release, but also the much higher spiritual release. The soul feels cramped,

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entrapped in the physical body and yearns to reveal, or even better, to return to its source. Revelation gives that experience, albeit temporary, to the soul. The physical (sexual) release forces the individual to experience a moment of being completely “free.” Indeed, sexual climax is often called “dying.” At that moment of ego-less-ness, who are you? Or even, are you? Only afterwards does the individual’s mind re-garb itself into a character of ego.

Recent medical studies show that when a person experiences sexual climax the areas of their brain that govern emotion and conscious action are temporally shut down.<sup>115</sup> This verifies the similarity between the physical sexual climax and spiritual Revelation, which goes beyond emotion and intellect.

Although we are to find God in everything, including the sexual union, this must be done with the correct intentions and in the correct manner. Proper mystical, sexual practice will never have as its goal complete withholding of climax. The union is designed to produce pregnancy. The state of mind of the parents at the time of conception will strongly affect which soul, with which characteristics, will come into that body being conceived.<sup>116</sup> It is a truly an awesome moment.

Always, Jewish mystical techniques will be compatible with a healthy, productive life, with the family at its center. This is an almost constant distinction between the teachings of the Torah and other mystical teachings. For example, in order to attain the preferred spiritual life, both Eastern and Western non-Jewish mystical practices recommend celibacy. Celibacy is considered necessary to contain the sexual energy in order to elevate it up the spine so it will energize the brain and capacitate god-realization.

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Some teach that celibacy is required in order to demonstrate that the practitioner is pure and married only to God. For them, to “. . . love God with all your heart . . .” means that God must be their spouse to the exclusion of a worldly mate.

When the Torah says, “. . . with all your heart . . .” it means to include even the “evil” side of the heart, teaching to see God everywhere and certainly within your physical spouse. The result of this understanding is that there will be families and not merely philosophies.

Although most of these religions also have a “householder” category that allows marriage, this is usually considered to be a lower path, set up for those who cannot maintain the higher, stricter path of the monks and priests who insist on celibacy. Celibacy is even more commonly recommended among those involved in spiritual or meditative practices.

The Torah teaches the exact opposite of celibacy and strongly forbids the practice. In fact, marriage is a prerequisite to learning Jewish mysticism. Also, a man must be married to become the rabbi of a community, and we are commanded to have at least two children. Jewish law insists a Judge who rules on capital offenses must have children, or else he would be suspected of being cruel. While some Nations say celibacy is praiseworthy, the Torah says it is a horrible sin.

## SIX

### Understanding Ego & Environment

Those who practice the worship of form or nothingness will end up stressing the worthlessness of this world to such a degree that they will come to conclude that the world is a non-existing illusion. Or even worse, they will come to believe that this is a world filled and controlled by Evil itself; therefore the ideal is to leave the world and live in hermitages or monasteries. The Torah demands the reverse. This world does in fact exist. It is a true existence. Even though it is made out of nothing,<sup>117</sup> it is now something. It is an essential element, integral to the overall plan of existence. And in fact, “. . . the whole earth is full of His Glory.”<sup>118</sup> Not only are we to stay in the world as long as we can, but we must also love the creation and demonstrate this love by elevating it.<sup>119</sup>

#### Ego As Perspective

The story is told of a particularly difficult gatekeeper. Whenever a traveler approaches this gate to the palace and requests entry, the gatekeeper asks; “Who are you?”

The traveler must identify himself. “My name is Mr. Paloni.”

The gatekeeper diligently searches the long list and then says; “there is no Mr. Paloni on the list. You can’t come in.” He then slams the gate closed.

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The traveler wants very much to see the palace, so he knocks again.

"Who is it?" yells the gatekeeper.

"It's me again. I am a very important person from a very large city and I want so much to come in and see this palace. Please let me in," answers the traveler.

"Who's calling?" asks the gatekeeper. The traveler thinks, "Perhaps I was too arrogant saying my name is Mr. Paloni and that I am so important. This time I will be more humble. It's David," he answers.

The gatekeeper checks the list and after a moment calls out, "there is not a single important person on the list nor is there any David on the list!" and again he slams the gate shut.

The traveler is not going to give up until he sees this palace. He has heard of its immense beauty and he must see it. In fact, the more the gatekeeper pushes him away the more he wants to see it. He knocks again.

"Who's there?" calls out the gatekeeper.

The traveler answers, "Look, it's only me, a simple man. Please let me in."

The gatekeeper yells back, "I checked the list and there is no reservation here for any simple man!" and again he slams the gate shut.

"Please!" calls out the traveler. "Let me in. I have come very far and I have no strength left. I am at my very end. I need to see the inside of this palace. My very life depends on this." And with this he breaks down crying and sobs, "I am nothing, truly nothing. Please let me in."

With that the gate and its keeper disappear.

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Some meditative disciplines insist on “killing the ego.” Depending on how we define ego, this may be a serious waste of time and effort. Ego can be viewed either as a knot in a rope or as a rope seen to be a snake. With either view, it is perhaps the most ingrained misconception with which man wrestles.

If by ego, we mean consciousness of individuality, then the ego is a dutiful and essential servant. Without a sense of individuality, one could not function. Here, we are looking at the knot in the rope. However, if by ego we mean the person we judge ourselves to be, then we are wrestling with a concept that most likely has no basis in reality. Here, we are looking at a rope and seeing a snake. Here, the individual grabs the rope and believes he is holding onto a snake that has coiled itself around his arm. In great fear, he squeezes the rope and by doing so he feels the snake bite him. Reacting to the painful bite he squeezes the rope even tighter, and this causes the snake to bite even harder.

Even with our first definition of ego as awareness of individuality, our understanding of ego must undergo a great change. However, once we have accomplished our realization, this ego is not destroyed but merely tamed. It will be understood to be merely an identification process, which identifies the individual as unique but not separate from his wider surroundings. Regarding our second definition, of ego as self-evaluation, this is entirely false and needs to be completely eliminated. What we judge ourselves to be is based on our momentary position in growth. Our current degree of knowledge is always changing; therefore our opinions are also changing. So the person we swore we were yesterday is not what we say we are today. So why react so strongly to such a subjective opinion that will soon fail? The goal we are seeking is

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unchanging. Judgment of our actions can be an essential tool for growth; without it, how could we know what to correct? But our judgments should not be a label affixed to the individual; not for the bad and not even for the good.

The most common use of the term “ego” is usually applied to those who are too generous with these appraisals of themselves. Having this type of ego experience is like trying to swim with huge gold bars in your pockets. The easiest way to dissolve this type of ego is to realize the truth of your accomplishments, especially when measured against what you could have accomplished had you really tried. Also remember that the greater the individual potential, the greater the individual responsibility. No matter how much good you do in the world, if you could have done much more and did not, you have not yet been successful.

As for the realization the proper ego must undergo, here we are talking about the knot in the rope. First understand what occurs when our perspective enlarges: the individual’s perspective will determine the individual’s reactions and thereby completely affect one’s understanding of self and environment. As this perspective widens, the self and environment do not change, just the understanding of them does.

For instance, hold up a small object with your fingers. See clearly that it is your fingers that support the object. Your mind completely confirms this as the clear, fixed, reality. But wait, is it the fingers that are holding up the object or is it the hand? Now you are widening your perspective to see that the fingers are not acting independently of the hand. And as you widen your scope from focusing merely on the fingers to looking at the entire hand, your mind clearly sees it was being narrow

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when it stated before that the fingers were holding up the object. The mind has corrected its previous tunnel vision and now testifies that it is certainly the hand that is holding up the object. But wait, is it the hand that is holding up the object, or is it the arm? Again, the mind must let go of its previous, narrow position and broaden to include the arm. The fingers, hand, and arm do not change as the individual widens his perspective. There was no line on the hand separating the fingers, hand, and arm except in thought. The only thing that has changed is the way the mind sees them. The limitation placed on the details within the field of vision widened. The arm did not grow. Now we certainly can see that the fingers and hand could not possibly be given the credit (nor blame) for holding up the object, for without the arm they would not even lie lifelessly on the floor, but would not even exist. But wait, is it the arm or is it the body that is holding up the object? It must be the body for sure. Or is it the person? Perhaps it is the mind? The Will? Or maybe it is the Life that is doing it? Or, maybe it is Existence? With each step our scope is broadened and our understanding expanded.

Now, apply this technique to the ego. Is it the individual doing all these things or is it Life on the planet? Both are true. Neither contradicts nor excludes the other. This identifies the true "doer" as the ONE who does all. This does not remove the finger's individual distinction, nor its responsibility. We have not killed the fingers. The knot in the rope is required in order to hold the object in. The fingers continue on as responsible members of the body, and when pinched, both the fingers and the person hurt.

It is easier to understand this concept intellectually than is it to bring it into your daily experience. A useful exercise to help

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do this is to say a few sentences about yourself such as, "I am walking down the street." Then repeat them, changing the "I" to "it." "It is walking down the street." This forces a change from a narrower, self-centered, ego perspective, to a broader, more objective view of the individual as an area of the All.

### **The Sound of One Hand Clapping**

One of the currently most popular forms of Eastern meditative disciplines utilizes seemingly impossible puzzles to engage the devotees' minds deeper and deeper, trying to break logic in order to understand the unknowable. Many struggle for years in order to grasp the simplest truth.

In one such school of enlightenment the students come from afar and serve the master by working in his garden for six months. Only then are they allowed entry to the all-important interview. The student finally arrives at the master's quarters, bows down, and awaits the master's words. The master looks the student deeply in the eye and asks, "What is the sound of one hand clapping?"

The student is thrown off-guard. He has never heard such a question. Obviously there can be no sound emitted from only one hand clapping, but not wanting to have wasted his six months of hard work in the garden he tries to respond and smiling with hope, he holds one hand up in front of the master's face. Sheepishly, he folds and unfolds it several times quickly, each time making a tiny clap. The master takes his stick from beside his chair and smacks the student hard on the head!

Out he runs back into the garden to work another six months, thinking, "What is the sound of one hand clapping?"

Again he is called in and this time he is prepared. "What is the sound of one hand clapping?" asks the master.

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The student holds one hand up and proudly claps it against an imaginary other hand. Smack against the air. He smiles broadly as he is sure the master will approve. The master reaches beside his chair and takes up his stick and again smacks the student hard on his head! This scene repeats itself again and again, sometimes for twenty years.

What concept is the teacher trying to impart? Hold your hands out in front of you. Look down at them and see your hands, your arms, and the front of your chest and body. You see it is all You that you are looking at. The entire body including the hands is one. Ah, look, the two hands are really One. There is only one You standing there. The two hands clapping are actually one, one you. Alas, the sound of one hand clapping. This is the process of broadening perspectives. Now, keep going until you include All existence.

Many hundreds of years before this Eastern enlightenment puzzle was first practiced, King Solomon explained this puzzle saying, "There is one and no second."<sup>120</sup> This is in fact the basic mystery of Monotheism;<sup>121</sup> not only is there one God, but there is nothing else.

### **Expanding Perspectives**

This process of expanding perspectives may be employed with any subject. See the light coming from the Chanukah candles. When we look at the candles, we see eight. When we look at the light in the room, we see one. Look at the light streaming into the house through two windows. From inside the house, we see two lights. From outside, from the broader perspective, we see they are both really one sunlight. When the sunlight reflects off an agitated body of water, many lights seem to be bouncing off the water. Each sparkle appears to be a

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separate light. Look up from the water to the light in the sky and see that all those lights on the water are really one.

Look at a ball of clay. It has only one side, its surface. Now, press the top of the ball into itself forming a cup. Some want to say, "now it has two sides, an inside and an outside." But in truth, it still has only a single side, its surface, albeit now pushed in a little. See that all creation has only one side now being pushed into all the various shapes.

See your two hands are left and right of one.

Without doubt, the mystery of the One is the mystery of all mysteries. This puzzle sends the majority of even learned minds wildly astray.

Upon asking most of today's teachers to explain the Torah's statement that besides God ". . . there is no other,"<sup>122</sup> one group of scholars will explain: "This is merely a metaphor and this sentence has no literal interpretation at all, and its actual meaning is to concentrate only on God." A second group will claim: "It is true there is nothing other than God, but this is a paradox beyond the capacity of the human mind to understand." While a third group will state: "From God's point of view it is true there is nothing else, but from man's point of view there is something else." There are even those who claim: "Actually, the world does not exist." These are all wretched distortions of narrow thinkers trying to rationalize their confusion. The simple truth is escaping them.

As an example to help clarify this mystery, consider a rainbow. There are seven distinct colors in the rainbow. While each color is a unique individual color, still there is only one light there. Each of the colors is a further revelation of that one light that is bending in order to reveal its colors. Before or after the light bends, THE SINGLE LIGHT IS STILL ALL THAT IS

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PRESENT. The colors do not hide the light, nor do they separate the light, nor do they create something that is not the light. The bending merely reveals a heretofore hidden aspect of the light. The colors do not replace, nor displace the light. In this example, the light stands for the Infinite that is constant and unchanging, that is, Its Presence is continuous throughout the entire creation, while the colors represent the formed, the finite which is the revealed aspect of the light. The appearance of the many variations within creation does not contradict nor distract from the singleness of the One Existent Being, Who is "bending" in order to reveal these additional aspects of Its magnificent multifaceted-ness. Even after colors, the light still remains the One and Only.

### **Making life changes while keeping them in context**

When your perspective broadens, you will see that much of what you previously believed to be true is simply not true. Major turns in life can come about in a moment. For instance, one of the greatest motivating drives in modern life is to become "successful." With a narrow perspective (thinking there is a separate you), one would naturally follow the common worldly advice, "success is measured by what you have gotten." But with a broader perspective, you can see that the opposite is true. Success is not measured by what you have gotten, but by what you have given. This is a change in perspective that can completely change your life.

Imagine an ant crawling along a long wall. It does not know what lies ahead of it, or even what is right next to it. It merely mechanically moves to accomplish what it has been programmed to do. It is to travel along, looking for food or whatever it bumps into that is useful and should be brought

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back to its nest. How different would the ant's life be if it could gain even a slightly broader overview? A person with a narrow perspective is like a bug moving along, always going toward the most thin, most materialistic, yet very pressing objectives, completely unaware of the far richer spiritual objectives that are also right here within reach.

The process of realization is sometimes mistakenly called, "merging with the One." The idea here is that the finite, when it realizes the Infinite, "melts" the seemingly separating borders and thereby merges with the infinite so that only the infinite survives. At best, this is poor semantics. The One Infinite is infinite even without your realization. There is no merging. The One is already all. More appropriate is the metaphor of the misty fog melting in the warmth of the morning sun. When the warm light of understanding dawns, the misty, mistaken belief that distinction entails severance ceases.

Another unfortunate choice of words frequently used to describe this process is, "connecting to" or "attaching to" God. This term forces the seeker to define the present experience as being disconnected, detached from God. Therefore, God must be away, somewhere else. Also, there must be something in between causing this separation. In order for there to be disconnection, there must be at least three objects: the one who wishes to become connected, that which the one wishes to become connected to, and the object or area that is presently standing in between separating these two. Although one could argue metaphorically that an individual's sins stand in between him and his Creator, the metaphor does not hold up. God is everywhere, appearing as both the righteous and the unrighteous. Would anyone say, "I want to become connected to existence?" This is not to say that at all times the degree of

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Revelation is the same. One who lives a life of sin will rightfully feel a sense of separation. Still, this is not an actual separation in Existence.

As for “adhering” or “cleaving” in Jewish mysticism: this expression (*devekus*) refers to the attempt by the seeker to adhere to the Revelation of God, not to God. Revelations come and go, God doesn’t. As stated above, one need not try to adhere to the All.

Another poor choice of terms, although not as unfortunate, is to say you wish “to come close to God.” Here, at least there is a certain common usage that can be applied to God for instance, one says he wants to come closer to his parents. Obviously, he does not mean physically close. “Close” also has the common definition implying spiritually close or emotionally close. However, the unfortunate aspect is when a novice hears this is the goal. He normally assumes “close” to mean physically close, since this is its most common usage, and therefore God must be far away.

Descriptions of God’s “unity” and attempts of “unification with God,” are also very misleading terms. These words force one to assume that there are many which must somehow be put together to make a whole, when in fact, the opposite is true. The many are made out of the whole; the whole is not made out of the many.

Do not think these objections are petty nitpicking. The way we use words, especially in the spiritual realm, reflects back onto our thinking and thereby defines our living experience. The way we think reality is, is the reality we experience. A paranoid person lives a frightened life even though no one is actually trying to harm him. Imagine a very handsome boy who grew up thinking he was ugly. Although his ugliness was

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merely imagined, this was the life he lived. One who strives for many hours every day to become “connected” to something is at the same time crying out, bemoaning the “lack of connectedness” he is experiencing. Someone who calls out with all his heart a thousand times a day: “I want to be enlightened,” is at the same time calling out with all his heart a thousand times a day: “I am not enlightened, I am not enlightened.” This creates an additional hurdle when there are already more than enough.

### **Extending the Meditative Mood**

Young children enjoy making a small tent from a blanket and sitting under it. While there, it is like they are in another world. It is a private, quiet, personal, even intimate space. It is a very interesting and attractive change from the normal perspective of always being subject to the adults’ demanding intrusions. Here, there is some degree of stillness, a moment that exacts reflection. This is the function of the prayer shawl. Even while surrounded in public, there is still some degree of solitude. The soul, alone, is given the opportunity to contemplate its nature and purpose. This is the process of meditation; moving from the scattered peripheral toward the still center, looking, searching, while in this quiet place, trying to understand what is the nature of one’s existence.

Paying careful attention can extend the calmness that meditation brings. This type of awareness practice is sometimes called “Mindfulness.” After meditation, relaxation techniques such as slow, deep breathing can be employed, or the actual meditative practice can be somewhat continued as you walk through the day. Looking down and not visually engaging those around will build a temporary fence protecting your quietness.

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Being silent is one of the most recommended techniques for developing or maintaining detachment and introspection. The Arizal, while in his meditative period, would speak only on the Sabbath, and then only to his wife when the situation required. Silence is even good for the physical body.<sup>123</sup> This practice should not be initiated with a vow because situations will inevitably arise (especially when first trying this practice), when you will want to speak, and you will soon become accustomed to breaking your vows. Ascetics in the East will stop talking for many years at a time. Some, for the rest of their lives! Others will carry a slate and chalk to communicate with, but this becomes a burden to the community, as this self-crippled man tries to communicate through tortured means. Such long periods of verbal fasting are unnecessarily severe. However, not talking before noon each day, or on a certain day of the week, or for one hour after meditating will greatly advance one's awareness.

A certain degree of detachment can be maintained even in the most hectic situations. But remember, the goal is not to go through life as if sitting alone on a mountaintop, nor floating underwater, but rather to gain increased clarity and thereby helping to receive and give the most of life.

### **Finding the Center Path**

King David recommended the center path.<sup>124</sup> Extreme highs and violent lows are to be avoided as being counterproductive. Many serious meditators get so caught up in their highs that they imagine these to be "God episodes," while the lows are not. They mistakenly believe that only the Glorification experiences are God-instilled. These people invariably get caught up in their spiritual egoism, feeling that only those rare

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moments of realization or revelation are genuine and the rest of our time here on the planet is of no true value. Instead, the calm center should be sought.

At times, the actual experience of "being centered" does come and the mind realizes a refreshing position from where it perceives life. Actually there is no mathematical center to that which transcends time and space, as does the mind.<sup>125</sup> Still, there are moments when a person realizes a centered feeling. At this time there seems to be no influence, neither from the right, nor from the left. The consciousness is JUST THERE. The often antagonizing, accusing left is dissolved and even the right seems to have no role. Life is experienced openly, more like a film receiving imprints without judgments, yet it certainly feels GOOD. In this stage, although formed creation is still seen, this does not disturb the recognition of being "centered." These are precious times, and when they come we deeply wish that they would remain; but we cannot maintain that openness, not until the end comes and the ". . . whole world will be filled with the knowledge of God."<sup>126</sup>

The release experienced while feeling centered is somewhat related to the release that can come while being photographed by many flashing cameras. When the flashbulbs flash there is light, clarity, elevation, a quick instant of "bliss" that causes a feeling as if experiencing a different world within this world. It is good, glad, and as always, an all-too-fleeting experience.

It is because of this phenomenon that the experimental drug users of the 1960s combined strobe (flashing) lights with drugs trying to induce this brief "released" state. The state induced by strobe lights is elevating by virtue of the mind being emptied of any other input, i.e. dampening certain facilities of the brain while exaggerating other facilities. This is in effect a strong,

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completely passive meditation tool. The blinking bright light by virtue of its blinking demands attention, but even more so, while the light is on, the mind reflects the light's singular and unvarying nature. This removes all other stimuli from the forefront of the consciousness. The result is an elevating sensation. This would be somewhat true with many types of stimuli such as sound, but light by its nature, has an elevating quality, i.e. its nature is to remove darkness and reveal. It is also reminiscent of Holiness as it often accompanies certain Holy Visions. And even though a person cannot recall having seen such a light, somewhere deeply imbedded in each soul is such an experience.

Being centered while still aware of the external world is in some ways a much richer experience than the completely passive meditation state. Experiencing the center while still being conscious of the worldly perspective reveals an awareness of the overall One that comes despite there being at the same moment an awareness of the multitude of variations (i.e. the external world.) The "centered-in-the-world" feeling seems to be the perfect condition of consciousness while living with "in-the-world" awareness. The strobe-induced experience is more of an attempt to get "out of this world." It induces an entirely mental experience, as opposed to one that includes external imagery.

### **Raising the Place of Consciousness**

Even higher than either of these two experiences is the awareness that comes when raising the consciousness by directing it toward the area in the upper front of the head. First, identify the location of the place from which you view the world (that is, the place where you feel you are watching from).

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This place is experienced as if it is somewhere toward the middle, back of your head. This is the place where the viewer function sits, that is, from where you see, hear, think, etc. What you are seeing, be its source the external world or internal thoughts, seems to appear in front of this place where the witness function resides. What you see seems to be seen on a specifically located screen of vision. Obviously, the screen itself is not seen, but rather what is being shown on it is what the witness is aware of.

Imagine you are raising the screen of vision up from its normal place directly in front of you to now be lifted up to the crown of your head (above the forehead, about an inch above the original hairline, centered between the eyes where Jewish men place the head-*tefillin* - phylacteries). While **still trying to gently hold** the place of concentration (the screen of vision) up by the crown, begin to imagine you are “spreading” the place **from which** you are looking. If this is difficult, try spreading this point first to the right and left and then also up and down, in all directions. Do not become frustrated if you cannot do this the first time you try. It might take some time and practice before you will be able to do so. Try to hold the place of concentration (the screen of vision) up by the crown of your head for as long as you can (even a few seconds). Then, if you can, move the presently spread place from which you view up toward the “screen” that is being held at the crown of the head. The immediate result may be the head temporarily falling forward, and then returning to a normal position. Try to be sensitive to the nature of the feeling that comes **just before** the head collapses, and then **just as it is returning** to a normal position. Be exceedingly humble and your understanding of surrender and Glory will grow. This is not an experience that can be maintained; it is fleeting, but you will become better at it

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as you practice more.

The previous meditation uses location (either of the “screen of vision” or the place from which the individual sees) as the subject. Although this subject is a specific limited area, it is not a fixed form that is meditated upon.<sup>127</sup>

### **Existence and Its Four Types of Pleasures**

When trying to analyze the nature of existence, we tend to see it simply as being, or as not being. Either it is, or it is not. Actually, there is more to existence’s nature than simply being. Existence comes into being with various stages of descent. These stages can be better understood when relating them to their accompanying pleasures. The unfolding of existence from the highest to the lowest is seen in the most sacred Name of God (Yod-Hay-Vav-Hay). The root of this word means to exist, to desire, or to descend.

The final Hay of this Name represents the lowest stage of existence, that is, the physical level. The corresponding physical pleasure is the pleasure derived from the senses, such as taste. Imagine tasting your favorite food. This is a common pleasure and is easily experienced.

The next higher stage in existence is the emotional stage. This stage is represented by its corresponding letter, the Vav. Imagine having been away from your loved ones for a very long time and now you are arriving at the train station, and they are standing on the platform waiting for you. You see them through the closed window but they cannot see you. Your emotions reach out to them. You experience a different and much greater pleasure than the physical pleasure that you had when you ate the delicious food.

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The first Heh of this Name represents the next higher stage in this unfolding of existence. It is the stage of intellect. Imagine having solved a tremendous problem; a problem that you had worked on for some time, and now with this solution, you have elevated your thinking so you will be able to go on to solve other such problems. The joy you experience at such a time is far greater than the emotional joy you experience when seeing your loved ones, and certainly it is higher and greater than the physical joy you experienced when eating your favorite food. Not only is it greater, but also, it is experienced in an entirely different manner. Whereas the physical pleasure mainly touched only the tongue, and the emotional pleasure reached only the emotional heart, the intellectual pleasure permeates and surpasses both of these. If someone would offer you an ice cream when you are looking at your loved ones you would reject it out of hand. It would have absolutely no appeal to you. If your beloved would knock on your door when you are about to finally solve that great intellectual problem you would ask her to wait. The intellectual pleasure fills the mind and satisfies the entire person. It transcends the pleasure that merely affects a specific area of the person.

The next and highest stage within our grasp is the spiritual stage. The first letter of the Name, the Yod, represents this stage. The pleasure experienced at the spiritual level comes only when holiness is revealed. Although we approach this level of pleasure when fulfilling a simple commandment, in truth, this is an intellectual pleasure as we take great joy in knowing that we are serving the King. However, true spiritual pleasure comes only when the King reveals Himself, or even a tiny corner of His garment. This pleasure can be anticipated by concentrating on the sequence of elevation seen in the lower pleasures.

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Imagine the physical joy of taste. Mentally stop there for a moment or two and try to capture the joy of that pleasure. Where do you feel it? What is so nice about it? What does it do for you?

Then mentally move on to the emotional pleasure that you experience when seeing a loved one. Feel that inner joy that your emotional heart experiences. See where and how you feel it. What type of joy is it? Stay there as long as you can. Realize how this experience of love is so much greater than the mere physical pleasure that the food gave you. You have moved up in experience from the lower, merely physical pleasure to the higher emotional pleasure.

Now, imagine having solved that great problem that you worked on for a very long time. Hold that joy on your face as long as you can. Take full pleasure in having accomplished this wonderful task. See where and how you experience this intellectual pleasure. Analyze how its experience is different than the pleasures derived from the emotional and physical planes.

Now, look back and try to visualize the sequence of the changes in elevation experienced when moving from one type of pleasure to the next. Specifically, how does the experience change when the pleasure moves from the physical to the emotional, and then on to the intellectual? The first pleasure was initiated upon seeing the physical food, but it was not activated until the food actually reached the tongue. The emotional pleasure also began when seeing the loved ones, but the pleasure did not actualize until the sight reached your emotional heart, that is, not until you thought about your love for these people. The emotional pleasure is higher, more precious, and reaches far more than just the tongue.

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Now, the intellectual pleasure; here, the entire process may only be in the mind. It comes when the individual realizes how important his accomplishment is. It is then that he realizes the pleasure. Certainly, this pleasure is greater, higher, and much more far-reaching than the preceding lower pleasures. The physical reached only the tongue. The emotional reached the feelings. But the intellectual pleasure reaches the intellect, and this pleasure may very well increase greatly as the solution to the problem that you discovered is brought into practice.

Project this upward sequence from what the physical pleasure brought to what the emotional pleasure brought, to what the intellectual pleasure brought, and now try to reach even further, moving upward. The various pleasures move in an ascending direction as they progress. Try to project this upward pattern trying to reach into the spiritual realm. Just as the emotional pleasure is many times greater than the physical pleasure, and as many times greater is the intellectual pleasure than the emotional pleasure, so too and many more times greater is the spiritual pleasure than the intellectual pleasure.

Beyond these four types of pleasures that can be experienced in this world are the entirely spiritual pleasures that are to be experienced in the future, entirely spiritual world.

## SEVEN

### Revelation Experiences

**I**dolaters pervert the truth. In their attempt to grasp the ungraspable, to satisfy their desire to conceive the inconceivable, they attribute various physical forms to the many attributes of God. For every mood or benefit that can possibly be bestowed upon man they assign a particular formed deity, a demigod.

For instance, there is a glorious revelation that certain sects of idolaters report happens to the most dedicated and fortunate of their practitioners. In this particular experience, God's Magnificent Glory manifests itself as a "cyclone" of blissful light. The glory is revealed as if coming from the distant horizon as an extremely powerful cyclone of light and glory. At first, before anything is actually seen, there comes the absolute realization, "GOD IS COMING!" It is impossible to explain the mind-set this creates in the seeker. All this happens so quickly and is so entirely intense, there is no time to prepare. This knowledge fills one's being with complete certainty. Even though the individual may have had no previous experience like this, he has no doubt that this is what is happening. Suddenly, Glory appears from far away on the horizon. At first, It is so distant, it seems almost as if the mind can contain and understand what is happening, but It immediately begins to sweep rapidly and overwhelmingly toward the individual. Initially, there is merely awareness but then almost instantly the

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entire sky radiates with a huge, palatable, magnificent Glory. The extremely bright light rushes from the horizon, now completely filling the sky overhead. Then, while still filling the entire sky, the Light approaches and intensifies into a Cyclone of Indefinable Bliss with Its higher end in the heavens while Its lower end shapes into a narrow twirling shaft turning like a huge whirlwind. It then strikes the seeker in the middle of his chest. This leaves him spiritually electrified, ecstatic, and “glowing” for days as he tries to somehow assimilate what has happened.

This entire, wondrous experience lasts but a few moments and is completely formless, yet when the Idolaters depict this experience, they draw in over the height of the cyclone and on the chest of the person experiencing this light the form of their particular deity. They are saying that their idol was the benefactor of such light. This lie is perpetrated to entice others to follow in their particular mistaken path. The experience of this glory is formless. Even the “cyclone” aspect of the revelation, which is discernable as a whirlwind, is formless. It is somewhat like light within light, or energy within energy, heated water within cold water. Certainly there is no form of an idol appearing above it.

Some spiritual experiences are universal, that is, they are relatively uniform no matter who is experiencing them. Others are individualized to fit that person’s need to understand.

Cyclone type revelations, for instance are widely known. Seekers from all major religions report the cherished experience of Holy Light. Certain visions are found more often in some cultures, but not in others. One such experience is envisioning distant “ancestors in migration.” Such a vision would not be common to an indigenous people who do not

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have a history of emigration, but would be more common to the Jewish People who have been migrating for two thousand years. Some cultures entertain a great fear of death. When a seeker from one of these cultures meditates for a long period of time and his mind raises its natural obstacles to success, these obstacles might very well come in the startling form of a dead body seemingly lying right there in front of him. This is so vivid that the meditator assumes there is an actual dead body lying right there. This experience is so frightening to him that he can be driven mad. He might very well jump up screaming and quickly flee for his life! However, in other cultures, a dead body would not be so particularly frightening. Therefore such an experience would not be brought to the mind when meditating since overcoming it would not result in the required growth. Different obstacles must be raised up before their mind's eye, such as a seductive woman or a hint of mystical power.

When the meditation dream of purgatory needs to come to a Western mind, it will be set in quite different environs than if seen by someone from an undeveloped Asian country. Here the dream must communicate a sense of seemingly endless waiting. Perhaps the seeker finds himself wandering among ashen-faced, expressionless people in an almost empty huge hall. There he mills about aimlessly, long dark gray waiting, seemingly without hope to finally be called. For a Western mind, a vast windowless train station might help convey this feeling, while a villager would not get that feeling from this type of scene and would need a different type of setting to create this feeling for him. Although some revelations are granted to a group together, the vast majority are only experienced by a single individual inside his own mind.

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In the much higher Revelation of Prophecy, not only is there formless Glory, but also the formed story aspect of the experience can be shown. This is the essential COMMUNICATION. The Prophet realizes not only GOD'S GLORY, but he understands that the insistent aspect of the experience is the message given to him. This information is either told to him while the Presence is being revealed, or the story is acted out showing him what he must tell the People.<sup>128</sup>

These Revelation experiences can occur alone or in public, in seated meditation or suddenly while walking in the street. They can appear in the upper or lower, right or left side of the mind. They can appear directly in front of you as you look out at the world or they can be experienced as if God is revealing His Presence by showing you Glory overhead, seen out in the world as if the Radiance is filling the room or covering the entire sky.

The Holy Light that accompanies the Revelation of God's Presence is clearly seen. But even when the experience is seen as if it is out in the world and the Glorious Light seems to be perceived by the physical eyes, still, there is no physical light. This amazing, Majestic Light is spiritual Light. Although it shows that God is revealing His Presence, one is not actually seeing God. This Revelation may seem to be appearing outside and high above your head. However, it is taking place entirely inside your mind.

Although these types of revelations are normally experienced intimately only by a single individual, there have been some unusual cases when such a revelation has occurred to a large group. This happened to the entire Jewish Nation,<sup>129</sup> to Moses and the Seventy Elders,<sup>130</sup> and to the priests at the First Temple's dedication ceremony.<sup>131</sup> These were rare

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occasions. Most often revelations are individual experiences as reported by the many recorded and unrecorded prophets.

Those who are standing near these individuals as the revelation occurs, even though they will be directly unaware of what happened, might feel the radiated glow from the one who did experience the revelation. This can elevate their consciousness so they will perceive things from a spiritual perspective, or it can be very unsettling to the inexperienced witness. To the one who is personally experiencing the Glorious Light, it is an experience that compels the soul to burst out, "This makes all those difficult years of searching worthwhile." But as the Experience fades, so does the memory, and the soul begins to yearn, again unsatisfied. Again, the beloved searches for her elusive Lover.

From Deborah the Prophetess we learn, these spiritual elevations can come to anyone. "I call Heaven and Earth to be as witness that any individual . . . man or woman, Jew or gentile, freeman or slave can have *Ruach Hakodesh* (Divine Inspiration) bestowed upon him, it all depends on one's deeds."<sup>132</sup> The reward is commensurate with the effort. The greater the sacrifice, the greater the Revelation.

### **Jerusalem Syndrome**

Revelation experiences are many and varied. But there is one thing they all have in common: the one who experiences it is positive of the truth of the revelation. This is not to say that every time someone experiences a mystical occurrence it will be properly understood, or that it was in fact a valid revelation. Today, there is a recognized malady that can affect tourists when they visit holy places. It is especially common in Jerusalem, so it has been named "The Jerusalem Syndrome." It

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is so common there that they have designated a special wing of a major hospital to handle these patients. Some tourists are so taken by the intense spiritual feelings that surface at holy places that they begin to imagine God is talking to them. They go on to discover that they are either the Messiah or some other grand personality mentioned in the Bible. In most cases, their confusion passes in a week or two and the tourists return to their normal states of consciousness and go back to their native countries somewhat embarrassed and wondering, "What happened?" What is the nature of this radiance, and from where and why does it come?

Indeed, every Jew does have a spark of the Messiah within him or her, and this spark can surface in the mind. When this happens, it becomes the reality of that individual. He actually feels himself to be the very Messiah of whom the Scriptures speak. He will even set about his affairs preparing for his mission. This "revelation" can surface for no apparent reason in an otherwise very normal person, or it can surface after a severe strain, such as a very high fever or a deep depression. The individual begins to sense a feeling of glory, of spiritual elevation and a very real awareness of God. In response to his having been singled out, he feels it only natural to announce his advent and set about fulfilling his mission. This experience invariably convinces the individual that he alone is the Messiah, and he can become quite upset when introduced to another Messiah. Indeed, a sign of false revelation is arrogance, while the sign of greatness is humility.<sup>133</sup>

To the meditator, these revelatory experiences are interesting on two levels. First, know such a spark is within you and may very well be touched upon. When this experience is properly understood, it should be a very positive occurrence, as long as

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you keep in mind number two. Any true revelation will bring genuine humility and a desire to serve. After such an experience, a mature meditator will be strengthened in his practice and in his service. He will wish that all people would have such an experience. He thinks, "How great this world would be, if only all could see this hidden truth that lies dormant within."<sup>134</sup>

### Various Revelation Experiences

#### Revelation with Specific Teachings

It is particularly helpful for your spiritual development when important information is communicated from the Higher to the lower realm. For instance, when you are reading from a holy book, just when you reach a particular sentence and while you are still unaware it has any special importance to you, the Holy Light fills your eyes and projects onto just that sentence.<sup>135</sup> As noted above, in some ways this light is similar to physical light. It lights up the sentence much like a mere physical light would. But this is spiritual light, so at the same time it communicates an awareness of Holiness and not merely the physical revelation, as is the case with mere physical light. Neither physical nor spiritual light are actually seen by the physical eyes. We do not see the actual physical light when we experience light, rather we see images of the physical things that the light reveals to us. Somewhat similar to this is the Holy Light. It is not the actual light aspect of the experience that we "see" but rather we see the physical area being glorified which seems to be lighted up. We immediately recognize the Holiness that is the underlying source of the light. One does not need past experiences with such a vision to know that it is Holy. The recognition of the Creator's Holiness is within the entire creation from the moment the creation was created. This is true

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of the animate and even the inanimate objects. All creation recognizes Holiness when it is revealed.<sup>136</sup> Also, if it were merely a physical light, someone standing next to you would also see that sentence light up, which is not the case with the Holy Light.

Or a famous teacher's voice may come during meditation, giving an important message or an uplifting feeling. Oh, what a wonderful gift this is. In this experience, not only has the Higher been revealed which produces a Blissful Experience, but It is revealed in such a way that It gives the meditator precious information. Do not think that this is the actual teacher who comes even from the grave to talk to the student. Rather, know that the Higher uses that particular voice as a vehicle to communicate to the seeker. This is done in the most appropriate way for that specific teaching to be best understood by that individual.

### **Light**

Any scene, physical or mental, may be the subject for elevation. As one's awareness elevates, there is at first a clearer understanding of the fact that all creation is actually made of light. Before this experience, darkness almost entirely blocks the light. This darkness was created<sup>137</sup> to allow options, that is, choices to become apparent. The entire creation is made out of light. The physical matter that we perceive is merely light that has been darkened by folding, compressing, or slowing it down so it will manifest as solid matter. While it was still in its solely light stage, there was no distinction so there could be no choice. In order to create distinction the bright light has to be shaded. The ultimate purpose of this process is to hide God's Presence so man can have free will. Obviously, if we were completely aware of God's Presence we would not sin.<sup>138</sup>

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At the beginning of some elevation experiences there is light, joy, and delightful apprehension. To the meditatively familiar, the apprehension centers on how to best steer the consciousness so it will receive the greatest spiritual intensity possible and not to dampen it, or even worse, drive it away. What, if anything, can be done to invite, encourage and assure that the GREATNESS that is just beginning to show Itself, will in fact be revealed? As the elevation continues, it moves from understanding to the actual experience of LIGHT. As the Light begins to electrify the subject, the form of the subject is still seen, but it is now seen from an elevated perspective, as if it is in a world entirely made of light.

This is, in fact, the actual underlining Reality of all existence. In the age of the Messiah, the sun and moon will no longer be our source of light,<sup>139</sup> but each object will give off its own light. When this revelation comes, the mind senses imminent Elevation in a way that is reminiscent of the moment immediately before sexual climax. Delightful, upward loss of control. No choice. Insistent! Overwhelming! The instant reaction must be complete humility, as if suddenly coming into the King's Chamber. There is great beauty, both physical beauty on seeing the elevated form, and spiritual beauty when recognizing its Holiness. Then it continues higher, brighter, until there is only formless GLORY, the HOLY LIGHT. The soul immediately responds, "I LOVE YOU GOD." When the mind experiences GLORY, it instantly overflows. It runs toward the source of the Holiness like a small flame when brought near a larger flame. It leans toward the larger fire wanting to totally merge.

Its capacity is far too limited to contain such input. The individual is Glorified. This is as if the electric power was

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increased, causing the same light bulb to give a greater amount of light. The individual now experiences a new realm of electrification. The entire experience lasts all too brief a moment, but should it linger, life would be permanently forced from the body.<sup>140</sup> However, it does not linger and life again returns to cling to the body; but now it must adjust its understanding and goals with what it has just experienced.

This experience may occur with the formless light seeming to be superimposed out into the world, or the entire experience may be experienced solely in the mind's eye. Neither experience seems more real than the other. Recognizing GLORY, the soul, like a moth, tries to fling itself into the flame, wanting to be totally consumed; but the fire goes out too quickly and the moth, although ecstatic that it saw something reminiscent of the World of Light that it seeks, is also saddened that it is again back here in this lower world still seeking that brilliant light.<sup>141</sup>

The various stages of spiritual love that the blissful aspect of the Revelation experience brings may be likened to the stages of physical and emotional love that a groom experiences for his bride. Initially, his love for her is solely intellectual, mental anticipation. Then, as he draws closer to her, the anticipation increases more and more until he actually touches her physical body. Now, he is filled with a tremendous longing. This powerful desire increases continually until it becomes his only perceptible need. It rushes upon him quickly until it overwhelms him. Then, when he finally experiences sexual completion, he is entirely consumed. The feeling is so overwhelming that his total being is forced out of his control and given over to the experience. He is electrified, wonderfully stunned. The experience completely dominates him. He is

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momentarily beyond ego. Then, after the exhilaration subsides his ego returns and now his love for his bride moves to the next stage. In this stage his love for her matures and becomes a great and deep appreciation. It is a love that warmly says, "I will dedicate my life to your desires and well-being."

So does the spiritual seeker feel this after his Revelation experience. He wishes to please his "bride," and is willing to do anything so She will reveal herself to him again. As a groom dedicates his life to his bride, all the more so does the spiritual seeker dedicate his life to the Source of all Revelation.

### **Glory**

Revelation experiences reveal the natural unveiled state of Existence. "The whole earth is filled with His glory"<sup>142</sup> is the literal fact of existence even in this lower world, but we rarely recognize this. During revelation experiences the Glory that is ALWAYS EVER-PRESENT, although normally hidden, is momentarily revealed. If the Holiness would continue to be revealed unabated the soul would expire, being forced out of the body. It would be extinguished by the recognition of HOLINESS. None can dwell with God. The intensity of the experience will vary according to the length of time the soul is able to remain conscious in the body during the Revelation until either the degree of Revelation diminishes or the soul lapses. It is not that the Glory is greater or lesser in any particular experience, although it may well be.<sup>143</sup> But the Glory at any degree of Revelation is far greater than the mind can withstand. The Ramchal writes that the degree of Glory revealed in such an experience is determined by the person's "devotion to God."<sup>144</sup> Then, as the veil of normal consciousness returns, so does the soul return to its normal attachment within the body.

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A Revelation experience might come very briefly and seem to be quite “mild”, yet it will still be entirely clear that it is God Who is revealing His Presence. It might happen in order to communicate some important information, such as which way the seeker should go. For instance, if on a mission to carry out a holy deed the seeker is faced with two choices, either to go to the left or to the right, and one of the choices seems to be logically correct, but just as the person embarks on that seemingly proper path, Glory is revealed over the other path. This is obvious guidance from Above, helping the seeker, showing him which way to go in order to arrive at the holy goal.

### **Fear of God**

The experience of FEAR of GOD is quite different than merely being afraid, although there are similarities. The FEAR experience is so overwhelming there is little time to be afraid, still, there is fear. Being afraid implies not wanting something to happen. With FEAR, there is light and bliss, and although there is no choice, you gladly surrender, wanting to be thoroughly consumed, although you are SHOCKED at Its Power. This obviously is not so when being afraid. Being afraid is being frightened of what you think might possibly come, while FEAR is AWESOME.

The experience of FEAR OF GOD is a major experience. It comes instantly like a sudden LOUD SHOUT! You immediately feel flung from existence, your life with your consciousness instantly blown out of the body! You look back at the body as if you are being hurled out backwards by having seen the PRESENCE OF THE KING. You are astonished, frightened, aware, glorified, judged, and had mercy not been granted, you certainly would be gone forever, thrown completely out of

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existence. Great ecstasy can cause death.<sup>145</sup> The heart beats fast, you are humbled, thankful that IT came, and amazed IT left you back here surviving. "I didn't see anything!" you quickly say, explaining to yourself how it is you are still able to be alive. You know if even now you recall what you saw, you will again be blown out of being. Although this may sound like the goal -- after all, what could be more wonderful than leaving this world in such glory -- still, here we are even against our will<sup>146</sup> with a task that must be accomplished. If we leave before it is completed who will do it? And we will be forced to return again and again to the same set of circumstances, back into this very world again, until we accomplish our purpose.<sup>147</sup>

### **Realizations of One Life, One All, Zero & the Revelation of God**

There are Revelation experiences that reveal God's Presence, and there are Realization experiences that reveal the underlying nature of the All. These experiences produce humility, awe and wonder.

#### **Life in the world**

From the normal, human perspective it is obvious that there is but one world and that there are many lives living in it. The Torah forces us to discard these logical assumptions and to search beyond our physical observations. The blessing said after partaking of certain foods concludes with the words; "Blessed is the life of all the worlds." From this we see that there is more than one world. In fact, the Kabbalah discusses many worlds.<sup>148</sup> Yet, even though there are many worlds, this blessing clearly teaches that there is but a single life in all of them. How can this be?

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Bringing your attention back again and again to this question, especially while surrounded by many people, can bring about a deep realization. Try to see that these many people are somewhat similar to the many molecules in your body. Even though people are individual, separate, living organisms, (and therefore we may not readily see them to be one), so are our molecules individual, separate, living organisms. And even though the molecules that make up our bodies are many, individual and separate; still, we have no difficulty seeing that they are merely tiny portions of a single body.

Try to imagine a single unseen mystical "light" vivifying whatever it touches. Quite like this does your single, unseen mystical life vivify the molecules of your body. This realization can be brought about almost entirely by practice.

Once this fact is understood intellectually, then, as with all conclusions, it must be taken to your heart. Do this over and over again until you are able to realize its practical implications and its application in your daily life. No true spiritual understanding is complete if it is merely an isolated, intellectual concept. The new understanding must be brought down into the world and change your behavior. You must ask, "Now that I know that our lives are one, how must I act differently?"

Realizations may be divided into various stages:

First is the intellectual understanding. As stated above, this can be accomplished merely by applying the logical, intellectual thought process to the meditation subject.

Next is the taking it to the heart stage. This is accomplished by returning the intellectual understanding again and again to the heart. This brings the higher (yet still cold) intellectual

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understanding into the (warm) emotional heart. Only then can the understanding become part of your actual reality.

The mind must rule the heart. It does this by bringing understanding to the heart. In this way the mind guides the heart by showing it what is good for it. But also, the warmth of the heart must be brought into the intellect and affect its decisions. If not, no matter how lofty the understanding, the decisions and their implementations can remain cold, isolated from the warmth of the heart.

Here we see that even though our intellectual facility must rule our heart, still without the heart's warmth the intellect cannot fulfill its potential. So which is greater, the intelligence or the emotions?

Initially, the beam or spark of God that fills the body seats Itself in the heart. At this stage the heart is considered to be the highest and most important aspect. A person can be physically brain-dead, that is, his brain can entirely cease to function, yet if his heart is still beating he is considered alive. However, the moment his heart ceases he is called dead. So at this initial stage the heart is seen to be the greater.

However, the heart at its emotional level can easily lead one astray. For instance, the heart could lead you to marry an unfit person if that person was physically attractive or rich. To protect against such foolish decisions the intellect must be brought in to play. The intellect must decide if what the heart is feeling is indeed fitting. Only then can the person be sure that he is doing the wise thing. But the intellect alone can be too cold, and calculating. And the heart alone can be too hot, even wild. What must be done is that these two facilities must be called upon, each to exercise its expertise. Only then can one trust that his decisions are properly guiding his life.

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After the stage of taking it to your heart, then the mystical enlightenment experience can come. When the concept reaches deep into your spiritual heart and becomes your actual conscious understanding of reality, then the mystical experience can come about. Usually, when this deep understanding dawns it is accompanied by an uplifting feeling and even a glow on the face of the person who has gained it. Although you must work to get to this stage, still, it comes mystically as if a gift. This glow is the source of the term enlightenment.

Finally, and certainly the most important aspect, is the practical application that this new understanding, and or enlightenment, must bring into the physical world.<sup>149</sup> This change in behavior of the newly enlightened person comes both as a sign of his spiritual accomplishment and as a result of it. No enlightened person sits alone without extending himself to the task of removing darkness and suffering from the world.

### **Realizing the One All**

After seeing that all life is one, now move on to a much broader perspective, one that goes beyond physical life and brings the entire creation into the meditation. As with the “one life” realization, this realization can be brought about almost entirely by practice.

First, you must intellectually understand that the entire creation is a single unit. The Talmud says, “The Earth is one field.”<sup>150</sup> The simple meaning is that all land is regarded as ultimately connected. Not only is all land ultimately connected, but all creation is also “connected.”

Imagine the center of the earth with a vertical line moving from that point to the surface of the globe. Going along this

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line, one could stop at any depth and say, "this is a level." But the reality is, the earth reaches from its central core to its surface as a continuum. Existence does not level off anywhere. The entire creation is a continuous, constant One from the very smallest, microscopic perspective to the very furthest, telescopic perspective.

Since your seat of consciousness is located within your body, it is natural for you to see your body as a single unit and the rest of the creation as separate. You do not directly feel what is happening outside your body, so you assume that you end with your skin. This is the normal personal perspective. Although your body is a single unit, when someone steps on your toe, your hand does not feel the pain. This does not challenge your feelings of individual oneness since your overall control tower, the mind, feels both the hand and the foot and you identify primarily as your mind. So even though the hand does not feel the foot, still you have no difficulty seeing that hand and foot are simply distinct areas of the one you. This shows that separation cannot be defined by lack of feeling.

Think of different ways to understand that the entire creation is a single "unit." Imagine a microscope strong enough to reveal the molecular perspective. With such a microscope, your body would appear somewhat like the heavens with the molecules seeming to be planet or star-like objects floating in vast empty space. Since we also have a skin perspective, we have no trouble understanding that the vast number of molecules and the great amount of empty space surrounding them are a single body. It is not hard to imagine that there is a very large outer "skin" perspective that surrounds the entire universe and that our bodies are but a tiny area within the larger overall body.

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Next, you must think this concept through again and again until it becomes your basic understanding of creation. This is the process of, "Know this day and take it to your heart . . ." <sup>151</sup> Knowing this right now is not enough; it must be taken deeply into your heart. This stage may take days or it may take years. But the concept that all is one must move from being merely an intellectual idea to becoming your basic understanding of reality, that all existence is a single constant One.

Then, after some time of actually seeing that all is one, the mystical realization of your already intellectual understanding can occur. Awareness moves from being merely an intellectual understanding of the concept, to actually becoming your deep personal (emotional) understanding. Then it goes on to becoming your actual (spiritual) experience of reality. When the mystical realization finally comes, it dawns instantly. It may be accompanied by a deep feeling of light and joy. From that moment on, even though you go about living as if all objects are separate, you will know that they are merely distinctions within the One All. You will see that all is One, but it is not all the same.

The stage of mystically experiencing the intellectual understanding as a deep personal enlightenment can occur without the need to go over the idea again and again. If the mystical concept is explained in such a unique way that the student grasps the idea deeply when he first hears it, then he may experience the light and joy of realization at that moment. In one Eastern tradition, this is called "Instant Enlightenment." Still, even after such a realization, the concept must be repeated and taken to your heart since the vividness of all realizations dims as soon as the experience passes. And, of course, the change in attitude and behavior must follow.

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### **Realizing the Zero**

The process to bring about the realization of Zero is the same as the process used to realize the One.

First there is the merely intellectual understanding. Again, imagine a microscope powerful enough to picture the molecular perspective. The molecules would be floating in vast empty space. Next, mentally enlarge the molecules so their structure will become visible. You are not cutting the molecule in half. You are merely magnifying it again so you can see its deeper nature. Now, each molecule would be seen to be zillions of atoms and vast empty space. Again, enlarge the atoms until you see their makeup; zillions of quarks and vast empty space. Again and again enlarge whatever forms appear under the microscope. See that whatever object appears, it can be magnified until its next deeper perspective is revealed. Go deeper and deeper until you finally come to nothing. Understand that all matter is actually something that is constantly being formed out of nothing. Realize that if formation would be unfolded, the formed object would cease to exist.

Second, take this information to your heart again and again until it becomes your actual understanding of all matter. See that although matter is firm material substance, still, it is being made out of nothing.

Third, there will be the mystical realization of the already deeply understood knowledge that although physical reality is indeed real, its underlying nature is actually nothing. As with the realization of the One, the realization of the Zero will come with a wonderful feeling of light, joy and a firm awareness of having transformed what was deeply understood intellectual knowledge into a mystical realization.

## Taming The Raging Mind

The difference between an intellectually understood concept and one gained by realization is that realization moves the person to a higher level of being. This new level of consciousness cannot be taken away from him, whereas an intellectual position can be changed. Also a person may have deep knowledge of a concept and yet not act upon it, but once realization dawns the person will live his life according to his realization.

Do not make the foolish mistake of thinking that since everything is being made out of nothing, therefore it does not exist, or that it is unimportant. The distinctions in the physical creation are an essential element that must be utilized in order to fulfill one's purpose in being. Although the entire creation is constantly being made out of nothing, still, what is being formed here and now is something and this something is a true existence.

Finally, see how this knowledge affects your behavior.

### **The Revelation of God's Presence**

This Revelation comes by God's Grace alone.<sup>152</sup> When God reveals His Presence to His creation, it is the most Glorious of all the Revelations. Although God's Presence is equal and constant throughout the entire creation, It is rarely revealed. Despite the fact that this Revelation comes from above and not by our effort, still, effort is required to bring it about. There are many things that can be done to hasten it, but again, do not think these actually bring this most cherished Revelation. The list is very long: for instance, living a completely righteous lifestyle, being genuinely humble, extending kindness and charity to all, study of Torah and fulfilling the Commandments, and perhaps most important of all, dedicating your entire life to bringing about this Wonderful Revelation.

### **Prolonging Revelation**

These experiences are extremely cherished and helpful. They may even be the greatest desire of the meditator, but **THEY ARE NOT THE GOAL**. What good is it if the head is in heaven while forgetting the feet that are still in hell? We must help to elevate the entire world, not just our individual consciousness, or we are not yet finished with our work here. Revelation experiences give us the impetus to go on, but they are not the reason we are here. Often, would-be prophets who attain great levels of elevations imagine themselves to be in direct communication with God. They quickly seize this thought, believing they have attained a great degree of awareness vastly beyond that of the average man. Their elevations have trapped them, causing them to forget God is the only one who ever speaks to anyone, even to the common man, “. . . there is nothing else.”<sup>153</sup>

The experience of the Revelation of the Presence of God does not always fade away instantly. When the time is ripe, when it suits the wishes of the Holy One, His Presence can be revealed for a longer period of time. This may be done to identify the Source of certain information that is being communicated to that individual at that moment. When this most wonderful experience occurs, the person looks up, not just mentally but also physically up, and although he still sees the normal physical view present, it is seen merely as a backdrop to the vision. The Glory of the Revelation fills the sky overhead and the person knows without a doubt that it is God Who is Revealing His Holiness. Remember, the Glory is not a vision of God, but a sign that His Presence is being revealed. At this time the person seems very small and the Glory obviously is the Creator's. Then the message is communicated through the

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small, still voice. If such a voice came without the glorification the person would most likely consider it to be one of his own thoughts, but when the thought speaks to him while the Glory is evident, the person has absolutely no doubt Who is speaking. The individual might answer either by word or by thought and the Voice might continue. He experiences talking in Awe to his formless Creator.

How can the Revelation experience last more than an instant even though longer periods of such revelation cannot be withstood by the soul? Each subsequent generation since man was originally created has become weaker than the previous generation. A few generations ago it was quite common for students of Torah to memorize the entire Talmud. Today this feat is almost unheard of. Certainly two generations ago there were many even simple men in the community who had memorized the entire book of Psalms. Today, even this is quite rare. So how can we at this lower level of consciousness withstand the revealed holiness that is needed to receive a lengthy message from God? What happens is, the Revelation occurs for a moment, then the Glory seems to recede, then it returns for a moment and again it seems to recede, and then it returns even once more. This could happen several times, with the Revelation of the Presence lasting each time for a mere moment or two. Then, when the conversation is over, the vision immediately ceases and the normal perspective returns. The Revelation then moves from having been an extremely vivid experience to mere memory and then the forgetting begins. After such an experience the individual imagines that this must be the experience that is recorded in the Bible when it says of the prophets, ". . . and God appeared unto . . ."

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After the spiritual seeker has been blessed with such a glorious Revelation, Revelation might come without the accompanying Glory. Hashem can make His Presence known however it suits His purpose. At such times the individual stops suddenly and stares upward anticipating with awe what might possibly be coming. He knows for certain that Hashem has momentarily reminded him of His Omnipresence. This experience will come even though the individual is involved in seemingly mundane matters.

Remember, meditative and other mystical practices do not directly bring about such an experience since practices cannot open the Gate of Heaven.<sup>154</sup> This Gate is opened from the inside. It is an entirely spiritual Gate and is controlled by His Mercy only. However, mystical practices do sensitize and prepare the individual to metaphorically stand before this Gate, which greatly encourages His Mercy. Then, when He does choose to open it, the seeker will be standing right there anticipating the great joy that the Revelation of His Presence brings. And this is what the King wants of His servants.<sup>155</sup>

Although practices do not bring about the experience, after such a Holy Experience it is natural that the person will try again and again to bring the Experience back once more. This is done by striving to imagine the Experience as it was. The mind begins to cloud over the recollection of the Revelation from the moment it ceased so it takes some determination to recall what happened. This technique does work to a small extent since the memory can recall some of the spiritual Glory it experienced. But this is mere memory of the experience. Memory cannot bring back the actual experience itself. As the person begins to recall the least drop of the experience he might start stuttering rapidly trying to somehow capture a portion of the Glory by

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saying something, but his words merely push It away.<sup>156</sup> He may automatically try to raise himself physically by stretching upwards or by raising his hands palms up, trying to receive any drop of Glory that could possibly come. Know that if man could bring such an experience, he would bring it without end until he glorified himself out of the world.

Once the individual has realized some degree of elevation beyond the average worldly perspective, he sees things differently. Although it is still the same world, the same physical environment, now there is greater understanding. Now, the deeper nature of the physical creation has been revealed. This is true from that time on, and for even the most mundane scenes. Yet, as the person goes through his normal day, seeing and not seeing, understanding and not understanding, scattered throughout his days there will be special moments. Now, since he is seeing from a higher, more aware consciousness, there are unusual instances when this new higher perspective is made boldly evident, such as seeing a horse in the meadow and deeply feeling, "This is me I am looking at! This horse looks like me!" A feeling of kinship and a revelation of mutuality dawns. Of course, the horse does not physically look like the person, but since the overall One has already been revealed there is such an intimate familiarity, a shared feeling of compassion of being, a knowledge that the One Life is filling all, that the simple horse is actually recognized as a reflection of the self. The sense that one has about oneself, the formless image one imagines oneself to be is seen as if it is a film of recognition superimposed upon the horse. This does not continue for long, nor is it common to all objects, but the experience surfaces sporadically as the individual's consciousness rises above the lower, simply physical perspective.<sup>157</sup>

## EIGHT

### Shifts in Consciousness

The goal of meditation is often called God-Realization, Self-Realization, or Transcendence. These names and the concepts they stand for are not untrue. In fact, they can be quite useful. However, they have for many years been associated with completely corrupt practices; therefore they must be used only with great care. It is most important to understand that words such as Realization and Revelation have been carefully chosen to teach or explain spiritual practices, and that these practices do not create God's Presence; rather, they attempt to reveal the Magnificence that is already here. Glory is the natural state of even this lower world, however, in our slumber we do not see it.

### Changes in the Meditator

As we begin to awaken, there are many experiences and changes that might occur. Most are merely imagination since the new, more aware mind sees additional details. This can have the effect of exaggerating them. Often someone who has been working very hard and has seen no noticeable gains will judge these type of experiences as being much more significant than they really are. However, even though the vast majority of such experiences are little more than imagination, there are many that are not. Also, there are changes that might very well be actual changes not only in the meditator's mind but also in his body.

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### **The Shape of the Eye**

The shape of the human eye is commonly depicted on the covers of mystical texts, posters and amulets. Some say this concept filtered down to the founders of the United States of America, who incorporated it on the back of their one dollar bills. The eye is drawn in, as if suspended over a pyramid. This is an accurate characterization, giving the feeling of an experience that can frequently appear to the spiritually aware person. Seemingly without reason, the distinct sense comes that Someone, a great Overseer, is peering down from above. The eye itself may appear to be looking down at you, large, above in the sky. When this happens, it is accompanied by some degree of fear. It communicates the strong feeling that there is a much greater Consciousness that is letting you know, in terms you can clearly understand, that It is looking down at what is happening here.

### **“Angel’s Wings”**

An interesting experience that may come during meditation is likened to the “fluttering of Angel’s wings.” It comes, as do all of these type experiences, without warning. After sitting quietly for some time, this distinct sound comes to the mind as if there is a bird suddenly flying close by your ear. Along with the sound, the mind might also imagine wind touching the ear. You may even duck quickly when this happens, thinking to avoid the bird. But there is no bird.

### **Sensitivity**

With development, you may find yourself becoming intolerant of even small disturbances. This can occur since the meditator is becoming more sensitive, now being aware of even subtle distinctions. One must learn to identify this phenomenon

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and to control it. When hurt, it is easy to strike out, but don't. Instead, be kind. Create the kindness that also will come right back to you.

### **Changing Eye Color**

An interesting sign of improvement that sometimes comes is found in the color of the eyes. For some who have lived all of their early years in lower level darkness, seeing life merely as dreary or materialistic, experiencing most of the common sicknesses, their eyes (reflecting their position) might appear dark or muddy brown. As they begin to awaken, now seeing the higher Common Denominator, the color of their eyes may begin to lighten until they actually become bright green. The fog burns away leaving the clear sun shining radiantly through.

### **Changing Shape of the Head**

One may also experience temporary changes in the shape of the head. While realization and clarity are being experienced, the forehead will raise higher, and when confusion reigns, it will lower, bringing the hairline closer to the nose.

New studies<sup>158</sup> show that daily meditation can alter the physical structure of the brain. The region changed plays a critical role in decision-making, working memory, and brain-body interactions.

### **Intuitive Awareness**

Another interesting occurrence that can manifest at times is an increased intuitive faculty. For instance, the telephone may ring and you automatically think, "Who could that be?" Immediately the sense of a friend comes to mind. Often, this friend will in fact be the caller. This will happen more often when the caller is simultaneously thinking about you. This

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usually does not happen when you try to do it; but rather when spontaneous, intuitive, it will be more frequent.

Similar to this is when walking in public and for no apparent reason, you think about a friend; perhaps his face comes vividly to mind. Then you turn the corner, and there he is! Or, when someone reaches into their pocket to bring out a foreign coin wanting to ask its worth. While he searches his pocket, the image of the coin comes to his mind. An intuitive person standing there will tell him what it is without even having seen it. As previously stated, this method of communication transcends language. So, if someone thinks an exclamation in a foreign language, the person it was directed to might receive it in his mind, as if it was his own thought in his own language.

This increased intuitive awareness may manifest in many different ways. For instance, as you look at a person you may see this person looks like a particular letter of the alphabet. It once happened that a sensitive person walked up to a total stranger and said, "You look like your name must start with a **M**." The man was completely startled. He said, "How did you know? My name is Menachem Mendel!"

There was an old friend who had lived many years in the woods, mostly alone except for a wild cat that took a liking to his table scraps. After some time, the old man began to notice whenever he felt a strong urge to eat something, the cat would sense his feelings and come running up to his hut for a handout. It was only much later that he realized the sequence was probably the other way around. When the cat was hungry, it would storm up to his hut radiating hunger, and the man received the cat's feeling, but believed it was he himself who was thinking, "I'm hungry."

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All people radiate thoughts, but for the longtime meditator, this is even more so. His mind is more developed so his thoughts may effect more noticeable changes. For instance, seeing an anxious person shaking his leg releasing nervous energy, he will calm the nervous person's leg as he looks at it, melting away the nervousness. He simply mentally spreads that person's anxiety by looking at the nervous area dispersing, dissipating, calming that area just as he would calm his own shaking leg, but now directing the calm to the other person's leg. Immediately the leg will stop shaking. This is not exerting a power, but releasing. Just as you would relax your own leg, so do you relax the leg over there. The nervous person will not feel intervention but assumes he simply relaxed.

When walking in a crowd of people who are walking in the same direction as you are but slower than you wish, as you project yourself through the crowd you may begin to notice that the people ahead of you seem to step right in front of you as you try to pass them. What may be happening is that your thought to move to the right of the person in front of you is received by that person who then follows the thought and also moves to the right. If on the other hand as you try to walk through the crowd you project the thought that the people in front of you begin to move to the other side, you may well notice a slight shift in their direction which allows you to move freely by.

**THESE TYPE OF MENTAL PROJECTS ARE NOT SOMETHING YOU SHOULD PURPOSELY BE INVOLVED WITH, NOR WITH ANYTHING "SUPERNATURAL,"** but simply notice them and go on. **WHEN YOU TRY TO MYSTICALLY AFFECT PHYSICAL CHANGES, YOU ARE ALREADY CAUGHT IN YOUR OWN TRAP.**

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A number of years ago, a long-time meditator was looking for a long-lost friend. He had heard that the friend was working for a commune health food store that operated a number of outlets in a certain area of Southern California. He found one of these outlets and inquired as to his friend's whereabouts. "Yeah. There is someone like that on the commune," he was told. "He works at a different location, but I don't know which one." The long-time meditator was not familiar with that area and had no idea of the possible location of his friend. He returned to his car, started the engine and began to drive slowly away when he found himself driving toward a certain location, but he had no idea where he was going. Without knowing why, he turned his car to the right, then to the left, then up a hill and finally found himself pulling into a parking lot. It was the parking lot of another branch of that same commune store! He got out of his car and was quite happy to find his old friend standing there to greet him.

### **"Out of Body" Experiences**

Another experience that causes great wonder and can happen during meditation is the sudden feeling of "popping" out of the body. It feels as if the seat of consciousness had been held in the body much like a cork being held underwater. Then, without warning, the body lets go and the mind pops out and effortlessly sails up to the ceiling. From there, it looks back down, emotionally detached, but still interested in the plight of the person it sees sitting down there meditating.

The soul is not limited to the body. Occasionally we can see the world from points of view other than the normal perspective. Normally we see the world as if we are looking out from behind the mind. We view the physical world through our

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eyes and therefore we experience the physical limitations that the borders of the eyes impose. We are so used to seeing the world from this perspective that we do not even notice these limitations. However, when we experience the world (the physical view of the worldly perspective) from positions other than through our physical eyes, these limitations no longer apply. At these times we see the world from an entirely spiritual vantage point and are not limited by the physical borders imposed by the eyelids. However, the view is still in front of the viewer and is not an entire 360-degree panorama. One need not be meditating for this to happen. This can suddenly occur even when being busy with normal, daily activities. When it does happen we lose all sense of body consciousness, but still, the body functions. We see the world briefly as if positioned out of the body, but not distant from it. The soul might wonder at this time, "Am I leaving worldly life now?"

These experiences last but a few seconds and are valuable as reminders that our normal perspective of seeing the world from a fixed point within the body is quite temporary and in fact we are very fragile. We can leave this world at any moment.

### **Shift in Seat of Consciousness**

Related to this experience is the also surprising experience of the seat of consciousness shifting to different places within the body. When this occurs, the individual sees himself and the world around him as if he is looking out from a different seat of consciousness than normal, for instance, his stomach or his chest. As previously stated, the value of these experiences is that they help the person realize that what he has always thought the world to be is simply not what it is. They also strongly encourage the meditator to go deeper. The only

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problem inherent in these experiences is that they can easily be misunderstood and lead the meditator along a false tangent that can take years to straighten out. Also, they frequently build an even more tenacious ego.

“Out of body experiences” are also reported by experimental drug users (even pharmaceutical prescription drugs users), and people who have been declared clinically dead. Their reported experiences frequently have somewhat similar themes. Those who were clinically dead often speak of a large, extremely bright light that comes to judge them. This light shines through them revealing any impurities.

### **The Tunnel (or Hall) and the Light at its Far End**

Both Jews and non-Jews from all over the world have reported having had this mystical experience. In some ways it is one of the most fascinating of all experiences. The fact that it seems to be universal is of great interest, but what is most interesting is that this particular vision is usually reported only at times of “death” or “near-death” experiences. People report that after they died they left their body. They then entered a dark tunnel that had a bright light at its far end. Then afterwards, when they returned to normal body consciousness they felt that they had just had an amazing spiritual experience.

A tunnel or hall, by definition, is an opening that is surrounded by something impassible, such as a mountain or a wall. As with all visions, what is seen is not an actual physical creation, but merely a picture, image, or sense that is designed to give that person the intended message. To explain; it is not that there is an actual tunnel that the soul of the departed person passes through. The tunnel image is merely there to give the information to the soul that it is moving from one realm to another. In this case, the soul is passing from the state of being

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attached to a physical body in a physical world to the world of souls, the entirely spiritual world.

Of greater interest to the spiritual seeker than the fact that this vision is often reported at near-death experiences, is that it actually reveals the process of Revelation. In fact, this is the vision all souls (and not only spiritual seekers) seek. It is a glimpse of the Creator's Glory.<sup>159</sup>

Just as is the "world of souls" (that comes after physical death) is entirely different than the "world of bodies," so is the spiritual world (that is always present) entirely different than the physical world (that we now experience.) The spiritual and physical worlds are not merely two co-existing worlds, but actually they are a single world viewed from different perspectives. Note that this means the spiritual world is right here, right now. When one views the physical world one is viewing merely a single aspect or "level" of the formed creation. The spiritual world, although ever-present along with the physical, formed world, is actually the underlying formless base that sustains the physicality. The passage from the perspective of form to that of the formless is likened to moving through a tunnel or a hall that leads from one room to another. Again, it is not that there is an actual physical or spiritual tunnel. This is merely the "visual" language utilized to communicate this very subtle idea so when the soul returns to the physical perspective the person will be able to understand what happened.

At first, the tunnel seems to be an empty opening surrounded by solid enclosure and it appears to lead to an open, lighted area. The tunnel itself may seem dark but it is not. The reason it may seem dark is that the far end of the tunnel is being illuminated by a "light" source coming from the other

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side and not from the source that is lighting the area surrounding the tunnel opening. What is actually happening is that the empty area is not empty at all, but it is simply empty of what surrounds the tunnel. To use a physical example, a tunnel in a mountain is entirely empty of the mountain. That is, the tunnel that leads to the entirely spiritual realm is completely empty of the physical realm, but the spiritual realm is not yet visible from this end of the tunnel. The further into the tunnel you go, i.e. the longer your consciousness is able to dwell there, the more you begin to see that the tunnel is not empty but rather it is filled with the spiritual aspect. At first this seems to be merely a hole, then the spiritual awareness begins to bring the relief of the physical stress that always accompanies the physical perspective, and then, further along, the empty feeling begins to “move” slowly toward the Revelation.

The more time there, the greater the Revelation of Holiness. If you continue there long enough to see what is really there, your soul will continue on and will not return to its physical body. When the soul cannot maintain its “closeness” and therefore is not “allowed” to continue on, but instead is “sent back” to the physical realm, it usually returns with a “message.” You will feel that you were not allowed to leave the physical world because you have something left to do. You will believe that you have some specific (albeit perhaps yet unknown) task, some further job you must accomplish here in the physical realm before it will be time for you to enter that other world.

You will have witnessed the spectrum of consciousness from the emptiness (of physicality) to apparent darkness, then the approaching Holiness, then the actual great joy as the Revelation was experienced and you began to see the glory of the garments of the King’s garments.

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After such a totally unfamiliar experience occurs; that is, when something so new or so fantastic happens, the person experiencing it will invariably want to somehow communicate (even to himself) what has just happened. In order to do so, he must put his experience into a language. To do this, he must reach into his history, his previous experiences, and vocabulary in order to find the words necessary to accurately describe his experience. The fact that he has to search through his past experiences to define and explain his current experiences may explain the variances in reports of those who have had "out-of-body" experiences. For instance, at this time a Christian might say that he saw a Christian symbol, while a Hindu might say that he saw a Hindu symbol, while some say they saw a "very bright talking light."

### **"Wonders" & Mystical Experiences**

Regarding "wonders," the story is told of a man who went off to learn about such things. He sat in meditation for many years. Upon his return to his village, he was walking with an old friend. When they came to cross the river on the ferry, the friend paid the small coin and offered to pay for him also. But the meditator wanted to show that his path was complete. He sat and meditated a long while and then miraculously floated over the water! Once on the other side, obviously feeling very content, he said, "See, I did not waste my time all those years." The friend answered, "Did you sit all those years for a small coin?"

Ecstatic experiences and wonders do occur. They are reported not only by Jewish seekers, but also by the seekers of the nations. Revelations and realizations are not limited to the Jewish People. They can be wonderfully encouraging, or they

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can be entrapping. THIS WILL DEPEND ON THE PERSON'S MOTIVES, WORDS, DEEDS AND HIS PARTICULAR PRACTICE. For instance, long periods of concentration can bring about heavenly music,<sup>160</sup> vivid lights, or ecstatic fragrances. These come to the consciousness with great clarity and joy. They are not experienced with the lower senses, which are subject to natural limitations and distortions. Rather, they are produced by the higher inner mind, which causes the sound, light, or fragrance to not only be heard, seen, or smelled without distortion, but creates the experience of actually BEING the music, light, or fragrance. The fullest and most beautiful music imaginable can float into the consciousness. Thoughts become music, which fills the mind. The soul soars. The mind moves effortlessly to any note or octave, with any instrument or symphony imaginable. These are richly rewarding and beautiful experiences. The mind acts as its own Heavenly synthesizer, producing any sound or fragrance it wishes. The Self experiences the mind BEING music, so it feels as if IT IS MUSIC.

These types of experiences are so desirable, that they may often be mistaken for the goal of meditation. When such phenomena do occur, they should not become the subject of your meditation. They can capture the mind to such an extent that it will not want to come back. Indeed, there are reports of people who have died or have gone deaf from dwelling on such music. This is not to say these phenomena should be feared; experience them and go on.

These are not to be confused with the experiences of an extremely stressed person who requires sedation. Unwittingly, the surrealistic mind of people in such conditions can easily stretch the sound of a refrigerator or an air conditioner into a

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wonderful symphony. This is merely the tormented mind releasing by delivering a pleasant distortion of “white” noise. The “white noise music” experience merely produces the sound quality of a loud radio or such. This is not at all like the experience of the music that can be generated from extensive periods of meditation.

Spiritual experiences are recorded both openly and in a hidden manner. We hear of Holy elevations that are overwhelming and indefinable in their splendor. Their Glory and their usefulness are breathtaking. Yet, we also see some parallels to these Holy experiences coming to people who want to use their experience to garner wealth or fame.<sup>161</sup> Why?

If all of the splendor came only from the spiritually correct path, would man truly have free will? There must be both right and left for there to be choice. Whatever occurs on the right, correct side, has its mirrored reflection manifesting on the left, corrupt side. But the right will continue beyond, while the left becomes entangled. For instance, one of the enticing options to the straight spiritual path is magic. There does exist such an option,<sup>162</sup> which is much easier to master than the long and often arduous path of righteousness. With magic there are no moral restrictions. In fact, those techniques are usually learned to overcome morality, to gain a certain material advantage, power, love, or such. But know that the “gains” acquired from such practices are much easier to get than to get rid of. Such powers can be acquired within two years of very hard, full-time practice. But then when the power ends up controlling the meditator and he finally sees that it is a crippling liability, it will take at least five years of even harder work to get rid of it.

Remember, these very signs of increased awareness entrap almost all seekers. Either their ego soars at their “great success,”

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or even worse, they begin to play with such mind-manipulated possibilities, believing there is a “white” side to magic that can help people, and ultimately they become severely entangled in wrong motives. Do not take this warning lightly by thinking only fools get so caught. Even great students of Kabbalah have been caught up in such low endeavors as trying to turn lead into gold.<sup>163</sup> Mind-directed magic, such as the Ouija board, is not a child’s game: they are in fact EXTREMELY DANGEROUS! They set up an awareness that is alluring and self-destructive. What initially seems to be your servant ends up being your master.

### **Christian Powers and Demons**

Christians divide god into three. This leads them to worship spirits and holy people. Hundreds of millions of Catholics pray to saints and statues, even to the “mother of god!” These practices create demons. The most spiritually aware of these believers live a life of endless spiritual warfare waged by the two “separate” forces of good and evil. In their more charismatic sects this duality manifests on the good side as the “holy spirit” that the believers can actually feel “come upon them” when they pray. They lift their hands, palms outward; (facing away from their bodies) the higher the hands, the stronger the radiance of the “divine presence.” This method of worship is not unique to Christianity. In ancient Egyptian art, dated thousands of years before Christianity, the priests stand lifting their hands in this exact posture of veneration. When a Jew (or Moslem) raises his hands in prayer, the palms face upward in a position of surrender, or receiving. The Christian/Egyptian position is one of basking in the power or even more arrogantly, feeling that they are radiating the power, or even still more arrogantly, feeling that they are actually

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projecting the power themselves. This power gives a warm, light feeling. Since it is seemingly physically felt, it is a verified experience. This strongly reinforces their belief in the two separate powers, one good and one evil. Invariably, this produces a spiritual egotism that is particularly entrenched, and, along with it, the spiritual warfare.

When they become especially “taken in the spirit,” the more susceptible or the more experienced will also begin to “speak in tongues.” They can become quite energized, with various sects specializing in various manifestations. When “taken by the lord,” they may shake, jump, yell, praise, or preach, while looking definitely otherworldly. They feel specially chosen as prophets of their god. Their mental attitude is reminiscent of the attitude produced by the frenzies practiced in the Far East. They explain these “tongues” as outpouring of the “holy spirit” which is “moving in them and speaking through them.” They even have classes on “How to open up to become a vessel in order to receive this gift of tongues, letting it flow through you.” They say this is a language, yet when a group of them are so “taken” together there is merely arrogance and confusion.

What is actually happening is the newly realized spiritual awareness overwhelms the intellect. The believer experiences his intellect failing as he tries to express himself in his normal language. He releases and allows his deepest feelings to flow freely. This verbalizes his emotions without the confines of his intellect or of a structured language. The free expression bypasses the intellect, releases pent-up feelings and is interpreted entirely according to the interpreter’s frame of reference. Also this practice, is not unique to Christians. Ancient soothsayers would “murmur” as they put themselves into a trance in order to perform their art. This experience also

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comes to secular people who interpret the experience according to their needs.

Certain believers also seem to do wonders and, in fact at times do; such as, spontaneous healings, accurate predictions, seeing “divine” lights, rendering others unconscious merely by touching them. This particular “gift” is called, “slaying them in the spirit.” Those so “slain” take this to be a sign they have been especially singled out. While those who have this “gift are chosen servants of the lord, going about doing the lord’s work.” When one “slays” a person, there is no effort or even directed will, no sense of energy at all. They just faint when you gently touch them.

One couple had the “gift” of being able to adjust people who were so troubled and tense that one of their legs was being drawn up substantially shorter than the other. A simple touch, and the short leg lengthened! Some of this comes about merely from hysteria, with the hysteria of the “healer” replacing the hysteria of the healed. In almost all of the cases of people giving up their crutches, they take them back again very soon after the “healing.”

Do not think this power is merely imagined. It is palpable and dangerous to the uninformed. It makes the believer feel special in the eyes of his god, and proves itself by apparently doing some good in the world. However, this unclean power<sup>164</sup> can also manifest as such a dark light, a heavy weight, that it physically holds the believers in a paralyzing depression. The believers invariably speak of love and kindness while they entice people to join their particular mania. But whoever receives these “gifts” also receives demons, and lives in almost constant spiritual warfare. The greater the power, the more overt the manifestations, the greater the demons. It does not

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take many hours of meditation or hard work to receive such “gifts,” merely belief. And this can come almost at once. It is not unusual to hear these believers, either in group meetings, or while walking alone in the street angrily yelling at the demons they are experiencing in their heads or even seemingly extended around them; screaming out loud, “I REBUKE YOU SATAN! GET OFF ME SATAN! I BIND YOU WITH THE BLOOD OF MY LORD!”

Most of these people are so sincere, wanting to do good. It is such a shame they are wasting their entire lives, both in this world, and even in the world-to-come, by following these demonic sects. Their two-separate-force philosophy, with the deity being only in the good people, while the other force, the devil, living in the hearts of the evil, creates a need in them to know their deity is inside them.

To address this problem, the Charismatic have group meetings where they come together “to invite god into their hearts.” Here, the strongest and most sincere concentration is employed, asking, begging, pleading, over and over again, saying out loud, “Please god, come into my heart.” Some even hear the voice of a strange little man speaking with a local accent from within their heads saying, “Okay. I’m in here now!” After the meeting, they assure each other that they have been successful and have indeed “received the lord” and certainly now god is living in their hearts. They then begin to look for signs in their life to confirm their new spiritual awareness. And they find many proofs of precisely what they are looking for. For instance, one woman reports that after praying as recommended, she looked in a mirror and saw a cross on her cheek. She understood this to be a definite sign from the all-too-distant god, that this was the true path for her

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to follow. To this day, she stops people on the street and relates to them her magnificent experience, pleading with them to try the same.

One of the most greatly distressing experiences that can come from extended periods of meditation does involve demons. This is especially true of those who either meditate on forms of deities, gurus and the like, or even have such books, tattoos or fetishes in their possession while meditating. These things act like a lightning rod, inviting such occurrences to the meditation. This experience is not limited to idolaters, but is also well-known to the righteous students of Kabbalah.<sup>165</sup>

When one opens the mind to subtle awareness through meditation or other means, many things that would have previously gone relatively unnoticed now become large and vivid. Whether these are real, that is, physically manifested beings, or whether they are mentally imposed on the consciousness, makes little difference to the mind that is encountering them. They could be either. They can come with amazing powers, offering such proofs of their greatness as accurately predicting the future, overwhelming the individual with bliss, explaining great mysteries of elevation, physically transporting objects from one place to another . . . etc.

“Transportation” is specifically singled out in the Talmud as an example of this unclean power. In this case the cucumbers in the field seem to gather into piles without the aid of a human hand!<sup>166</sup> One stands by the side of the field and actually sees the cucumbers being gathered by an unseen hand.

Such voices and powers can at first seem holy and constructive, fooling almost all. Then, only after they have gained your confidence do they show their true, evil nature. They are capable of wreaking havoc with even the strongest

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and most pure minds. They can come first with sweetness and coaxing words and then suddenly turn and start to scream profanities. They may appear as a single “personality” or they may come as many. Many voices screaming profanities LOUDLY inside the meditating head! They can throw the person to the ground. Many suicide attempts have been blamed on this phenomenon. Indeed, whatever the person can do to himself, certainly these horrible creatures can do. Their undesirable antics can be extremely creative and certainly plentiful.

Particularly difficult are the sexual demons, who immediately push you onto a steep, slippery slope. Do not let this get started or you will not be able to stop. Do not even mention their names.

Demons can come with humor, with threats, with whatever the mind will listen to. One particularly sad case was a Jewish woman who was hospitalized, about to starve herself to death because the voices told her not to eat. Perhaps the worst is the “battle of demons.”<sup>167</sup> Here, the mind becomes the battlefield of warring demons, while the individual appears to be a hapless, forced witness reacting to each blow, seemingly tied to this horrible torment. They are extremely tenacious and can take difficult years to get rid of. This experience is likened to being attacked by “birds of prey.” Their name means “Destruction.” These are certainly most appropriate descriptions of this entirely painful experience. This is extremely serious and is one of the most pressing reasons why a righteous, experienced guide is mandatory.

### **Dispelling Demons**

How to get rid of such phenomena takes some understanding of their purpose in creation, and hard work. In

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the end, all must be seen to be good. Yet, here we find what seems to have ABSOLUTELY no good whatsoever. Even after searching to their deepest depths, looking for any good whatsoever, none will be found. They are ENTIRELY EVIL! Yet, they also are here for a good purpose.

This is best understood by using Hebrew names. A demon in Hebrew is called a *Shin Dalet*. We do not even pronounce this name, not because, as with a Holy Name, it is sacred; but rather we do not mention these names lest it seem to be an invitation to engage one of them.<sup>168</sup>

The letter *Yud* in Hebrew stands for the Jew, the Yid (derivation of Judah). When the Jew meditates or does any spiritual practice in other than the proper Jewish way, his *Yud* will diminish. He will move further and further away until finally, he will come to his *Shin Dalet*. To rid himself of this demon he must reinstate his *Yud* by learning Torah and fulfilling the commandments VIGOROUSLY - all the commandments, not just the ones against idolatry. Then, as the *Yud* is replenished, it will attach itself to the *Shin Dalet* and he will see his *Shin Dalet* turn into *Shin Dalet Yud*. *Shin Dalet Yud* is the Name of God that signifies Sufficiency or ALMIGHTY and therefore protection. This explains the role of the demon. It is sent to make us turn. We then see it was Hashem all along, acting as this horrible creature for our own good. Experiencing demons is a most real and extremely serious problem not to be taken lightly. There are special prayers and procedures that can help. There are also rabbis who are particularly capable in dealing with this phenomenon.

Warning: do not undergo exorcism by any of the various religious practices, magicians nor any of the like. Even if they

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could relieve you of your personal demon, the ones they will give you will be many times worse.

The Arizal taught that such phenomenon as demons occur because the meditator has not yet nullified himself sufficiently and he should return to his daily spiritual work of prayers and goods deeds with greater intensity. Then, after some days return to his meditative practice.<sup>169</sup>

Although such phenomenon as demons may be “merely” mentally imposed, this is not to say there are no true revelations, such as Prophecy where the future is accurately revealed. According to most opinions, the age of Prophecy has passed.<sup>170</sup> But all agree that various degrees of this most wonderful phenomenon still exist. There used to be in Israel schools for the “Sons of the Prophets.”<sup>171</sup> Since only a few Prophets are recorded in the Scriptures, many mistakenly believe there were only a few Prophets. This is not true. There were many thousands.<sup>172</sup>

### **Beware: Dangers of Successful Meditation**

As you become more experienced and more aware of the spiritual perspective, you will begin to note which of your past deeds directly brought about the very thing you are now receiving. You may even be able to see which words you spoke a few days ago caused a complete stranger to say those very words back to you today.

Also, new meditators might experience anxiety or behavioral problems. This can happen when unpleasant thoughts and memories that had been buried for many years, now, through the meditation practice, come to mind. At such times one must simply watch those unpleasant thoughts go by,

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and if need be, say, "I see that." Once those thoughts no longer bother you they will stop coming.

But be careful. Do not become a spiritual "bag lady," winding along life's long, seemingly endless roadways, pushing a rusty shopping cart in front of you, filled with small plastic bags. Inside each bag is another bag. Inside the innermost bag is a special possession, an idea or a toothbrush, all essential. Bags within bags, within bags, each filled with stuff. All very important. Each possession is precious because it is this bag that identifies her. Without them, she would not know who she is, nor even where it is she is going. So can the spiritual seeker become such a squirrely character or space cadet, flitting from moment to moment, either peacefully oblivious or arrogantly certain that he is going about the proper path while those around him alternate from either being cavemen who must be tolerated (since they also happen to be found in his world), or holy angels who have been specifically sent to help guide him along his way.

Do not become attached to the various, even amazing scenarios that can appear to the mind's eye when meditating. They go ever more "upwards," revealing greater and greater wonders, only to then throw the consciousness back down to evermore depressing lows. For example, many types of colored, brilliant lights can flash before the mind's eye. At first these thrill the meditator, but they soon disappoint him. All colors are lower than the colorless clarity. Therefore, these bright lights act merely as pitfalls catching many ardent meditators, falsely convincing them that they are growing. Certainly do not be foolish enough to be impressed by such fraudulent techniques as are common in India, such as the teacher pressing

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sharply on the student's closed eyelids against his eyeballs, thereby producing "divine lights."

As opposed to these colored lights is the clear Holy Light. When this appears as a Brilliant Light, It either consumes the meditator's consciousness, leaving no one to experience It, or, if the eyes are open, It can cause the eyes to sting so much they are unable to look, coming to tears as the intellect cannot fathom Its Grace. Had the Holy Light not immediately receded, the individual surely would cease to live in this world. This experience is completely different than the colored lights. The colored lights are never all-consuming since by their nature they are merely a single specific color. They are particular and not universal. So they always appear as other than the one who is seeing them. The clear light is the underlying light that all creation is made of, therefore it includes all, even the meditator. Although the colored experiences may be so strong that they render the meditator unconscious, they will always seem to be "other."

Again, using the example of the rainbow; the rainbow is made of a single light that is being bent. Bending the light reveals its seven basic colors. Each color is only one individual color. The red is not the blue. The blue is not the green, etc. However, the underlying one light that the colors are made of is common to all of the colors. Therefore, each color is not merely its own particular color, but obviously it must also be the universal, underlying, colorless light. The light before coloration that is universal to all of the colors is called the pristine Whiteness.<sup>173</sup> This explains why the visions involving Holy Light are all-consuming while the colored or formed visions are always experienced as other. Again, it is best to try to ignore virtually all "visions" and meditation experiences.

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The colored lights can come in such stunning, vivid colors and forms, and so suddenly, that they leave the mind flabbergasted. One particularly exquisite scene is the City of Jewels. In this experience, the meditator has been experiencing many hours of normal, colorless meditation when suddenly, completely unexpected, the breathtaking vision of a city entirely made of flaming jewels flashes into his mind's eye! In this city, each block of every building is alternately a blaring red ruby or a brilliant, deep blue sapphire. Each exquisite jewel more vivid and more glittering than the next. The scene comes and goes in an instant. The mind is thrown unconscious, unable to fathom what just happened, but still it knows exactly what it saw. The meditator, now blissfully even more dedicated to the process continues in order to see what could possibly be next.

One of the most oft-cited goals of meditation, especially in the East, is to attain such bliss. Bliss at its lower stages will produce a sense of elevation, an upward-moving rush, leaving behind the heavy, often painful experience of body consciousness. This is somewhat like a giant smile overtaking the entire body upward. The sensation can be likened to the overall elevating sexual pleasure, uncontrollable and joyful. But bliss produces spiritual joy and not merely physical gratification. Bliss's taking over of the will and the accompanying feeling of loss of choice adds to the sense of euphoria.

In true bliss's higher moment, it is the result of the Revelation of God's Presence. When the revelation appears, the individual's experience is that of witnessing God's Presence. It is a bliss beyond description but never lasting more than a moment or two, as the human mind cannot hold such glory without shattering. It fills the awareness like a great, brilliant, colorless, joyful spiritual light. The first time a certain magnitude of Revelation appears, there is

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accompanying bliss. The next time that degree of Revelation is revealed, although it will be a cherished moment, It will not bring such bliss; now only a higher, new, even greater Revelation will. The day the First Temple was dedicated, the Revelation was not only to an individual but was experienced by all present; and was so intense that the priests were unable to stand to perform their service.<sup>174</sup>

### **False & Genuine Forms of Magic & Superstition**

Prophecy, and the lower spiritual experience of Divine Inspiration (*Ruach HaKodesh*), are not trance states brought about by specific techniques or practices. Although this might seem to be the case, it is not. Certainly, throughout the ages, students of these holy subjects have practiced spiritual techniques and endeavored to live the righteous life-style required to make a person fit to receive such a wonderful gift as prophecy or Divine Inspiration. However, these practices themselves do not manifest such gifts.<sup>175</sup> Rather, the seeker must work very hard, and then suddenly, perhaps even while he is not even practicing, such a spiritual gift might appear.

If spiritual exercises and intensities could actually gain entry to the KING'S HALL, the Glory would be breathtaking. You would be amazed. Shocked out of understanding. You would stick your head and shoulders into the Hall through the breach you made in the side wall and you would be filled with Holy Light. Then would come the distinct realization, the King is about to return to His Private Chamber and ask, "What are you doing here? Who invited you?" Such would be the feeling, if techniques could gain entry.

These mystical experiences are anything but trances. Seeing while in a trance is likened to seeing while in a semiconscious,

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smoky stupor. “Stupor” better describes the normal, daily perspective. Seeing Prophecy would be like seeing super-vivid, true reality, a view of Reality that melts the sleeplike sense of normal sight.

### **Genuine Magic & Superstition**

Whatever appears from holiness often has a mirrored and opposite manifestation that comes from the side of the unholy. These mirrored possibilities have been created in order for there to be free will. As previously mentioned, if all of the mystical experiences would come only from the side of holiness no one would be foolish enough to venture into anything else. But the spiritual path is more complicated than that. Surely, as history has recorded prophecy, has it also verified records of future telling by psychics and crystal ball gazers! In fact, the productions from the left can even seem to outdo the miracles of the right!

From this other side, there certainly is genuine magic, and spiritualism. We even see such as things as various manifestations of spiritual messengers and the like!<sup>176</sup> Those who practice these occult arts are many times more dangerous than the fooled or corrupt medium.

Although not every source agrees that these magical powers are real,<sup>177</sup> but as stated above, even if the experience is merely in the mind, for all intents and purposes, it is entirely genuine.

Necromancy is the conjuring up of the soul of a dead person. This is usually attempted by a “medium” who tries to reveal or influence the future.<sup>178</sup> The medium seems to bring up the voice of someone who has died in order to ask that person a question. King Saul engaged in this to his detriment.<sup>179</sup> Barring the completely corrupt charlatan who electronically or

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otherwise produces a voice, what is usually happening when someone has the experience of hearing a dead person speak, is that the dead person's voice is being produced by the memory or by the imagination of the person wanting to hear from that dead person.

Another possibility (as previously mentioned) is when, during meditation, the voice of someone, even someone who has died, comes to the meditator and gives over important information. This "voice" is created by God, Who is using the sound of that person's voice in order to identify the "source" of that information. King David wrote, "The dead cannot praise God."<sup>180</sup> Since the dead are unable to praise God, it is certain they cannot engage in mundane conversations with people.

The chances of experiencing such dangerous occurrences as can come from magicians, spiritualism and such, is almost entirely eliminated when one stays within the well-tested realms of Torah practices. It is when one replaces or mixes these practices with teachings from the books and vocabularies of the East, Magicians, and the like, that these very grave troubles are especially invited. Few people who practice these systems know that the books of yoga and related practices warn that an integral hazard of these techniques is insanity. These books say this almost bragging. In many places such an insane person becomes honored as one who has attained "freedom" and therefore is a great source of instruction and inspiration. The devout will travel far to bow down and worship this person, feeling blessed when he takes their presents.

An interesting, case happened recently in India. An unfortunate man was mistakenly buried by an earth-moving machine that came to level his village to prepare for new construction. After three days, the villagers realized this poor

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man was missing. They began to dig for him and were amazed when they found him still alive, although unable to function. They reasoned this must be a very holy person to have survived underground for such a long period of time. From then on, each day, they would come to visit him with great reverence. They would prop him up, bow down to him, lay him back down and then go about their day feeling blessed by having been in the presence of such a “holy” person.

A Hindu seeker who has severely crippled himself by sitting in a fixed position meditating for many years and then can no longer walk, is called “god, honored teacher.”

The fact is, those who refuse the yoke of Torah do so thinking to be free. In truth, they wish to satisfy their own will without restrictions. A yoke by its nature does not increase the animal’s burden but rather reduces it. Even without the yoke, the same load must be pulled. Each of us has our individual, personal burden that life seems to impose upon us. Each of us is born into this world and then we travel through our individually allotted time span and then, the minute our allotment is over, each of us will die. No one escapes. Without the yoke, only the head and teeth must do all the pulling, thus using the smaller neck and jaw muscles to drag this immense load. The yoke comes to allow us to also use the larger shoulder and back muscles. Since we must pull the seemingly inescapable load anyway, the yoke comes as a great kindness.

### **Amulets**

As for the use of amulets, the vast majority are outright fakes and the vast majority of the remainder, although created with the best of intentions, affect only the imagination. This, in itself, is not bad. Very few do anything, as the Rambam writes.<sup>181</sup> Amulets that have been previously proven effective at

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least two times, (some say it must be at least three times), may be carried outside the private domain on Sabbath. Normally, all carrying in the public domain on Sabbath is forbidden. Allowing these amulets indicates there must be some validity to them.

For instance, today there is commonly found in Israel the red thread tied around the wrist. It has been made popular, especially by the poor who wish to receive charity and give these threads as a remedy for all sorts of maladies. The idea behind this thread has a great history. For instance, it brings to mind the red thread that hung in the Temple signifying the prayers of the High Priest were accepted on *Yom Kippur* (The Day of Atonement) and the Jewish Nation was forgiven its transgressions. This thread was hung in the Temple in a place where all could see it. When first hung up, it was red. Then, if the priest's prayers were accepted, it would turn pure-white right before the congregation's very eyes. Today, righteous people will take a long strand of red thread and wind it around the tomb of Rachel our Mother while reciting the mystical prayer of forty-two words. The initial letters of this prayer form a single Name of God.<sup>182</sup> The Holiness of the place is somewhat received into the thread, so the wearer in turn receives this splendor. There are learned sources that completely debunk such practices, and certainly the vast majority (if not all) given out on the streets are simply sewing thread.

### **Gifts and Powers**

Seeking gifts and powers is a well-known trap, yet many still strive for them. The main reason people seek such worthless spiritual gains is to show the world how great they have become. The powers are like a large bone placed through a small hole into a wooden box. The box is then chained to a

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tree. Wanting the bone, the monkey puts his hand through the hole and tightly grabs hold of it. Now he cannot get his hand out of the box because he will not let go of the bone. This is, in fact, how the East Indians catch their monkeys. Beware.

## NINE

### Searching For The Calm Mind

#### **Anxiety**

Anxiety disorders are the most common psychiatric illness today. Although there may be genetic or other physical reasons for this illness, most often anxiety is the result of persistent, unsettled thoughts.

When a disturbing thought comes, a person wrestles with it until he is able to come to some type of resolution. If while wrestling with that current, as yet unresolved thought, another disturbing thought surfaces, the individual can become anxious. If then another troubling thought piles on, the anxiety grows even more complicated, more persistent and therefore more frustrating. These disturbing thoughts commonly deal with things that the individual has absolutely no immediate control over, such as a terminal disease, debt, popularity, or such.

When the mind becomes so inundated with what seems to be a relentless stream of disturbing thoughts, one will naturally become anxious. At these times simply say, "These things are out of my immediate control and I want to calm down." Then just watch your breath. This will allow you to begin to unwind.

Breathe smoothly and deeply watching the breath as it moves in and out. Feel the air touching your skin as it enters and exits the tips of your nostrils. Concentrate on that feeling.

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Do not allow your attention to move away from that physical sensation, not even for a moment. As you notice the disturbing thoughts returning to your consciousness, simply return to watching the breath, feeling the air. The only thing you must do at this time is to silently watch as the air comes deeply in and is then slowly expelled. Directing, forcing if need be, the concentration to steadily watch the breath and to ignore everything else is the sole aim of this technique.

The longer you do this simple exercise the calmer you will become. The breathing itself is not the remedy. The breath is merely the physical subject that is focused upon. The remedy comes as the mind pays more and more attention to the smooth breath instead of the disturbing thoughts. When the mind resists and returns to the agitating thoughts, as it always will, remind yourself that those thoughts are raising problems that you have no control over at the present time so it will do you absolutely no good to let them thrash you around. Then quietly return to the single task of watching your breath.

Obviously, this technique will not solve the real problems that the disturbing thoughts were raising. What it will do however, is replace the anxiety with a calm mind and then you will be able to deal with them one at a time in a stress-free manner.

Mastering this simple technique gives you a great tool in spiritual growth. Not only will you be able to calm a raging mind, but also, even more importantly, you will learn to be a detached observer now being aware of the subtle ways that the mind used to rule you.

### **Depression**

Sadness comes for a good reason. When we experience sadness, it normally forces us to ask ourselves why is it we are

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sad. We then search our deeds and relationships until we find the reason for the sorrow. Once we find it, we usually take the required steps to remedy the problem. So we see that the sadness really helped us. In fact, if it were not for the sadness we might never have taken those steps that were necessary to correct something wrong in our lives.

Depression is not like this at all. We cannot learn anything constructive from being depressed. Depression merely chains its victim to its darkness. Whereas, sadness often leads to a positive deed, depression often leads to negative deeds. A depressed person has no idea why he is depressed. He asks himself, "What is wrong with me? Why am I so down?" He then searches his mind and memory for all that could possibly be called wrong, and indeed, he finds many things to be depressed about. Both pleasant and unpleasant thoughts are always stored in the mind and whichever one seeks for will be recalled. All this person really knows is, life is dark, bad, and he is miserable! Although none of the reasons he found are actually reason enough to be depressed, they do serve to validate his depression. He has convinced himself that his depression is justified.

One does not usually come out of depression because of the depression. This is not like sadness. Sadness will help drive the person to improve his life, depression will not. It merely convinces its victim to wallow in the mind's darkest corners. The depressed person actually becomes so used to his familiar, dark surroundings that he even comes to think of that state as his "home" i.e. his "natural state."

### **To Help Cure Depression**

There are two distinct ways to help cure depression.

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Here, we are not speaking of the clinically depressed person whose depression is often triggered biochemically in his brain. We are speaking here of the vast majority of cases where the individual experiences great frustration and seemingly endless sorrow. He feels worthless and lives in darkness day after day. These feelings actually come for a very good reason. They come to guide us and we must pay attention to them.

When one lives a solely materialistic life, or tries to compete with the images he sees on television to evaluate his worth or to establish his identity, such a person should become depressed. These are unnatural, fictitious, even unhealthy ideals. It is proper for the system to complain when you try to adapt to these standards.

Way too often this person will take tranquilizers, which he may very well become dependent upon for years, if not for the rest of his life. These drugs do not solve the problem. They merely adjust the body's sensitivity so the depressed person becomes callous, if not immune, to his spiritual senses.

### **First: The physical steps:**

The depressed person should first pray that God will heal him from his darkness just as any sick person should pray. Depression is a disease that must be healed. Then, the depressed person must pick himself up and physically go out into the world with the intention of helping another person. For this to work, it is essential that the depressed person actually moves out of his confines and physically goes out into the world. Once there, he must in whatever way possible try to help a fellow human being. The particular type of help that he is able to provide is not important, as long as the depressed person sees that he has in some way been instrumental in improving the other person's life. He could help by walking the

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other person to the store to shop for food. He could help clean the other person's house. It doesn't matter how he helps as long as he does indeed help.

These steps begin to heal the depression in several ways.

**One:** they move the depressed person out of his solely mental preoccupation, out into more public surroundings. A depressed person focuses almost entirely on his internal, mental darkness. Moving out of one's personal settings requires one to pay at least some attention to the external. This is required merely to move around in the physical world. This naturally forces the depressed person to leave his entirely mental concerns and forces him to focus, at least somewhat, on the physical perspective. Merely breaking away from the entirely mental perspective affords some relief.

**Two:** looking for others to help, will show him that there are many people out there who are much worse off than he is. Even depression cannot deny this.

**And finally,** his acts of kindness to others will give him a "credit" in Heaven that will induce mercy for himself.

### **Next: The Mental Steps:**

There is a house with two rooms in it. The roof of one of these rooms has a hole in it and it is raining cold rain outside. The second room has no hole in its roof and it is warm and comfortable. A depressed person is like someone who is sitting in the room with the hole in the roof and he is being rained on. He is experiencing a cold, wet and miserable life. All this is true.

The cold, wet, miserable person should simply go sit in the other room. But he objects saying, "There is a hole in the roof

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and by simply going into the other room it won't fix the hole in the roof." He is right. It doesn't fix the hole by merely moving away from it, but at least he will be warm and dry. "But," he objects again, "that would be like ignoring the problems and the problems are so real and they won't go away." Correct. He is right. Still, he should just go sit in the dry room. He will stay warm and comfortable, maybe even for the rest of his life. "But it won't fix the problems. It will still be dark over there," he continually complains. He is right, but in the meanwhile he will be dry and comfortable.

Then, perhaps it could be, that after a very long time of staying in the dry, comfortable room he might be able to do something that could fix the roof over there. But, if instead of sitting in the dry room the depressed person tries to solve his mental outlook while wet and cold he will merely wallow in his darkness. He will insist that he must analyze his problem in order to solve it, but he will merely deepen his darkness as he wrestles with it. Wrestling with depression verifies that his problems are very real, even palpable. Instead, he must be led into the dry room and helped to dwell there. Maybe, if he is fortunate enough, he may even spend the rest of his life there, never going back into the wet, cold, room again, not even to fix the hole in the roof.

## The Calm Mind

When the mind is calm, it judges differently than when it is agitated. This calm is reflected throughout the entire body, evident in relaxed posture and facial lines and affecting reactions to objective stimuli such as sunshine. The calm person will be able to look into a bright day without squinting, yet that same person, when agitated, finds the same amount of sunlight

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very disturbing. Coming from a calm perspective the mind will sometimes see great beauty even in putrid piles of garbage. As it is written, in the time of the Messiah “ . . . even the household pots of Jerusalem will be Holy like the vessels of the Temple.”<sup>183</sup> Yet now, especially when agitated, even Nature can seem ugly. Evaluations are never objective. Not only are they based on past experiences, but they are also affected by mood. Often, things are right there before your very eyes, yet you do not see them. The eyes are functioning but the mind is focused on something else. The mosquito bites and the body feels it; yet while asleep you are totally unaware.

When commenting on God placing Adam (the first man) in the mystical paradise called the Garden of Eden, the Zohar states, “So does God do now to any man . . . when he repents of his sins and occupies himself with the Torah . . . and God places him in His garden, which is the Shekinah . . . (God’s Presence).”<sup>184</sup> The mystical paradise called the Garden of Eden is not merely an historical, specific location. It is everywhere. This paradise can be realized by turning away from judgments and instead, seeing the entire creation to be God’s magnificent handiwork. When we return to judging what we see, we are again cast out of the Garden and are forced to make our way in the world by the sweat of our brow.<sup>185</sup>

### **The My, the Mine and the I**

When unaware, we do not even think to ask the questions that pertain to our very existence. For instance, we thank God every morning for the soul He has “returned to us.”<sup>186</sup> To whom has He given this soul? Who is the “you” to whom He has given this valuable opportunity? Who receives your soul in the morning?

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The distinction that is being sought here is the distinction between the possessor and the possession. Since we say “my soul,” this indicates that there is a “my” and that there is a soul. Since these two concepts have different names, they cannot be identical. Ultimately, with depth of inquiry, the conclusion will be that just as the body is a garment that is wrapped around the individual and forms the physical characteristics of that person, so do the individual characteristics of the soul act like a garment by forming and coloring the spiritual characteristics of that person. In fact, the individual soul is an actual portion of the Higher One Who is now being brought down to enliven the individual.<sup>187</sup> The Higher, now dwelling as the lower soul, vivifies the soul. It does this by being there as a soul. The soul then vivifies the body. The “my” is the limit, the boundary that the mind puts on that portion of the Higher One. This is what the person calls “I.” To the person the “I” is the individualization of that soul, but actually the “I” is the Higher One.

To understand this more clearly, imagine a bright, white light coming from the ceiling of a large room. Now parallel to the ceiling and a few feet under the light, place a thick sheet of opaque, black plastic as a lower, second ceiling. The black plastic reaches from wall to wall so no light gets under the plastic. Cut a large number of small holes through the black plastic, each a different size and shape. Put different colored, thin cellophane sheets over each hole and look under the black plastic. From the perspective of looking solely from under the black sheet, the mind will tell you there are many different colored lights there, each a different size and shape. The “many lights” also say there are many lights there. Each beam feels that it is actually a separate light, but in truth there is just a single light streaming through the many differently shaped holes.

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In this illustration, the one light both before and after the holes are cut out represents God, and the individually shaped and colored holes that the light streams through create the individuality of each soul. "My" ("I" as a possessive pronoun) is the uniqueness that each of us identifies with, which is created by shaping the Single Great "Light." The "i" is really the One and Only "Light."

The black plastic represents the concept of "constriction".<sup>188</sup> Before creation, God's Upper, Undifferentiated Light completely filled the entirety so there was no empty place to put the changing, limited creation that He was about to create. This Light is not a light in the worldly sense of the word but is called light to describe in physical terms the experience that occurs when His Presence is revealed. According to this metaphor, in order to make room for creation, God constricts, or conceals His Higher Light thereby leaving room for Him to place the finite creation. The creation is then formed out of His covered and now hidden Presence.

Another productive way to meditate on the nature of creation and the individual's place within it is to imagine a huge body of water. Suddenly, there occurs a temperature change in many tiny areas within this body of water, which causes a large number of ice cubes to form. Each ice cube is shaped somewhat differently than the next. From each ice cube's perspective, they are entirely separate, unique individuals. However, when the temperature of the water is increased they completely disappear and the underlying nature of the relationship between ice cubes and water is revealed. Try to see yourself as a temporary formation created by a change in temperature, and that someday the formation that you presently are will simply melt.

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### Looking and Seeing

When we look at an object, as we are accustomed to doing throughout the day, we usually ignore the various stages involved in the experience. We simply reflect on what we are seeing. But actually, there are a number of distinct stages in the process.

For instance, (as we discussed earlier) when we look and see an object, we do not see the actual object itself, but rather, we see a picture of the object. The picture is not the object. These are totally distinct. Also, we do not see that picture where the object is physically located, but rather we see it in our heads. In this experience, there is the picture, and there is the seeing of the picture. These are two different stages or aspects of the experience. There also is the looking stage. This is the searching or reaching to see aspect of the experience. This too is a distinct stage or function. In order to be looking there must be a willing to look stage. Willing is also a distinct aspect of the experience. We are exerting. There is an effort to look. In order for there to be a will there must be a will-er, a some one or some thing that is willing. This also is a distinct, identifiable aspect of the experience. So we see that what we had considered to be a simple, instantaneous, single-dimensioned process of seeing actually has many stages. There is an I who is willing to look in order to see a picture of an object. Each stage is a crucial and distinct aspect of the experience. Yet, most people are totally unaware of their existence.

The seeker who is experienced in meditative techniques will easily be able to identify and label each of these stages. When we can distinguish between the seeker and the sought, we can quickly detach from our binding desires and then we can come to the goal.

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### **Physically Induced “Spiritual” Experiences**

Interestingly, one’s physical surroundings can be a catalyst to a spiritual experience. For instance, imagine walking along on a gray, cloudy day when, without warning, the wind blows the clouds apart, starting from the horizon far behind you. This split in the clouds moves quickly, bringing the bright sunlight closer to you from behind. You do not know that this immense light is coming. Then suddenly you experience it coming upon you overhead from behind. As the light overtakes you, its contrast to the gray day is so strong, you must tightly shut your eyes against its brightness. You do not know this is sunlight. The sunlight can only do so much, but your mind continues the sweep of brilliance that came upon you physically, and now mentally increases it by recalling the Bright Light from your spiritual memory. The experience soon passes, and if you did not know it was the wind, clouds, and sunshine that caused it, you could easily be fooled into thinking that it was going to be a current revelation experience. Memory of the intimate experience of the Most High is embedded within each of us, but it is covered over when we are born. Indeed, IF WE COULD ONLY REMEMBER we could reveal this Great Presence at will. The obvious result being that we would remember our way right out of this world. This is the reason for the covering over of the soul when it is born.

### **Dreams, Visions and Voices**

Imagine a person sitting in a swimming pool while listening to the radio, watching television, eating a sandwich, smelling incense and reading a book all at the same time. This is somewhat similar to the daily experience of the average person’s mind as all of his senses are bombarded with life's encounters. Then suddenly all except one of these activities

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cease. Even though the “volume” of that remaining activity was not increased, the mind will now experience that input as being louder. Obviously, without the other distractions, the mind will more easily concentrate all of its attention on that single subject. This adhering accounts for most of the unusual meditation experiences that can come. However, there are also the natural, but untapped, mystical abilities of the mind that can surface when the mind delves deeply into itself.

These meditative experiences appear much more vivid than dreams. They are even more vivid than normal waking experience. For instance, if when meditating one fell into a meditative dream, and in this dream he saw himself trimming his fingernails, then, after he gathered all the sheared nails carefully into his tightly clenched fist, he awakened. Then when he stood up and walked across the house to properly dispose of the clippings he was very surprised to have found his fist empty. He even backtracked to see where they might have fallen, until finally he realized it was just a meditative dream.

One meditative dream experience projects the pictures of the dreams onto a small circular portion in the center of the mind’s screen. This is done while the rest of the screen is seen as darkness, that is, without any of the dream showing there. In this small “window” there will be a vivid, colorful running dream sequence that will depict any subject that the meditator thinks of. He can actually direct these dreams to play any scene he desires. This can be quite alluring as the person might be tempted to let his imagination run away into any low subject imaginable. At such times the mind does not complain and warn the person. Rather, it simply follows the lower Will. Interestingly, in this experience while the flow of dreams is playing, the meditator is completely aware of his “external”,

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physical environment as if he is not dreaming at all. This happens even though he is at the same time watching the dreams. If such a dream condition occurs do not let it run wild, as it will just play out your subconscious desires. Definitely do not direct it toward “secular” subjects. Either try to elevate the subject of the dream by picturing the highest vision you have ever experienced, or return your concentration to your original meditation subject.

Dreaming is a frequently cited method of divine communication.<sup>189</sup> “And Hashem spoke to Israel in the visions of the night.”<sup>190</sup> Even common dreams are considered 1\60 of Prophecy <sup>191</sup> and can be explored to gain insight as to the individual’s subtle concerns. A voice can come in the middle of the night calling your name so loudly you will jump out of bed startled, and run to the window to see who is calling you. When your name is called twice, it is a sign of endearment. And if once? You will not have to be told. If you are being called to task for something you have done incorrectly or have left undone, you will know it as you are being flung from your sleep. You might even laugh nervously as you are being hurled from your dreams. You reassure yourself thinking, what you did could not have been that bad. You change your deeds. You are embarrassed and you are thankful.

“Dreams dreamed in the morning are more likely to come true.”<sup>192</sup> But, since all dreams contain an aspect of truth and an aspect of foolishness,<sup>193</sup> they certainly cannot be relied upon. It is important to remember that dreams follow their interpretation and “while part of a dream may be fulfilled, the whole of it is never fulfilled.”<sup>194</sup> Therefore, always interpret whatever you see in dreams in the most positive way. When a person has a good dream, he must constantly keep it in mind or

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it will not come true.<sup>195</sup> A righteous person is given bad dreams to worry him into repentance, while a sinful person is given pleasant dreams to lull him into complacency.<sup>196</sup> King David never had a good dream in his life.<sup>197</sup>

As the different mystical experiences come, whatever type or level of experience you become interested in will hold you right there. The mind's involvement will continue with that subject until you are able to let go of it and go beyond. Even after the experience has ceased, the more impressed you are with that experience, the longer you will stay at that level. Generally the rule is, no matter what happens DO NOT FOLLOW AND DO NOT FIGHT.<sup>198</sup> The rare exception (being so rare it is scarcely worth mentioning) is the mental experience of a True *Maggid* (a spiritual teacher), or an Angel. There are even cases when Elijah the Prophet, "physically" comes when needed to guide those who are in a position to help His People or even a single, forlorn individual. Such is the Love of the Creator for His creation.

Although such true "visits" are almost unheard of, and are recorded throughout history by merely a handful of the most righteous or important people, still there are those who claim to be in frequent contact with such Holy Teachers. There are certain people, or even families, who are born with a propensity for visions. These are people who in all other aspects seem to be completely normal, but who see the most ordinary scenes or dreams as important visions or messages from Above.

For instance, upon seeing a mundane scene such as someone walking into the room, a "visionary" may collapse, saying he saw something hidden about that person, or an Angel hovering above them as they entered. This seems to be a chemical imbalance that exaggerates normal mental images. There are

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some tests a person will want to look at before declaring his announcements. Did the experience make the person experiencing it more genuinely humble? After such an experience, does he feel proud or special that such a thing happened to him? Does what the person predict always come true? Is the person acting so strange that a normal person would be embarrassed to do so? As stated previously, it is best to ignore all meditation and spiritual experiences as the vast majority are plateaus that cause a person to level off and go no farther.

As for voices that can come during meditation or even throughout the day to the longtime meditator, a general rule is: if the voice sounds like someone else, an "other" speaking to you, it is a lower voice. If it sounds like your personal thought, it may well be Higher. This is not a fixed rule as sometimes even strange thoughts (i.e. those that come from people around you) can be received as if they are the your own thoughts. The content reveals its nature.

If a voice that sounds like a normal thought comes to mind but says something completely out of context, completely strange to the individual, pay attention. Search your mind and the surroundings to see if there is a message in it for you. For example: One Sabbath morning at the Kotel (Western Wall in Jerusalem) a thought-voice came clearly to someone saying, "You are going to get blood on your Prayer Shawl." The individual looked around to see if this very strange thought was a special message or merely one of the many jumbled thoughts that frequently surface. Nothing happened.

The next morning at exactly the same time and place, the man sitting next to this person suddenly jumped up out of his seat. He seemed to be in great fear. He leaped into the air and then fell hard, crashing onto the stones and smashed his eyeglasses against his face! It was an epileptic seizure. He

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assisted the man with the seizure until the ambulance came and carried him away. Returning to his prayers, he noticed the blood on his Prayer Shawl.

Spiritual experiences may also involve the normal speaking voice. For instance, someone may ask a question, and when you form the words to reply, an unexpected sentence comes from your mouth.

A few years ago, on the island of Hawaii, a man came running up to a longtime meditator complaining bitterly that his only brother was about to be married back on the Mainland and that he had absolutely no money to buy a ticket to fly to the wedding. The meditator wanted to comfort him and said, "Don't worry, a ticket can always come." It didn't help, as the distressed person responded, "Oh yeah? Where is that much money going to come from?" The meditator opened his mouth to speak and was surprised to hear himself say; "Look in your mailbox in three days." Three days later the man came running up, calling out, "How did you know? How did you know there would be a check in my mail today? It was mailed almost a week ago, so it must have already been in the air when you said it would come!"

Related to the experience of mental voices is the startling experience of a very clear and quite loud radio program popping into your consciousness right in the middle of your most silent meditation. It is so clear, at first you are sure someone is playing a loud radio nearby. The program will be complete, perhaps with various speakers discussing an interesting subject, or even a disk jockey playing LOUD rock and roll music! Time-checks (almost invariably giving the incorrect time), announcements, commercials, whatever you would expect to hear on a normal program can arise in the

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mind. These usually do not last very long, but once they start coming they can return often until you outgrow them and are no longer impressed with such happenings.

Do not get caught up in these sorts of phenomena, as they are merely distractions that go nowhere. They can be brought about by long hours of meditation, or they can happen to a stressed person, or even to someone without any other unusual symptoms. They come suddenly, unannounced. This experience has led many to report that the metal fillings in their teeth are acting as radio receivers.

Such experiences are a sign the meditation is deepening and you should be encouraged, but do not get caught up in such things. Rather, direct the meditation beyond the lower, mental responses, for these phenomena are but one of the many possible worlds that can be found in the mind's planetarium. Focusing on any of these interesting experiences is like affixing your attention to a stream of consciousness that can play all day and then, at best, drop you off where you first got on.

To go beyond such alluring phenomenon, RETURN TO THE SUBJECT OF YOUR MEDITATION. Whatever happens, return to your subject. Do not think that since the experience seems higher than your subject, you should therefore concentrate on the experience. If the subject was good enough to bring that experience, with even more concentration, it will bring you even higher.

### **Dream Interpretation**

The Gifts come only to the deserving, but never because they are deserved. If they were to come from merit, they would not be called Gifts. For example, the ability to interpret dreams does not depend on a person's intelligence. It is a gift with

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which a person is born.<sup>199</sup> Here, we assume the person had merited it from a previous lifetime.<sup>200</sup> This interpretation comes to the mind not as a process of logic, but as a solution.

As an example, a non-religious young Jewish man came to the Western Wall of the Temple Mount. The young man had a dream about the Wall that was disturbing him very much and he went there to see if he could find out what it meant. There he found an old religious Jew with a long, white beard and he asked the old man if he could tell him the meaning of his dream. The old man immediately thought of Joseph from the Bible and how God revealed the meaning of dreams to him and he quickly admitted he was just a regular person and that dream interpretation was something that comes from Above. He saw the young man was so upset and he very much wanted to help, so he prayed that Hashem should help, and asked about the dream.

The youth said, in his dream he was washing the Wall and the water splashed off the Wall falling onto some candles that were burning close by. The water put them out. He was upset and he did not know why.

The answer came at once to the old man. Not in words, nor in actual mental pictures, but in a clear understanding of its meaning which immediately came to his mind. He asked if anyone in his near family had recently passed away.

The youth said, "Yes," his father.

The old man continued, "This is what your dream meant. You feel, even though you have been praying for your father in your own personal way, that since your prayers are so sincere, they must be so pleasing to God that they are actually washing the Wall. But since you have not been praying in the Traditional way, but simply praying how you feel best, your prayers have

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actually been putting out the lighted candles that are traditionally placed there to remember the dead." Right away the youth saw the interpretation was correct and happily said that from then on he would follow the ancient, prescribed tradition.

Intellectual dream analysis is quite different. Here we take a vivid dream, either a meditative dream or a normal sleep dream and we try to see what we can learn about our deepest concerns. Sometimes great insight can come which will change our life's direction. Here, we try to match the scenes and props that appeared in the dream with what could be related situations in our daily lives.

For instance, a young student had an extremely frightening meditation experience. In fact, it so unnerved him that he stopped his meditation practice for over a month until he spoke to a longtime meditator who explained what the experience meant. His experience was: a very vivid, thick darkness surrounded his head like a large bubble and he was falling backwards! The darkness was so thick that it took his air away and he thought he was going to die. The intense fear he experienced forced him to "snap out of it." Now that the experience was over, he was most disturbed by the fact that he was so frightened, and he did not know if he was frightened by the darkness or because he thought he was about to die. He wanted to know which he was afraid of. He was even embarrassed that he was so frightened.

When the longtime meditator heard the details of the experience he asked, "Are you thinking of going back into something that you left because it was not good for you?"

The young student blurted out, "Now I'm not, but when this happened I was. But what was I afraid of?"

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His guide explained that it did not really matter what he was afraid of in this experience, for both aspects, the darkness, and the thought of death, came to give him the very real sense of fear. This was, in fact, what the experience came to teach. "When you were thinking about returning to your old dark ways, you were shown why not to." The young student was immediately relieved and what he had considered to be an extremely negative experience, once understood, became a very positive experience. He returned to his meditation with great enthusiasm.

One time, an experienced meditator wanted to know if the Eastern meditation method of mindlessly repeating a mantra could be a valid technique if used with a proper Holy Name.

As the Indian system teaches, he meditated repeating his Jewish mantra over and over again, first very rapidly and then as the mind slowed, he repeated it slower and slower until he fell into a vivid dream state.

In this dream he saw a most wondrous sight. He was walking in a meditative state, slowly, among East Indians on a wide sidewalk, which ran parallel to an ocean. The ocean was the most beautiful green water he had ever seen. He wanted to reach the water but the sidewalk was some thirty yards away from it. Then he saw a small drainage pipe right by his feet. He bent down and put his hand into the pipe and as the waves came up to the shore, the pipe filled and he touched the water. Then he suddenly awoke!

He thought, "What could this wonderful dream mean?" After a while, he understood the dream was explaining the folly of trying to reach the water through a drainage pipe when he could have easily walked over to the ocean. It became obvious that the beautiful water stood for his goal in meditation and the

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Eastern mantra method was shown to him as the drainage pipe. Yes, he did touch the water but he would have been so much better off by going over to the ocean, where he could not only touch the water but he could even swim in it.

Remember, some of each dream is true and some is so fantasized it cannot be sensibly understood. This can be a valuable tool but, as already stated, dreams cannot be relied upon.

### **As You Progress**

As your meditation deepens you will become more aware of the way the One works. Since all is one, in some way all is directly affected by everything else, even thoughts. This is easier to understand at a lower perspective. For instance, from the perspective of "there is a Great God Who watches over all," it is easy to understand how seemingly unconnected events come about. So when something unusual, even miraculous happens, you can always say, "Ah, the Overseeing God brought this." From this perspective, God is seen to be a personal intervener above creation and is sending the miraculous result to His lower creation. Looking from a higher, broader perspective, we see that the One, Who is All, has naturally caused this to happen.

A simple example: from the lower perspective when we see someone do a good deed and soon thereafter we see someone walk up and do a good deed back to the person who just did the first good deed, we would say that God caused the second good deed to come as a reward to the man who did the first good deed. From the higher, that is, broader perspective, we would say that the first good deed itself caused the second good deed to come. Both perspectives are valid.

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Once it happened that a simple, God-loving man was attending a meal celebrating the circumcision of his friend's son. There were many fine rabbis in attendance so he was quite surprised to see the people eating before anyone said a word of Torah. It was such an important occasion that he wondered if maybe he should stand and at least try to say something appropriate. He clearly thought, "Either, I'm going to stand up and give a word of Torah or I'm going to have a glass of vodka."

Immediately, from across the room, a complete stranger stood up and hurried over to the place where he was sitting and clunked down a bottle of vodka on the table right in front of the simple fellow and without saying a word, he walked away! From the perspective of "there is a loving God overlooking this world," it is easy to say that God was kind not to allow this simple person to embarrass himself, so He interceded and sent a messenger to save him. From a Higher perspective, we say that the cause forced the effect. Both are true.

### **Overreacting**

With development, strong emotional responses to even minor issues may surface. For instance, if while standing in a place where people are normally inconsiderate, someone bumps into you and you see that the person is sincerely apologetic, tears may come to your eyes. This can be controlled once you recognize why it is happening. But if these reactions are tempered within the normal span of the emotions, they are not necessarily negative.

Often people who were very cold emotionally before beginning their search become overly emotional as they begin to develop. This can be a source of more rapid advancement, as a more sensitive person will go through changes more quickly.

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There is no lasting gain in the stirring that comes from Above, unless there is first stirring from below.<sup>201</sup> Genuine emotional responses can produce deep introspection. However, they must not be overly sensitive, or they will become an obstacle that prevents further development.

Also, emotions stress the body. Overly strong reactions show that the person does not clearly understand the situation at hand. When we can see the objective cause of things that happen, our intellect will keep our reactions objective. The Patriarchs looked very young even when they were very old. Their trust in Hashem steadied them, allowing them to go through their troubles relatively unscathed. Wrinkles are campaign ribbons from this incarnation and birthmarks for the next. Not that youthful looks are the goal. Prisoners serving lifelong sentences have so few worries that their faces look much younger than people who must struggle for their livelihood, and interestingly, people on vacation are the most susceptible to heart attacks.

### **“Mediums” And Other Distortions**

It is not uncommon for some misguided, passive meditators to manifest signs and even wonders, which supposedly prove the validity of their supernatural experiences. They can appear to be possessed, or seem to have words come from their mouths as if spoken by someone who is speaking through them from another world. These voices may identify themselves as a certain spirit or person who once lived in the world. The person experiencing this may even see the historical personality's face as their own when they look into a mirror. This fools the public and even the medium. This phenomenon almost always occurs when the more subtle thoughts of the medium come floating into his consciousness from the collection of dreams, memories, fantasies

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and such that are stored in his subconscious mind. Although the medium's advice may seem harmless, it has been known to lead their clients to destruction. As for the mediums themselves, the "successful" ones first find fame and riches, and then ultimately end up being tormented by their entirely distorted minds.

A stressed person sees the mind as if there is a magnifying glass in-between him and certain functions of his mind. Often, the result of this distortion is that a simple thought can seem to be a great voice coming down from another world. Just as dreams can be fantastic due to the mind's freedom from the restrictions of wakeful logic, so can the stressed mind act this way. In a dream the mind is free to imagine any scene it wishes without the limits of reality pulling the thoughts back into sensibility. This also happens to the extremely stressed person's wakeful mind.

Certain physical diseases also lead to psychotic delusions.<sup>202</sup> Recently, a young woman who lived in Northern Israel was afflicted with such a disease. She had hundreds of people believing in her mystical ability and paying her handsomely to hear of the visions she saw about their past lives.

A number of years ago, a Jewish woman in New York was taking diet pills and doing deep breathing exercises in a hot bath. She suddenly heard a voice calling out the name of another woman, a "spiritualist teacher," whom she had never known. The voice told her to seek out this woman. She found this woman and then, almost immediately developed a very strong energy that was felt by anyone who came near her. She quickly became a well-known "teacher," guiding hundreds of students in her personal brand of Hinduism, with herself being the incarnation of a female deity. After a several-year-reign, she ended up in a hospital long-term care unit with the most severe migraine headaches.

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Before information becomes available to the consciousness, it is first available to the subconscious. This means that right now you are in some sense aware of what you will think and see a moment from now. This occurs even though you are not conscious of it. So what can seem to be a “premonition” or “Word from Above” is usually a rather normal, although more vividly or even somewhat prematurely viewed thought. Again, in deep meditation the mind can be so magnified that a simple thought can seem to be such a “Voice” or “Spirit” coming from “Beyond.” Most thoughts are actually directly self-willed, being formed in response to the “I’s” reactions or desires. This is done so subtly and so quickly that the “I” is usually unaware of its essential role in their formation. Thoughts appear in the mind somewhat like a small amount of dye moves in a large body of clear water, or as a small gaseous cloud appears within a much larger clear sky.

### **Thought Sequence**

The mind works in such a way that it is often difficult to know which thought preceded which. For instance, you may think the sequence began with a specific, uncomfortable thought, which then led you to react by feeling uncomfortable. However, the sequence actually began with feeling uncomfortable without knowing why. Then your mind ran quickly through its inventory and brought up to the screen a menu of several possible choices of what could be good reasons to feel uncomfortable. You immediately reject most of these options as insignificant and quickly choose the one you feel is an appropriate cause for discomfort. All this happens so quickly and so subtly that you remember there having been only the one option and you believe this thought came first, causing the uncomfortable feeling that followed.

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For instance, in a dream, an unknown, sweet voice calls the dreamer's name. The individual wants to identify the caller, so the mind is sent into its memory reservoir instructed to bring to the surface of consciousness a number of options that could possibly fit that voice. The mind presents these to the individual and he picks the one he is "certain" is the one who called. The identification was chosen after the fact, but this happens so quickly that the individual not only believes he knows who called, but he also believes he recognized the caller as soon as he heard the voice. This same process occurs with much of our thinking. When we understand the workings of the mind, we can begin to master it, instead of serving it.

### **Breaking Addictions**

The awareness and sensitivity that develops from practicing meditation can be utilized to help you control your daily life. Not only can poor and lazy habits be changed, but even the severest addictions can be broken when one asserts his will and refuses to give in to them. The reason strong habits and addictions persevere is not simply because they are so desirable, in fact, many times they are unpleasant even to the one who is so addicted. The real reason they continue unabated is that the individual has not yet realized that indeed he can control his life. Since he does not know this, he believes he has no choice and does not make the concerted effort to assert his will and take control of his behavior.

Take a most desirable food such as a cool glass of water on a hot day, or ice cream, or any thing that you truly enjoy. Prepare yourself for the experience that you know will definitely come when that food first reaches your tongue. Know that initially there will be an instant of pleasure. Expect this. Try to see exactly how that sense of pleasure will reach you. What

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determines if it is, indeed pleasurable? Is it the tongue? If so, which part? The mind? Where and how does it cause that response? How long does the pleasant sensation last? Know that the moment you finish that first small sip of water, or even before you have finished it, the body and mind are going to insist on more. As you take that first tiny sip, watch carefully. See where the sensation starts and then see what happens next. You already know that an urge for more is going to come, so prepare for it. Anticipate it. Try to determine what route that insisting urge is going to take. Then, as it comes, follow it from the tongue to the mind and then back to the tongue again. Do not take another sip. Hold back. Watch carefully and see, when you deny yourself that second sip, where does the complaint come from and to what aspect of you does it complain. Watch precisely which functions of your body urge, even demand, and try to see how they do this. Do they mentally insist you fulfill the desire? Do they cause physical or mental discomfort in the mouth or stomach? Do they press so hard that you feel it would be so much easier to just quickly give in? Hold back from that second sip a little longer. Wait and watch. What does the mouth do? What grievances are raised to the mind? Listen. Remember well how these insisting functions work and pull on you. Do not give in. Their pulls are only feelings. After the desire is under control and even temporarily subsides, take another tiny sip of water and see if the body repeats its pattern. Do this a number of times until you clearly see how the attraction pulls on you, and even though it strongly insists, still, see that you can control your behavior.

Take charge of your actions. Determine what is best for you and then apply your resolve to that end. Each time you overcome your animal desires your will becomes stronger. With time, by using this exercise, you will learn that in truth,

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your will can intelligently direct all of your choices and you can take charge of your daily life.

### **A Horse, a Wagon and a Driver**

Which are you? Certainly, you will immediately identify with the driver and not the horse or wagon. Yet, when you ask yourself what you are, you will most likely answer, "I am a man. I am a person. I am an American. I am a meditator, father, friend, engineer" and so on. See that all of these functions identify with the body or the actions of the person and not with the individual itself. When the person dies, what that person truly is will move on to the next world. Everything they thought they were stays in this world and quickly disappears.

Imagine the horse, wagon and driver waiting by the side of the road. Now, the driver says, "giddy-up" and the horse pulls him and the wagon down the street. So far we see that even though the horse is the moving power, it is the driver who is in charge. For now, the horse and wagon are merely his servants. Then, when they pass a restaurant and the delicious smells suddenly fill the horse's nostrils, the horse quickly turns off the road and pulls the driver and wagon along with him right into the restaurant. Unless the driver pulls back hard on the reins, at that moment the horse will be in charge. In fact, the driver must pull back at least as hard as the horse is pulling forward or the horse is going to get what it wants.

In this illustration, the wagon is the body, the horse is the animal instinct that we all have, and the driver is the soul that vivifies our lives. It is the soul that continues on into the next world.

Every decision you make is being made either by your wagon (the body insists on sitting down), or your animal

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instinct (“LUNCH! RIGHT NOW!”), or the intelligent soul that rationally directs the horse and wagon. Every choice you make can be made based on intellect and not merely on the emotional animal drive, or the simple physical requirements of the body.

### **How Many Problems?**

Each person’s mind has its own capacity and can only consciously deal with a limited number of problems at a time. When one of the ten problems is solved, there will not then be merely nine problems left, but rather number eleven will move up in order to fill the individual’s active mental capacity. Realizing this can help put problems into a more controlled perspective so you can work on your problems instead of having your problems work on you. In truth, it is far better to work on the solutions and not to work on the problems. Working on the problems often entails wrestling with troubles, while working on the solutions often means moving into the release.

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## TEN

### The Empty Vessel

When a person has lived his life to fulfill the will of the Creator and has divested himself of vain and selfish pursuits, over time he will become an empty vessel. Of course this is a blessing but it also carries a distinct reality that must be dealt with. This empty vessel becomes susceptible to its surroundings. For instance, when this person looks at another's face he will feel, or more accurately, will reflect, that face, and therefore will experience the things that are causing that face to be so positioned.<sup>203</sup> The empty person will experience, to some degree, the experience of the person he is looking at. The thoughts and feelings that rush into the empty vessel are the pains, joys, or fears the subject is experiencing. The empty one will also feel these.

This is why a Chassid is embarrassed when his Rebbe looks him in the face. He understands that when the Rebbe looks at him he sees the Chassid's past. All of us broadcast a radiance that reflects the things that we have done. We even radiate deficiencies for all of the things we were supposed to have done but did not do. This is how the great Rebbes are able to help their Chassidim. When he looks at the student and feels the pain and anguish the student is experiencing, the Rebbe immediately relieves himself of these troubles from within, as he did when such problems first tried to attach themselves to him. He sees what he did to bring his relief and then he advises his student how to do the same. He sees what muscles he

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shifted, what thought sequence he applied, what actions, what common denominator, or prayer he called to mind to dispel these particular problems and he explains to his student how to do the same. The student tries his advice and it works.

This can also be done without saying a word. Each of us radiates our entire position, both physically and spiritually. A great teacher radiates a strong vigor that can produce both spiritual and physical relief. Standing around loved ones we feel open and expansive. Standing around evil people we feel tight and withdrawn. Seeing someone yawn usually makes us yawn. Watching someone eat a raw lemon brings a similar reaction in our mouths. Sitting close to someone who is fast asleep will make us feel a strong wave of sleepiness even when we do not know that person is asleep.

### **What Will Fill the Empty Vessel?**

After passive meditation techniques empty the mind, what then fills it will depend upon the meditator's intentions. As previously stated, when one meditates, the results depend on the individual's word, deed, and desire to attach. Attachment is also called cleaving. It is the attempt or wish to adhere to the cherished vision, to maintain the highest experience. Indeed, to some it is the very goal. And through the seeker's word, deed, and desire to cleave he brings down that aspect to which he becomes attached. The prophet Jeremiah said, ". . . they went after nothingness, and have turned into nothingness."<sup>204</sup>

The intense spiritual seeker may very well forsake his physical surroundings. If he isolates himself and delves deeply into his practices many unusual things may soon begin to happen. When these mystical experiences first occur, they are occurring to a completely inexperienced person. How he is

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going to understand them and therefore where they will lead him will depend upon the path that he has chosen.

For instance, if a Jewish meditator were involved with Yoga would see a vivid, colorful dream of a handsome man and woman dressed in the ancient Hindu tradition sitting on the roof of his house, he would interpret this to be a very good sign. He would be encouraged to delve deeper and deeper into his yoga, feeling that such a dream proved that he was on the correct path. However, if he would see such a dream after he left the Indian tradition and returned to his Jewish roots, such a dream would either be entirely insignificant or negative to him.

### **Dangerous Power**

A powerful, clear radiance comes to a person who excels on the proper path. This radiance will not manifest as a specialized ray or tube of energy, but rather, he and his actions will seem to be suffused in light. Entirely unlike this clear radiance is the experience of the centralized, localized power. This experience comes to those who seek power. It is central to the individual or to a specific area of his body to the exclusion of others around him. It frequently appears (mentally) as a tube or a beam that radiates from above and overwhelms the individual. It can develop from extended periods of mental concentration and is usually experienced as a strong physical force or energy. This is especially so when using the "*Kundalini*" ("The coiled serpent power" as taught in Yoga) or related methods of duality such as Yoga Postures (*Hatha Asanas*) or Sexual Yoga (*Tantra*). Here, during meditation, the individual develops a strong feeling of energy in his body. He becomes familiar with this warm, strong feeling and in an attempt to control or increase it he begins to move it around his body. Whether this is an actual physical

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energy, or merely a mentally defined or even totally imagined force makes no difference to the person experiencing this, nor to those around him. The fact that it is experienced makes it real. Concentration is just as strong, whether the subject is real or imagined.

Once he feels it strongly, those around him will feel it radiating from him. He can direct this power, especially directing it more to certain people and somewhat withholding from others. For instance, he can increase its flow to others by mere will or by holding up his hand. Or if he wishes an even stronger effect, he lifts up his arms. The power then radiates from his body, allowing those around him to feel this warm, almost numbing sensation even more, and its accompanying increase in spiritual awareness.

This power (energy) is felt physically even by those who are completely unaware of its source. One need not, for instance, have faith in the person radiating it to feel it. The receiving experience can be likened to a person who has a normal "40-watt" spiritual awareness capacity all of a sudden being boosted, via this energy, to a "90 watt" awareness. The one receiving the energy will sense an elevation moving him up in his own spiritual awareness. This feels like a great boon. Now he is made aware of his own higher thinking.

Although increased awareness is always a blessing (since it elevates the consciousness), here the "boon" comes from an unclean source surrounded with idols. So, in fact, it is not a blessing. The person receiving the feeling from the person who is radiating it might experience a feeling of platonic love, or an extremely sensual, even sexual love. Here, the receiver is overwhelmed by the wave of sensual, warm, surrendering love. "Better than a lover" might be his reaction, although he has

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remained physically untouched. To the one radiating the power, this experience might seem to be a beam of light streaming from his eyes. When he sweeps the beam across a group of people, as it reaches each person, they experience a blissful, elevating feeling. Or this centralized radiating feeling might fill a large area with giggly joy, causing many hundreds of people to experience bliss.

After recovering the normal, daily perspective, the one on the receiving end will always want more. He associates the rush he experienced with that person who brought it about. He becomes a disciple of this "teacher." He works hard, following ANYTHING the source commands, and from time to time does in fact receive a boost or rush that reminds him of higher places. But after each experience he comes back down to the mundane world where he must work and wait for the next possible boost to come. This becomes his goal - another boost. Ever higher! But even if he is successful, that is, even if the elevations come fast and furious, and even if he has not fallen into the trap of idolatry, this path will at best take him nowhere. Not in days and not in years. He will go up and down forever.

Meanwhile, the "source" experiences a continual increase of strength and then a severe decline in power. As the devotee bows down in front of the guru, signifying surrender, he experiences an increase of intensity, which moves him toward bliss while the guru experiences an increase of light and power. This raises a desire in the guru to bless the devotee, which in turn increases the devotee's rush. Back and forth they feed each other, up to their fullest capacity. As the power leaves, the guru feels cold, as if his very life force is leaving him. Often it feels as if it is draining out through his hands. One partial remedy comes when he touches his thumbs to his forefingers. This

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recycles the energy back into his body, which increases his power and allows him to send it out even more strongly. This is why statues and drawings depicting meditation leaders from the East will often show their fingers in this position.

In India this power is called "*Shakti*." The gurus with a strong dose of it never lack devotees, nor anything else they physically crave. They become famous and wealthy, living in the styles of the Rajahs of old with many people striving to keep them content. They normally develop peculiar, finicky appetites and furious tempers, which they reserve for their closest devotees. They treat their devotees as children and servants and the devotees treat them as a Queen Bee, whose only job is to continue generating this energy that keeps the camp buzzing.

### What Comes to the Idol

What is his future, this one who has become the idol? The punishment that an idolater receives is minuscule when compared to the punishment the idol receives. The exact repercussions that befall the idol will depend upon the particular way he abused the truth.

When such mystical energy or power is experienced, this power is to be dissipated by imagining it to be spread equally throughout the entire creation. Begin spreading it from the place it is most strongly felt. The One, Universal is the goal of the true seeker and this One is equally everywhere. But if instead of spreading this sensation, his practice is to focus on this energy and to interpret it as a specific power central to him, then when this specific power is experienced as a strong, contained force, he feels sound and well. When he "blesses" someone with a dose of his energy, sending it out, he can then

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feel cold and empty. Now he must hold his arms closer to his body to prevent even more strength from leaving him, or even sit on his hands. When fully charged, he will not want his hands together as this will temper the strength. With the palms together the energy is pacified, short-circuited. This is the position a devotee takes upon seeing his guru thus signifying humility, inviting the master's power to reign. After giving out a large dose of his radiance he will probably want to keep his arms together and may even have to keep his fists clenched, especially while around others. The energy increases and decreases with such strong feelings that he gets caught up in it. Now he must recharge himself by hours of meditation, solitude, or other practices. He goes up and down. While up, he sees great visions. There are not words to describe these. When down, he witnesses the lowest pits of hell. He believes he is helping those around him to reveal their higher selves, a useful teacher, a servant of the Holy One teaching people to ascend spiritually. This remains his belief even after he has long since left the bounds of normal morality, and now even abuses his devotees. He has convinced himself his "unique" spiritual position has freed him from the common man's restrictions. He has entrapped those he thinks he loves and has locked himself firmly into a box he himself is building.

What to do to prevent this trap? If you are among the very few whose practice and constitution is so severe that such an experience begins to develop, there are ways to prevent yourself from becoming entrapped by it. Although it is sometimes recommended to go off and be alone to meditate, meditation is not designed to take you out of the community. The opposite is true. Once you begin to see through your mistaken beliefs about the nature of the World, once you have realized the difference between actuality and the illusionary

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nature of the information received by the senses; once you have escaped the imaginary encasement called ego and have seen the Higher Reality, you are in a position to be of great service to the community. This will not be accomplished by isolation. Bodyguards and mansions need not protect this elevated awareness. The great compassion you should be experiencing must be expressed in HELPFUL deeds.

By staying within such a proper structure as the Torah provides, you will be prevented from even unwittingly taking advantage of the ones who have not yet learned your lessons. You will see great examples of spiritual life that you could not possibly have seen locked inside a mountaintop retreat. Your private imagination will not be able to rule. You will see how your daily life measures when held up to these giants. This will almost entirely remove the danger of this type negative experience. Again, if you are so intense, an expert, righteous teacher is even more essential.

The centralized, specific power referred to above may also be transferred, that is recognized, by unclean magical amulets or films, television, telephones, even satellite.<sup>205</sup>

For instance, one who is familiar with charms and such can draw an actual magic formula (not merely sleight of hand) on a small, thin, rectangular, copper sheet. The script looks like a single, continuous line, running in a tight, circling pattern until it covers almost the entire sheet. This is called a "*Chakra*," named after the body's so-called "energy centers" that it activates. When this sheet is sat upon in meditation, even far away from the magician who drew it, a very strong feeling of energy akin to sexual pleasure will rush up the back! It is surprisingly physical. How high this feeling will go, depends on the meditator's concentration. With little concentration,

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there is bliss reminiscent of sexual ecstasy welling uncontrollably up from the seat, through the trunk of the body and up to the chest. With excellent concentration, it will continue up and turn into dazzling light.

This is a specifically located feeling and is thus dual (as opposed to the Universal power). Its greatest danger is that it is extremely desirable and this "benefit" is understandably addictive. At first, it seems to be a means to an end; but then it becomes the very purpose of the spiritual practice. Also, once such an object has proven effective, the seeker very often goes searching in that direction for other such tangible results. The despicable depths and darkness of magic are pitiful. Yes, there is a reality to this; if not, there would be no danger. Its reality is its greatest danger. Do not invite in any way these traps into your practice. As stated previously, magic looks at the left hand in a mirror and shows it to be the right.

### **Secular "Spiritual" Power**

Related to the experience of the guru's power is the entirely secular power of the matinee idol, rock star, sport hero, symphonic conductors and such. It is not without reason that these people are called "idols." Their fans fan their light to such an immense degree that a PALPABLE energy is experienced when they come to a performance. This power is generated entirely by the desires of their many fans. The more the fans, the more the energy. This in turn pushes them on to even greater heights. It is well known that a receptive audience extracts a greater performance. The image that is created entraps the "idols" and now they are reluctant to go out of their houses without their makeup on.

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### **The Enlightened Master**

The goal of meditation is often called enlightenment. The myth of the “enlightened master” has for ages spread throughout the world. In its true context, an enlightened person is one who understands the ONE and ONLY reality. Such a person is a blessing to all around them. Their advice will be extremely helpful to all who inquire and not only in spiritual matters. Since this person sees clearly, their advice in secular matters will also be extremely valuable. Such a person should be greatly honored. There can be no better friend or teacher. However, the myth that such a person has now become a god or is now unimpeachable is foolish, primitive and defeats any of the possible benefits to his “enlightenment.” How many times do we see so-called “enlightened beings,” especially from the East, demanding upright behavior from their students while they themselves discard all rules of decency? Their students claim such a person is above judgment. These false teachers should begin the search all over again and their students should flee from them quickly.

Perhaps the most persistent mistake of the students of enlightenment is their belief that the clarity experienced in deepest meditation is maintainable throughout the day. This is simply not true, nor would it be desirable. Deep meditation experiences encourage and inform the meditator of the hidden aspects of life. But the way life is experienced in deep meditation is not the way it is experienced in daily life. They complain, “But when I am meditating there are moments when I REALLY SEE THE ONE and I don’t see it at all when I’m walking around.” The ONE is the ONE whether you realize it or not. There is nothing else here to see. The understanding that all existence is ONE should never leave you, but the degree of clarity will vary from moment to moment. When driving a car,

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you should be concentrating on the distinctions found on the road before you, not on their underlying commonality.

### **“Energy Healers” and Miraculous Healing**

A warning to those who are involved with “hands-on” healing, such as “channeling” and “energy works” and certain massage therapies; although the mediums insist they are mere channels, who have received this wonderful “gift” and that they are being “directed and moved from above,” although they loudly claim to be mere servants of the “Great One,” they in fact, could be singling themselves and their clients out for serious troubles. First, the “healers” develop tenacious egoism, the type that is extremely difficult to eradicate. Here, they are obviously doing some good. They feel especially chosen, unique in the world. It is this uniqueness that entraps them. They are considered by many to be special. Obviously, it is they who have this “gift” and it is obvious that they are doing good.

After trying to heal someone with their “energy,” the practitioners may have to briskly brush away the feeling of energy that they perceive still resting on their bodies. They will rub their arms vigorously with their hands in order to brush the feeling of the power off their bodies. If they do not do this, the power may become so palpable that it will become very uncomfortable or even unmanageable! They do not see this to be illogical or dangerous behavior, but merely the nature of their “gift.”

All goes well for a while. They often relieve pain and for this service they are honored. Then, sadly things can begin to go wrong. For instance, those who beamed energy from their hands might develop cramps or sharp pains in their hands. They might even develop a dreaded disease. It may even be one

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of the very diseases they were able to dispel in others. But now, they themselves are stuck with it.

Some things that certainly help to eliminate the risk to “healers” are; before and after treatment have the patient pray that God should allow the treatment to work;<sup>206</sup> be careful to wash your hands three times alternatively after working on a patient, attribute healing to the ONE who creates and heals all, be ENTIRELY MECHANICAL and not spiritual in your approach. None of these will guarantee that you will not become afflicted, but if you are healing people not to receive glory for yourself, diseases can be healed, and certainly you would be helping the world by reducing suffering.

There are certain alternative medical practices that incorporate an oriental form of healing which is also called “energy work.” In this practice the healer tries to sense where the patient is experiencing energy blocks that are preventing the patient’s own normal flow of energy. The healer then tries to unlock these blockages either by acupuncture, acupressure or some other type of physical manipulation. These practices may make use of entirely mechanical systems without negative spiritual repercussions. However, even when they are entirely mechanical these “energy workers” commonly incorporate within their system such spiritually unclean and dangerous practices as, *Chakra* healing, psychic readings, paranormal and metaphysical experiences and such.

As for the energy experience itself, the primary test is, **is the energy used in the healing the patient’s own energy, or is it said to be coming from the healer?** There is only one “energy” in creation. But, if this single energy is focused upon in such a way that it is experienced coming from or through the healer, and this is seen to be happening due to something unique about

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that healer, it is the dangerous type of practice and should be completely avoided. This is true even though he claims to be a mere channel. If the disease is said to be relieved because of the practitioner's spiritual intervention instead of God's, or not because of the introduction of certain medicines or manipulation, but rather due to the uniqueness or special power of the practitioner or some other spiritual force, look out!

A disastrous case recently occurred in Jerusalem. A middle-aged, religious woman was bothered by her very poor eyesight. Although her thick eyeglasses rectified the problem, she felt that wearing them made her look very unattractive and this was a source of great discomfort for her. She heard of a group that did "hands-on energy healing" so she and her husband went to see if these people could help. The head of the group applied his method of radiating energy that came through his hands onto her eyes and she said that, amazingly it did help somewhat. The "healer" told her that he himself could not heal her eyesight any more than he had. However, if she would agree he could call for assistance from "other powers" and they would be able to heal her completely. She quickly agreed and almost instantly her eyesight was corrected and in fact she could actually see without her eyeglasses! She was ecstatic. This was exactly what she wanted. That night while she was lying in bed with her husband, she began to complain that "they were sitting" on her. That some type of heavy energy, or spirits, or something was sitting on her and it was making her feel very uncomfortable. Then she started shaking violently "like a fish out of water." Her husband took her to many doctors and mystics trying to get rid of this horrible experience but to no avail. Now he says he is afraid he is going to have to put her into a mental institution because they cannot find a cure for her condition.

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Having given several warnings herein about corrupt “spiritual healers” and such, it must also be said that there have been and today are a few righteous people who are known to bring about miraculous healings. The prayers of the righteous have always been answered swiftly. Historically, there have been a handful of community leaders who were called by the lofty title “Masters of the Good Name”<sup>207</sup> who were able to effect many open and revealed miracles by calling upon God’s Name. When a righteous person becomes the leader of a community, he receives a mantle from Heaven that helps him carry out his earthly tasks. One of the ways this mantle is revealed is that frequently these leaders’ prayers are miraculously answered. There are many stories of the wonders reported to have occurred due to the prayers of the masters of Jewish mysticism.

Besides these community leaders, there are also reported cases of righteous individuals who have been effective in rendering certain diseases impotent by merely looking at the afflicted individual.

So, how then does one distinguish between the charlatans or spiritually corrupt healers and a righteous person who apparently does wonders? Perhaps the only way a novice can know is to look at what surrounds the individual who is reported to be able to provide such a service. Are this person’s spiritual practices and vocabulary completely in line with the teachings of the Torah, or do they refer to *Chakras*, *Shakti*, serpent power, psychic energy, powers, demigods, spirits, or any one of the many types of spiritual impurity that shamans or practitioners of the occult invoke. Remember, the teachings that various “powers” and such are involved in a particular system may be completely hidden from the novice. As previously

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stated, a person brings down to the physical world that aspect of the spiritual world to which he becomes attached. This means that the type of practices or intentions a person maintains will determine which of the infinite possible aspects of spirituality become manifest. "Every person is led in the path he wishes to go."<sup>208</sup> This is an awesome responsibility to the intense seeker.

### **Medical Doctors**

Medical doctors can have a peculiar handicap in their spiritual development. Since they are removing suffering by healing the sick and downhearted, they often feel they have no need for spiritual or religious practices. They deduce that since they are doing such wonderful work in the world, helping to remove suffering, they have no need for these practices. This arrogance can cost them dearly as they grow old and see only physical results to their lives. This solely material perspective not only prevents them from developing a spiritual perspective throughout their lives, it even limits their medical practices.

Today, even Western medical practitioners recognize the physical health benefits of meditative and relaxation practices.<sup>209</sup> A closer look at the relationship between mind and body has led to the conclusion that many diseases are caused by, or at least substantially affected by, the patient's mental condition.

### **Belief**

After the mind has been emptied, what system is there to depend on? Once we realize we make mistakes, what can we trust? If our very hearts lead us astray,<sup>210</sup> how can we rely on

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our decisions? What are we to believe? In fact, what is the role of belief in spiritual development?

Belief is needed to bridge the gaps in understanding. Obviously, we do not know the unknown. Even what we do know, we forget from time to time. The most obvious, simple truth is sometimes purposely clouded over, forcing us to search. Belief is the tool that can tide us over until the truth is revealed. But, belief can just as easily prevent the truth from ever being known. Belief means that you have not yet found the logical answer. Once understanding has dawned, there is no need for belief, since there is knowledge. Still, there are many, many more believers in absurdities than are there believers in truth.

Two recent examples: a woman in Midwestern America prayed to Frank Sinatra (a famous singer) to be healed of her feelings of loneliness. She claims her prayers were heard and she has been completely healed. She now has a radio program, teaching this "wonderful" new religion!

Another woman lived many years in the Old City of Jerusalem. She was entirely secular in her philosophy, even to the point of being anti-religious. She believed the Bible was a man-made "fairy tale" and she could not understand how so many seemingly intelligent people believed in it. But there was one thing she shared with her religious neighbors, a great love for the Old City. She was persistently curious as to the reason for her love of this place. Finally she heard of a man who could "see people's previous lives." She sought this person out, and after paying a handsome sum she heard that in a previous life she had been "a prostitute for one of the divisions of the Roman army that captured the Old City some two thousand years ago." She immediately loved this idea, and today firmly

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believes this is the explanation for her emotional attachment to this place.

Beliefs must be frequently re-verified. You must question them, demanding their justification. Do they conform to reality, or do you believe in “monkey gods?” Measure them not only against your personal experiences, since the mind and heart can easily lead you astray.<sup>211</sup> Do not defend your beliefs emotionally, clinging to them, constantly looking for ways to rationalize your position. Challenge them with even the harsh comments of dissenters.<sup>212</sup> If they do not stand up, perhaps they are not worthwhile.

### **Understanding Physical Reality**

Our original goal was to utilize meditation techniques in order to reveal the hidden nature of existence. One of the reasons these techniques work is that they dislodge our fixed, superficial understanding of reality. They do this first by detaching us from the mental stimuli, and once we detach, we begin to empty our minds of all assumptions. Then we are in a position to carefully reappraise ourselves and the world around us. What is the nature of physical reality? What is the actual nature of matter? How much of reality do we really understand?

Earlier we saw how all matter is one and that it is constantly being made out of nothing. Now, we will try to understand how it is being made. Again, we are speaking of the entire creation, from the most distant stars to our very bodies.

We experience matter as completely solid substance. But what would happen to the physical matter if gravity ceased? Scientists prefer dividing all power into four unique energies; gravity, electromagnetism, the strong force and the weak force.

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The Torah insists these four and any other possible powers are a simple single power. What would happen if this power were suspended?

If the Earth's gravity ceased, our bodies would float off the planet. But if all power ceased, what would hold the bodies together as they floated away? One might imagine that the body's members would separate and each would float off in its own direction, the head going here while the legs would go there. But what would hold the head and legs together?

Deeper and deeper, consider the repercussions of the termination of power. What practical difference would occur to the physical creation? The molecules and the atoms and on and on would simply unfold, cease to exist. What we experience as dense physical matter is merely energy being formed into a solid position, so if this power were to cease so would all matter cease. The power that is holding everything into formed matter is called Will. The creation was not merely created once at its beginning, but rather it is an ongoing process that must be constantly sustained. The Creator is constantly willing His creation into being, and if that will would cease so would its deeds.

If we would put all physical existence on a scale from the largest to the smallest, from the vast, super-galaxy to the tiniest, minute atom, in size, man's body is halfway along the scale. There is so much to the physical universe and our scope is so narrow, yet to us, our tiny point of view is so very demanding.

What in us is predominant? Right now, any object set before you may have tremendous attraction, be it a delicious piece of food, a glass of cool water, a lump of gold, or a tender, young maiden. The attraction is fierce. "I want that!" the soul demands. "There is nothing more pressing than that which I

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want! Give me that." Yet, after you eat a large bag of peanuts that delicious slice of food loses all its appeal. Could it be that such a strong demand is merely worth a bag of peanuts? The instant sexual satisfaction has been achieved, suddenly that lusted maiden seems almost superfluous. Is this great, demanding attraction real within her or is it just a thought passing through me? Does her actual flesh contain the attraction or is this pressing, seemingly essential need, merely the imagination of my mind? Is the entire, fierce attraction a magnetic cell wisely placed within a very small portion of each of us? How does life work? How far are we led along by such volatile desires? The minute examination that comes in meditation can help to free the raging mind from such basic quandaries.

Without reason and understanding, man is but an animal. When we react to life merely instinctively instead of understanding it, we are lowering ourselves to the domain of the beasts. Once we allow our animal instincts to control us, we have given up our elevated position in the design of creation. With reason we can overcome even our most base inclinations.

For instance, from the point of view of creation, man had to be given deep desires to assure the continuation of the species. He has implanted within him certain imperative needs. The pain of an empty stomach comes from a loving Creator. Without it how would we know to eat? What would force us to spend so much of our energy merely seeking food? We also have within us a dutiful sense to inform us of what is desirable as food and what is not. These tools were intended to be our servants, but instead we have become their slaves. Today, we seldom eat because we are hungry. It rarely gets that far before we find ourselves searching to satisfy the desire for taste. We

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interrupt whatever we are doing in order to go serve ourselves the tastes, smells and textures we find most pleasing.

If we would gain an overview, we would see the relationship between food, senses, desires, and self. But generally we do not even bother trying to understand what is happening. Rather, we take the much easier and immediately satisfying path of succumbing to what we think we want right now.

All of our lusts can be gently tamed by guiding them to proper usage. Without the desire man and woman naturally have for each other, human life would cease in a single generation. But to allow this animal aspect to rule our lives is to throw the crown from off our heads and begin to grow a thick, fur coat.

### **Whales**

Once a year, in the warm coastal waters of Hawaii, a marvelous ballet is performed. Some fifty meters offshore, there appear two of the most magnificent, largest creatures of the animal world. From the sandy bottom under the shallow water, these grand whales push themselves upward, smashing through the water's surface. Their noses are firmly butted together, with what appears to be a two or three meter long, white-bellied fish pressed tightly in between them. They fling their immense bodies straight up, entirely out of the water, hurling the smaller creature far up into the air. The smaller animal spirals upwards. **THIS IS THE MOMENT.** Having flung the smaller creature into the air, the two giants continue up and over, forming huge, graceful, backwards arches, and then come **CRASHING, FLAT, BACK** upon the water. The ferocious **SLAM** can be felt all the way back on the beach. By now the smaller animal has flopped back into the water.

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Again the two rush, pinching the smaller one between their noses, dashing hurriedly up from off the sandy bottom. Again they come crashing out of the water and fling their slippery load up, stretching. Without knowing what is happening, one might assume that this is a battle, and the two huge whales have joined forces to remove this intruder. But this is not so. In fact, the experts disagree as to what these whales are doing.

Here, is what must be one of the most commanding proofs of a planned creation. Since whales give birth every other year. Being mammals, they cannot breathe while underwater. This presents what seems to be an impossibility. How can the mother whale give birth in her only habitat, under water, and still get the newborn whale to the surface to breathe? Nature has it worked out in an amazing way. The year a mature female whale is not giving birth, she has a very strong urge to swim over to one who is giving birth. She rubs the expecting whale's stomach with her nose, to help ease the birth process. Then, once the baby is out but not yet breathing, she rushes to join noses with the new mother. Together they pinch the baby in between them and race it to the surface to reach the life-giving air. The moment the baby is spiraled upward, it sucks in its life.

Other experts disagree and claim that the new whale calf is merely nudged to the surface by its mother in order to breathe its first breath, and this entire elaborate dance is either an incident of whales playing with a fish, or an attempt to resuscitate a stillborn. In any event, a newly born calf must be brought to the surface to breathe because the stimulus for opening its blowhole is air and without air in its lungs, the calf would tend to sink.

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### **Ants**

There is a certain species of tropical American ants called parasol ants that tend gardens! These ants go even far from their nests to bring home fragments of leaves to mulch their fungus gardens.

### **Eels**

Another most interesting sea creature is the eel. For thousands of years this creature has been considered a prime example of non-kosher sea life. To be kosher sea life there are two requirements and both of these must be present. The fish must have fins and scales. The eel obviously has but one, only fins. But now that we have microscopes we see the eel has tiny scales. So in fact, what we thought was a water snake, in truth is a kosher fish. But since its scales are not visible to the naked eye and since it has been classified non-kosher for so many years, the rabbis have deemed it wise to continue its non-kosher status.

Until the 18<sup>th</sup> century, people believed this fish came spontaneously from the mud at the bottom of the world's waterways. But actually, every eel in the world comes from the ocean's crevice at the bottom of the Sargasso Sea near the Gulf of Mexico. They all begin their life there. They then slowly swim out away from the depths of this breeding crevice, taking three or four years to reach virtually all of the earth's waters. After a while they even acclimate to freshwater and swim up the rivers, always moving away from the place from where they first came into the world.

But the most amazing thing about these fish is that they have a twelve-year clock. After reaching this age, they turn and begin to slowly swim back down the rivers, back across the

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oceans, until they finally return to the place where they were born. Once there, they spawn and then die. What is the nature of this force that is pulling all these eels from all the earth's waterways, back to this small area off the coast of Mexico?

### **Salmon**

The salmon are also driven by an insistent internal demand so strong that it forces them to return back upstream, amazingly flinging themselves, flying back up waterfalls. Their obstinate nature forces them to return back upstream to where they were born, to spawn and then die. What is this power that is inserted into the nature of this fish that it must climb back up waterfalls?

### **Dung Beetle**

There is a very interesting insect indigenous to many lands. It is called the Dung Beetle, named after its most peculiar habit of roaming through the countryside rolling up all the cow dung it can find into balls. At first, these balls are quite small but as the beetle becomes more and more successful, its dung ball becomes quite large. In fact, it becomes many times larger than the beetle itself. Amazingly, some of these dung balls get almost as large as soccer balls and weight up to fifty times the weight of the beetle. For a beetle to push around a soccer ball while always trying to add more and more dung to it is quite an achievement.

However, the most baffling question about this behavior is, why are they are doing it? The beetles roll the balls into burrows and lay their eggs into these balls to keep them warm. Also, the dung will be food for the larva. But there seems to be absolutely no reason for these beetles to gather such a huge amount of dung. Yet, here they are working very hard,

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gathering, pushing, rolling up and falling off their substantial dung balls as they struggle to add more and more to their take.

These beetles are treated with great curiosity and are often photographed by tourists as they grapple with their huge balls of dung, rolling them around the fields always looking for ever more dung to add to their private stash.

It is very tempting to suggest that the purpose of these beetles is to give man a warning. Man, do not be like a Dung Beetle, accumulating more and more, even beyond the wildest imagination of your personal needs. Often, very “successful” people will have more than enough material substance to satisfy their lifetime needs, and even more than enough to satisfy their children’s needs, and even on as far as the mind can see. Yet, each morning they awaken, driven to roll up more and more stuff, gathering it into their particular bundles, feeling great pain when a deal falls through and exulting greatly when yet another digit is added to their accounts.

### **Man**

Man, much like fish and beetles is also persistently pulled along, forced, seemingly without choice. His body squashed, his head folded as he passes through the narrow birth canal, squeezed like a slippery, rubber tube, popped out into this world only to grow and to then be just as insistently pulled back to the same place he came from.

The tiny, fish-like sperm are shaped like the entrance they must pass through. Though so tiny, they drive the huge body, insisting on the explosion they were created for, their one and only chance at life. The race! Each drop tenaciously prods from deep within, demanding of him, “GO! GO INTO SUCH A PLACE!” Finally their opportunity comes. The rush! The frantic

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swim, thrust out, and now striving deep in, in to the very secret of life's canal. Program: REACH THE EGG, FOR IT IS LIFE. Those not chosen almost all die immediately and unceremoniously drain away. The rare, single speck that succeeds, the winner, permeates the anticipating, expectant egg. The two distinct entities merge, melting into each other. Each loses its old identity and the new identity, the new person, begins to grow. Man, without really understanding why, is first ejected from and then urgently drawn back to a parenting crevice. Then, finally, when he is old and grows tired, he is pulled into his final crevice, in the ground.

The same wondrous power that is mysteriously birthing whales, teaching ants to tend gardens, drawing eels from far around the world, that insists fish fly back up waterfalls, is also urgently pulling us. Both physically and spiritually, it pulls us to the finale our deeds create.

Sensitive meditative practices increase awareness. Increased awareness leads to increased understanding. Increased understanding reveals how to cooperate with this grand and wondrous power, LIFE.

### **Understanding Time**

There are many things affecting our daily lives that we assume to be naturally occurring in physical existence, yet they do not. We are taught to look for them, so we assume they exist. For instance: the week. There is natural, physical evidence to identify years. The earth circles the sun every twelve months. Therefore we have physical proof for the year. Quarters of years are made physically obvious as nature responds to its annual seasons. Months are made obvious by the cycles of the moon. There is also the half-month cycle seen in the moon's waxing

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and waning. Days are made physically obvious by the sun's apparent daily rising and setting. But we gear our lives by the week and its all-important weekend. We assume the week is a naturally occurring division in time but in fact it has no natural support at all. The seven-day week is a Biblical creation, a spiritual concept. The vast majority of the world lives, believes, and acts on a weekly calendar, yet really there is no such thing. To this day, traditional Far Eastern calendars do not even show weeks, while we Westerners swear by them.

### **Taking advantage of time**

There once was a woman who came to greet the Messiah. Happily, she said, "It's almost Friday night now and in your honor I would like to light Sabbath candles." So she lit her candles and they made a beautiful glow that filled the room, lighting up the faces of everyone standing there. Indeed, she was very content.

Then another woman came and said, "Oh, it's time to light the Sabbath candles." The light that came from her candles was so glorious that not only did it fill the room with great beauty, but the people standing there were almost overwhelmed.

Now, the first lady spoke up to the Messiah and complained, "Wait a minute. I lit two candles and she also lit two candles. Why do her candles make so much more light than mine?"

The Messiah explained, "Because she has been lighting for her entire lifetime. You waited until I arrived before you lit your candles. Certainly your candlelight is beautiful, but everyone knows that candlelight seems much brighter when it is still dark out."

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### Changing a Character Trait

Our Sages warn, “It is easier to conquer a city, than is it to change a single character trait.”<sup>213</sup> To capture a city requires many thousands of determined men with swords. Such is the tenacity required to change a single personal trait. Each birth brings with it unique inclinations individually skewed toward that soul’s particular needs. Even what is learned after coming into this world, is chosen to be learned because of inborn traits. These traits that are brought about by that person’s previous life’s deeds go on to form the life situations he struggles with now.

To change this pattern, or even much more difficult, to increase its scope, requires an immense amount of work, years of study and practice. Yet all of these traits can be instantly dissolved and entirely replaced by Holy Yearning, the moment the *Shekinah* (God’s Presence) is revealed. This Revelation is hastened immensely by attentiveness; thus, the practice of meditation. A sloth, a boor, a dry scholar, all can be awakened at once by a single flash of intuitive understanding, or by the lifelong process, the path that attains the goal.

To change a character trait is comparable to converting the evil inclination. This is much greater than merely controlling it. To temporarily knock out the evil, bring Torah thoughts to the mind. This is learned from King David when he knocked out the evil, one-eyed giant Goliath by slinging a smooth stone to his forehead. This process is reenacted each morning when Jewish men put on phylacteries, which resemble the sling. But to actually kill this beast, David had to use the giant’s own sword.<sup>214</sup>

To explain: each story recorded in the Bible comes as more than an historical record, although these stories certainly are

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that. They come to teach some principle that is applicable to each of us during our lives. If the story were merely a lesson in the greatness of King David, it would have little value for us individually today. In this story King David represents the individual and the giant Goliath represents the evil inclination.

Quite often in life this evil giant's LUST rules over the mind and even the body. There seems to be little a person can do to control this insistent behavior. Filling the mind with holy thoughts will temporarily control this degrading situation, but as soon as one stops and goes about in the world, the lusting thoughts return. In order to kill this horrible creature, one must convert it to goodness. This is done by entering into the covenant of Holy Marriage and thereby elevating this lowest animal inclination to becoming the Most Holy Service of God. "Be fruitful," is the first commandment given to man and in fact, is equal to all of the commandments.<sup>215</sup> Numerically calculated; "The groom upon the bride," equals 613, which is the total number of commandments.<sup>216</sup> This shows the importance of marrying and raising a Jewish family. In fact, this is the greatest benefit of living a Torah observant life; that there will be a Jewish People in the world.

### **Desires and a Genie**

The story is told of a Genie who came to a poor person and said; "If you take me on as your servant, I will give you anything you could ever want, but," he warned, "If you do not keep me busy, I will turn against you."

The poor fellow was ecstatic. He jumped at the chance saying; "Don't worry, I have plenty of desires, enough to keep you busy for the rest of my life," and with that he took on the genie. "Give me a huge house," the poor man commanded, thinking that it would take the genie many years to conjure up

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such a thing, but within a few minutes a magnificent house materialized before him.

The genie bowed low to the ground and handed the poor man the keys saying, "Here is your wish my master. Now, what does your heart desire?"

The poor man smiled and quickly said, "Give me a large flock of sheep."

Within a few minutes a large flock of beautiful sheep appeared grazing around his new house. Again and again he commanded the genie to satisfy his wishes, but very soon he began to stammer. He was running out of wishes. He became very frightened when he saw the genie turning toward him with his arms raised. "Oh, no!" he cried; "This is terrible. What can I do?"

Just then an old wise man happened by. "Help, Help," the poor fellow begged; "If I don't keep this genie busy serving me he will come against me and destroy me!"

The wise man whispered the solution in his ear. "Take a large jar of beans and command the genie to remove all of the beans from the jar one at a time and he is to count them as he goes. Then as soon as he is finished, he is to put them back in again one at a time and count them again to make sure none are missing. Command him to keep doing this until you call for him to return to you."

In this story, the poor fellow is us, and the genie is our evil inclination. As long as we keep it busy, even with the mundane, it cannot come against us.

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## Conclusion

### Progress

One of the most frustrating times for the spiritual seeker comes when he thinks that his practices and prayers are being unproductive. Although he may pray for something many times a day for months on end, if he does not see the answer to his prayers, he is tempted to stop all of his spiritual practices.

Prayers work in two directions: outward and inward.

If someone embarrassed you, or stepped on your toe even on purpose, and then had deep regret and sincerely apologized, how many times would he have to ask you for forgiveness before you would forgive him? Probably only once. Well, if this is true of your degree of forgiveness and certainly God is more merciful than you, why then, do almost all of the daily prayer arrangements include requests for forgiveness? If God is so forgiving, why must we keep asking Him so many times? Also, God does not change. If He is so absolutely fixed in His way, what good will it do to beg Him for forgiveness over and over again?

The answer is that these prayers are not designed to effect changes in God, but rather, to effect changes in the one who is praying. By our requesting forgiveness so many times, God does not become more forgiving, but we, the ones who are praying begin to see the importance of forgiveness and then we ourselves become more forgiving. Then as we forgive, we can be forgiven.

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But what of the prayers that we offer specifically for others, such as the prayers for them to be healed?

Two Duke University researchers presented a study to the American Heart Association of 150 patients suffering from acute heart disease. They reported, "Patients who were prayed for did significantly better than those who were not prayed for, even when the patient was completely unaware of the prayers on his behalf."<sup>217</sup> The Sages tell us that prayers for the sick remove 1/60 of the disease. It is unrealistic to expect that every time you pray for someone they will immediately jump up fully recovered, but know that each time you send out a sincere prayer for someone's recovery a small portion of their disease is being removed.

The same is true for all of our spiritual practices. Although we do not see the fruit of our hard work sometimes for years on end, still, know that each time we do a proper spiritual exercise some positive change is occurring no matter how subtle it may be.

### **Answers to Prayer**

The mother of the Jewish people, Sarah, was barren for many years. Certainly, her husband Abraham prayed for her to conceive. Yet, year after year, God never responded. Here were the two most righteous people in the entire world who wanted a common, even simple thing, yet God refused their prayers over and over again. Why would God refuse such a wish?

Then, after many, many years God remembered Sarah and finally she conceived. Why was it that she conceived at that particular moment and not the day or year before? In fact, the conception came so late in life that God had to perform a great

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miracle to allow a woman of Sarah's age to conceive; yet that was precisely when God chose to bless Sarah. What was so special about that day that it broke through the apparent decree against Sarah and Abraham's wish?

If we look at the line in the Torah that comes immediately before,<sup>218</sup> "And G-d remembered Sarah . . ." we see that Abraham prayed for Avimelech, that his household could again conceive. Why did God have Abraham pray for Avimelech's household? Couldn't God have opened those wombs without Abraham's prayers? After all, it was God Who closed those wombs in the first place. He closed them when Avimelech kidnapped Sarah. God closed all of the wombs in Avimelech's household to prevent anyone from molesting Sarah, and now that Avimelech had released Sarah, God told Abraham to pray that they could again conceive.

The sages tell us that when we need something desperately, if we see that there is someone else who also desperately needs that very thing, if we will earnestly pray for them, our prayers for ourselves will be answered first.

God wanted Abraham to set into motion the spiritual "mechanism" that was required to bring about Sarah's blessing. God could have given that blessing without Abraham's intervention but this is not what He wants. He wants man, who has free will, to apply his will in the physical world in order to initiate the spiritual momentum that will draw down the blessings from the Heavenly realm to the lower world.

When we need something we must not merely sit and cry about it. This is not enough. Our prayers for ourselves may not be sufficient to manifest the blessing we seek. We must make a vessel, that is, take positive action so God will have a vessel to fill. This is why the prophet Elisha told the poor widow to go

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and borrow many empty vessels and then those vessels could be filled with precious olive oil.<sup>219</sup> It is God's design that insists there be a spiritual "blueprint" drawn in the spiritual realm before the physical blessing will be manifested. Sincere prayer for oneself begins to draw such a blueprint, but when the prayers are for someone else they are directed out into the physical world. Therefore, these prayers act as a physical vessel. We see that God's design requires some action be taken in order to bring down the spiritual blessing into the physical world. Prayer for others satisfies this requirement.

### **The Most Important Times of Your Life**

The two most important moments in life are the moment you are currently in and the moment in which you will die. The moment you are in is the only moment in which you can actually change anything. And your thoughts at the moment you die will strongly affect where it is you go.<sup>220</sup>

### **The Kiss of God**

When an entirely righteous person dies, the "Kiss of God"<sup>221</sup> takes his soul from this world into the next. Some say this is the highest revelation possible. The soul leaving the body is likened to standing before a GREAT LIGHT. All the impurities are revealed as the soul's sojourn on earth is laid out before the Judge.

Each person has unique fingerprints. We realize why, as everything we touched throughout our lives comes before us and says, "You did this, and here are your fingerprints to prove it." When one kisses someone, they draw the breath of their beloved back deep inside themselves, wanting to entirely consume their treasured one. A righteous person's passing is likened to a groom kissing his bride. So too does God, through

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His "lips," lovingly draw the life breath of the righteous back into Himself.

### **Guiding Yourself**

If you find your practice is moving you away from the righteous people of your community, it must be altered. The signs of success include more than simply longer periods of concentration and more than merely extended periods of calm. They are genuine humility and increased concern for those around you. Meditation is not intended to take you out of the world, but rather, by developing greater clarity and sensitivity, it reveals how to live better while in the world.

To realign your spiritual comprehension, its breadth and depth of awareness and understanding, remember again the continuous and singular nature of existence. Look for the common denominator. See that you, your body, your consciousness, and all around you, are a single, constant, one. ". . . And when the mind begins to think thoughts, return to the Place."<sup>222</sup>

The one, who sees the All, sees that when something hurts, it hurts all, and that when something helps it helps all. First, help that which is closest to you, namely, yourself. Strive to fulfill your greatest potential. There is one person in this world with whom you are in competition. If you beat this person you are a winner; if not, you have lost. This person is you yesterday. If you are better today than you were yesterday, you are winning.

Next, reach out to help those around you. Certainly help them physically, but even more importantly, try to help them spiritually. We are commanded not to look away when we see someone's donkey fall under its load.<sup>223</sup> Instead, we must help them to pick up the load and replace it securely on the animal.

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The physical load that a person tends is worth but a few dollars. His spiritual load is worth an eternity. How much more so must we not turn away from those less aware, those who have succumbed to their spiritual ignorance. Share the things that you have seen work. Not only will this pick them up, but also by relating these successes to them, you will pick yourself up even further.

### **All-Day Meditation**

The process of meditation is merely directing one's attentive mind toward an object, or goal. Thus, all day meditation is possible when one is either doing, or is moving toward doing, a good deed. When there is a Holy objective, the steps on the way to its fulfillment are also Holy. Thus, shopping on Tuesday for Sabbath (Saturday) is also keeping Sabbath. This is the secret of a Holy life.

### **Cleaving vs. Dwelling**

This process is also called cleaving. Cleaving is the stage when the soul first realizes it has been torn away from the OVERSOUL. Much like a tiny ray of the sun being beamed into a narrow tube, the soul suddenly feels naked,<sup>224</sup> small, and alone, away from its original natural Place. It strives desperately to return. When successful, it attains a modest degree of achievement and miraculously God's Presence is revealed. The ecstatic soul with all its might tries to cleave to this Revelation. This is the beginning of the higher portion of the return flight of the migration of the soul.

Cleaving is adhering. This is distinct from dwelling. In cleaving, there remains some idea of duality. Something is cleaving to something. But dwelling is when the soul, either having never left or having already returned, now simply

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dwells (rests) in the Revelation of the Presence. “. . . and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”<sup>225</sup> In dwelling, the soul loses its individuality. This is not so in cleaving.<sup>226</sup>

### **Which Path?**

Each person has a unique temperament that has been fashioned to serve that particular soul's needs. Which path, which techniques, will depend on that temperament. Whether you meditate actively, as Rabbi Dov Ber of Lubavitch, “not merely gazing but make use of his power of perception”,<sup>227</sup> or passively, as Rabbi David, the father of the Raavad, “Imagine a Holy Light held above your head”,<sup>228</sup> (Light, by its very nature is experienced as a simple, one.) or as the Arizal, “. . . sit alone, away from the sound of people or even a bird, stripped of thought, as if his soul has gone out from him . . .”,<sup>229</sup> the goal is to become more aware and therefore more helpful, living a life that exemplifies: All is one.

Ultimately, the fixed gazing of the passive meditator will produce visions that bring VERY DEEP perceptions and realizations, and the deepening perceptions of the active meditator will ultimately produce MOST HOLY VISIONS that he will passively and blissfully gaze upon. “Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth. Your love is better than wine.”<sup>230</sup> The bliss that accompanies revelation is far greater than the relief that comes from wine.

### **The Importance of Meditation**

If it could be said that there was a specific moment in the entire four thousand years of Jewish history that has permeated each moment thereafter, it would have to be the moment that “. . . Moses went up to God . . .”<sup>231</sup> on Mount Sinai to receive the “Ten Commandments.” The famous Jewish sage, the Abarbanel says, Moses did so through meditation.<sup>232</sup>

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### **Seeing God in This Place**

When Jacob slept on the Temple Mount, he had such a Holy dream of Angels going up and down a ladder that when he awoke he exclaimed; "There is God in this Place! . . . How full of awe is this place."<sup>233</sup> The Sages explain his meaning was, "Had I known it, I would not have slept." This is in fact how the soul will feel in the next world when it looks back down at its sojourn here on earth. "Why," it will ask, "did I spend all of my time gathering turnips and fish while I was living in a land filled with diamonds and pearls?" Once the soul leaves the constraints of the body, it sees this lowest of all worlds was its only opportunity.<sup>234</sup>

### **Bringing the Redemption**

Understanding how our present experiences mirror their causes, gives us a tool to direct our future. The exile of the soul is from the higher world to the lower world. To reverse this process the soul must elevate the lower, physical world up to the higher, spiritual world. This is accomplished by utilizing the physical for spiritual purposes. The exile of the Jewish people has come about because Jews hated Jews without reason. When this exile results in Jews loving Jews without reason, it will end.

## Conclusion

A caveman sees;  
THE PHYSICAL SERVES THE PHYSICAL.

An enlightened man sees;  
THE PHYSICAL SERVES THE  
SPIRITUAL.

An understanding man sees;  
THE PHYSICAL IS THE SPIRITUAL.

The skin stretched over the body  
is smooth here, though rough there.  
Here it's near, while distant there.  
Hair here, there none,  
yet, amazingly, all one.

The veil that clouds the mind is a simple obstacle once it is understood. Until then, it is entrenched; this is the "insurmountable" obstacle to BILLIONS of people, the barrier to the Very Most Obvious Truth. Awareness exercises help to eliminate this barrier.

It is well known that we utilize but a fraction of our mental capacity. Paying attention reduces this needless loss.

Be careful, for the "higher" you go, the more costly the mistakes.<sup>235</sup> In each situation, and especially in new situations, ask, "What can I learn from this moment?" Be humble, and

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listen, for all of it is a message.<sup>236</sup> There are no accidents."<sup>237</sup> Everything that comes comes for a specific purpose. When you pray for a particular need, do not anticipate that the answer will fit your precise expectations. Most often the response will come in a totally unexpected way, shaped quite differently than you expected. Be more patient with other people's feelings than with your own. Not everyone has attained the same degree of understanding. If the opportunity occurs to choose either to go on into the WONDROUS BLISS OF LIGHT, which is the most basic and natural desire of the soul, or to return to this troublesome world, you must try to state, "I will return to help the world."

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3. According to our Sages, this means to focus the mind on Hashem. ....	15
4. When the perception of the subject of meditation is still, such as when one meditates on the breath, or on a flame, or on consciousness itself, such meditation is called passive. ....	15
5. In these sources we see silence, stillness or light as the subjects. ....	17
6. If the meditator seeks an empty nothingness, this will be the discovery. ....	17
7. When one seeks Holiness . . . ....	17
8. One may concentrate on a written word, such as a Name or Holy concept. ....	18
9. "I place HASHEM before me always," which is an excellent subject for active meditation. ....	18
10. The five senses can be used as vehicles of meditation. ....	20
11. Even a very mild fragrance can be a useful subject of meditation by directing the awareness back to the fragrance again and again. ....	20
12. A sound such as a <i>Chassidic</i> melody ( <i>nigun</i> ) can spiral the consciousness upward by following its music, reacting to its mood. ....	22
13. The melody alone is an adequate subject for meditation. ....	22

## Taming The Raging Mind

14. A single note can also be used as a meditative subject. .... 22
15. An exercise that helps train the mind to listen for this mystical stillness is to sit in a very quiet place and try to listen to the silence as if there were some sound present that you are not yet able to hear. .... 23
16. If the sound is meaningless, such as a tuning fork, the meditation will be completely passive. .... 24
17. Take a large crystal of salt and place it on your tongue way back inside. . . .... 25
18. One reason a warm tub of water is so relaxing is that it replaces the mind's normal daily worries, insisting it apply a larger portion of its capacity to the pleasant heat surrounding the body. This is, in effect, the process of passive meditation. .... 26
19. Using the sense of sight as a vehicle, any meaningful object, such as the *tzitzit* (fringes) can be a useful subject of meditation. .... 28
20. Thus, meditating on light causes the mind to experience and radiate light. .... 29
21. Even more subtle are the distinction-less meditations such as bringing the concentration back again and again to the Place that fills and surrounds all matter. .... 29
22. In some meditations the Torah suggests a form to meditate upon, such as when (referring to the fringes) it says, ". . . and you shall look upon them . ." .... 35
23. Meditating on light or on the underlying emptiness from which all creation is being formed . . . .... 36
24. Try to concentrate on the One, Common, Universal Place. .... 45
25. Concentrate on the meaning of each word, trying to gain deeper and deeper understanding. .... 49
26. Begin by looking at a Name of God . . . then watch your breath for a few cycles. .... 51

## Index of Maditation Subjects

27. A productive method is to start with a passive technique. As the mind calms or leaves the subject, try to understand the depth of the subject, thereby shifting to an active technique. Then shift back to the passive technique. .... 51
28. If the subject is without content, such as a crystal or a meaningless unwavering sound, the meditation will be completely passive since there is no desire to understand the subject at all. .... 51
29. When the subject has content, such as a Holy Name, consciousness, or Place . . . making the meditation active..... 51
30. Gazing at the brightness that surrounds the upper portion of a flame, although seemingly without content, will train the mind to search for the Holy Light. .... 52
31. Sweeping outward into the vast inner space ..... 55
32. The direction of consciousness can turn inward back onto itself. .... 55
33. An excellent exercise for releasing a “stuck” mental perspective is to concentrate on water within water. .... 57
34. The use of silence as a meditation tool is not only an ancient Jewish technique, but it has also been an indispensable aspect of some ancient non-Jewish meditations. .... 58
35. This Realization can come through the process of transcendence Here, we are discussing the broadening of perspective. .... 60
36. Some great Jewish mystics have recommended a system that on the surface seems to be similar to Eastern mantra meditation. .... 62
37. Unlike mindless, constant sounds, listening to the Shofar (the holiday ram’s horn) will bring Fear. .... 62
38. Chanting is merely verbalizing the meditative process..... 65

## Taming The Raging Mind

39. Learn one of the teachings of each rabbi while meditating by his grave. Be particularly open to the characteristics that teacher was known for. .... 72
40. To meditate on air, see that it is uniform, unchanging, consistently filling not only the atmosphere, but also all matter. Each time your mind wanders, bring it back to this entirely unformed element. .... 72
41. Sitting in this hot water, or by the huge freshwater lake meditate on the nature of water. .... 73
42. Gazing at a large body of calm water will calm the mind as it reflects the water's uniform nature. .... 73
43. In Hebron, sitting above the burial cave of the Fathers and Mothers is the best place in the world to meditate on their lives, on how we in fact are their legacy. .... 73
44. Sitting by the Kotel during the quiet hours of the day is perhaps the finest place in the world to meditate, contemplate, or pray. .... 74
45. After Sabbath has departed . . . . At this particular time, the most appropriate, and therefore the most successful meditations will utilize both music and lofty thinking. .... 77
46. Matzah is the type of bread that we ate while we were fleeing from Egyptian bondage. That is its historical message and one well worth meditating on. .... 78
47. To go out into freedom we must deflate this ego and see ourselves to be the flat basic ingredients that we are made of. .... 78
48. This turns cleaning the house into a spiritual exercise. .... 78
49. This process teaches us how to search for the leaven in our minds ..... 79
50. The best place to meditate during the holiday of Booths (*Sukkoth*) is in the booth itself, which is the essential aspect of this holiday. .... 79

## Index of Maditation Subjects

51. Use your normal meditative technique, but adjust it to take advantage of the unique surroundings designated for that particular holiday or for that time of the year..... 79
52. The truth is, only the King is here. This is the central theme of this holiday so it is also the most appropriate subject for meditation at this time. Try again and again to concentrate on the meaning of this story during the holiday of Purim until you can finally peek out from under your mask. .... 81
53. The subject should be such that when the mind returns to talking, it will bring the meditator to Holy thoughts. This, as opposed to meditating on a meaningless object such as a glass. .... 104
54. Choose a subject such as LIGHT or PLACE. By meditating on the nature of LIGHT, PLACE, ALL ONE, ALL OVER, ALL, including the view and viewer, the mind will finally come to see reality as one constant expanse, witnessed silently. .... 105
55. A good exercise that will help you to better understand Place . . . Now spread those mentally defined borders, first east and west, then also north and south and then up and down. .... 106
56. Try to understand the ultimate conclusion of “The whole earth is full of His glory.” ..... 106
57. See that the place in front of you, and the places to your sides, and the place behind you, are all a single continuous place, and that this one continuous place also sweeps right through you. .... 106
58. The Talmud warns, it would have been better not to have come into this world, than to look upon four things: “What is beyond the highest? What is beyond the lowest? What was before creation? What will be after it is all over?” ..... 106

## Taming The Raging Mind

59. Instead of trying to concentrate on unknowable subjects, pick subjects that will explore the mystical yet not remove your frame of reference from this world. The most traditional subjects of meditation, as taught by the greatest mystics, are the "Deeds of Creation" which explain the secrets of existence, and the "Chariot of the Prophet Ezekiel" which explain the secrets of spiritual elevations. .... 107
60. If you wish to meditate on a flame, olive oil makes the steadiest and clearest light but any still flame will do. .... 107
61. If you choose to watch your breath, do so understanding that Hashem breathes the breath of life into the body: ..... 110
62. Related to breath meditation is watching or gazing at the nose. .... 114
63. A very intense place of meditation is underwater. .... 115
64. Staring at the Sun (a warning) ..... 117
65. Probably the most intense meditation of all comes while standing on one foot, virtually naked, with the entire body stuffed inside a large thorn bush! ..... 117
66. Some try group visualizations, wanting to increase the intensity of their experience. .... 119
67. Meditations during movements or postures ..... 124
68. Rather than forming the body into meaningless positions, forming it into the shapes of the Hebrew letters will lead to more than just the posture-related benefits. .... 127
69. Meditate on each of Peh's definitions. .... 128
70. Place your head between your knees while lying on your back. .... 129
71. The body movement meditation most beneficial to the entire person is dance. .... 130
72. Another old and interesting method of meditation comes while physically spinning. .... 131

## Index of Maditation Subjects

73. Sufi method of meditation ... twirling ..... 131
74. When one relieves himself through a bowel movement, there is a joyful release. .... 134
75. As a sneeze begins to build up strength within the body, trace its progress. .... 135
76. Low pressure repetitive acts such as sharpening a knife, mixing ink from charcoal, or sewing (for an experienced tailor), can be used as effective meditative techniques. .... 136
77. Combining both the "serpent power that we discussed in Chapter Two, and the repetitive acts meditation, are the infamous techniques of Tantra Yoga. .... 138
78. Hold up a small object with your fingers. Is it the fingers that are holding up the object ? ..... 146
79. This process of expanding perspectives may be employed with any subject. See the light coming from the Chanukah candles. .... 149
80. As an example to help clarify this mystery, consider a rainbow. .... 150
81. This is the process of meditation; moving from the scattered peripheral toward the still center, looking, searching, while in this quiet place, trying to understand what is the nature of one's existence. .... 154
82. After meditation, relaxation techniques such as slow, deep breathing can be employed or the actual meditative practice can be somewhat continued as you walk through the day. .... 154
83. Being silent is one of the most recommended techniques for developing or maintaining detachment and introspection. .. 155
84. The blinking bright light by virtue of its blinking demands attention, but even more so, while the light is on, the mind reflects the light's singular and unvarying nature. .... 160

## Taming The Raging Mind

85. Even higher than either of these two experiences is the awareness that comes when raising the consciousness by directing it toward the area in the upper front of the head. .. 157
86. The previous meditation uses location (either of the “screen of vision” or the place from which the individual sees) as the subject. .... 159
87. Although this subject is a specific limited area, it is not a fixed form that is meditated upon.<sup>238</sup> ..... 159
88. This pleasure can be anticipated by concentrating on the sequence of elevation seen in the lower pleasures. .... 160
89. Any scene, physical or mental, may be the subject for elevation. .... 170
90. Returning your attention back again and again to this question, especially while surrounded by many people, can bring about a deep realization. Try to see that these many people are somewhat similar to the many molecules in your body. Even though people are individual, separate, living organisms, so are our molecules individual, separate, living organisms. And even though the molecules that make up our bodies are many, individual and separate; still, we have no difficulty seeing that they are merely tiny portions of a single body. .... 176
91. Try to imagine a single unseen mystical “light” vivifying whatever it touches. Quite like this does your single, unseen mystical life vivify the molecules of your body. .... 176
92. Think of different ways to understand that the entire creation is a single “unit.” ..... 179
93. Go deeper and deeper until you finally come to nothing. Understand that all matter is actually something that is being formed out of nothing. .... 181

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94. There are many things that can be done to hasten it ... and perhaps most important of all, dedicating your entire life to bringing about this Wonderful Revelation . ..... 182
95. Try again and again to bring the Experience back once more. This is done by striving to imagine the Experience as it was. .... 185
96. See yourself as a temporary formation created by a change in temperature and that someday the formation that you seem to be will simply melt. .... 225
97. Either try to elevate the subject of the dream by trying to picture the highest vision you have ever experienced, or return your concentration to your original meditation subject. .... 229
98. . . . if the Eastern meditation method of mindlessly repeating a mantra could be a valid technique if used with a proper Holy Name? ..... 236
99. Take a most desirable food such as a cool glass of water on a hot day, or an ice cream, or anything that you truly enjoy. Prepare yourself for the experience that you know will certainly come when that food first reaches your tongue. .... 242
100. What would happen to the physical matter if gravity ceased? Deeper and deeper, consider the repercussions of the termination of power. .... 264
101. To realign your spiritual comprehension, its breadth and depth of awareness and understanding, remember again the continuous and singular nature of existence. Look for the common denominator. See that you, your body, your consciousness, and all around you, are a single, constant, one. .... 281
102. All day meditation is possible when one is either doing, or is moving toward doing, a good deed. .... 282

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103. Not merely gazing but make use of his power of perception. .... 283
104. Imagine a Holy Light held above your head. .... 283
105. Sit alone, away from the sound of people or even a bird, stripped of thought, as if his soul has gone out from him. .... 283

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## ENDNOTES

- 1 Rambam, Yesodei HaTorah 2:10.
- 2 Genesis 24:63.
- 3 Genesis 35:1.
- 4 The Lubavitcher Rebbe warns, "If you are sick, passive meditation can heal you, but if you are well, it can make you sick."
- 5 Gemora Megillah 18a.
- 6 Berakoth 58a.
- 7 Psalms 4.
- 8 Liturgy, Chanukah.
- 9 Psalms 16:8.
- 10 Deuteronomy 33:10, Mishnah, Tamid 5:2.
- 11 Keter Shem Tov 250.
- 12 The first Lubavitcher Rebbe.
- 13 Keter Shem Tov 166, Yekarim 6, Sichot HaRan 16.
- 14 Scientists today claim that some 80% of what we see is internally generated while only 20% comes from the external stimuli.
- 15 Specially tied fringes are commanded (Numbers. 15:39) so that "... you look upon them and remember ..."
- 16 Gazing at the Chanukah lights "... in order to offer thanks and praise ..." is integral to the observance of Chanukah.
- 17 Numbers 15:37.
- 18 Genesis 25:6, also see note 43 below.

## Taming The Raging Mind

- <sup>19</sup> There are seven basic categories of prohibitions all humans are responsible to observe; Idolatry, Blasphemy, Murder, Incest, Theft, Eating the flesh of an animal taken while it was alive, and assuring Justice in their courts.
- <sup>20</sup> Living Dharma Teachings of 12 Living Buddhist Masters p.291.
- <sup>21</sup> Tao Te Ching Section 42.
- <sup>22</sup> The Yellow Emperor's Classic on Internal Medicine.
- <sup>23</sup> As is taught in virtually all Hindu texts.
- <sup>24</sup> A common Hindu saying.
- <sup>25</sup> The Essential Tao, Harper p.157.
- <sup>26</sup> The Essential Tao, Harper p.166.
- <sup>27</sup> The Essential Tao, Harper p.163.
- <sup>28</sup> The Way of Zen, Alan Watts p.13.
- <sup>29</sup> "Focus on Asian Studies", Bealing Vol. 2, no. 1 p. 9-11.
- <sup>30</sup> "Gods, Ghosts & Ancestors", Wolf, p 131.
- <sup>31</sup> Genesis 1:26.
- <sup>32</sup> Kedushas Levi p.1.
- <sup>33</sup> The creation is an ongoing process constantly being made out of no preexisting matter; "something from nothing." It may also be said that He is forming creation out of His Light.
- <sup>34</sup> Living Dharma p.308.
- <sup>35</sup> From a letter by the Lama published in National Geographic magazine.
- <sup>36</sup> Indiana, USA 1999, as reported in CNN news.
- <sup>37</sup> Genesis 10:25, Midrash Rabbah 38:8.

## Endnotes

- 38 Zohar, Chassidus, Gemora Yoma 39a, Midrash Rabbah Shir HaShirim.
- 39 Living Dharma.
- 40 Ahavas Brious-Love of creation is a Biblical commandment.
- 41 Be fruitful and multiply is the first Biblical commandment.
- 42 Genesis 21:9 see Rashi, Exodus 7:11.
- 43 Genesis 25:3, Asharam "Ashrim" son of Abraham. See Rashi.
- 44 Genesis 25:6, Meditation & Kabbalah, Kaplan, p. 94. Also see previous note.
- 45 The star is called, "Shield of David," in Hebrew, "Magen David."
- 46 These conceptual innovations are dearly cherished in Torah study.
- 47 Genesis 1:6.
- 48 Numbers 23:3 see Rashi.
- 49 Numbers 6:27.
- 50 Genesis 1.
- 51 Ethics of the Fathers 5:1.
- 52 Some Jewish sources disdain using any type of repetition meditation.
- 53 Deuteronomy 6:4.
- 54 Deuteronomy 4:15.
- 55 Genesis 3:5.
- 56 Deuteronomy 4:39.
- 57 Exodus 25:22.

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- <sup>58</sup> When comparing the four species taken during the holiday of Succoth, Torah is likened to taste and the Commandments are likened to fragrance. This is so since knowledge of Torah is acquired by effort, as is taste. A person must bite and chew to receive the taste of the fruit. However, the benefit that results from the fulfillment of the Commandments goes out into the world like fragrance that proceeds from the plant and reaches all those around without their having to do anything other than breathe.
- <sup>59</sup> The other two being mikveh (ritual immersion) and living in the Land of Israel (not all authorities count living in the Land as one of the 613 specific Torah commandments).
- <sup>60</sup> Keter Shem Tov 250.
- <sup>61</sup> Numbers 22:12.
- <sup>62</sup> Midrash: Balaam's knowledge of the occult was greater than Moses'.
- <sup>63</sup> Numbers 22:6, 22:12 see Rashi. Sforno, however, states that Balaam only had the power to curse and not to bless.
- <sup>64</sup> Zohar 1:99b.
- <sup>65</sup> Genesis 25:6.
- <sup>66</sup> Genesis 25: 3. Also see notes 2, 18, 43, and 44.
- <sup>67</sup> Webster's Dictionary; also see "Feel Great With T.M.: An Introduction to Transcendental Meditation," Anderson & Stevens.
- <sup>68</sup> Genesis 25:6 see Rashi.
- <sup>69</sup> As reported in the media.
- <sup>70</sup> Pranayama yoga.
- <sup>71</sup> Job 31:2, Tanya Chap. 2.

## Endnotes

- 72 The original name of this cult was "Nichiren Shooshu."
- 73 Daily liturgy "Aleinu."
- 74 As happened, for instance in "Jonestown," Guyana, where over 900 people committed suicide!
- 75 The system is called SPECT.
- 76 Newsweek February 5, 2001.
- 77 Arizal, Sharei Kedushah, 8<sup>th</sup> Gate.
- 78 Zohar, Acharaim.
- 79 1 Kings 18:42.
- 80 Genesis 45:27 see Rashi, "Sorrow prevents the Revelation of God's Presence."
- 81 Gemora Megillah.
- 82 Tanya, Likutei Amarim, Chap.28.
- 83 Arizal, Sharei Kedushah.
- 84 Mishnah, Berakoth 5:1.
- 85 Gemora Berkoth 32b.
- 86 Tanya, Likutei Amarim, Chap. 44.
- 87 Meditating on "nothingness" is currently found in the Zen sect of Buddhism. It is an ancient practice disdained by the Prophet Joshua 3300 years ago and today recalled in the daily prayers, ". . .we are not like the Nations of the World who bow down to nothingness . . ."
- 88 Sefer Yetzirah 1:8.
- 89 Isaiah 6:3.
- 90 Mishnah, Chagigah 2:1.
- 91 Genesis 1.

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- 92 Ezekiel 1.
- 93 Tanya, Kuntress Acharon, p.603.
- 94 "The Blue Pearl", Muktananda.
- 95 Zohar Chadash 68:4.
- 96 Gemora Berakoth 57b.
- 97 Exodus 34:40.
- 98 Shaarei Avodah, the Strasheler Rebbe.
- 99 Genesis 2:7.
- 100 Pele Yoetz, "Wondrous Adviser."
- 101 Gemora Berakoth 55b.
- 102 Deuteronomy 18:20.
- 103 On certain days the portion read within the Land of Israel is different than that read outside.
- 104 See "Spice of Torah - Gematria" Judaica Press.
- 105 The Bagavad Gita.
- 106 Gemora Yebamoth 103; Arizal, Shaarei Kedusha.
- 107 "Yoga-System of Patanjali" p. 3.
- 108 Gemora Sanhedrin 52b, "hanging, covering."
- 109 The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon, Davidson, 1848.
- 110 Liturgy, Kedusha.
- 111 Liturgy, ". . . who ask permission from one another. . ."
- 112 Numbers 25:29.
- 113 The first person the Torah records as having become sick was Jacob. Genesis 48:1
- 114 Zohar, vol. 3, p. 7.

## Endnotes

- <sup>115</sup> "Brain Areas Shut Off During Female Orgasm," Live Science, June 20,2005.
- <sup>116</sup> Me'am Lo'ez, 3b p.502.
- <sup>117</sup> "Yesh Me'ayin": "Something from nothing," is a basic Torah concept that explains that God creates the Universe from no preexisting matter.
- <sup>118</sup> Isaiah 6:3.
- <sup>119</sup> A basic teaching throughout the Tanya.
- <sup>120</sup> Ecclesiastes 4:8.
- <sup>121</sup> Tanya, English translation notes p.793.
- <sup>122</sup> Deuteronomy 4:39.
- <sup>123</sup> Ethics of the Fathers 1:17.
- <sup>124</sup> Books of Musar on "moderation."
- <sup>125</sup> The mind and not the brain is being discussed here. To help understand this concept, think of a circular line. Where is the center of this line? There is none since it is continuous. The concept of "center" does not apply to a circular line. Likewise, since the mind is not locked into space or time it escapes these linear and sequential restrictions.
- <sup>126</sup> This prophecy refers to the age when the final redemption occurs. Isaiah 11:9
- <sup>127</sup> Although this meditation subject is a fixed location, still, it is formless, and therefore totally unlike the formed meditations of the idolaters.
- <sup>128</sup> Gemora Yoma 9b.
- <sup>129</sup> Exodus 20:15, and various times during the 40 years of wandering, such as in Numbers 14:10 & 16:20.
- <sup>130</sup> Numbers 11:25.

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- <sup>131</sup> 1 Kings 8:11.
- <sup>132</sup> Tanna De Bei Eliyahu 9, Amora R. Anan.
- <sup>133</sup> Numbers 12:3.
- <sup>134</sup> Numbers 11:29.
- <sup>135</sup> This seems similar to one of the descriptions of the “reading” of the Urim and the Tumim, Exodus 28:30. See notes ArtScroll Series Stone Edition of the Chumash there.
- <sup>136</sup> Genesis 28:11 see Rashi, Numbers 22:23, Psalms 66:2.
- <sup>137</sup> Isaiah 45:7 “ . . . who created darkness . . . ”
- <sup>138</sup> Genesis 28:16 see Rashi.
- <sup>139</sup> Isaiah 60:19.
- <sup>140</sup> Me’am Lo’ez 3b p.457.
- <sup>141</sup> Sefer Bahir p.1.
- <sup>142</sup> Isaiah 60:19.
- <sup>143</sup> The Way Of God, Luzzatto, Sec. 3 Chap. 3 and 4.
- <sup>144</sup> Ibid. 3:4:4.
- <sup>145</sup> Me’am Lo’ez 3b p.457.
- <sup>146</sup> Ethics of the Fathers 4:22.
- <sup>147</sup> Mishna Brura -Shaar HaTzion on Mincha Yom HaKippur, where reincarnation is explained.
- <sup>148</sup> There are five spiritual worlds; Adam Kadmon, the World of Emanation, the World of Creation, the World of Formation and the World of Action.
- <sup>149</sup> “Not study, but doing is the essential thing.” Ethics of the Fathers 1:17.
- <sup>150</sup> Gemora Kedushin 27b, Baba Kama 11a.

## Endnotes

- <sup>151</sup> Deuteronomy 4:39.
- <sup>152</sup> Not all sources agree that Revelation and prophecy cannot be brought about by man's efforts, but rather are bestowed from Above. For instance, Rabbi A. Kaplan wrote, "...prophets used meditative methods . . . to attain prophecy." Meditation and Kabbalah p.7. See note 154.
- <sup>153</sup> Deuteronomy 4:39.
- <sup>154</sup> Some say that practices do bring about prophecy. See note 152. The Ramchal also writes that practices bring "a revelation of His Light." The Way of God 3:4:4. However, he also writes that, "Only Moshe could voluntarily initiate a prophetic vision" while all of the other prophets "could do so only when God wished to bring His Influence to bear on them." Ibid. 3:5:6.
- <sup>155</sup> Psalms 123:2.
- <sup>156</sup> "If a word is worth one coin, silence is worth two" Gemora Megillah 18a. Rashi explains since there is no end to God's praise, the more one praises the more one detracts. "Silence is praise to You." Psalms 65:2.
- <sup>157</sup> Elevations of the soul are often reported in Jewish texts, from the Temple times when the King commanded the High Priest to elevate and ask God a question, to the many reported by the Chassidim. See Gemora Chagigah 14b, and English translation of the Me'am Lo'ez. footnote 88 p. 640.
- <sup>158</sup> Journal Neuro Report, 2005
- <sup>159</sup> Moshe asked God for this vision when he asked Him to show him a glimpse of His Glory. Exodus 21:18.
- <sup>160</sup> Meditation and the Kabbalah, Kaplan p.50.
- <sup>161</sup> Numbers 22, Balaam.

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- <sup>162</sup> The Rambam writes that all magic is merely sleight of hand.
- <sup>163</sup> There are sources that strongly claim that all references to any serious student of Kabbalah and such Alchemy are merely metaphors with the metal being a simile for the ignorant student and gold standing for an enlightened master of Kabbalah.
- <sup>164</sup> Genesis 25:6 see Rashi.
- <sup>165</sup> As found in the writings of Chaim Vital and Abulafia.
- <sup>166</sup> Mishnah Sanhedrin 7:11.
- <sup>167</sup> Deuteronomy 32:24. See Rashi and other commentaries there.
- <sup>168</sup> “. . .nor take up their names upon my lips.” Psalms 16:4.
- <sup>169</sup> Sharei Kedusha 3:8.
- <sup>170</sup> Gemora Yoma 9b.
- <sup>171</sup> 2 Kings 4:38.
- <sup>172</sup> 1 Samuel 10:5.
- <sup>173</sup> Tanya, Kuntress Acharon (in English), Essay 4 footnote 14.
- <sup>174</sup> 1 Kings 8:11.
- <sup>175</sup> Mishnah Sanhedrin 7:11. There are numerous ways these gifts can manifest.
- <sup>176</sup> Genesis 25:6 see Rashi, Exodus 7:11.
- <sup>177</sup> For instance the Rambam, who considers all magic to be merely sleight of hand.
- <sup>178</sup> Deuteronomy 18:11.
- <sup>179</sup> 1 Samuel 28:7.
- <sup>180</sup> Psalms 115:17.

## Endnotes

- 181 Mishnah Torah, Laws of Shabbat. Mishnah Shabbat 6:2.  
182 “Ana b’koach . . .” Liturgy.  
183 Zechariah 14:21.  
184 Zohar, Genesis 27a.  
185 Genesis 3:19.  
186 Liturgy; first prayer of the day.  
187 Job 31:2. Tanya, chap. 2.  
188 The concept of Tzimtzum as explained by the Arizal.  
189 Genesis 15:2, 28:12, 31:11.  
190 Genesis 46:2.  
191 Gemora Berakoth 57b.  
192 Gemora Berakoth 55B, Bereshit Rabbah.  
193 The Aruch on Gemora Berakoth 55a.  
194 Gemora Berakoth 55a.  
195 Ibid.  
196 Me’am Lo’ez 3b p361.  
197 Gemora Berakoth 55b.  
198 Deuteronomy 2:5, Do not contend with Esau.  
199 Gemora Berakoth, Tosafoth 56b.  
200 See Shaar Hazion Mincha Yom Kippur where reincarnation is explained.  
201 Ohr HaChaim on Matan Torah: Human endeavor is the prerequisite to Divine intervention.  
202 Such as Lupus.  
203 Physiognomy, “Chamath HaPartzuf,” see Yalkut. Reuveni, Gemora Berakoth 68a.

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- 204 Jeremiah 2:5
- 205 Genesis 25:6 Rashi on unclean power.
- 206 Prayer for healing.
- 207 *Baal Shem Tov*.
- 208 Numbers 20, Gemora Makot 10b.
- 209 Jerusalem Post Magazine May 1996 p. 25.
- 210 Deuteronomy 11:13.
- 211 Ibid.
- 212 Ethics of the Fathers 2:14 “ . . . know what to answer an unbeliever.”
- 213 Ethics of the Fathers 4:1. Proverbs 16:32.
- 214 1 Samuel 17:51.
- 215 Genesis 1:28.
- 216 In Hebrew each letter has a numerical value. The numerical values of “Chatan al Kallah” (Groom upon the Bride) total 613, Liturgy Sabbath evening.
- 217 The Jerusalem Post, March 1, 2001 page B9.
- 218 Genesis 20:17
- 219 2 Kings 4:3.
- 220 Gemora Berakoth 61b “Happy is he who died while saying “ . . . the Lord is One.”
- 221 Gemora Berakoth 8a.
- 222 Sefer Yetzirah.
- 223 Deuteronomy 22:4.
- 224 Genesis 3:7 Rashi: naked of Torah and Commandments.
- 225 Psalms 23:6.

## Endnotes

- <sup>226</sup> See Ohr HaMikdash by R. M. Luria p.5 of introduction.
- <sup>227</sup> Kuntres HaHitbonenut.
- <sup>228</sup> Sharei Kavanah.
- <sup>229</sup> Sharei Kedusha.
- <sup>230</sup> Song of Songs 1.
- <sup>231</sup> Exodus 19:3.
- <sup>232</sup> Moreh Nevukhim.
- <sup>233</sup> Genesis 28:12.
- <sup>234</sup> Ethics of the Fathers 4:16,17.
- <sup>235</sup> Deuteronomy 34:4, 32:51.
- <sup>236</sup> Baal Shem Tov: "Everything that comes to a person comes for his benefit", Gemora Sanhedrin 37a " . . . for me the world was created."
- <sup>237</sup> A common concept throughout Chassidus.
- <sup>238</sup> Although this meditation subject is a fixed location, still, it is formless, and therefore totally unlike the formed meditations of the idolaters.