

The Kabbalah Experience



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KABBALAH PUBLISHERS

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THE KABBALAH EXPERIENCE

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Published by Laitman Kabbalah Publishers,
1057 Steeles Avenue West, Suite 532, Toronto, ON, M2R 3X1, Canada.

Printed in Canada.

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ISBN: 0-9738268-0-0

FIRST EDITION: DECEMBER 2005

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INTRODUCTION

The wisdom of Kabbalah teaches us how to live in the reality that is spread before us. It is a systematic method that has evolved over thousands of years, taught by a handful of unique individuals in every generation. Their task has been to ensure that the truths of Kabbalah would be given to those ready to receive them.

During all that time, Kabbalah was concealed from the public (which was not yet ready to receive it), until the current generation; it was this generation for which this method was specifically developed. That is why the Zohar, the Ari and Baal HaSulam (Rav Yehuda Ashlag, the author of *HaSulam* (The Ladder), a commentary on the Zohar) reveal that from this time forward, the Kabbalah will become a simple and genuine way of life, open to all, with no restrictions. This approach originated in 1995, and we are currently in the midst of this process to expand the reach of Kabbalah.

Why our generation? Because the souls that descend to this world and dress in our bodies evolve from generation to generation. Ultimately, they will arrive at a point of questioning the meaning of their very existence.

The question will form: “What is the meaning of my life?” or “What am I living for?” It will arise not only if we are in constantly intensifying pain, but also if we are filled with peace, fulfillment and pleasure. When the pain of this question suddenly surfaces, it knocks us flat, before we find the solution in drifting in the currents of everyday life.

Indeed, if we contemplate reality, as described in the books of Kabbalists, that speak of “the end of days” --which we now face--we become profoundly fearful that, without the wisdom of the Kabbalah, we will not be able to secure safe passage through the challenging times to come.

The wisdom of the Kabbalah allows us to come to know the “Upper World” - the very system that monitors and leads reality. That includes the reality of this world, the whole of humanity and each and every one of us at any given moment. With the help of Kabbalah, we can

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control the system of the worlds and determine how to conduct our daily lives, which makes this wisdom necessary for everyone.

Until the year 1995, I was busy opening many Kabbalah classes throughout Israel and around the world. As a result, I was presented with an ever-growing number of questions, until I could no longer answer them by ordinary correspondence. Therefore, I decided to set up an Internet site and supply the answers to those requesting them, along with more general knowledge of man and his existence in the world.

The web site quickly developed and expanded, and today over a million people from all corners of the world visit it every month. They download information about the method of Kabbalah and the way to conduct their lives, in addition to submitting numerous questions through email and online discussion forums. They come with private questions and general questions alike.

Still, I often meet new people – in lectures or in more informal discussions – who have not discovered this valuable method, even though the question “What is the meaning of my life?” burns in the heart of every one of them.

All of them seek a clear and scientific answer they can comprehend. Therefore, I have decided to gather all the postings that have accumulated on the forum and publish them. From the multitude of material before me, I have chosen those questions and answers, by which anyone can make their first steps in Kabbalah.

People like you, whose point in the heart (the point that makes us wonder about the meaning of life) has awakened, sent me these questions. This book will give you insights into the path they followed, from the urgent question, “What is the meaning of my life?” “How do I control my destiny?” and “What should I expect of every single act in my daily life?” to the concise answers they received.

These answers are based on a clear and independent vision that evolved in all of them after studying the Upper Forces through the wisdom of Kabbalah. The path each of them took is a personal one, suiting

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none but them. But through the answers that I provided, based on thousands of years of research and development of the wisdom of Kabbalah, you, too, can discover your personal path.

Be aware that the deeper you go, the more questions will arise, which are answered directly from the Source. That is ultimately what will advance you. Remember, success depends on you alone.

I am with you all the way.

Rav Michael Laitman



CHAPTER 1. THE THOUGHT OF CREATION

MAN - THE PURPOSE OF CREATION

Q: Many have tried to solve the riddle of the purpose of creation – why we come into this world, why we live and die. What is the purpose of creation according to the Kabbalah and how can one attain it?

A: Man is the center of creation and is its purpose. The Creator created mankind and wishes to raise human beings to the highest possible degree: that of the Creator.

The process of “the attainment of the Creator,” meaning getting to know the Creator’s attributes, is a means for correction. It is also the very purpose of creation because attaining the Creator, unlike a scientific process, is the gratification and satisfaction given by the Creator. According to the Kabbalah, mankind is the whole of creation (or the First Man). After he was born, he shattered into 600,000 parts. Each part corrects itself independently by equalizing itself with the Creator. Each and every creature must consciously go through that process.

The correction of each part makes it possible to fill it with the Light of the Creator, meaning to feel the Creator. The sensation that the Creator fills you up is a new sensation. It is in that sensation that you will find the spiritual worlds.

Our goal is to be entirely filled up with the Creator. However, as of now, our souls are in a state called “this world,” where the Creator is not felt, but is concealed and hidden from them.

When the soul perceives contact with the Creator for the first time, it rises to its first spiritual degree. It then begins to make itself resemble the Creator more and more, and thus feel Him more and more

intensively. When all the parts are completely corrected, they will rise to a state defined as “the end of correction.”

Q: What will happen if humanity refuses to accept the purpose of creation and objects to its goal? Will the Creator have to destroy and recreate humanity?

A: We have nothing to be afraid of, because even your question comes from the Creator! Man has but the ability to say, “If I am not for me, who is for me?”

This means we must act as though the Creator does not exist, and afterwards, when all is said and done, to ascribe everything to the Creator, from the very first thought to the final act. Everything is planned ahead. Your entire path is set in advance. You are already in your final state; you just cannot feel it yet. All that depends on you is how fast you advance toward the goal. If you read more, the rest will follow. You will see that there is no other way.

Questions of the type you describe arise because we are weak and uncorrected. However, the Creator sees the end and the beginning tied together as one; thus, there is no need for any further action. Everything that happens, happens only inside us, as we eventually sense each occurrence. Outside us, everything is permanent, perfect and eternal.

THE “CORRECTION”

Q: What is the correction, and who must be corrected?

A: The desire to enjoy that was created by the Creator is called a “creature,” or the “substance” of creation. However, this desire cannot be fulfilled in its primary form, because as soon as one is filled with pleasure, the joy vanishes. The intent of the Creator from the start was to make the desire complete. However, this only happens when the intent resembles the Creator’s attribute of bestowal by one’s free choice. Because this attribute is not limited in its use by emotions, man can attain perfection and eternity.

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Man, the objective of creation, is obliged to transform the will for self-enjoyment into the will to please the Creator. When one acquires this intent, the desire to enjoy becomes equal to the Creator's desire to give. In conclusion, the creature brings self to perfection by the correct use of its only attribute – the reception of pleasure.

Changing the intent of one's desire involves several phases:

1. Avoiding using desire in its original form.
2. Isolating from one's desire to enjoy only those desires worthy, in quantity and quality, to be used to please the Creator.
3. Spiritually coupling with, and discovering, the Creator. (Possible only through the isolation of the desire, with a corrected aim).

The first two corrections are called “circumcision,” and, like all other corrections, are not performed by the creature but by the Creator, meaning a higher spiritual degree than his current one. The creature never has the strength to perform a self-correction. Man's goal is simply to arrive at the desire to be corrected – to send out a prayer, a plea for correction – and the Upper Degree (the Creator) will perform it.

THE EVOLUTION OF HUMANITY

Q: Why did the Kabbalah remain, much like all Jewish thought, in the margins of the development of the cultural world, without influencing the advancement of humanity, as did western philosophy? After all, the Kabbalah sees as its goal the correction of mankind.

A: The purpose of creation is to bring the soul, meaning the whole of mankind, with all of its parts, to a state where its every movement is in harmony with the Creator, who is our criterion for perfection. But first, humanity must go through all the opposite situations in order to realize that, indeed, only the Creator is complete.

Culture and science are only vessels given to us to reveal that we and all around us are destined for adhesion with the Creator. That is our destiny-the highest degree of evolution we must reach.

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The Kabbalah, as the whole of the Torah, must still be revealed to mankind. The time has not yet come for this to occur, and only in our time are souls that possess a genuine demand for spiritual development descending to this plane.

INTEREST IN THE PURPOSE OF CREATION

Q: Why are so few people asking themselves questions about creation? How can people be made more interested in learning the purpose of creation?

A: Our world ~ with its history of torment and its achievements, and the spiritual worlds, with all their substance -- is nothing in comparison to what man is about to discover. The vast magnitude of the design of creation is incomprehensible to a human being.

Billions of people live their lives in our world so that a few dozen will attain the correct concept of the Creator, and from those dozens, only a few will attain Him. But out of those dozens, even those who test themselves in Kabbalah are already chosen ones.

The Kabbalah is revealed from Above; it evolves slowly and will, at some point, burst into everyone's awareness, offering a clear goal for the lives of each of us. Billions of people will actually participate in this process.

THE STATE OF HUMANITY

Q: Relative to the spiritual world, what is humanity's position?

A: Man's place in the Upper World depends solely on the power of the screen that he attained. This, in turn, is determined only by the distance from the state where all of man's desires are in this world, with the aim "for me," and by the nearness to the degree of the Creator, meaning the intent "for Him."

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Q: To the best of my understanding, there is always only one man on earth, who is in the Upper World, higher than all other Kabbalists. Who is that man today?

A: It is said: “Israel is not widowed,” and also, “There is not a generation when there are no such men as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.”

There are hidden Kabbalists in the world known only to the Kabbalists themselves, and then there are recognized Kabbalists. All of them work in this world and perform their tasks according to the instructions of the Creator.

Their business is only their own and the Creator’s. We need not know of their work because we should only deal with what we were born to accomplish: correcting ourselves.

For true correction, we must choose a place that we feel in our hearts is exactly the right place for us. This need not be because of the presence of a great teacher, one who is highly regarded by others, and not because he is eloquent and knowledgeable. One must choose a place where things are spoken that one wishes to know in one’s heart.

My advice to you is, search in your heart; be honest with yourself. Agree to nothing, not even the smallest thing, if you do not think it’s right, because the soul must find the place where it will be corrected. And when the soul begins to develop from a point into a complete vessel of ten *Sefirot*, then you will feel the Kabbalists.

You will know them, you will be with them, and you will receive the answers to all your questions.

THE PERFECTION OF CREATION

Q: What is perfection and how can it be attained?

A: Perfection is something that cannot be explained, but can be attained! It is possible, however, to explain what characterizes it. There can be only one perfection, never two – either one or both of them are incomplete.

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Creation is the state of the Creator because the Creator is unique and supreme. Is it possible to attain the Creator? That is the purpose of the life of each and every one of us. The method by which we can attain perfection is called Kabbalah. If you start to study it, you will feel the most wondrous sensations.

The whole difference between man and beast is that man has the freedom of choice. In the directive, “Therefore, choose life (Deuteronomy 30, 19)” the term, “life,” refers to adhesion with the attributes of the Creator.

Q: If, as you say, we have to resemble the Creator, why not aspire to peace?

A: The Creator is in a state of “complete rest” because He is in a perfect situation and does not require any change. You want peace as well, but shame and its other manifestations – vanity, or the quest for knowledge or power—compel you to move on. Your situation is not complete, and therefore, if you do nothing, you are regarded as lazy.

To aspire to your root means to aspire to its perfection. Peace is a result of that perfection.

THE CONCEALMENT OF THE CREATOR

Q: If the Creator is benevolent and wants us to enjoy ourselves, then what is the source of our pain?

A: The Creator is the only source of everything that exists. Where could anything else come from? Because only perfection comes from the Creator, when it encounters man –who holds opposite attributes to those of the Creator – that perfection is felt as the opposite of what it is: imperfection and, in fact, torment. This phenomenon is called “the concealment of the Creator,” and herein lies man’s problem.

Our task, therefore, is to resemble the Creator by correcting ourselves, so that His influence on us will be felt in its true form, as benevolence. In that state, we should naturally equalize ourselves in every

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attribute with the Creator, and if one of our attributes is not yet complete, we will naturally feel (to that extent) the influence of the Creator as incomplete.

In order to prevent us from sinning (by accusing and cursing the Creator), so as not to distance us further still from Him (as with impure powers), The Creator hides from us. As long as we feel unhappy, we cannot see that everything comes from the Creator, and only when we begin to feel good, does the Creator reveal Himself as the source of that goodness.

Q: If the torments are a means that aid man, why is it said that the desire to suffer comes from impure forces?

A: I don't understand the term, "means that aid man." It is an expression that praises pain, something which is completely contrary to the purpose of creation. The purpose of creation is to delight us. Pain is an undesirable feeling to the Creator, and its purpose is only to force us to connect to the path of correction.

The sensation of pain distances us from the Creator. It is sent only to shock us, who otherwise desire only rest. By our nature, we operate by the law of maximum pleasure for minimum effort. But when pain forces us to wake up and remember the goal, by searching for the source of the pain, then we should immediately turn to the Creator, as this was the sole purpose for which the pain was sent.

At the end of correction, when we will have used all our powers and desires correctly, there will be no room for even the smallest hint of pain. On the contrary, we will feel wholeness, pleasure and serenity.

THE MEANING OF AGONY

Q: Why does the Creator force His creatures to suffer if He really wants to endow them with "eternal heaven?"

A: Man has asked that question since he was first created and in every generation since. There is no answer to this question.

Rav Yehuda Ashlag writes that it is impossible to understand the outcome of a process or assess it correctly when we are at its beginning, or its middle. Only after we have gone the whole way, and are at the end of the process, can we relate correctly to everything that happened along the way.

There is a good reason for the popular saying, “Do not show a full job half done.” Only those who go the whole way will acquire enough wisdom to correctly appreciate everything that has occurred.

Moving forward along the spiritual path creates the sensations we need to help us attain the final result: the sensation of eternity and perfection. It cannot be any other way.

So why didn't the Creator create us complete and eternal to begin with? If He had done so, we would not have been able to feel the perfection and eternity! Along the way, before we come to free choice between our situation and the spiritual situation, we gradually learn to actually appreciate spirituality and make the choice to bring it into our lives.

At that point, spiritual perfection and eternity become desirable and we really do delight in them.

Q: What is the meaning of agony?

A: In answer to this question, I'd like to quote the words of Rav Yehuda Ashlag in his “Introduction to The Study of the Ten Sefirot.” Here, he explains why he wrote that book.

“Indeed, if we set our hearts to answer just one famous question, I am sure that all the questions and doubts will vanish from sight and you will look unto their place, and they will be gone. It is the indignant question, asked by all the people in the world, which is: “What is the meaning of our lives?” Meaning, this number of years we have been given, which cost us so heavily, meaning the multitude of pain that we suffer for them, in order to complete them, who is it who enjoys it, or better phrased, whom do I delight?

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And it is true that researchers have grown weary of delving over it, and all the more so in our generation, when no one wants to even consider it. Yet, the question still remains as valid and as bitter as ever. And there are times it meets us uninvited, and pokes our mind and throws us to the ground, before we find the old subterfuge to be carried senselessly in the currents of life as always.” (Introduction to The Study of the Ten Sefirot, item 2).

After that, the writer explains that only when we learn how to master our own destinies do we receive the answer to that question.

OPEN QUESTIONS

Q: Why does the Creator hide the spiritual world from us?

A: I like your question a lot because it indicates a quest for spirituality. What do you think? Why haven't people found these answers for thousands of years? Or perhaps they have found the answer, but they hid it from us! How is it that so many intelligent people—philosophers, scientists, and researchers—cannot answer man's most important questions?

In fact, why can't we answer it ourselves? Why does the Creator hide these answers from us? Notice that He hides the answers, but He doesn't hide the questions! On the contrary, it is He who makes you ask them, which is why human beings can ask them and taste their bitterness. Read the “Introduction to The Study of the Ten Sefirot” from Item two onward.

THE SPIRITUAL ROOT

Q: Do we influence our position in the spiritual world? Is this the goal of the Correction?

A: In our spiritual root, in *Malchut* of the world, *Ein Sof*, we exist in an eternal, completely corrected situation, which does not change. We have to come to that state by ourselves, through our desire and our

consciousness that the root is the single most perfect and desirable situation for us.

We have no influence over the root itself, because the inferior can never influence or change the superior. On the contrary, the inferior is completely dependent on the superior.

How was the connection between the Upper Worlds and the souls formed there? *Malchut* in the world *Ein Sof* (our root) was blended with the first nine *Sefirot* (attributes of the Creator). The Light grew dimmer and finally vanished, and the worlds were created. That part of *Malchut*, which is included in the worlds, is called “*Malchut of the Worlds*.”

At the same time, the first nine *Sefirot* influenced *Malchut*. They were mixed in it, and in this way the soul of the first man was created. Thus was contact between the worlds and the souls formed, based on those nine *Sefirot*.

Q: Does creation belong solely to the Creator? Can man have any effect on it?

A: Man has free choice. He comes to a situation where he can freely do anything he wants, but still choose the way of the Creator. This happens when, during man’s evolution, he completely agrees with, and recognizes, that the Creator and His actions are perfection. In this way, man resembles the Creator, is equal with Him, and is completely corrected as He is.

Q: I understand that creatures should come to adhesion with the Creator. But that situation is eternal and exists from the very beginning, and time is but a corporeal term. So what has actually changed?

A: Adhesion with the Creator did exist in the world *Ein Sof*, but at the expense of the Creator, who created that situation by Himself. In order for the creature to attain the same situation, he must exert his own efforts, out of his own free will. For that, he needs to disconnect entirely from the Creator, the Light, and to stop feeling Him so as not to be under His influence.

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Only then, only out of free choice, will man gradually correct himself through developing the screen, thus attaining equivalence of form with the Creator, to the point of *Ein Sof*, meaning the absolute equivalence with the Creator.

Q: I understand that, just as two hairs cannot grow from the same root, so two objects in this world cannot stem from the same spiritual root. Each creation has its own spiritual root. But I thought that everything came from the same root – Keter?

A: You are right, everything does come from the Creator and then descends to the world of *Atzilut*, where the system of the management and the correction of the soul of the First Man (meaning our souls) is formed.

The three lower worlds to *Atzilut* (*Beria*, *Yetzira*, *Assiya*) were created in its image. These worlds are a diminished, yet accurate image of the world of *Atzilut*. Our world was created much like those worlds.

Everything that exists in any of the four worlds descends from the world of *Atzilut*. By the same path, the soul rises from our world to *Atzilut*. We attain the world of *Atzilut* by replacing our attributes, which are called “our world,” with attributes called “the world of *Atzilut*.” This is our goal in this world, and everyone must follow it.

The degree, the attributes, the place to which we all must rise, is called “our root.” The present degree is the place where we are at the given moment, the place where our “I” is, which is called a “branch.” Each root has its own branch.

THE SENSATION OF THE RECEIVER

Q: Why did the Creator make His creation feel deficient upon receiving?

A: He did so in order to awaken in us the need to change our intent to receive into intent to give. Only to those whom the Creator wants near Him does He send the sensation that they receive from Him.

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In order to feel it, one must first rise to the degree of the revelation of the Creator, to feel Him as the Giver. Man can ask for that revelation because it is for the purpose of correction, not for pleasure.

The host offers his guest food and drink. All the guest actually wants is the food, but along with his desire (vessel) and the future pleasure (the Light), there is yet another sensation – the presence of the host, the giver. Because of that, he feels himself as a receiver, a taker. That sensation is so unpleasant that it overshadows the pleasure of eating the food.

THE FEELING OF SHAME

Q: Why did creation, *Malchut* of the world *Ein Sof*, feel shame, if the Creator doesn't mind which way it receives?

A: You are right. There is indifference on the Creator's part, but not on the creature's part. Creation was formed in such a way that shame is built into it, and the creature must neutralize that feeling. In fact, in our current condition, we are unfamiliar with that sensation; it is not in us, because it can be felt only between the corrupted and corrected attributes of *Malchut*.

We do not have them: they are the sensations of the receiver and the giver. We do not even understand what it means to give or to receive, because in order to feel it, you must possess those two attributes. Everything we feel comes out of comparison with an opposite, but within us are no attributes of the Creator, and thus we can neither feel nor understand the attributes of creation.

THE END OF MATTER

Q: Will the physical world vanish at the end of correction? Is *Malchut* of *Malchut* the material world? Are the souls that do not have a screen always in it?

A: Kabbalah speaks of desires and intents. There is not a single word in Kabbalah that refers to our world, meaning physical bodies.

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Creation was made with the desire for pleasure and there are only two participants in it: the soul and the Creator. That is unchangeable!

The intent can be “for me” or “for the Creator.” The desire finds the intent “for me” if it does not feel the Creator, and the intent “for the Creator,” if it does feel Him.

On the one hand, it is possible to feel the Creator only after you are equipped with an intent for the Creator, but on the other hand, you can only get such an intent through the revelation of the Creator, through the sensation of the Light.

The miracle of the attainment of the screen, the intent for the Creator, hides within that very contradiction. That is why it is said that we must make great efforts in everything we are told to do, such as studying, circulation, teaching others, etc. But we cannot tell in advance which way salvation will come.

Desires in our world are independent of the intent. Our desire for pleasure does not come from the spiritual Light, from the Creator, but from a “Minute Light,” which takes the form of this world: sex, wealth, power and knowledge.

The spiritual desire is to delight in the Light, in the Creator. If that desire is self-oriented in its intent, it is considered impure and is called a “shell.” If it is a Creator-oriented desire, it is considered pure and is called “holiness.”

Therefore, in the beginning, through the influence of proper study and labor, a desire to enjoy spirituality for self develops, and one begins to want the Upper World, the Creator, instead of this world. When that desire reaches its peak, we receive a screen, and only then does our desire become a part of *Malchut* (of the world of *Atzilut*).

Even if we are immersed in impure desires, they are still spiritual because we still want to delight in the spiritual pleasure, the Creator, and not earthly pleasures such as sex, wealth or power.

COMPLETE ADHESION WITH THE CREATOR

Q: When *Malchut* cleaves to the Creator in its final state, does that state last until it is completely nullified within the Creator, or does creation remain separated nonetheless?

A: It is impossible to explain in words the complete adhesion, which is complete in the unity of thoughts and qualities. But the intent of one toward the other is not gone, and herein lies the difference. Creation is not nullified within the Creator, but remains active for Him. It would have been nullified if it had not acquired a screen on the desire.

We see that the Will and the goal of the Creator is for creation to remain independent in its thoughts, and equal to the Creator in strength, will power and intent.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF CIVILIZATION

Q: I understand that my question may sound stupid, but I wish to know: if we imagine that the world starts to improve, will there still be a place for science? Will studying outer space, chemistry, and mathematics be rejected by humanity? Will the world return to the natural economy? Isn't such a world destined to decay and die out?

A: It's a very interesting question. I am also a researcher, a scientist by nature. We each seem to believe that our approach to nature, to the world around us is correct, thus allowing us to exist in it. We can't even imagine that there may be a different and better way of receiving the abundance of nature.

We are constantly worried about how to grab as much as we can from nature and feel upset at the thought that soon we'll run out of natural resources. We are struggling to hold on to the loot.

But everything should be different. If the Upper Light could reach our world, we would be able to receive simply, without struggle, by using our spiritual powers. Now, however, we are forced to receive through the shells, snatching from them tiny sparks of Light for sustenance. That is

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why all our lives are spent chasing after desired pleasures and not “only good pursued me all the days of my life” (Psalms).

Through blood, we learn the laws of nature in order to use them later in a barbarous manner. But if we could learn them through our resemblance to the spiritual nature, we’d have those laws inside us and could fulfill our desires without the need for physical action.

We wouldn’t need billions of unnecessary things, nor would we miss them, as we would be happy without them, and without many other things that will be made by people in the future without making them any happier.

The science of the world would be studied from within, but not by our sketchy experience or by chance discoveries. We would know nature in its perfect harmony and relationships, and learn how to use it wisely.

Today, however, all scientific and technical discoveries bring harm to man, since they only show us how imperfectly we have developed. Hence we can only conclude that all human activity should be strictly determined by its intention for the Creator.

If our intention matches the goal of creation, then we’ll develop pleasantly. If not, we will suffer, but only to reveal the evil inside us, to understand and correct it, ultimately achieving the same goal through anguish.

WHY IS RECEIVING FOR MYSELF EVIL?

Q: If “the Creator made a world in order to bestow His abundance to the created beings,” then what’s wrong with wanting to receive everything “for oneself?” Why is it perceived as evil? Why was it necessary to create a world so imperfect, and a creation so incorrect?

A: The Creator wishes to bestow. Therefore, He created only a desire to enjoy. But in order to enjoy, a desire must not disappear after receiving pleasure.

Pleasure must not destroy desire. Desire must be intact, despite the received pleasure, possibly even growing, searching for new greater pleasures.

Therefore, desire and pleasure must dwell in different objects. For example, consider a mother endlessly caring for her child because her pleasure is in him and not in herself. In contrast, if someone wants to enjoy something, that person receives the pleasure, but doing so immediately extinguishes the desire, and the feeling of pleasure disappears. That is why it is only by living to fulfill another's desires that we can feel never-ending, unlimited (by duration, volume) pleasure.

Therefore, the Creator's Will, which created beings that must bestow upon Him, is simply a precondition for receiving endless, eternal pleasure.

But there's one more result to that action: since we match our actions to those of the Creator, we become like Him and begin to feel what the Creator feels, i.e., we reach His level. And this is not just feeling eternal unlimited pleasure; it is the attainment of a totally different existence.

This existence is called "the goal of creation," because the Creator will never leave us alone until we reach that level - every single one of us, and all of us together.

Why didn't He create us in that state to begin with? Why must man go through so much suffering in order to feel this level? Because we can feel something only out of its opposite. Moreover, the greater the difference between the states, the stronger and more intense the feelings. Hence, reaching the Creator's level compels us to go through states quite opposite to His: humbleness, emptiness, darkness and suffering.

If it's impossible to avoid them, where can we get strength to go through all this? Are tragedies, catastrophes, destruction and pogroms unavoidable? From one generation to another, until the cup of anguish is full to the brink, can't we arrive at tranquility and perfection? Where is the great and perfect Creator?

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Our complaints would only be fair if we were not given the instructions for achieving the goal. Kabbalah was given to correct us, to make us like the Creator. By studying how we can change ourselves, we can do so quickly and enter the state of perfection and eternity now, in this world, and in this lifetime.

Kabbalah reveals us to ourselves against the spiritual Light surrounding us, thus forcing us to feel ashamed and humble before the Light (the Creator) prior to physical suffering, and accelerate the emerging desire to get rid of our evil nature, and acquire the perfect properties of the Creator.

By starting to study Kabbalah, we can reach the state of perfection and eternity within three to five years (ideally, and within six to ten years normally). Keep asking those questions.

THE PURPOSE OF CREATION

Q: Are we seeing an incorrect world?

A: The Creator started creation. To be more precise, He created a world of “evil,” or corruption. But man finishes creation, meaning man corrects it. Because man has the ability to lead the world, the Creator passes on to him the leadership of creation. The Creator increases the pressure on us to make us take the leadership upon ourselves. That is why the world around us is so bad; the Creator made it so, in order that we begin to correct it.

Q: Can you prove that Kabbalah aims us toward the purpose of creation?

A: Kabbalah is based solely on experimentation, and not on the human mind, or even on philosophy or other rational considerations. It maintains that everything that stems from logic and contemplation lacks any real basis. That is because our minds are a result of our desires, our nature. Therefore, it is impossible for us to discuss anything objectively or impartially.

THE KABBALAH EXPERIENCE

An ordinary person who is not a Kabbalist can never discuss anything objectively, but only from a personal perspective. Such people cannot exit the boundaries of our world into a wider and more general world.

Those who are endowed with such abilities become Kabbalists. That means they receive higher knowledge about the whole of reality, they see and understand the general laws of nature and where they lead the universe. Those who do not enter the shared space of the universe cannot understand what purpose we are discussing. They are born; they live and beget children who are like them, and then they die, unconscious as ever.

That is why Kabbalah, as a science, refuses to describe the real system of the universe, as well as our purpose, on the basis of man's current false understanding. Rather, Kabbalah takes man out to another space of feeling first, to another outlook on the universe. And those who go by the wisdom of Kabbalah can see that Kabbalah aims at the purpose of creation.

The role of each of us is like the role of the whole universe, because in us are all the components of the universe. Kabbalah teaches this to us when we study the Breaking of the Vessels, which occurred prior to our creation.

As a result of that shattering, all the parts of all the souls got mixed together, so that each soul contains parts of every other soul. This is the source of the mutual responsibility and the reciprocal bond between all mankind that is a major focus of Kabbalah.

A single individual cannot exit to the spiritual world. This would be like one individual beginning to develop the whole of physics or chemistry, and then starting to use these sciences. It would be similar to living like a Neanderthal without using all that humanity has achieved thus far, before attaining that knowledge by one's own resources.

It is for this reason that a beginning student needs a teacher who has already attained the Upper World, and can show the student how to attain each step to develop towards the Upper World. The teacher is

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a spiritual connection to the student, but the student will understand it only after attaining the Upper World independently.

Unity with the teacher can occur in the preliminary stages because both bodies are on this worldly level. But unity with the Creator is only possible when one goes out to the Upper World. That is why contact with a teacher leads to a contact with the Creator. The teacher is the leader.

Kabbalah explains incarnation as a dressing of souls in new bodies after they have rid themselves of old bodies. That means that the souls of the previous generation dress in new bodies, and thus the new generation appears on earth. Each new generation is made of the same souls robed in newly born physical bodies.

Physical bodies are born, live and die. After their death they go from a stage of animation to a stage of stillness... and that's it. Nothing else happens with those bodies.

Nothing of what the protein body had is re-lived in the new body. A "body" in Kabbalah is a body of a soul - the desire to be filled with Upper Light.

For this reason, we must understand that when the Torah speaks of the soul exiting the body, it refers to the Light leaving the body of the soul. When it says that the soul returns to the body, it means that the Light has returned to fill the soul after its "will to receive" has died, been corrected and became a will to bestow.'

And when it says that a body has been revived, it refers to a will to receive that was once uncorrected, not spiritual; meaning "spiritually dead."

The Kabbalah teaches that the term, "incarnation," refers to the soul, not to the physiological body. The fact that we relate to a corpse with so much respect is because we must relate to everything in this world in accordance with the Upper World. But my teacher would say that he doesn't care where and how his bag of bones will be buried.

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There will come a time when the whole of humanity will open its eyes and will see both at the level that it does today, and a greater space, one that Kabbalists call the “spiritual world.” That state is called “the coming of the Messiah.”

Then, everyone will change their egoistic natures (their bodies) into the nature of the spiritual sphere, a giving nature. Kabbalah calls that process “the revival of the dead.”

How can we reach the Creator? We accumulate experience over our cycles in this world and evolve to the level that we are able to begin to develop consciously toward spirituality. In so doing, we learn to oppose unconscious development, as we have been led through by our past cycles. When we attain that certain level, a special desire begins to awaken within us.

All of our desires are to enjoy in this world, but this new desire demands pleasure from a Source of Light, from a spiritual pleasure that cannot be found in our world. That desire pushes us to search for the Source of that pleasure, to seek and find the Creator. The soul is what leads us from that time on.

CONNECTION BETWEEN SUFFERING AND THE GOAL OF CREATION

Q: I can't find an answer to a very important question. How does physical suffering lead to the emerging of spiritual desires and needs? What's the connection?

A: One comes to Kabbalah with the question, “What is the sense of my life?” Then, one begins to study, and draw the surrounding Light that activates the desire for the goal of Creation (and not for some imaginary “spiritual spheres”).

There is no difference in various kinds of suffering; the distinction is only external, in their raiment. They all exist due to the lack of Light in the desire. Similarly, all kinds of pleasure come from the Light, regardless of the fact that we feel them in different objects.

OBTAINING LIGHT

Q: How does the Upper Light reach us?

A: The Light that comes to us is so dim, we cannot perceive it. We can only recognize it within the objects we are attracted to, because it is dressed in them. That way, we can receive the Light and enjoy it for our own purposes, but only to that extent, and only at that degree of power.

In order to feel that Light at least as much as those who are in a state of clinical death, we must detach ourselves from our desire to take pleasure. That is exactly what happens to them, and that is why they feel the Upper Light openly.

But even if we completely detach ourselves from our bodies and take on another form, we will feel the Upper One, eternal and perfect, to a lesser degree than we can feel Him in this body in this world. This is because we are in this world and in this body, and can detach from it and rise with our souls to the Highest Degree.

We are able to receive the Light by using a system called, “three lines.” The “left line” is the accumulation of all of our desires to please ourselves. The “right line” is the attributes of the Creator. It is clear that a person does not begin by feeling them immediately.

When we study the books of Kabbalah that are written in a special system, we attract a “Surrounding Light.” We will be able to feel that Light inside us later on and receive it in the form of pleasure.

However, until we are ready, that Light remains around us, concealed, and waits for us to be ready to receive it. Kabbalists are people who receive that Light openly. Their writing leaves the contact they have with the Light within the text.

Therefore, when we study from a book written by a genuine Kabbalist and in the right system, we can draw in a more effective illumination of surrounding Light, which cleanses the soul and prepares us to receive the Light.

Then, we can be filled with the Upper Light and feel ourselves whole and eternal. But the correction under the influence of the Surrounding Light is done gradually, and in portions.

To the extent that we absorb the attributes of the Light, we correct ourselves, our left line, and become able to receive the Light. Those portions of correction are called the “degrees” or “rungs” of the ladder, the spiritual ladder, which raise a person from the sensation of our world, the sensation of ourselves, to the sensation of the next, the sensation of the Creator.

The middle line is the best possible combination between man’s receiving nature and the forces of the Upper Light. It coordinates between them in such a way that a person will self-correct to resemble the Light as much as possible, while still maintaining one’s independence.

ON ADAM AND THE WORLD

Q: How should the term *Adam ha Rishon* (“the First Man”) be understood – is it a spiritual entity (related to the world of *Adam Kadmon*) or literally a man of flesh and blood in our world? What about all the people before *Adam ha Rishon*?

Also, how does it correlate with the sciences dealing with the origin of man?

I read in your books that all objects and interrelations are ultimately realized in specific people on Earth. So is it literally the first man, or is it the first man to have a screen?

A: The universe and humanity are eternal. There is neither beginning nor end to the development of matter. The formation of the universe is a consequence of the development of the spiritual world. The creation of man stems from the development of spiritual objects, which upon descending in degrees materialize into the lowest forms – the objects of this world.

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Of course, we have developed from the more primitive forms, but not by natural (Darwinian) selection. Our development came about by the surfacing *Reshimot* – spiritual genes.

The first manifestation of the point in the heart is *Adam* in this world.

Its first development into sensing the Creator is Abraham.

The first manifestation of the method of uniting with the root is the receiving of the Torah.

I can say only one thing in response to your question: until the point in your heart manifests and forms the first ten *Sefirot*, you will be absolutely unable to understand where you come from and where everything is headed! No explanation will help, since there is no vessel to receive it.

TWO LAWS OF CREATION

Q: Who is the Creator?

A: The wisdom of Kabbalah, which studies the collective law of creation, uses words such as God, Creator, and Emanator, as technical names for forces, lights and degrees. The names, Creator and Emanator, are similar in definition.

For example: each upper degree is called “Creator” when relating to the degree below it, because the upper degree creates, controls, and develops the lower degree.

Creator is also a collective name for everything that exists, besides the souls, which are called “creatures.”

The Creator is a collective, special Force that monitors the whole system of creation. That Force is one and unique. In Kabbalah there is but one primary law – the law of creation, which is to delight the creatures in any way the creatures can be delighted. All other laws stem from that one law, and everything that happens does so in the carrying out of that law. Everything that happens at any given moment in creation, its

sole purpose is to make people come to the point of utter bliss – to be filled with the Light of the Creator.

The Creator acts much like gravity: in the center of creation is the Creator. The souls were distanced five worlds away from Him. These include *AK (Adam Kadmon)*, *Atzilut*, *Beria*, *Yetzira* and *Assiya*, all the way to the farthest point called “our world.” From that last point, He pulls us toward Him.

We sense that pull as pain – beginning with disease and ending in painful death. But if we make an effort to approach the Creator by cooperating with that Force, we will not feel the pain. Instead, we will feel that Force as good. If, however, we refuse to go along with that pulling Force, we will feel pain, disease and other troubles to the same extent that we resist it.

The wisdom of Kabbalah enables us to realize ourselves in such a way that we will always, under any condition, be in accordance with that gravity, and thus come to the center of creation. That is the reason that Kabbalah is the most practical science for learning how to live well.

To equalize with the Creator means to be equal to Him in every manifestation. It does not refer to the Upper Force itself, but to how He relates to things, how He appears before us, within us, as a Supreme Power, as Essence, in the way that He wants us to feel Him.

The Creator created us through His wish to give, to bestow. He created our will to receive exactly in the amount that He wanted to give. That is why we must attain everything that He wants to give us – eternity, strength, perfection, total control. This means we must assume all the duties of the Creator.

The primary law of creation is the singularity of the Creator—the one and only power that controls everything. “There is none else beside Him.”

The second law of creation is that the Creator is totally benevolent. We cannot settle the contradiction between these two laws as they appear in our conception of reality.

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To Kabbalists, this is not an “idea,” but a fact they discover within their sensation of the Creator. People cannot begin to understand how there could have been a holocaust if there is a Creator, because they do not feel Him! In fact, the benevolence of the Creator appears only in our corrected desires (vessels). If we are not corrected, then to the extent of the corruption compared to the Light, we will feel the opposite of the goodness of the Creator, feeling torment instead of happiness.

Q: Can you explain the terms *Lishma* and *Lo Lishma*?

A: *Lishma* (for Her name) and *Lo Lishma* (not for Her name): The depth of these terms is immeasurable. The essence of the term, *Lishma*, is found in the words themselves: all the efforts, the aims – only for the Creator. He is the one who receives the results of my efforts.

There is another term: “not in order to be rewarded,” which is at an even higher degree, when there seems to be no connection between me and the reward, when all the joy comes not to me, but to the Creator.

I am in the present, below the barrier, below the degree of *Lishma*. That is why I cannot understand the sentence “to work for someone else, without any benefit for myself.” After all, regardless of what I think of the reward, I always work for myself.

WHY STUDY?

Q: Why should I study?

A: While we are working *Lo Lishma*, we cannot perceive that our actual purpose can be the opposite of our apparent intentions. That is where the question, “Why study?” comes from. When someone is still unable to see and understand that one must try to go against the mainstream of this world, I say: keep living like everyone else, because you have not yet evolved enough to aim for something higher than this world.

Such doubts about the rightness of the way can also come to advanced students who have already arrived at a certain spiritual level. They must continue to study the wisdom of Kabbalah with perseverance

despite the obstacles they encounter, “as an ox for a burden and as a donkey to the burden.” Only one who insists on believing can progress, regardless of any reasoning.

DESIRE FOR SPIRITUALITY

Q: What is the “point in the heart” and do we all have it?

A: Every person has a point in the heart, but many people still don’t feel it, because they haven’t matured enough to feel it. During one’s life cycles, one comes to a situation where the point in the heart is revealed. One then begins to feel a desire for spirituality, for the Upper One.

If one currently does not show interest in the spiritual world, then one is still not ready for it, and it would be coercion to try to forcefully awaken that desire.

But if one does feel a need to discover the Upper World, then we must help such a person. There cannot be coercion in either case. Kabbalists always say that only a person who cannot do without Kabbalah can study it.

THE POINT IN THE HEART

Q: Is the development of the point in the heart considered spiritual work with the intent “not for Her name?”

A: Developing the point in the heart consists of several steps:

Working *Lo Lishma*.

Working *Lishma*.

Working “not in order to be rewarded.”

We don’t know...

The work *Lo Lishma* also contributes to the development of the point in the heart. It develops the point under the influence of the group and the teacher below the barrier. Therefore, *Lo Lishma* is a conscious advancement toward the purpose of creation, as much as one can be aware of it when the Creator is in fact still completely hidden.

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There is not a single word in Kabbalah about the situation that precedes the appearance of the point in the heart. In that situation, both the religious and the secular prefer the literal part of the Torah.

When a person's point in the heart is inactive, and there is no desire to develop it, the Torah serves only to assure one of eventual rewards ~ both in this world and in the next.

Such a state is not regarded as *Lishma* or *Lo Lishma*. There isn't even a name for it. It is simply a way of satisfying man's need for self-assurance, justifying his existence.

"Not for Her name" is a situation where one has already discovered the point in the heart, and has begun to develop it. At the beginning of the spiritual work, a person develops the point in the heart, but one's thoughts are still divided between spiritual work and mundane affairs.

Q: Is *Lo Lishma* a kind of correction?

A: *Lo Lishma* means that a person begins to work with the objective of receiving a reward, while still developing the point in the heart. To the extent that one is able to changing one's attributes to resemble those of the Creator, one understands the meaning of the spiritual degree *Lishma*, from its first appearance to the very highest and complete attainment. That percentage constitutes the degrees of spiritual advancement.

Q: Is there a barrier between *Lo Lishma* and *Lishma*?

A: *Lo Lishma* is a spiritual state that precedes the barrier (the entrance to the spiritual world). *Lishma* is the spiritual state one achieves after the crossing of the barrier. Between those two states there is a period when we restrict our intentions and try not to fulfill them. Instead, we want to advance toward the Creator for our own pleasure.

This spiritual situation is like a seed from which a new entity grows. That new entity is called "the crossing of the barrier" and "the beginning of the ascent"

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THE PASSAGE - ACQUIRING A SOUL

Q: If we cross the barrier, does it mean we can no longer do something without the right intention, such as in our “ordinary lives?”

A: No one does anything without intention, since nature does not permit doing anything without a reason. When energy is spent, we demand to know what it is spent on. The expending of energy happens subconsciously.

In the process of studying Kabbalah, we gradually start answering these questions more consciously. Crossing the barrier means that all conscious processes will occur with the intent to benefit the Creator, while biological ones will remain as before, since bodies do not change.

THE SENSATION OF SATISFACTION

Q: When people work a lot, they become proud of themselves. Is it right to be proud for the purpose of inner correction?

A: When people invest a lot in their spiritual development, a sense of self-satisfaction develops, and they begin to take pride in their efforts. It is a good idea to be careful of such gratifications.

However, the efforts should continue regardless of one's conclusions about oneself. Naturally, before we cross the barrier between our world and the spiritual one, all our efforts stem from the will to get something for ourselves. But these efforts gradually expose the evil in us, making us feel as though we are growing worse.

For example: I would always drive my neighbor in my car, lend money to friends and help my relatives. These acts gave me satisfaction and made me respect myself, until I suddenly saw that my behavior stemmed from pure selfishness. I wanted to think well of myself, to be highly spoken of, to maintain what I had been taught to do, and thus put my mind at ease. Of course now, when I realize how selfish I was, I get depressed.

Nevertheless, it is a necessary phase.

Q: How do I begin to hate the situation of *Lo Lishma* so I can perform the restriction?

A: You mean, how can you advance from a spiritual degree of *Lo Lishma* to the degree *Lishma*? To do so, you must come to such a high degree of *Lo Lishma*, that it will be clear to you that *Lo Lishma* is a false situation, and you will despise that lie.

When you really do begin to hate that situation, and hate that lie of *Lo Lishma* because you have now discovered the truth, you can compare the two and clearly see where the deceit lies.

If you begin to feel the Light of *Lishma* within the situation of *Lo Lishma*, you will see how deep that situation of *Lo Lishma* is, and you will feel you must get out of it, but can't!

You will already see the evil and despair because you can't escape that situation on your own. At that point, the exodus occurs. The passage from *Lo Lishma* to *Lishma* is exactly like a seed that rots and gives life to something new.

Q: Will we be unable to enjoy life in another way after the restriction?! It's as though there is no connection between the spiritual worlds and the material worlds. Before we learn to give, will we be unable to receive any pleasure!

A: If you didn't have a point in your heart that constantly wanted to receive spiritual delight—a pleasure that cannot be given in this world—you would receive pleasure through your five senses. These would bring you a sense of the various phenomena around you; you would satisfy your animate vessel and enjoy life.

But if you have already discovered the point in your heart, the embryo of your soul, the desire to be filled with the Light of the Creator—then you understand that it can only be filled with that Light and not with any substitute. That Light can be given only when your attributes are the same as the One who gives the Light.

The first act toward attaining identical characteristics is the restriction. Just as there is a concealment of the Light from above, from the Creator, so we need to imitate that concealment and infiltrate it into our souls. Only then will we be able to receive Light from Above.

Because the Light is concealed from us, we must change our attributes to be able to receive it. . Then, we will feel the sensation of receiving, and will change our attributes by the same intensity of the sensation of receiving, in order to turn it into giving.

Then, by reason of the law of “equivalence of form,” the Light will enter our souls. Those concealed Lights open inside us in accordance with our spiritual progress and the correction of our egoistic attributes.

A vessel that does not feel through its five senses does not belong to this world, but to the next world; it is the vessel of the soul, the point in the heart – a vessel from the other world. If that point – the desire for the Upper Light – is in our hearts, we can try to ignore it and just “go with the flow” and try to return to “regular” life, or we can try to break that “regularity” and start studying Kabbalah.

That desire can only be developed with the help of a group.

Leaving the group is not necessarily a physical act. One can remain physically in a group and take part in the activities, but if there is no inner connection or unification of intents with the group, it is just as if one is out of the group.

If a person leaves the group, the point in the heart may be turned off, and there is no telling when it will light up again. By participating in group studies, that point can be developed, and the desire for the Creator intensified. The wisdom of Kabbalah is a method that helps develop that point.

In order to satisfy the desire of that point, the aim should match the pleasure. Matching with the pleasure is called *Lishma*, because the pleasure comes to us in the form of the Creator, and the pleasure can only be received by a special vessel that matches it.

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Q: At what phase do we disconnect from the intent *Lo Lishma*?

A: I don't know what it means to give the Creator. But the thought comes by itself. We cannot know what it is, or how it happens. The revelation and the attainment of the spiritual world occurs according to the rule, "Taste and see that the Lord is good." In other words, first one sees a picture, and then one begins to understand it.

CLOSENESS WITH THE CREATOR

Q: Is the circulation of the wisdom of Kabbalah a real spiritual act?

A: It may be unclear how the physical dissemination of the wisdom of Kabbalah can be a spiritual act. However, there are "mediators" who help us advance toward the Creator by realizing the actual motivation behind our actions - to receive. Actions motivated by good aims are called *Mitzvot*. In our world, we carry these out between each other.

Any act should be followed by the intent of wanting to reach the Creator, to contact Him. That should be our motivation with regard to the group. Our connection with the Creator forces us to build a group and create social contacts with our group mates. That is the right use of our ability to act.

Otherwise, if we are incapable of acting "as we should," then, as it says, "Sit and do nothing - is better."

If I work without the intention of coming to the Creator, then what do I work for? If you take action without the intention to approach the Creator, you are doing harm. Such an act is destructive to begin with. Anything that brings us closer to the Creator is preferred to an act that takes us farther from the Creator.

The Creator wants to delight His creatures. He can delight them only to the extent that the attributes of the creatures match His. If you can help people bring their attributes closer to those of the Creator, you

are performing the best possible spiritual act in the eyes of the Creator; an act that delights Him most.

How can we try to bring people closer to Him? Through the dissemination of Kabbalah. That is why it is the most effective means to produce spiritual closeness and equivalence of form with the Creator.

It only becomes the most effective means if we do it in order to come closer to the Creator, to please Him. If we seek, we will find the place where we can concentrate our efforts. We need not even search far: a thought about the Creator and the connection with Him will gradually bring us the means, both external and internal.

If the thought of the Creator does not precede the act, it is done on purpose, in order to come to us at the end of the act or during it. There are many reasons for that. But if we do not work systematically according to the rule of “think of the end before you begin,” if we do not think that this act will intensify our connection with the Creator, we are not trying to draw near Him. Therefore, those actions belong to the “path of pain.”

Such actions put us on a dead-end street from which we must turn back and search for another way. They only extend the correction process.

Q: So where is the way out?

A: We have to keep thinking about our contact with the Creator. All our problems in this world indicate that we do not have contact with Him. It is the same problem everywhere – in individuals, in groups, in society and in the whole of mankind.

TO DEMAND FROM THE CREATOR

Q: If even we, who study in a group, keep forgetting about the Creator, how can ordinary people remember Him?

A: The contact does exist. If ordinary people are unable to reach that conclusion, neither will we, as we are all connected. Everything that

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happens in the general public happens within us, too. It happens in another form, but for the same purpose.

We learned that when a person begins to think about the Creator, it must be understood that if one has found the Creator, it is because the Creator has found this person first and created the desire within that individual to begin thinking about the Creator. Man is but a derivative of the Creator.

We must turn to the Creator to demand to make and afterwards strengthen our contact with Him. But it is we who must demand it. We can't wake up and start thinking about Him by ourselves. When we think of Him, it is actually He who creates and strengthens our desire to think about Him.

The process is entirely in His domain; we must simply demand of the Creator to constantly renew the resources, and ask for His help to strengthen the contact. He is waiting for it. Perhaps it is still without the intent "for Her name," but it doesn't matter - we already depend on Him.

THE REASON FOR PAIN

Q: How do I maintain that awakening and strengthen it?

A: By being aware that the Creator is the one who gives you all the torments, that by putting you in such a state, the Creator asks for your attention. People still can't see the actual reasons for those painful events; they cannot see that it is the Creator who is behind them. They don't understand that the Creator desires to bring us back to Him, to make us advance in the right direction toward the goal.

To avoid pain and suffering, we must ask the Creator to direct our thoughts not toward the pain, but toward its source -Him. We have to ask Him never to detach us from that thought, and to maintain continuous spiritual connection with us through that thought. This prayer is the single most important thing we can do. Here lies the beginning of everyone's way to salvation.

Q: Is there no need for torment in such a case?

A: Pain and suffering are sent to us to awaken our plea for contact with the Creator. We cannot ask for this before we feel our dependency on Him – which emphasizes the significance of that contact. That is precisely why He sends us the pain and suffering.

But it all depends on the amount of pain, its nature, and how we can take that pain and transfer it from the “animate” level to that of human suffering, and use those torments for spiritual progress. Any pain we feel, from the smallest to the greatest, reflects a sensation of the absence of Light, the sensation of the absence of the Creator in the point in the heart, in our souls.

The sensation of the absence of the Creator is torment itself, though we are unaware of it. There is, in fact, nothing but a Light and a vessel, which is the desire for Light.

If I were to turn to Him and beg, “Don’t leave me. Stay close to me, stay in my soul,” in the simplest of words, it is the most effective means to success.

I am now referring to the beginning of the way. After that, we arrive at the degree of *Lo Lishma* (not for Her name) and *Lishma* (for Her name), meaning “for me and for Him.” At that point, I become grateful for the pain! But that will happen later on.

I don’t want people to wake up only under the impact of pain and disaster. I want people to awaken through studying and reading books. But they do not bother opening a book until they receive a warning. A person who experiences pain, even the smallest possible pain, can already increase it through the imagination and thus avoid greater pain and suffering in the future.

After finding ourselves in even the smallest of troubles, we should start asking, “What is the meaning of my life, why do I suffer? After all, I was born for pleasure!”

We should help each other advance from that basic question about the meaning of individual pain to a general question about life that

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would inspire a search to find the answer (the Source of suffering: the Creator).

Everything depends on our efforts, which can help us speed up the process. Our purpose is to speed up the pace, and hasten time.

What, in fact, is pain? If you could see into the spiritual world, you would see that in that place, in those aims (in which you suffer), you lack the desire for the Creator, which is why you feel pain.

Pain is the sensation of the absence of the Upper Light, the Creator. If we fill up that place with the Light of the Creator, we will begin to feel pleasure instead of pain, in those precise places of pain and suffering that degrade us. After the revelation of the Creator, we will feel the greatest pleasure precisely in those situations.

In the meantime, our goal is to regard even the smallest painful event as a major one, intensify its meaning in our eyes and immediately start searching for the actual reason for that suffering. We will begin to search for the reason despite ourselves.

The solution for our problems is in, "Taste and see that the Lord is good." There is no other solution. The pain itself is not the Creator; it is an expression of His absence from our lives. Pleasure means, "Taste and see that the Lord is good." That is the eternal, complete and total pleasure that awaits us.

Q: Some people suffer their entire lives, but still can't feel the point in the heart; it's just not there... why do they suffer?

A: Everyone suffers all the time. Humanity in general has been suffering throughout its history. People lived, died and never understood the actual reasons for their pain. The pain should accumulate and reach a certain level before we can discover the reasons for it, and Who is responsible for it.

Mankind as a whole has already accumulated that critical mass of pain, and we are here to show people the reason for their suffering.

A SINGLE AIM

Q: How do I intensify the sensation of the Creator in order to avoid being disconnected from the thought of Him and His Providence?

A: We cannot always feel the Creator, although that sensation should accompany our every desire. How do we make that aim unceasing? The Creator takes care of that; He guarantees that we always remember Him.

The guidance is to show us how we can make that contact last! Just imagine for a moment that you have lost contact. Think of ways you can make it stronger. Make any effort to maintain it. Gradually, your efforts will accumulate and become a single aim directed at the Creator.

CONTACT THROUGH EVIL

Q: How do we discover evil, and for what purpose?

A: If you remember the idea of creation and its goal, all your calculations will stop being passive. Instead, they will become vessels, or aims with which we contact the Creator and feel Him. Every negative attribute in us becomes a means to an end.

There is no other way to make contact with the Creator-only through our negative attributes, through the evil. The revelation of evil is the beginning of the revelation of good - its opposite. The Creator tells you of your negative attributes to make you want Him when you sense your egoism. We have to try and use the evil to help us make contact with the Creator.

Here, in the midst of my evil, I cleave to Him. Even if it is the opposite side, I still make contact with the Creator. It is here that I ask Him to help me: "Out of the depths have I called Thee, O Lord (Psalms 130, 1)."

Q: Is this what prayer is?

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A: Yes, this is prayer. Otherwise, where will you raise your MAN (prayer) from? When you feel that all this is death, and only the Creator has the solution, you ask, you plead and cry. In a moment you'll be dead, like one who stands above the abyss, like the situation in the middle of the exodus from Egypt, standing at the shore before the Red Sea opened.

We needn't hide our negative attributes; only use them creatively in negative situations. We should simply consult the Creator before any action, and only then start acting.

ANGELS

Q: How can I always maintain my aim?

A: Before every thought, every action and every breath you take - think of the purpose!

If a member of my group reminded me of the existence of the Creator, even if quite rudely, by poking me when I fell asleep in class, to me, that person is an angel. It doesn't matter how the creator sends the reminders, but from then on, I can advance. If you think like that, you will see that everyone around you is an angel made to remind you of the existence of the Creator.

We keep getting pushed from Above so we can advance toward the Creator. The problem is that we attempt to find solutions to complex situations with the power of our minds. That pushes us to the path of pain: we begin to get beaten up until we realize that the solution cannot come from our minds.

It is a long process, but it depends on us; we can speed it up only when we are wise enough to understand that we have to search for the solutions above.

But what does this mean? The answer is, whatever the problem, we mustn't lose contact with the Creator! It is written: "Even when a sharp sword is placed upon one's neck - one should not deny oneself of

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mercy.” Even under unbearable pain you can feel perfection, if you only maintain spiritual contact with the Creator despite the pain.

It may appear to others that you are suffering unbearable pain, but you can feel instead completeness and delight if you create a spiritual contact with the Creator, despite the pain.

The body could burn and you would feel nothing. It all depends on the tightness of your connection with the Creator. The stronger it is, the greater the joy; the weaker it is, the lesser the joy.

Pain is given to us only to tighten the contact and attain the spiritual degree where all we feel is pleasure. We must think of it as the most important exercise.

Q: Is it important to do this in a group?

A: It is important to do it inside the group, outside the group, together and alone.

THE SEARCH FOR THE DESIRE

Q: Is the desire for spiritual contact a desire for pleasure?

A: If the desire is there, there is nothing more to work on. It means that the Creator Himself is inviting you to meet Him.

But if there is no desire for contact with the Creator, you must search for that contact. If you already have a sensation of the contact, then you already have a desire for Him. Now, search for the additional desire to unite with Him.

If you are waiting for the desire to come to you, it will not happen by itself. Instead, you will get pain and suffering from Above to make you start asking questions and search for that aim. If you have that aim, Baal HaSulam writes that the Creator Himself gives us the desire for Him, and invites us to draw near. Then comes the time when we must make an effort in order to match the desire of the Creator.

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There is only the Creator, the creature, and the contact between them in the world—nothing else! It is precisely when we are in pain that we can turn that suffering, whether individual, national or global into pleasure. The pain is given to us for one purpose only – to contact the Creator through it, thus turning it to pleasure.

If we relate to our pain correctly, we will see that all those torments are simply a reason for us to ascend spiritually, and then the entire world will be at our feet.

WHAT ACTIVATES US?

Q: What is the ego? What is around me, and what should I do with it all?

A: The only thing that was created by the Creator is called *Adam ha Rishon* (the First Man), the collective soul, the creature, *Malchut*. The *Partzuf* of *Adam ha Rishon* was created and then broken in order to correct creation.

This shattering mixed the attribute of the creature—to enjoy—with the attribute of the Creator – to delight. There was, in fact, a kind of blast that caused the attributes of the Creator to penetrate the attributes of the creature.

The parts of Man were shattered and separated. That is why there is a spark of the First Man in each of us. Within that spark exist *Reshimot* (recollections) of all our future situations, from the beginning of the spiritual path to the end of correction. That is because *Adam ha Rishon* fell from the highest state, so the “documentation” of the upper situations and all other states is already within us in a form of *Reshimot* (recorded, programmed data).

That chain of *Reshimot* perpetually evolves within each and every one of us, but we feel only the outermost *Reshimo* (singular of *Reshimot*), the lowest. We feel it as an order to get something, and operate accordingly. In that sense, we are nothing more than robots.

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Some people want quiet lives. Others want to grow and search for fame and fortune. Everything that distinguishes one person from another is embedded in the *Reshimot*, like the biological genes.

Everything that happens to us depends on the currently active *Reshimot*. Therefore, it is impossible to demand spirituality of a person if one's outer *Reshimot* give only the desire to rule, for example. Our purpose is to prepare everything that is needed for the implementation of spiritual desires in a person whose *Reshimot* of spiritual development are already active.

The only possibility at our disposal is to speed up the pace of the passage from one *Reshimo* to the next, along the entire chain of *Reshimot*, from beginning to end. We cannot change anything but the pace of the correction.

That is why we should think only about the present moment, and what we must internally correct right now.

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF MY LIFE?

Q: What does it mean to feel “inner necessity?”

A: Inner necessity is when you have a question about the meaning of life and you cannot find the answer to it. In the introduction to the most complex and important book in Kabbalah, *Talmud Eser Sefirot* (The Study of the Ten Sefirot), the author, Rav Yehuda Ashlag, writes for whom this book is intended. It is anyone who is troubled by the question: “What is the meaning of my life?” It is meant precisely for those who wish to know the meaning of the suffering they experience; those who try to understand why things go wrong in their lives.

IMPROVE BY BEGINNING

Q: I'd do anything to improve my life, but how can I before I know anything about Kabbalah?

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A: You can improve your life immediately without even knowing a thing about Kabbalah, simply by taking an interest in the wisdom of Kabbalah, wanting to belong to it, and wanting to improve the world. If you continue to study and progress, you will begin to affect the spiritual world voluntarily, consciously, in order to build a better future for yourself.

That means that the study of Kabbalah can be done on several levels, depending on the person himself. Just as in our world, some people live and act passively, doing only one thing throughout their lives, others take initiative and change their lives, influence society, and have an impact on the whole world. The same pyramid exists in our influence on the spiritual world, and, in fact, on the entire reality.

OUR OTHER BOOKS

A Guide to the Hidden Wisdom of Kabbalah (with ten complete Kabbalah lessons): provides the reader with a solid foundation for understanding the role of Kabbalah in our world. The content was designed to allow individuals all over the world to begin traversing the initial stages of spiritual ascent toward the apprehension of the upper realms.

Attaining the Worlds Beyond: is a first step toward discovering the ultimate fulfillment of spiritual ascent in our lifetime. This book reaches out to all those who are searching for answers, who are seeking a logical and reliable way to understand the world's phenomena. This magnificent introduction to the wisdom of Kabbalah provides a new kind of awareness that enlightens the mind, invigorates the heart, and moves the reader to the depths of their soul.

The Science of Kabbalah: is the first in a series of texts that Rav Michael Laitman, Kabbalist and scientist, designed to introduce readers to the special language and terminology of the Kabbalah. Here, Rav Laitman reveals authentic Kabbalah in a manner that is both rational and mature. Readers are gradually led to an understanding of the logical design of the universe and the life whose home it is.

The Science of Kabbalah, a revolutionary work that is unmatched in its clarity, depth, and appeal to the intellect, will enable readers to approach the more technical works of Baal HaSulam (Rav Yehuda Ashlag), such as *Talmud Eser Sefirot* and *Zohar*.

Although scientists and philosophers will delight in its illumination, laymen will also enjoy the satisfying answers to the riddles of life that only authentic Kabbalah provides. Now, travel through the pages and prepare for an astonishing journey into the Upper Worlds.

Introduction to the Book of Zohar: is the second in a series written by Kabbalist and scientist Rav Michael Laitman, which will prepare readers to understand the hidden message of "*The Zohar*". Among the many helpful topics dealt with in this companion text to *The Science of Kabbalah*, readers are introduced to the "language of roots and branches", without which the stories in *The Zohar* are mere fable and legend. *Introduction to the Book of Zohar* will certainly furnish readers with the necessary tools to understand authentic Kabbalah as it was originally meant to be, as a means to attain the Upper Worlds.

Kabbalah for Beginners: By reading this book you will be able to take your first step in understanding the roots of human behaviour and the laws of nature. The contents present the essential principals of the Kabbalistic approach

and describe the wisdom of Kabbalah and the way it works. *Kabbalah for Beginners* is intended for those searching for a sensible and reliable method of studying the phenomenon of this world for those seeking to understand the reason for suffering and pleasure, for those seeking answers to the major questions in life. Kabbalah is an accurate method to investigate and define man's position in the universe. The wisdom of Kabbalah tells us why man exists, why he is born, why he lives, what the purpose of his life is, where he comes from, and where he is going after he completes his life in this world.

The Path of Kabbalah: "Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any manner of likeness" (Exodus 20:3). This commandment from the Bible is the basis of the Kabbalistic wisdom, for Kabbalists know that the only true reality is that of His Essence, the Upper Force. When we accept this concept, we can become truly open to the prospect of freedom for every person, for every nation, and for the entire world.

While the structure of reality and how we perceive it are at the surface of this book, it is the underlying story of the human soul that truly captivates us: this is about you and me, and all of us. It is about the way we were, the way we are, and the way we will be.

ABOUT BNEI BARUCH

Bnei Baruch is a non-profit group centered in Israel that is spreading the wisdom of Kabbalah to accelerate the spirituality of mankind. Kabbalist Michael Laitman PhD, who was the disciple and personal assistant to Kabbalist, Rav Baruch Ashlag, the son of Kabbalist Rav Yehuda Ashlag (author of the Sulam Commentary on the Zohar), follows in the footsteps of his mentor in guiding the group.

Rav Laitman's scientific method provides individuals of all faiths, religions and cultures the precise tools necessary for embarking on a highly efficient path of self-discovery and spiritual ascent. The focus is primarily on inner processes that individuals undergo at their own pace. Bnei Baruch welcomes people of all ages and lifestyles to engage in this rewarding process.

In recent years, an awakening of a massive worldwide quest for the answers to life's questions has been underway. Society has lost its ability to see reality for what it is and in its place easily formed viewpoints and opinions have appeared.

Bnei Baruch reaches out to all those who seek awareness beyond the standard view. It offers practical guidance and a reliable method for understanding the world's phenomena. The group's unique method not only helps overcome the trials and tribulations of everyday life, but initiates a process in which individuals extend themselves beyond the standard boundaries and limitations of today's world.

Kabbalist Rav Yehuda Ashlag left a study method for this generation, which essentially 'trains' individuals to behave as if they have already achieved the perfection of the Upper Worlds, here in our world.

In the words of Rav Yehuda Ashlag, *"This method is a practical way to apprehend the Upper World and the source of our existence while still living in this world. A Kabbalist is a researcher who studies his nature using this proven, time-tested and accurate method. Through this method, one attains perfection, and takes control over one's life. In this way, one realizes one's true purpose in life. Just as a person cannot function properly in this world having no knowledge of it, so also one's soul cannot function properly in the Upper World having no knowledge of it. The wisdom of Kabbalah provides this knowledge."*

The goal-orientated nature of these studies enables a person to apply this knowledge on both an individual and collective basis in order to enhance and promote the spirituality of humankind, and indeed the entire world.

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