

עין

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האין

Eye To
The
Infinite

A Jewish
Meditation
Guidebook

How to
Increase
Divine
Awareness

About the front-cover

The front-cover design suggests a number of themes: the *AYiN* of the eye (discussed in this book) through which to perceive the *AYiN* (the Infinite), the influx from the Infinite through the constriction of our awareness, the initial constriction and subsequent influx of the Infinite Light in the original act of creation and the two types of 'Light', *Igulim* and *Yoisher* (literally, circles and straight light, as described by the Arizal) through which *Ein Sof* created, creates, directs and influences all the universes.

About the back-cover

Rabbeinu Bachyei Ibn Paquda writes, "A wise man sees himself in comparison to all mankind, mankind in comparison to the world, the globe in comparison to the galaxies ... and the galaxies in comparison to their Maker" (*Obligations of the Heart: Gate of Humility*). "The heavens tell of G-d's Glory," sings the Psalmist (*Psalms*, 19:2), "created with the L-rd's Word, their hosts with the Breath of His Mouth" (*Ibid.* 33:6). Isaiah exclaims, (40:26), "Lift up your eyes and see Who created these?" (quoted by the *Zohar* (Vol. I, 2b) in a meditation on G-d's greatness). Nechemiah says: "The heavenly hosts prostrate themselves before You" (9:6). The prophets tell us: meditate on the stars, the galaxies beyond and stand in awe before Al-mighty G-d.

שיר למעלות
אשא עיני אל ההרים מאין יבוא עזרי
עזרי מעם ד' עושה שמים וארץ

עין אל האל
EYE TO THE INFINITE

A
JEWISH MEDITATION
GUIDEBOOK

HOW TO INCREASE DIVINE AWARENESS

A COMPENDIUM OF MEDITATIONS,
VISUALISATIONS & TECHNIQUES
ADAPTED FROM THE KABBALAH, TALMUD
& CLASSICS OF JEWISH PHILOSOPHY

©

EYE TO THE INFINITE

ENLARGED & REVISED EDITION

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by Aharon Rubin

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Singleton Williams.

Please note:

- *Following the suggestions in this book is at the sole discretion of the reader, who assumes full responsibility for his/her actions in relation to the information herein.*
- *The material presented herein requires a basic standard of holiness in conduct and living, as prescribed by the Torah.*
- *If you are dependant on medication for mental stability or have a psychological condition, please consult with your physician before attempting the exercises.*
- *The term "Mitsvoth" refers to all Torah commandments, including the rabbinical injunctions. For non-Jews, it refers to the Noahide Commandments (Appendix I). [Cf. pages 76 (fn. 209) and 260.]*
- *Please treat this book with holiness and respect as it contains Names of G-d.*

*The Infinite, the All,
Challenges you to find
Divinity in fall,
To unify Soul, Heart and Mind.*

This book is dedicated to my father, o.b.m., who
introduced me to the fascinating world of
meditation

לעילוי נשמת

אא"מ הר"ר אשר ישעי' בן הר"ר יעקב יוסף ע"ה
תנצב"ה

Approbations

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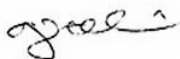
אני לדחי הדחי לי

Rabbi Ahron Dovid Rubin has, in this Sefer, partially unveiled the deeper meanings of our Torah and Mitzvos thereby making these concepts more understandable and attainable to a wider section of Klal Yisroel. This will be a great help for people to achieve greater depths in their Torah and Tefilla and performance of Mitzvos.

Rabbi Rubin is to be commended for having been able to present all this in an easy to grasp language. This sefer is a further contribution to the wide range of authentic Torah literature now available, and it is a particularly valuable one.

I wish him every success with this publication.

בברכת כתיבה וחתימה טובה




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פעיה"ק ירושלים תרחב"א

אי אלא ה' תורה

גמר

למזכר ספר אבותך צדק ה' מנצחיה בעלול ברוח יי אהיו
היו רוחן שלטון מצינו מנצחיה אש חסד חסדו (באין)
בשפת התנאים זה האמת בדרך הקלה והחסינות והוא
הולכים ומתמלאים יי הנה אמתה לבה נהגו לשון אלה יי
על וראו אפסו בקרב ישראל והם אהן מניח אהן
השליטה אפסיה דאונגליש ירך הסדר יצאת מניח כהן אהן
מנה ית הנה הנה מנצחיה לוא צדק ה' והיו אהן דואר
והוא לא יצאו מן אמתה יו ואפסיה וי ימנה יצוי
מזיונתן מצד ושמא רהו אהן יו ושמא אהן יו
אהן ה' כהן אהן מניח וניח אהן דהנה בשלחם ביה
ולעם אהן אהן אהן אהן ויהו ויהו חסדו חסדו חסדו
ישלח ויצא אהן אהן אהן אהן אהן אהן אהן אהן

ע"ה יוניו מנצחיה ביה
י"ן ימן אהן אהן



Have you ever wondered about Jewish meditation?

- Is there an authentic *Jewish* system?
- How does it work?
- How different is it from other disciplines?
- How is it practised?
- Can you radically improve your life through Jewish meditation?

Join the author on an exciting learning adventure as he plumbs these powerful questions with insight and simplicity. Discover the hidden secrets of Judaism's contemplative traditions. Revel in life-changing meditations from ancient Kabbalah texts, the Talmud and Jewish theology. Seasoned scholars and untutored neophytes will find this groundbreaking work innovative and stimulating.

A hands-on spiritual guidebook, this is more than just another book on Jewish meditation. With system, eloquence and precision, it presents the theory and then the practical, authentic Jewish techniques, meditations and visualisations, from the greatest Kabbalists and Masters of the Soul, together with clear and lucid introductions, enabling immediate benefit, wherever you are in your spiritual journey.

"A great step-by-step walkthrough of key concepts, with an easy to understand non-technical approach. An excellent work on Jewish meditation and focusing on G-d for everyone! Beautiful work. "

Reb Akiva, editor of Mystical Paths

"*Eye to the Infinite* is an excellent condensation of Judaism's contemplative traditions. The author shows an exceptional grasp of the key sources, a keen eye for detail and expertly binds theory to practice with the accompanying meditations. His methods, particularly 'The Chariot', 'The Divine

Omnipresence' and 'Unifications' are similar to those I might use and are particularly useful for generating a quiescent mind."

Daniel Gigi, teacher of Kabbalah Meditation, author of 28 Jewelled Crown: A Comprehensive System of Jewish Meditation and Mysticism

"The simple and inspiring meditations in *Eye To The Infinite* help us remember that the Light of G-d surrounds us and is available to us at all times."

Yedidah Cohen, compiler of A Tapestry for the Soul & In the Shadow of the Ladder: Introductions to the Kabbalah by Rabbi Yehudah Lev Ashlag

"Eye To The Infinite (revised edition), a very welcome addition to the new and burgeoning genre of Jewish meditation books, is to be especially noted and celebrated for its firm-rootedness within the Jewish tradition and sources.

Rabbi Rubin's work not only continues in the trailblazing path of Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan's ZT"L work, but actually and practically builds upon it. The new sections, in particular those concerning the Jewish festivals – recognising sacred space and time – and the 'Signs of Success' within one's practice, significantly enhance and elaborate upon the original publication."

Dr Elliot Cohen – Chartered Psychologist, Scientist and Transpersonal Psychotherapist, Senior Lecturer in Psychology at Leeds Metropolitan University, Director of the Ohr Menorah Centre for Jewish Meditation

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I thank you

L-rd, my G-d and G-d of my fathers,

For all the kindness You have done with me

And that You will do with me in the

future.

מודה אני לפניך

ד' אלקי ואלקי אבותי

על כל החסד אשר עשית עמדי

ואשר אתה עתיד לעשות עמי

במה אכף לאלקי מרום – I thank the Creator for all His kindness, His giving me the opportunity and the wherewithal to write this book, the ideas and help in sourcing the material and the encouragement of friends and colleagues.

My father ע"ה, who brought me up to love G-d and His Torah and who first introduced me to meditation, תהלה לו דומי' תהלה: it is with awe and love that I think of him and find myself unequal to expressing my gratitude towards him. I merely pray that this and any subsequent publication, give my Father נחת רוח and that his soul be bound בצרור החיים.

תבדל לחיים ארוכים וטובים, my dear mother's shining persona serves as a constant spur to reach higher in perfection of character

and service of G-d. My crowning glory, to her I owe all I have. May G-d bless her with good health, much happiness and *Yiddishe nachas*, from her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Special thanks to the esteemed author and teacher, Rabbi Dovber Pinson, who influenced me to write this work and gave his permission to include herein a meditation from his lectures.

Thanks are also due to an old and dear friend who has recently re-entered my life and has never been far from my mind, Rabbi Sholom Herbst, for his encouragement and assistance, to my esteemed *chavrusoh*, Mr Michael Stern, for giving freely and graciously of his valuable time and expert advice, to my respected colleague, Daniel Gigi, for his invaluable suggestions, to Rabbi Eliezer Moskowitz for availing me the benefit of his time, knowledge and acumen that combined to give an unequalled proof-reading of the manuscript, to my colleague and friend, Mr. Dovber Klein, for his proof-reading and suggestions, to Miss M. Lehmann, for the many, many hours she spent editing and improving the text, to Mrs. P. Singleton Williams for her editing skills, graphic-design suggestions, artistic input, time and effort she invested to help make this book pleasing to the eye as well as to the intellect, to my niece, Mrs. M. Katz for her consistent, kind and willing help with the covers, figures and diagrams and to my dear children, Shimon Elozor, Alter Yisroel Mordechai Nisson and Rivkah Hessya, who, each in their own inimitable way, helped with the proofreading.

מכל מלמדי השכלתי – הרבה למדתי מחברי ומתלמידי יותר מכולם. It is due to certain unnamed teachers, colleagues, students and friends that this project has materialized. May G-d bless them all with happiness and success.

אחרון אחרון חביב, my dear wife. May she be blessed with happiness, good health and *Yiddishe nachas* from all our children.

Preface



Have you ever wondered about Jewish meditation? Does such a system exist? If it does, why don't you hear about it? How does it work? How different is it from other meditation disciplines? Can your life be dramatically improved through Jewish meditation? With fundamental introductions on the inner workings of the soul, mind and creation, mind-expanding Jewish meditation techniques and exercises, this enchiridion seeks to answer these questions.

The book divides into four. The first two sections deal with the metaphysical, the soul, the cosmology of kabbalah and the importance of resonance, as *Part One: The Soul* looks at the soul's source, nature, strength and potential and the correspondence of its various levels to the spiritual worlds. Whilst this section serves to clarify the value of meditation, the 'why' behind the 'how', the actual effects of meditation are explored in *Part Two: Introducing Jewish Meditation*, where we examine its aims and their consequences on the metaphysical mechanisms of the mind and the universe.

Parts Three and Four deal with the practical. *Part Three: From Theory to Practise*, consists of advice of how best to meditate, including methods of how to access higher states of prophetic consciousness, translated here (some possibly for the first time) from

the original writings of the Masters. The fourth and final section, *Meditations*, is a unique collection of adapted visualisations, faithfully reformulated from original kabbalistic texts, Jewish-theological writings and the Talmud, giving you immediate tools to heighten your awareness and deepen your relationship with G-d.



The title, עין אל האינ *Ayin El HoAyin* (*Eye To The Infinite*), was inspired by the verse, אשא עיני אל ההרים מאין יבוא עזרי – “I lift up my eyes to the mountains; from where will my delivery come?” (*Psalms*, 121:1), the holy *Zohar*'s explanation thereof and that עין and אין, the Hebrew words for “eye” and “nothingness”, are pronounced similarly (*Ayin*) and are therefore homiletically connected.¹

According to the *Zohar*, AYiN is a mystical description of a very high level of the G-dhead:

... the place that upper and lower [worlds] draw [influx] from and long for (that place), as it says (ibid.), ‘From *Ayin* will my help come’... the righteous’ desire and enjoyment is to look to that [brilliant] ‘shine’ that all other ‘shines’ emanate from and all these crowns [*Sephiroth*] draw from it ...²

Literally “nothing”, אין AYiN describes G-d as ‘He of no-thingness’: He Who lies beyond all comprehension, the Ungraspable, the Unfathomable, the Infinite One. It tells of the absence of all limitations, beyond and above all manner of creation.

Hence, *Mei'ayin*, normally translated as “from where”, really means “from [the place of] AYiN” and “From whence comes my

¹ See p. 53-56 (Part 1, Chap. 2) for further explanation.

² *Zohar*, Vol. II, 83a.

אתר דעלאין ותתאין אתמשכן מיניה ותאבין להווא אתר דכתיב (תהלים קכא) מאין יבא עזרי וכתוב (דניאל ז) ועד עתיק יומיא מטה וקדמוהי הקרבוהי, ותיאובתא וענוגא דצדיקיא לאסתכלא להווא זיוא דכל זיוא מיניה נפקא ואתמשכן מניה כל אינון כתרין

delivery?" becomes an exclamation of hope and trust:

I lift up my eyes to the mountains.
From *Ayin* (G-d, the Unlimited One) will come my help!³

This is the deeper meaning of "*mei' Ayin*" – "from where". At a certain level, "Where", or "Where is He", becomes a Name, a description of G-d as One Whose Place cannot be fathomed.⁴ At this level, above the constricted experience of our existence, G-d created every possibility. It is from here that we can draw down every manner of salvation.⁵

On a simple level, too, contemplating the awesome majesty of the mountains, the grandeur of creation, ("I lift up my eyes to the mountains"), inspires true humility, the realisation of one's powerlessness before G-d (the personal *ayin*). This feeling of nothingness before the omniscience of the All-Powerful⁶ enables the cognisance of and attachment to the Incomprehensible, the level of G-d's revelation called *Ayin*, thus opening the way to the individual's salvation.⁷

The title, "*Eye to the Infinite*" also has a double entendre: the

³ According to the kabbalah, הרים – "mountains" refers to specific Divine interactions, *Sephiroth* (see Glossary), called *Netsach* and *Hod* (lit. eternal/victorious, and grandeur), which can bestow upon a holy person the spirit of prophecy. Thus, the verse can be understood as a preparatory prayer to draw down influx from the Supernal Worlds. See also *Ben Ish Chai's* interpretation in *Chut HaMeShulosh*.

⁴ As we say in the Shabbos morning prayers, "His Ministering Angels ask each other, 'Where is the Place of His Glory?'" or, as the *Zohar* and kabbalists interpret it, "'Where (איה)'" is the Place of His Glory!

⁵ See *Noam Elimelech, Vayechi*, s.v. *VaYechi Yaakov*, where he explains that G-d created every type of potential possibility before creating this world. (This is strikingly similar to the modern theory of parallel worlds.)

⁶ See *Liquetei Amorim Tanya* (R. Shneur Zalman of Liadi), Chap.3.

⁷ See *Klei Yoqor*, Ex. 3:1, "Most prophets came to prophecy while pasturing flock because prophecy needs *hisbodedus* [to be alone with oneself]. Through [constantly] seeing the heavens, G-d's handiwork, all thoughts become bound up with G-d's Reality and Presence, till a spirit of G-d rests upon him...." See also *Hamaspiq La'avodas HaShem* (R. Avrohom Ben HoRambam), *Hisbodedus*, page 178.

contemplating eye looking up to G-d⁸ and an 'eye', or opening, to the Infinite, a point from where one can experience profound communion with the Divine. In a state of *deveikuth* (a profound communion with the Divine that can remove a person from physical awareness), the intellect blends with this *eye*, causing influx of divine blessing to all.⁹



*Sefer Chassidim*¹⁰ advises that a *sefer's* title should hint at the author's name. Interestingly, after deciding on the title (*Ayin El HoAyin* – עין אל האין), it was found to have the same numerical value as my Father's and my name.¹¹



Conventions have been established to make this book as clear and concise as possible. We have used the masculine form, rather than the repetitious "he or she". This choice is based on total respect for both genders and with the intention that any reference be equally appropriate for either.

Though the Creator has no gender, there are male and female

⁸ *Chessed L'Avrohom* (R. Avrohom Azulai), 51: "The eyes are the portal to man's intellect".

⁹ This is explained in Parts One and Two of this book.

¹⁰ *Book of the Pious* by Rabbi Yehudoh Hachossid.

¹¹ עין אל האין = אהרן דוד בן אשר ישעי' – This computation is made either by taking the א of אין to be 1000 and including the number of letters, or by adding the את-בש (according to the *At-Bash gematriah* system) of the title, עין אל האין, to its ordinary *gematriah* (i.e. 227 + 1015). Both are valid *gematriah* systems. (The verse from whence the book's title is derived also hints at the author's name: אשא עיני אל ההרים מאין has the title, א"א stands for ישעי' בן אשר ישעי' and עזרי is *gematriah* the author's name plus ז' ז' standing for his mother's name, שרה (א"מ) (זסשר"ץ) יוטא. The number of pages in this book also equals the *gematriah* of his name.)

aspects in His relationship with His creation and in His order of revelation, as indicated in Scriptures and in Aggadah. We have therefore used “He” or “It” when referring to the *Ein Sof* (lit. He without end), “He”, in reference to G-d and “It” or “She” when speaking about the holy *Shechinoh* (Divine Presence).

Hebrew words have been transliterated. For the most part, we have followed the *Ashkenazic* (i.e. Germanic) pronunciation, though “th” is often used to indicate the Hebrew letter “Sof”.¹² For proper names, we have generally kept to the accepted English usage.

A short definition of Hebrew terms has been placed in parenthesis after the word, offering immediate explanation whilst keeping the narrative flow, with a fuller explanation often given in the footnotes or glossary, thus opening the door to higher levels of experience, whatever stage a person might find himself, in his personal journey.

A word regarding the footnotes. Those who take the time to explore the sources quoted will find their efforts amply rewarded. They will discover pearls of timeless wisdom, of inestimable value. The notes serve as stepping-stones to something much greater.



This work is offered with hesitation. Writing authoritatively on a holy branch of Torah, where understatements can border on the sacrilegious, is far from simple. Nonetheless, the dearth of authentic, quality material available for the English reader and the thirst for relevant and proper knowledge in this area convinced me of its necessity. Accordingly, following the advice of Rabbeinu Bachyei ibn Paquda (Introduction to *Chovoth HaLevovoth* – *Duties of the*

¹² See beginning of *Sulam Beis E-l*, introduction to *Siddur Beis Yaakov* (Rabbi Yaakov Emden). (I am aware of inconsistencies in my transliterations and for those I crave your indulgence.)

Heart), “part of alacrity is not to be over-cautious” and the encouragement and blessings of mentors, betters and peers, this offering is presented.

This is by no means an exhaustive authority. Not all sources are discussed nor are all methods explored. Rather, its aim throughout has been to show a way forward, to help the reader discover his own potential and latent ability to experience G-d’s Presence and to open his eyes to the rich and diverse material available within the original Jewish sources that he be encouraged to explore them further.¹³

It is my heartfelt prayer that the introductions and explanations, techniques and meditations, presented herein, will lead the sincere reader to a profound relationship with G-d, His Torah and His Mitsvoth, a life of meaning through joyful, mindful performance.

B’Ahavoh, with love.

¹³ A comprehensive treatment of the subject can be found in *Jewish Meditation* by Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan published by Shoken Books, NY.

Introduction

Why Meditate?



editation is an essential component of the *mesiloh ho'oileh Beis E-l*, "the path that leads to G-d". It draws a person into G-d's Presence, to bask in His awe and love, to experience the ultimate consummation: the soul's union with the Creator.

For aeons, meditation has been a key discipline for the spiritual seeker. Through *hithbodeduth* (being alone with oneself) and *hithbonenuth* (detaching mentally through deep, inner contemplation), "I set G-d before me always" (*Psalms*, 16:8), has been the rallying cry of saints and scholars since Biblical times, the holy Torah commandments performed in quasi-prophetic states, with profound *kavvanoth*, mystical intentions, meditations and letter permutations taught by saintly Masters.

The forefathers, prophets, *Chachomim* (sages of the Second Temple period), *Geonim*, *Chassidim* and *Rishonim*, the Arizal and the kabbalists, the Baal Shem Tov and his followers, each had his own meditation methods, according to the spiritual climate of their era, to

attain an experiential knowledge of and attachment to G-d.

Numinous meditations lie at the heart of esoteric doctrines and mystical tomes and, on occasion, form the bedrock foundation of ancient customs, their fibres woven into the very soul of tradition and law (which makes it all the more tragic that today this subject is practically ignored. Denying its due place in the study hall leaves the bearers of our heritage starved of the richness of their birthright, the wholesome spontaneity of spiritual awareness that results from disciplined, mindful practice.)

Yet besides a couple of notable exceptions and esoteric works, you would be hard put to find clear, unambiguous references to meditation systems, in Biblical or early Rabbinical literature (– only in the last millennium have techniques been formalised). There are two reasons for this. Firstly, advanced methods, those necessary in order to access the higher spiritual realms, needed careful tutoring. Instruction was strictly by word of mouth, from prophet to novice, master to disciple.¹⁴

The second reason is that the meditative state is a natural and automatic result of the fulfilment of the Torah precepts. Do Mitsvoth properly and you will be privy to higher states of awareness as a matter of course.

Whereas in some systems the meditative state is the aim, in Judaism it is always the by-product. Performing Torah commandments creates a highly charged meditative state, often without one even being aware. Formalisation of primary meditative states was therefore deemed superfluous and beside the point. Even the Oral Law, as eventually recorded in the Mishnayos (based upon disciple *Tanna'im's* notes) and Talmud (transcribed and edited for

¹⁴ *Mishnah, Chagigah* 12b: “One may not expound ... *Ma'aseh Bereishis* (the “Work of Creation”) to more than one student [at a time], *Ma'aseh Merkovah* (the “Work of the Chariot”) to even one student – unless he is wise and understands [these matters] with his own knowledge.” The Talmud (13a) enlarges upon further conditions and limitations relating to the transmission of these esoteric wisdoms.

fear of being lost due to excessive persecution), does not expound on that which was lived and known by every Torah student. G-d awareness was a mindset absorbed from an early age. It was the air they breathed.

Unfortunately, in today's cyber-age of virtual-reality, this mindset has been replaced by an external, sentimental and superficial outlook, one that breeds mechanical religious performance. The shell of outer existence needs to be counter-balanced by an inner awareness, nurtured by wisdom, ideas and imagery, created by the person's own knowledge and private practice. Otherwise, with so much emphasis on the peripheral trappings, the outer shell, like a black hole, will collapse.

Though Mitsvoh performance helps to uplift the physical world and transform the material to a higher spiritual level, thus easing the tension between spirit and substance by creating a visceral awareness of G-d's Presence, this tentative and nebulous awareness will quickly dissipate if it is not constantly maintained and developed – and maintain it we must, if we are to affect real change within ourselves and our surroundings.¹⁵

The inner consciousness engendered by a Mitsvoh is an inchoate, embryonic expression of the Divine Will that needs to be encouraged, cultivated and strengthened through Torah-learning, prayer and meditative thought on the Creator. Each step is indispensable. In his classic work, *Gates of Repentance*, Rabbi Yonah of Gerondi reckons meditating in order to gain an awareness and awe of G-d as one of the main areas of religious obligation, next to prayer and Torah-learning.¹⁶ *Shushan Sodoth*¹⁷ insists that meditating on G-d is the *condicio sine qua non* for basic spiritual well-being:

It is fitting for every person to [be able to] cogitate and think

¹⁵ (*Liqutei Amorim*) *Tanya*, Chap. 3.

¹⁶ Gate 4, para. 21.

¹⁷ Unknown disciple of Ramban.

deeply only on the Creator, blessed be He, not on anything else, [as] written in the Torah, in the Prophets and in the Writings....”

Therefore, it is right for everyone to be vigilant in learning how to remove all other thoughts from his heart besides those on the Creator of the world, blessed be He, for [only] when he knows Him, will he be able to serve Him...¹⁸

In the book of Psalms, King David talks constantly about the constant ‘gazing’ on the Glory of G-d.

I asked one thing from G-d and I constantly seek it: ‘Let me dwell in G-d’s House all my life, to gaze on the pleasantness of G-d and to visit His Palace’.

(Psalms, 28:4)

Mitsvoth and *Deveikuth*

Jewish meditation combines the purposeful thought of the mind with the passionate yearning of the heart. Coaxed and guided by the still, inner voice of the divine soul, the conscious mind seeks the sublime depths of the Infinite, attaching, merging and dissolving, to realise the transcendent immanence of the G-d of Israel. This soul-seductive, transient, state is called *deveikuth*.

Literally ‘cleaving’, *deveikuth* is a mystical state of union, the result of a perpetual, profound and powerful awareness of G-d. It is the quintessence of the Mitsvoth, the essence of the Torah and the supreme way of life.¹⁹ This attachment to the coveted thread of Infinite Essence, the indivisible Eternal Divinity that lies at the heart of creation, the Tree of Life at the centre of the Garden,²⁰ is the result of

¹⁸ *Shushan Sodoth*, p. 1. See also *Liqutei Amorim Tanya*, end of Ch. 3; also *Kuntres HaTefilloh* by Rabbi Sholom DovBer of Lubavitch, Chap. 2.

¹⁹ *L.A. Tanya*, *ibid.* See also *Ramban*, *Deut.* 11:22.

²⁰ *Gen.* 2:9. See also *Toldos Ya’akov Yosef*, *Parshas Bamidbor*.

following the Torah's path with mindfulness and intent.²¹ Ignore this most crucial ingredient and the soul will never feel fulfilled.

Development of mind-imagery is an essential step to *deveikuth*. Words and actions influence our thoughts and desires but ambition and the mind's imagery are their ultimate directors. As the Rabbis say, "Words are secondary to intent"²² – words can only direct the mind to the extent of the mind's visual vocabulary. This is especially true of prophetic meditation and *deveikuth*, where heart and mind must be subjugated to the soul – primarily through visualisation – to behold the Presence of G-d.

Like anything worthwhile, *deveikuth* requires regular application. King David says "Seek G-d and His Strength (a metaphor for the Divine Presence, the *Shechinoh*), search for His Face-Presence constantly."²³ Only through pure mind-imagery and regular effort can the soul and heart unite in their search for the Creator. Small snatches of insight will not amount to anything.²⁴ This book presents the knowledge and exercises in order for you to build your mind-imagery: it is up to you how you use the information.

Besides the *chovoth halevovoth*, Mitsvoth incorporating thought and emotions, there are also action-Mitsvoth.²⁵ An action-Mitsvoh

²¹ See Noam Elimelech, *Liqutei Shoshanim* (437a), *Kedushas Levi* (Vol. II p. 471) and the introduction to *Toldos Ya'akov Yosef*.

²² אחרי הכוונה הן הן הדברים – See *Brochoth* 15a.

²³ *Psalms*, 105:4. See *Tanya* Chap. 3 and *Rabbeinu Yonah on Mishlei*, end of Chap. 2.

²⁴ *Yoisher Divrei Emes*.

²⁵ There are basically two categories: action-based Mitsvoth, those that require a specific act or dialogue, and thought-based Mitsvoth, such as love of G-d. (*Ibn Ezra* and *Klei Yokor*, Deut. 30:11-14. Also *Ibn Ezra*, Ex. 20:2.) The *Noam Elimelech* (R. Elimelech of Lizhensk, circa. 1800) writes, "A person has to serve G-d on three levels: speech, deed and thought; speech through the holy Torah, deeds [through] the Mitsvoth, and thought, [through] contemplating G-d's greatness." פ' לך לך,

ד"ה והנה דבר ד'.

דעיקר רוממות אל-הוה במחשבה שהוא אחד מג' מדריגות שצריך האדם לעבוד להשם ית', בדבור במעשה ובמחשבה. הדבור היינו התורה הקדושה, ומעשה הם המצוות, ומחשבה הוא רוממות אל-הוה ויתעלה."

Although the *Noam Elimelech* places deeds and speech in two separate categories, when we are considering the soul's internal and external modes of expression, speech is in the same category as action. (Speech may also be considered action; see *Sanhedrin* 65a.

without a basic desire of closeness to G-d, is, according to the *Meor Einayim*, a lifeless corpse:

If we observe Mitsvoth with *deveikuth*, closeness to G-d, our Mitsvoth have life: they have a soul. Otherwise, they are empty rituals – bodies devoid of spirit.²⁶

Mitsvoth without *deveikuth* lack vitality. Mitsvoh-meditation serves to combine action with thought, the external deed with the inner Light, breathing life into the outer shell. As action, emotion and contemplation align with G-d, man ‘comes home’, experiencing the holy sublimity of Gan Eden.²⁷ But, besides the thoughts accompanying action-Mitsvoth, time must be set aside for *deveikuth* itself and to develop the mind-imagery so central to *deveikuth*.

By meditating on G-d and His Presence, His Words and His divine consciousness within us, the exoteric is balanced by the esoteric. Through meditation, we train our ego to resonate with our soul, to perceive its G-dly perception and innate self-knowledge. By grounding perception with action-Mitsvoth, our speech and actions become mindful and purposeful and our physical consciousness starts to comprehend spiritual actuality. The Divine Light, ordinarily masked by ego-induced scotomas, will be experienced as a palpable reality, more real than corporal existence.²⁸

Shabbos 58b and 119a imply that speech and physical effect are connected.) Speech can also be used as a medium between thought and outer expression – see *Rashbo*, *Brochoth* 8a (ד"ה ארשב"י).

²⁶ *Meor Einayim* (by Rabbi Menachem Nochum of Chernobyl, 1730-1797), *VaYeiroh*. See also *Liqutei Torah* (Arizal), *Eiqev*. This is not to say that one does not fulfil one's obligation without *deveikuth*, merely that the Mitsvoh is regarded as lacking life; cf. *Nefesh HaChaim*, Gate 1, end of Chap. 22, s.v. “*Ach sheyekayeim ish Yisroel kerouy*”. Also, Gate 2, end of Chap. 2.

²⁷ Introduction to *Toldos Yaakov Yosef*, “Mitsvoth are vessels into which one has to draw down the Light of *Ein Sof*”.

²⁸ See *Liqutei MoHaRan* 1:22, pa. 5, 6.

Image and Soul

Man was fashioned in G-d's image, thus giving him the potential to be G-dly.²⁹ This potential can be realised through embracing that image, also given in written form: the Torah.³⁰ More than a revelation from G-d, Torah is a revelation of G-d, G-d's image (as it were) written as a manual for man who is created in that image.

It thus addresses all of man's capabilities, latent abilities and deliquescent modes of expression (including the natural human phenomenon of meditative thinking), because they are all part of that image and all of man's psyche must be expressed in order for him to realise his potential and achieve wholeness. When man studies Torah, meditates upon its meanings and fulfils its precepts, he embraces his own identity whose totality is unified with G-d's Will.

In contrast to other disciplines, Torah does not advocate asceticism or extreme reclusiveness. It teaches balance: thought with deed, ideas and ideals with action. The spiritual light is directed and given a vessel; holy speech, unifications and emotions are bound to the physical.³¹ Thus, soul and body work in unison, creating the greatest unification.

Without the Torah's guidelines, the individual's path may be obscured by the shadows of good intentions whilst the Divine Will in the soul's purpose eludes him. Through the Torah, the holy *Shechinoh* will reveal itself to the person's soul (according to its root and his level of *deveikuth*), because the person lives the image of G-d. By adhering to G-d's Word, cleaving to Its Spirit with purity, holiness and zeal, the Divine Presence will come to rest upon the person.

²⁹ Genesis 1:26. (This is discussed further in Part 1, Chapter 1.)

³⁰ See *Shabbos* 86b, *Meor Einayim*, *Toldos*.

³¹ See *Pirquei Ovoth* (*Ethics of the Fathers*), 1:17 (לא המדרש העיקר אלא המעשה) – "It is not the learning that is most important: it is the action" and the introduction to *Sefer HaChinuch* (האדם נפעל כפי פעולותיו) – "A person's character changes according to their deeds"). Recent research confirms that though positive thought makes actual changes in the brain, those changes are short-lived if they are not followed up by positive, reinforcing, action.

Yet the *Shechinoh* can even elude the followers of this divine path if they are blind to the inner spirit. The *Shechinoh* seeks a person who is in tune with his divinity, who yearns for the Divine closeness his soul has known.³² Recognition and awareness of the soul's yearning is realised through uniformity and purity in action, speech and thought, meditation, learning and experiencing. Though this has always been the case, today's endemic lack of depth and clarity, reflecting our confused culture and tumultuous environment, make the need for silent reflection even more pertinent than in previous generations.

Meditation is a means of establishing contact with the divine spark that resides in every one of us. It can free a person from the shackles of materiality and allow him to connect with eternal truths, to see clearly, to think profoundly, to grow without limits. By then combining thought with deeds, the heights reached through meditation are seeded and brought to fruition. Through fusion of thought, emotion and action, man renders a transformation and rectification in himself and in all aspects of the universe.

Taste and see! G-d is good!

Medical papers and journals extol the virtues of meditation.³³ Scientific studies verify its physiological effects, its ability to improve physical performance and mental proficiency. They should be sufficient to advocate its regular practice. Yet even these reported advantages of relaxation, regeneration, stress-reduction, increased concentration and self-confidence are the mere wrappings and by-products of Torah prophetic meditation, a lifetime exercise that progressively accesses higher dimensions of spiritual reality the soul

³² The Hebrew word for soul, *nefesh*, from the word "*noifesh*" – "to rest", also derives from the verb meaning, "to want".

³³ *Journal of Neuroscience*, 7 September 2011, 31(36); *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, November 2011, Vol. 6, no. 6, 537-559.

recognises and embraces.

By integrating G-dly awareness with day-to-day living, the divine soul's influence strengthens, until its inner joy and holiness is revealed in all its splendour. One then walks consciously with G-d, experiencing what King David said (*Psalms*, 33:9), "Taste and see! G-d is good!".

People seeking the world over for soul-fulfilment have yet to realise that the answer lies within their own longing, in the power of their thirst. The soul craves G-d as a woman longs for her husband. In that craving lies the unmistakable Divine Stamp, G-d's signature on the soul as it distanced from its Maker to incarnate within the physical. When cleared of the impurities clogging the consciousness, this Divine Imprint will shine through, allowing a person to behold his Creator, naturally and effortlessly, as indeed the angels are always saying (*Isaiah* 6:3), "The whole world is filled with His Glory".

Moses said (*Deut.* 30:14), "Indeed, the matter³⁴ is extremely close to you, in your mouth and in your heart..."³⁵ G-d is omniscient and always available. When Moses went into the Tent of Meeting (*Mishkon* – Tabernacles), he heard the Voice of G-d speaking to him from between the two *Cheruvim* (cherubs) upon the Holy Ark, in the Holy of Holies, and It spoke to him.³⁶ In the Ark were the *Luchoth*, the two stone tablets inscribed by the Finger of G-d, the Decalogue brought down by Moses. Surely, here was the most concentrated holiness in the entire universe. Yet the Voice did not emerge from *within* the Ark. It emerged from between the two *Cheruvim* above the Ark.³⁷

The tablets in the Ark correspond to the Torah we hold in our

³⁴ Referring to the aforementioned "*HaMitsvoh*" (30:11) to cleave to G-d (see *Heichal HaBrochah* ad loc.).

³⁵ See *Rashbo*, *Brochoth* 8a (ד"ה ארשב"י).

³⁶ Paraphrased from *Num.* 7:89.

³⁷ The Holy Ark corresponds to the heart and mind; see *Nefesh HaChaim*, Gate 1, Chap. 4, *Sifsei Kohein*, Ex. 39:32. The two *Luchoth* (tablets) correspond to the collective soul of Israel; see *Ohr HaChaim*, Lev., 23:15. See also *Ta'amei HaMitsvoh* (Radbaz), *Mitsvoh* 77.

minds and hearts. Through learning and living Torah, we become profoundly aware of G-d's Presence and Providence. This awareness is the 'pre-frontal lobe' of the Ark, between the two *Cheruvim*, the space of freewill.³⁸

G-d speaks in this awareness, the marriage of the Divine Essence and man's divinity, the Place of G-d's Presence. Specifically, the altruistic consciousness that sees not the physical world but G-d's all-pervading Presence, a consciousness that pulsates with love for G-d and for one's fellow man, the result of a pure mind that contains the unadulterated Word of G-d, can bring the Voice of G-d into earshot and allow for the spontaneity of revelation.³⁹

Elijah the Prophet heard G-d in a still, small voice.⁴⁰ King David said (*Psalms*, 119:89), "Forever, O G-d, Your word stands in the heavens" and G-d says (*Exodus*, 15:26), "If you listen carefully to the Voice of the L-rd your G-d". G-d's Word and Voice, say the sages and kabbalists, eternally reverberate throughout the world.⁴¹

Within the wellsprings of pure truth, G-d's Voice can be heard. To hear It, we must get in touch with our inner consciousness and then subjugate mind and soul to G-d.⁴² We will then experience His

³⁸ The Rambam understands this space as referring to the thoughts of the heart (Rambam's *Responsa and Letters*, p. 32). This space, the one place G-d has removed at it were from His control and placed under our jurisdiction, can embrace the Light of *Ein Sof*.

³⁹ See *Seforno*, Ex. 25:22.

⁴⁰ *I Kings*, 19:11-13.

⁴¹ אריב"ל בכל יום בת קול יוצאת מה"ח ומכרזת ואומרת אוי להם לבריות מעלבונה של תורה

"R. Yehoshua Ben Levi says, 'Every day a *Bas Qol* (Heavenly Voice) goes out from Mount Horev and announces, 'Woe to mankind from the shame of the Torah, etc''." (*Ethics of the Fathers*, 6:2). On this *Mishnah*, the Baal Shem Tov comments: "Every day a person 'hears' the Voice of G-d reminding him to return. This Voice goes 'from one end of the earth to the other'; it is responsible for all yearnings and thoughts of longing to make amends and return to G-d". The *MaHaRal* writes, "For the Giving of the Torah exists without any change whatsoever, as the Sages said, '... This teaches us that the Voice of the Holy One, Blessed Be He, exists eternally ... for He gives the Torah and the Wisdom constantly... the only difference is in those who receive..." (*Tifereth Yisroel*, Chap. 56.) See note **Error!**
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⁴² See *Shulchon Oruch*, O.C. 25:5, "וישתעבד להקב"ה הנשמה ... וגם הלב"

Presence and know that G-d is very close, speaking to us constantly.

Whether a whisper in the profound stillness, more subtle than the delicate voice of conscience, a soft echo within our inner calm, a crashing awareness that reverberates to the depths of our being, a talking Voice, or the wasp that stings us when we least expect it, the Ubiquitous is constantly talking and It's calling us.

The time has come to tune in and start listening. We *all* have the tools. This book will help you turn up the volume.

Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson of Lubavitch writes, "We all possess an inner 'Moses', i.e., the ability to selflessly devote ourselves to G-d and His will. G-d calls out to us through this inner Moses, enabling us to enter the mysteries of the Torah and commune with His presence. By fulfilling G-d's commandments and praying, we refine ourselves so that we can perceive G-d's presence ever clearer in our study of His Torah." *Daily Wisdom, Inspiring insights on the Torah Portion from the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Vayak'hel-Pekudei.*