

An Introduction to Integral Religion

Eros and Tears

Society as it is currently constructed is designed to bypass your tears. Yet, crying is an art. Tears are the colors with which the tapestry of your awakening is painted. Sometimes we cry surface tears in response to stuff that happens – good stuff and bad stuff. But the truest tears are those that well up from the deepest place on the inside of the inside – they may be triggered by a specific event or image, but they are larger than any one event.

Every time you cry these true tears, you cry for all the times you never cried before. True tears come only on occasion, but when they do, they are harbingers of great wisdom and guidance. These are the tears of the holy of holies. They carry revelation. To receive that revelation, you must be willing to sit still and be truly alone, so that your deep core can come out naked. From that place you wail, flooded to the core by deep sadness or profound happiness. These are not superficial tears but what we might call source tears. To hear the voice of source tears emerge, we must access the ground of dynamic stillness which is the well from which this revelatory crying rises up.

But we are so busy. It seems that every time we are about to get quiet enough to drop into the well of truth which is on the inside of the inside... we get a text message. The cell phone buzzes. An email comes in. We are lost in Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Google+ and more every day. The purpose of these social media is to keep us connected. Yet for the most part they serve to disconnect us from what is right in front of us. We have great difficulty being present to the presence of the present. We need to relearn the art of “Nowing,” to re-enchant the power of now. Who actually communicates voice to voice anymore, what we used to refer to as phone calls? Let alone setting up face-to-face meetings? We have lost face. Our to-do lists have become so much longer than our wish lists. We are deadened by our lives, too distracted to let us ourselves be guided by the muse of tears.

A contemporary jester at the court of culture writes as follows:

And I let [the sadness] come, and I just started to feel ‘oh my God,’ and I pulled over and I just cried like a bitch. I cried so much. And it was beautiful. Sadness is poetic. You’re lucky to live sad moments. And then I had happy feelings. Because when

you let yourself feel sad, your body has antibodies, it has happiness that comes rushing in to meet the sadness. So I was grateful to feel sad, and then I met it with true, profound happiness. It was such a trip.

Does the jester in the court not tell truth?

Isn't it true that as soon as we feel ourselves approaching the void, we get scared? When the loneliness gets too palpable, when the potency of our fear threatens to break the surface, we run for cover. When too much profundity threatens the ostensibly safe and pleasant veneer of our day, we immediately move to avoid the danger of depth. We reach for the phone, junk food, a quick hit of gossip, flip on the TV, go for dinner or whatever. We engage in persistent and almost obsessive avoidance. A-void-dance. We do anything we can to dance around the void.

We all yearn for Eros. Eros is depth. Eros is the feeling of the inside of the inside. Eros awakens in you as interiority, fullness of presence, the yearning force of being, and the feeling of wholeness – the interconnectivity of the all with the all. In all of these disguises Eros is awake, alive and aware in you. When we cannot find Eros, we take seeming refuge in pseudo Eros. Pseudo Eros is emptiness trying to disguise itself as fullness. Pseudo Eros appears as every form of addiction which seeks to fill the emptiness with pseudo pleasures that do not last and leave destruction in their wake. Eros is the sacred in all of its surprising disguises. The opposite of the holy is not the profane. The opposite of the holy is the superficial. It is not the profane that blocks entry to the sacred. It is the superficial. The depth is earned, clarified and distinguished. The superficial is unearned, confused and common.

Pseudo Eros is superficial. It is unearned and unrefined. Pseudo Eros is the giga blocker of Eros. We seek comfort instead of pleasure. We wind up comfortably numb, alienated from any true pleasure. We move to label and categorize everyone and everything, knowing that staying in the uncertainty might allow the depths to arise. We seek a-void-dance at all costs. Because it seems terrifying in there. We fear that we have forgotten how to navigate the depths. We have even forgotten that we have forgotten. Or so we think. But underneath it all we all seek Eros. Every time we fall on our knees to any idol, we are really on our knees to God. God appears as Eros. Eros is our nature and our birthright.

The court jester continues:

The thing is, because we don't want that first bit of sad, we push it away with a little phone or a jack-off or the food. You never feel completely sad or completely happy, you just feel kinda satisfied with your product, and then you die.

Isn't it true that the moment too much depth threatens the banal loveliness of our life, we move to avoid it? So much of our life is a dance around the void. Yet you can be born only by walking through the void. The deeper truth is that when you let yourself enter the void, you both die and are born in the same moment. You die to the smallness of your skinencapsulated ego. You die to the smallness of your limited identity with your separate self. You melt into the larger context and spaciousness of

all that is, which holds you in every moment. And then the voids fills up with the unique quality of your essence. You are born to your irreducibly unique gorgeousness that is a mysterious, one-time-only, irreplaceable expression of essence that lives in you, as you and through you. Love intelligence and love beauty, the initiating and animating Eros of all that is, awakens as you. When you realize in the same moment that you are both nothing – no-thing – and a unique expression of everything, then you are free. Your unique self, your Eros, is always radically free, even as it is radically committed.

The portal to Eros is laughter and tears. I only trust people whose tears and laughter are right beneath the surface. Our court jester speaks in the language of laughter. (I promise you a book about laughter soon.) This book is about tears. The Eros of tears. Tears as the portal to Eros. Eros is no less than the fullness of your life well lived, awake, alive and aware, dripping with the pleasure of your goodness, truth and beauty even as you realize your holy enmeshment in the larger contexts of your life. Eros through the languages of tears is what invites you to play the largest game you can play. Tears are the portal.

The Language of Tears

This is a book about tears. It is about the dance of tears in our lives. Tears are not of one texture. There are many forms of holy tears. And there are also, or so it appears from the perspective of one level of consciousness, unholy tears.

This book is about learning to discern between these different forms of tears. To learn the language of tears is to discern between the different forms of sacred tears. Ultimately, however, from a higher level of consciousness all tears are holy in their root.

Part of what it means to wake up is to identify the nature of your tears, and to give your tears voice. To wake up is to know the language of tears. When you are awake, you hear and hearken to the melody and message of your tears. You are guided by your tears in all of their forms. Tears of joy and tears of protest. Tears of longing and tears of transformation. Tears of prayer and tears of ecstasy. Tears of breakthrough and tears of breakdown. Tears of expansion and tears of contraction. Tears because it is all so big and tears because it is all too small.

The Evolution of Tears

But this writing invites you to even more than the discernment of tears. This book is about the evolution of tears.

At the core, life is the evolution of tears. Love is the evolution of tears. This book is an invitation to life and love. To outrageous love. It is an invitation, a challenge, a demand and a plea, for the evolution of your tears – and through that, for you to participate in the evolution of love. Outrageous love. In the way that only you can.

Let's look at it from a large perspective. There is a mystical tradition that divine tears birthed the universe. Divine tears are an expression of divine love. What do we mean by divine love? Divine love is the ceaselessly creative nature of reality itself, generating level after level of evolutionary emergence. Divine love is the Eros that initiated the big bang. It is what the physicists at Santa Fe Institute once called the inherent evolutionary Eros, the fifth force of the universe. Eros, as another name for divine love, is the strange attractor that inherently calls reality to higher and higher levels of complexity and consciousness. Eros, sometimes known as love-intelligence, is the evolutionary attractor which motivates the emergence of ever-deeper and ever-higher expressions of the good, the true and the beautiful.

You are an irreducible expression of the love-intelligence and lovebeauty which is the initiating and animating Eros of all that is. You are the personal face of essence which is Eros. You are the irreducibly unique story of Eros that lives in you, as you and through you. Because you are unique, your tears are unique, unlike any others. The evolution of your tears catalyzes the evolution of Outrageous Love.

What do we mean by the evolution of tears?

The crying of the baby is of a very different quality than the crying of the awakened master. The baby cries in order to survive. The baby feels the pain and delight only of her own existence. The awakened master feels the joy and pain of all of reality. The growth of a human being from baby to awakened master (and all her stages in between) is the evolution of tears. Tears show up differently at every level of consciousness. The evolution of your tears is the evolution of your consciousness. And the evolution of consciousness is – on the inside – the evolution of love

On the Nature of Evolution and the Evolution of Love

All of reality is born in love. Love is the interior Eros driving evolution to ever-higher levels of mutuality, recognition, union and embrace. To be alive is to participate in the evolution of love. This is not a dogmatic assertion but rather the deepest insight into the interior face of the cosmos revealed by the most subtle and speculative researchers of consciousness from all of the great traditions. This research was done in what science refers to as double blind conditions. That means that it was conducted by different researchers performing similar experiments in different parts of the world, who were not influenced by or even aware of one another's work. As such, it is highly reliable and trustworthy. It is fair to say, based on this extensive cross-historical and cross-cultural research, that the purposeful nature of reality is the evolution of love.

The evolution of love expresses itself as the evolution of tears. When you grow, you learn to cry more deeply for more people. When you grow you learn to cry *for* more of yourself, *from* more of yourself, and *as* more of yourself. Your circle of love expands as does your circle of tears. Both tears of joy and tears of pain.

Evolution is the core nature of reality. The evolution of tears is an expression of this larger great movement of evolution. Every thing and all being is evolving in every moment. All being is always becoming. The big bang, the moment when manifest reality flares forth, is actually the first of several big bangs. The first big bang initiates the process of cosmological evolution. Quarks, moved by a ceaselessly creative Eros, come together to form atoms. Atoms come together to form molecules. Molecules come together to form complex molecules. It takes billions of years of inspired Eros to move from elementary particles to planets, stars and galaxies.

At some point the cosmos wakes up and the first life is formed. This is the second big bang which initiates the process of biological evolution. This takes place over another vast stretch of inspired evolutionary time. Some complex molecules evolve and awaken as living cells. Living cells evolve and form more complex cells with a nucleus. Gradually life emerges and evolves. Early plants, later plants, early animals and fish. Later animals. Early mammals, later mammals, hominids. Each new level of emergence gives birth to something entirely new, a new whole. The new whole is emergent. That means that the new whole is a new reality, a new consciousness and complexity, well beyond the mere assembly of its previous parts.

Then a third momentous leap takes place. A third big bang. Somewhere beginning between 30,000 and 200,000 years ago the third momentous evolutionary cycle begins, the third big bang. The human being is born, and human evolution begins, along with what we now call cultural evolution. Development is just another word for evolution, growth or creative emergence. Reality is ceaselessly creative, evolving and birthing ever more complex and more conscious emergent realities. The Hebrew word for development is *Hit-pat-chut*, literally meaning “opening.” Reality opens to higher and deeper levels of complexity and consciousness. There are many ways to trace this evolutionary cultural emergence of higher levels of complexity and consciousness in the human realm. We might look, for example, at how we humans organize our trade, food and economy. We begin with foraging or what are called hunter-gatherer societies. Then society evolves to horticultural, meaning early farm tools become the core procurer of food and the organizing economic principle. Then reality evolves and agrarian communities emerge, which are organized around more sophisticated farming methods like the plow.

Much later there is a huge emergent leap to the industrial economy. This takes place with the emergence of modern rational science and is commonly called the industrial revolution, which began only a few hundred years ago. A few decades ago an even more dramatic leap takes place. The microchip appears on the evolutionary scene and so begins the dramatic emergence of the information economy. This is just one of the many ways to describe the evolution of culture, in this case through an exterior lens looking at the techno-economic base of society.

There are also many lines along which individuals develop. For example, there is cognitive development. First we respond, as a baby, to a direct stimulus, let's say to a cat right in front of us. As our cognitive capacities evolve a bit more, we might respond to an image, let's say to the picture of a cat. Then we evolve a bit more, and we respond to the word for cat. Finally we respond even to a concept, let's say to the

concept of a “feline species,” which holds an entire category. This is a clear evolutionary line which moves from impulse to image to symbol to concept. A second example of individual development, just to get the hang of the evolutionary idea, would be motor development. Simply, we evolve in terms of motor skills. First we are immobile. Then we crawl. Then we walk. Soon we can run and skip. A little later we can ride a bike. Some of us can cross Niagara falls on a tightrope. Each line of development has its geniuses. But evolution, of both the collective and the individual, is not merely an exterior measure. At the very core of reality’s growth is the evolution of interiors. This interior world includes love, loyalty, meaning, virtue, art, ethics and everything else that we hold life worth living for. Tears are the litmus test of the world of interiors. What we cry tells us what we value, what we love, what we find worth living for.

Four Levels in the Evolution of Tears:

So let’s look at the development of interiors from the perspective of tears.

Level One:

The first level of tears in the personal evolutionary path are ego-centric tears. A person on the egocentric level of consciousness is concerned with his own survival, comfort and pleasure, and with the survival of his immediate circle. His felt sense of love and care is for himself and his immediate circle. He cries for himself – a baby’s tears – or for his own immediate circle.

Level Two:

She then evolves to ethnocentric tears. At this second level of tears her tears expand and deepen. Love expands and deepens. Her felt sense of love and care is for her tribe. Her identity has expanded. She cries for her people. She cries not only for the present, but for the past and future as well. She cries in joy and in grief for the entire history of her tribe. Her tears are bound up not only in her story but in the historical memory and utopian dreams of the tribe.

Level Three:

We evolve yet again from ethnocentric to world-centric consciousness. The tears of joy and grief are aroused by his identity with every human being on the planet. His wider circle of identity with all of humanity expands his circle of felt love and care to all of his brothers and sisters across the globe.

Level Four:

Finally she deepens and evolves again from world-centric consciousness to cosmocentric consciousness. We spell cosmos with a K instead of a C, following Ken Wilber's suggestion, to indicate not only physical reality but all that is. Every level of reality, all sentient beings, all of existence, all interiors and exteriors are part of the cosmos. When a person achieves cosmocentric identity, she realizes that she is not separate from all that is. She awakens to her identity with the whole process, even as she realizes that she is an irreducibly unique expression of the process. She is identified as Unique Self1, the personal face of the process, of all that is, the cosmos. She cries for all that ever was, is and will be. She wakes up to the truth that her tears birthed the cosmos, and evolved the cosmos. She knows that only her tears can heal the cosmos.

The Evolution of Love is the Evolution of Tears

The evolution of complexity is mirrored in the evolution of consciousness. The evolution of consciousness is but the evolution of love. The evolution of love is the evolution of tears.

The evolution of consciousness is – in its essence – the evolution of love, which is the evolution of tears. A tiger is both more conscious and more loving than an amoeba. A tiger cannot cry but can whimper sadness and joy in a way that is impossible for an amoeba. A human being is more cognitively complex, more conscious and aware, and more capable of love than a tiger. Human capacity for love at its best builds hospitals. Human capacity for love at its best is capable of expending vast energy and resources in loving and caring for all people and for all sentient beings. Tigers have never been known to build hospitals. Tigers feel their own immediate pain and perhaps also that of their survival circle. This is also how human tears begin. The tears of a baby through the tears of early childhood. But a human life is about the evolution of tears. Tigers' tears do not evolve.

Human tears, in their most evolved state, are evoked by the ability to feel and identify, not merely with personal pain but with the pain of all sentient beings. It is true that human beings introduce tears into the world. But as we've seen, not all human tears are the same. The trajectory of human emergence is the evolution of human tears, as the human consciousness evolves from egocentric to ethnocentric to world-centric to cosmocentric tears. Cosmocentric tears are the tears of the face of God living in human form.

Tears in the Mystical Tradition of Cosmocentric Consciousness

Let me tell you a story of holy tears of this kind. A Hasidic story.

Isaac, the Vorker Rebbe, was best friends with another well-known master, Menachem Mendel of Kotzk. They had years earlier made a sacred promise to each other, that the one who dies first would visit the other and share the secrets of the higher world. As it happened, Isaac of Vorke died first. Strangely, however, weeks have gone by and Menachem Mendel has received no visitation from his departed friend. Deeply disturbed and worried for his friend, he decides to break with protocol and ascend to Heaven himself to inquire after his friend's welfare. Arriving in Heaven – the world of *Atzilut* – through the mystical method of soul-ascension, he searches for Isaac. He searches through myriad realms and palaces, the palace of King David, of Abraham and Sarah, of Joseph and his brothers, of Solomon and Sheba. But wherever he wanders, he is told that his friend Isaac had indeed been there, but he left. “But where could he have gone?” queries Menachem Mendel, and the ancestors respond by pointing in the direction of a vast and dark forest. Menachem Mendel heads for the forest and wanders there for a considerable amount of time (and about what happened in the forest we cannot write in this book).

After a time, he hears the rush of water – the sound of a vast sea – and he follows that sound to the edge of the forest where he discovers his friend Isaac standing by the sea, crying, and defiantly so. They meet and embrace, and Menachem Mendel asks his friend: “Where have you been, why did you not ever come to visit me as promised? And why are you crying?”

Isaac responds: “My friend, look at this ocean and listen. Do you know what this ocean is?” Menachem Mendel, master of Kutzk, inclines his ear and his heart and listens. The sounds of the ocean make him shiver; sending a deep chill up his spine, and an overwhelming, unbearable sadness threatens to suffocate his heart. No waves had ever done this to him before. But he cannot make out the reason. “Know, my friend,” Isaac explains to him, “that this is the Ocean of Tears. There are tears in this ocean that were rightly shed and tears that were wrongly shed – but I don't care their cause. I have told God that I will not leave here, I will not hold back my tears – not even to enter Heaven – until God, in love, promises to dry up all the tears.”²

This is a story of cosmocentric consciousness – when a human being can love, cry for and work to heal and transform all of reality as the natural and felt expression of his humanity, even at the expense of his own spiritual pleasure. That is outrageous love.

Crying with God and As God, Sacred Texts

But it is even more than that. Outrageous love is when man so loves God that he is willing to cry with God and as God. This is part of the rereading of ritual that transforms our topic of conversation: Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year holiday. Classically this holiday is understood as the solemn day of judgment when the heavenly court declares who shall live and who shall die. God is the all-powerful and perfect king, and we human beings are the imperfect subjects pleading for pardon and reconciliation. Deep within the sources of mystical reading, however, are the resources for re-reading ritual. Enter into the inside of the text, and a deeper consciousness of shocking beauty reveals itself. In this re-reading man and God meet in supreme union as they shed – as one – cosmocentric tears. The human being shares God’s infinite pain and cries God’s tears.

According to one mystical master, Kalonymous Kalman, this meeting and merging between man and God in the place of tears is the inner mystical secret of *shofar*, the ritual ram’s horn that is blown on Rosh Hashanah. *shofar* blowing is the core ritual of Rosh Hashanah. Classically, *shofar* is understood as the horns of pageantry that declare divine kingship over all of reality. A second reading that we will unpack, which appears in the sources, re-reads *shofar* as tears. The nature of the *shofar* tears will be one of the major themes of our meditation together. But let us for a moment skip the careful steps of the scholar and bring ourselves right to one wildly important and essential re-reading of the meaning of tears. In a profound and ecstatic, painful and beautiful mystical re-reading, the tears of *shofar* are God’s tears. More deeply still, as we will see in the course of our study, they are human tears which have merged with divine tears. For now, let’s just taste the beginning of this re-reading in the next several pages. I will return to this same material again, in greater context later in this volume.

Kalonymous Kalman writes, “And the voice of the *shofar* is the voice of God’s tears; as it is written ‘God rises through the *Teruah* sound, God is within the sound of the *shofar*,’³ meaning that God is aroused through the *Teruah* – the wailing sound of people sobbing in pain – and responds in kind with Divine tears, the sound of the *shofar*, which in turn announces the redemption.”⁴ The second-century Rabbi Elazar taught, “See how great is God’s compassion. In the moment that he remembers the suffering of [his creations], he turns his back on the attribute of judgment and subdues it and has compassion upon them. This is what is meant by the teaching, ‘God sheds two tear drops into the great sea’ ... meaning that when God is reminded of the suffering of his [creations], he sheds two tears of judgment into the great sea, which is the Sea of Wisdom, in order to sweeten them, and transforms the attribute of judgment into the attribute of mercy, and has compassion upon them.”⁵

How Can You Believe in a God Who Does *Not Cry*?

The most important and powerful modern expression of the human being crying cosmocentric tears comes from the same master, Kalonymous Kalman Schapira⁶ From 1939 till 1942, Kalonymous Kalman finds himself in a hell called the Warsaw Ghetto. The Germans have done their utmost to rob its inhabitants of all sense of human dignity, particularly the power of speech, of the word. The worst offense in the ghetto was to circulate a newsletter, give a public speech, or teach Hebrew texts. Kalonymous Kalman, in a defiant heroic assertion of faith history over power history, of spirit over degradation, refuses to comply. Every week in the Ghetto he gives discourses on Kabbalistic topics. Descended from an important Hassidic lineage, he is fondly known as the Piacezner Rebbe. On his father's side, he is a direct descendant and lineage holder from the great master Elimelech of Liszensk. On his mother's side, he is a direct descendant and lineage holder of Kalonymus Kalman Epstein, author of the Chasidic classic, *Meor Va Shemesh*. He lives from 1889 to 1943. The name of the book he wrote in the inferno of the Warsaw Ghetto is today called *Aish Kodesh*, "Holy Fire." However, the original title of the book as the author himself wrote it, is, "Commentaries from the Years of Rage." As mentioned in an earlier chapter, Kalonymous buried the manuscript before he was killed by the Nazis in Treblinka. The manuscript was found in the late 1950's in Poland and published in 1960 in Israel by Kalonymous Kalman's brother, who had immigrated to Israel prior to the Holocaust. Often, he would implicitly link his essays to the events of the week in the Warsaw Ghetto. As we shall see, the core of his teaching is based on a mystical reading of the Jeremiah teaching of tears. In this teaching, we feel Kalonymous Kalman himself incarnating the Rachel archetype of Rosh Hashanah. During his three years in the Warsaw Ghetto, Kalonymous continually returned to the theme of Divine pain and tears. Each engagement with the hurt of God yields new depth and light. I quote from his discourse given on February 14, 1942:⁷

Now, the Israelite, who is tormented by his afflictions, thinks that he alone suffers. As if all his personal afflictions and those of all Israel do not affect God above, God forbid. Scripture states, however, "*In All Their Troubles He Was Troubled.*"⁸ The Talmud states that when a person suffers, what does the *Shechinah* say? –

"My head is too heavy for me, my arm is too heavy for me."⁹ Our sacred literature tells us that when an Israelite is afflicted, God, Blessed Be He, suffers, as it were, much more than the person does.

This is a classic statement of the radical identity in pain between man and God. Kalonymous Kalman, however, takes it one very dramatic step farther and writes:

It may be that since God is not subject to any limitation – for which reason no conception of Him is possible in the world – therefore His suffering from Israel's troubles is also boundless. It is not merely that it would be impossible for a person to

endure the experience of such great suffering, but that even to *conceive* of His suffering, Blessed be He – to know that Blessed Be He does suffer, to hear His voice, Blessed Be He, proclaiming “Woe, for I have destroyed my house and have exiled my children” – is impossible, because it is beyond the confines of the human.

This passage expresses, for me, the only way that I can hold my radical love of the Divine together with the overwhelming reality of evil in the world. As I have written elsewhere, I do not believe that we have any satisfactory metaphysical answer to the problem of pain.¹⁰ No individual theodicy and no combination of explanations for suffering are satisfying in the face of burning children. We have no explanations for evil. To attempt to explain in coherent human terminology “why God allows evil in the world,” or “why bad things happen to good people,” is to my mind and heart no less than the desecration of the name of God.¹¹ The problem of evil needs to be answered not on a conceptual metaphysical level, but on a spiritual existential level. That is to say, the real question is not how to come up with an explanation that conceptually maintains the goodness of God in the face of extraordinary evil, but rather how can I continue to experience the goodness of God in the face of extraordinary evil. Kalonymous Kalman makes a series of stunning theological moves beginning in the paragraph we just cited, which for me allows spirit and the infinite love of God to live in my heart even in the face of horrible pain. He takes the notion of Divine infinity and turns it on its head. Classical Divine infinity is taken to mean two things. First, God is infinitely powerful, and second, God is infinitely other. God is therefore not truly understandable by the human being in any real sense.

Both notions of Divine infinity reach their fullest formulation in Hebrew wisdom in Maimonides’ Doctrine of Negative Attributes. This doctrine affirms that God is so totally other, that we can only speak about God by way of negation; we can never say that God is powerful; we can only say that God is not powerless. For Maimonides, God must be powerful; God cannot be powerless. For God to be powerless, says Maimonides, is impossible. Rabbi Schapira turns this medieval schoolman’s notion on its head. God’s infinity is not only infinity of power; it is infinity of pain. God’s infinity does not address only God’s power and God’s otherness, but more importantly, God’s infinity addresses God’s pain as well. If God is infinite, then God’s pain is infinite. If God’s pain is infinite, then God’s crying is infinite. The transposition of the notion of infinity, from the infinity of power in Maimonides’ mindset to the infinity of pain in Schapira’s mindset, is a theological-existential move of overwhelming power. It is true that we suffer; it is true that we have no satisfying explanation that answers the great and terrible “Why” of suffering. It is true that men often live lives of quiet desperation. However, men never live lives of quiet desperation alone. God always suffers with us, God always cries with us.

Kalonymous Kalman wrestles mightily with the great paradox of the Divine human encounter. How do I approach God? Do I, in Arthur Lovejoy language, ascend to God, or does God, as it were, descend to me?¹² These are two poles, or, if you will, two paths. Said differently, can we understand God through the prism of Divine infinity, or through the window of Divine intimacy? Divine infinity is the transcendent and “wholly other” God of Maimonides, the God of negative attributes. Divine infinity is critical because it is the bulwark against all forms of paganism. Once I affirm the

descending path of Divine intimacy, which experiences God as fully present and available in the world, then, very shortly, the entire world becomes a pantheistic mess of indistinguishable divinity. Which he calls “submission.” The human being submits before the God of nature; nature as the entire natural world and nature as man’s primal and immediate nature – nature both within man and without. This is the level of consciousness that is pre-Havdalah, pre-distinctions. The human being is embedded in the natural order both beyond and within. The hills are alive with divinity. There is no individuated human being or humanity. There is no ethical dignity or autonomy. Since all is God, all distinctions fall away. Schopenhauer understood this very well when he wrote that pantheism is often but a polite form of atheism. If all is God, then the biblical religio-moral sense is effaced; in effect, the result is that nothing is then God. Moreover, if everyone is God, then no one is God. God is lost in divine immanence. God descends into the intimacy of impotence. On the other hand, there is an enormous danger in Divine transcendence as well. God can become irrelevant; the infinity of indifference. So it was for the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century deists who spoke of God as a watchmaker who made and wound the watch but was no longer present. It was their philosophies that served as the matrix for the American Revolution and later the American Constitution. An infinitely transcendent God is too far away to be part of my life. The ultimate expression of the distant God, of the deification of Divine infinity, is Aristotle’s Divine unmoved mover. Aristotle’s God knows not our name, knows no particulars, and knows nothing of the details of our world. The Aristotelian god therefore cannot be a God who calls us to ethical perfection and moral transformation.

What emerges is, that radical Divine infinity protects us from the radical Divine intimacy that easily degenerates into an amoral or immoral paganism – an immoral intimacy of impotence. However, infinity has its own dangers. Radical Divine infinity produces indifference, and therefore irrelevance.

How, then, do I hold the balance between intimacy and infinity? How do I hold both, the intimacy of infinity and the infinity of intimacy, was the essential quandary that engaged the Kabbalists. This dialectic is stretched to a breaking point and beyond during times of extreme evil and suffering like the Warsaw Ghetto tragedy. Kalonymous Kalman seeks to maintain the tension of intimacy and infinity without yielding fully to either. It is only in doing so that he is able to find a voice for himself and his community to engage in God talk; to talk to, to be close to and even to love God in the Kingdom of the Night. The vital challenge is to avoid the infinity of indifference while at the same time avoiding the intimacy of impotence.

In his early talks, Kalonymous Kalman deploys some of the classical Jewish theodicies in order to explain evil. At a certain point, however, the suffering becomes so intense that he realizes that the old approach that tried to provide an answer to the “Why” of suffering was no longer authentic. He understood that there could be no ultimate answer to the “Why.”¹³ Rabbi Schapira is therefore concerned not with why, but with what does God do when His people suffer. Or, said differently, how can a person hold the reality of Divine love within the reality of human pain? Schapira’s core answer begins with his mystical apprehension that God is crying. His understanding of Divine tears adds a new dimension to the notion of the crying God,

which is both haunting and beautiful, and has greatly helped me personally in holding the authenticity of Divine intimacy. He writes:

[The Question] of why the world remains standing in its place; why it is not destroyed despite the pain and the screams of the Holy One Blessed Be He for the people of God who are suffering and for his house which has been razed...

[The Answer:] Since His pain – as it were – is without borders ... thus so much larger than the world, it cannot enter the world and therefore the world is not shaken because of it. In the Midrash, an angel said to God, “*I will weep so you will not have to weep.*”

In this stunning teaching, Schapira suggests that the reason the world is still standing at all is because God has refused to reveal the depth of his pain. Since his pain is infinite – without borders – if God were to shed a single tear the world would be destroyed. He continues:

The angel actually wished to bring God’s weeping into the world, so that God would no longer have any reason to weep. Once the voice of God’s weeping is heard in the world, the world would hear it and explode. A small spark of the sorrow, as it were, would need only to enter the world for all of His enemies to be burned away (i.e. for the world to be destroyed)...

In the simple reading of the *Midrash* that Schapira is referring to, the angel is devastated by the pain of Divine tears and wishes to cry in God’s stead to somehow lessen the pain. But an angel is finite and would only cry tears that are finite, in contrast to God, who is infinite and cries tears that are infinite and therefore whose pain is infinite. The angel feels that these Divine tears are a violation of Divine transcendence and perfection and therefore need to be cried by an angel, whose mandate is imminent engagement in the world. In Kalonymous Kalman’s re-read, however, this *Midrash* is turned on its head. The angel wishes that God *should* cry because God’s tears would destroy the world. The world of evil is in the experience of the angel a violation of God. God, however, in infinite love for the creation, sustains the world through his absence, by his refusal to cry in a revealed fashion. For if God’s tears were revealed, then, as the angel indicated, one tear of God’s infinite pain would destroy the world. It is only in the time of the redemption that God’s tears will be revealed in the world itself; for at that time God’s tears will be part of the revelation of Divine consciousness that will *redeem* the world and not destroy it. Until then, God weeps only in the secret places.

But ... because the time of redemption had not yet come ... God answered the angel and said, “I will enter a place where even you do not have the ability to follow, and there alone I will weep,”¹⁴ as it is written in the teaching of Jeremiah, “My soul will weep in secret places.”¹⁵

Now we have arrived at the mystical teaching of Jeremiah the prophet as understood by Hassidic master Kalonymous Kalman. In this daring and highly paradoxical understanding of Jeremiah’s words, Rabbi Schapira bids us to fully re-

understand God's absence. Normally, God's apparent absence in the world is perceived as a challenge to God's love and presence. How could a God who cares, be absent? In Eli Weisel's first book, *Night*, there is a scene of a young five-year-old boy hanging on the gallows. Someone says, "Where is God?" – To which someone else responds, "God is there, hanging on the gallows." For Kalonymous Kalman, who himself saw the boy hanging on the gallows, God's absence does not mean that God is hanging on the gallows. Rather, God's ostensible absence reveals the *presence* of his love – in fact, it is the ultimate *expression* of Divine love. God the lover feels the pain of his beloved. Not only does God feel the pain of the beloved, but God's infinite ability to feel pain, which for Schapira is the very definition of Divine Infinity, means that God's tears are so potent, so infinitely searing, that if God would allow but one tear to drop, it would destroy the entire world. The reason we don't see and experience God's crying is because God hides his crying. God, in the *language* of Jeremiah's teaching, "cries in secret." God cries in secret, not because God doesn't care; God cries in secret because God cares *so much*. If God's tear-drop would but become public for even a moment, the world would come to an end instantly.

One month later, on March 14, 1942, Kalonymous Kalman continued with his commentary on Jeremiah's teaching about the tears of God. He writes, "The Talmud states in *Chagiga* 5b, that we may apply the verse 'strength and rejoicing are in His place'¹⁶ to God's outer chambers, but in His *inner* chambers, He grieves and weeps for the suffering of Israel." Rabbi Schapira here refers us to the very poignant and deep Talmudic grappling with the question of God's crying. In one teaching, we read, "There is power and joy in his place," which would seem to indicate that on the inside of divinity there is joy. However, in a second teaching we read, "My soul cries in the secret places." This would seem to indicate that in God's place, in God's hidden places, there is *crying*! The Talmud is not sure which it is: a crying God, or a God of joy and power. While the Talmudic mystic certainly knows *both* Gods, he is not sure, however, which is the interior face of God. The Talmud's encoded resolution of this ultimate question is then to draw a distinction between the outside and the inside. In the words of the Talmud: "This is in God's outer chambers and this is in God's inner chambers." The Talmud in typical koan fashion fails to tell to us to what "this" refers, as in which "this" belongs to which "chambers."

And so, Jeremiah's teaching remains obscure. Which is on the inside – God's joy or God's tears? Many Kabbalists understood this distinction as meaning that God cries on the *outside*; God's weeping is in the outer chambers, and God's joy is in the inner chambers.¹⁷ This, of course, makes good theological and even mystical sense. In the Divine absolute, the inner chambers, which are beyond the world and its pain, power and joy, are the essence of divinity. However, on God's relative face – the outer chambers, which are interdependent with the world and its pain – God is crying.

Kalonymous Kalman nevertheless refuses to accept the explanation of this passage given by the classic Kabbalists. For it cannot be that God cries in his outer chambers and is joyful in his inner chambers. Remember that Kalonymous Kalman, in his earlier work cited above, has already understood *shofar* as being God's crying. Remember also that in an earlier chapter we studied the passage in the Talmud where *shofar* is defined as having the status of spiritual service that takes place "on the

inside” – specifically in the inner chambers of the Temple, known as *sanctum sanctorum*, the Holy of Holies. Thus, if Kalonymous Kalman understands *shofar* as God’s crying, then indeed God must cry on the inside. Kalonymous therefore joins the classic early-medieval sage Rashi in his reading of the Talmud’s cryptic resolution: God cries in his inside chambers and is joyous in his outside chambers. For Kalonymous Kalman, Jeremiah’s teaching is that God cries on the inside because God’s tears are so potent that if God allowed Himself to cry on the outside, his naked pain would destroy the world. God so loves the world that he hides his pain, his infinite pain, in order for the world to survive. And Rabbi Schapira so loves God that he seeks, despite the terrible danger, to penetrate to God’s inner chambers in order to cry with God, to share the Divine pain.

We have arrived. These are cosmocentric tears. This is the great secret of the evolution of tears.

Rabbi Schapira writes as follows in the direct continuation of this discourse:

The person communes with him there (in His inner chamber), each individual in accord with the situation We’ve already mentioned how the oral Torah was revealed in exile; similarly the holy Zohar was revealed that at a time of extraordinary calamity It is hard to raise oneself up time and again from the tribulations, but when one is determined, stretching his mind to connect to the Torah and Divine service, he enters the chambers, where the Blessed Holy One is to be found. He weeps and wails together with Him, as it were, and even finds strength to study Torah and serve Him.

In Schapira’s restatement of Jeremiah’s teaching, not only does God cry with us, but we also cry with God. Not only does God share our pain, but we too are bidden to share God’s pain, and in that sharing we redeem God’s pain. In the words of Nikos Kazantzakis, standing for the entire Hebrew mystical tradition: “We are the saviors of God.”

God, Love, and Torah

This is a book about love. Outrageous love. We live in a world of outrageous pain. The only response to outrageous pain is outrageous love. Outrageous love emerges from the evolution of tears. Outrageous love is the evolution of tears.

Outrageous love is not only a singular dramatic act of love’s expression, although sometimes it is gorgeously just that. But outrageous love, in its most beautiful and noble expression, is the sustained intimacy of simple commitments repeated again and again through time. The great Hebraic wisdom tradition of Torah is at its core a set of instructions for loving. In the language of an ancient sacred text, “If the Torah would not have been given, all wisdom could be learned from the great love song, the Song of Songs.”¹⁸ The Song of Songs is the great song of Eros attributed to the famed Israelite King whose name was Solomon. The implication of the text is this: the

Torah teaches about love and Eros, and love and Eros teach us about everything else. The way of the Torah is to establish a set of laws, teachings, ritual and holy days in order to show a human being how to be lived as love. Each law, ritual and holy day is engaged, practiced, studied and evolved anew in every generation. Through this process of engagement, practice and evolutionary refinements, the individual and the holy day or text or ritual all merge into a larger union in which both are awakened and expanded into their full power and beauty. In the very act of study – which seeks the deeper meaning and practice of a specific law, text, ritual or holy day – the one who seeks and studies is transformed, enlightened and evolved. This is the embodied psychological, mystical and intellectual form of personal evolution through the process of erotic merger with a sacred text, ritual, law or holy day¹⁹.

More specifically, this book engages an ancient Jewish holy day and spiritual practice called *Rosh Hashanah*. To most, *Rosh Hashanah* simply implies the beginning of the Hebraic New Year. Literally, however, the words Rosh Hashanah mean, the” Beginning of Transformation.” In this book I invite you, my reader – who are my friend, student and teacher – to engage with me on a sacred journey to the center of your soul. In this introductory chapter I will introduce three sacred methodologies, or frameworks, which will help us in the course of this sacred quest: The Four Meanings of Torah, The Three Faces of God and The Three Planes of Consciousness. Each of these three is central to your own evolution of consciousness. They are also, taken together critical first steps in the articulation of a particularly Jewish expression of Integral religion and World Spirituality

Torah

Torah is a word that holds four distinct meanings – four that are actually one. Very often, groups within Judaism choose one or two of these meanings and reject the others. The Divine intention in our generation has deployed different individuals and communities in ways that allow them to focus with particular intensity on one or more of those meanings. Ultimately, however, all four meanings will be integrated within all peoples. That is the vision of messianic consciousness as well as of what I call Integral Judaism. Both invite us to understand that all four meanings are simultaneously co-valid.

Sadly, three out of the four meanings of Torah have been virtually lost in most of our popular, contemporary engagement with Torah. First, the word *Torah* means “Guidance,” or “Instructions.” The common Hebrew phrase, *Torat Hayyim*, usually translated as “Torah of Life,” is therefore better understood as “Instructions for Living.”²⁰ The core sensibility of Buddhist thought was once summed up humorously as “Don’t just do something, sit there.” This was correctly contrasted with the core sensibility of Torah, which is clearly that of *mitzvah*. *Mitzvah* means “Applied Instruction,” or, said better, it means that there is something to be done; there is something that needs to be done *now* and can only be done by you, and its moment is

now and only now.²¹ Don't just sit there, *do something*: "The Torah implores you to just do. And whatever it is you find to do, is pleasing to her."²²

The goal of Torah is to instruct us on what needs to be done. That which needs to be done is the instruction of the hour.²³ Therefore the Torah invites us to a path with instructions on how to become *more* alive. These instructions include prayer, meditation, symbolic ritual, ceremony, spiritual laws of the universe, and ethical guidance. But most of all, taught the second-century Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai – the primary teacher of the Zohar, the great book of Hebrew mysticism – the Torah is all about instructions for love. In his words: "Be *Chavivuta Talya Milta*– It all depends on love."²⁴ Torah is then the Bakhti Yoga of the heart. It is comprised of instructions on becoming and being a great lover in every dimension of your life. In this first dimension of Torah there is also the certainty of love's instructions. The beloved gives instructions which are designed to protect the lover and keep her safe. Instructions show us the way, allow us to avoid confusion and dangerous byways. In this sense Torah provides the certainty of being, of being held safe in the arms of the mother who deeply loves her child.

Second, Torah means "Search."²⁵ The biblical narrative in the Book of Numbers tells of the twelve men, one from each of the twelve tribes, who were sent by Moses "*la'tur*," to spy-out the land. The word "*tur*," derived from the same root as *Torah*, means "to search." The modern English derivative is "Tourist." Our contemporary incarnation of the *tur*, the search, is more often than not, the accidental tourist who has learned to travel the highways of the world without ever being on the path. We need to return the pilgrimage to travel and the seeker to the tourist. In terms of the meanings of Torah, however, suffice it to say that Torah embraces not only the certainty and clarity of the Instructions but also the openness and uncertainty of the Search. Torah is the search for both love and the beloved.

Now let me offer at least one example of how people adopt one meaning of Torah, that of instructions and certainty, and ignore the search and uncertainty quality of Torah. Much of the classical Orthodox community views Torah primarily as Instructions. Sometimes the *goal* of the instructions – to become a lover – is sadly lost, but that is another conversation. The law itself is seen as the primary manifestation of Torah's instruction. The law implies certainty and a measure of safety. And that is well and good up to a point. The problem is that instructions for living are supposed to keep us safe. We tell a child "follow the instructions and you will be safe, protected. What happens, however, when we follow the instructions and are *not* protected? For example, what happens when huge communities of Jews are gassed to death in a Holocaust? Clearly the instructions did not keep them safe. There are really only two possible responses if one entertains only the meaning of "instructions" for Torah. First, is to claim that the people were not following the instructions. That is to say, the Jews suffered because they violated the Torah in some shape or form by omission or commission.²⁶ With some notable exceptions, this is the classic response of Orthodoxy. The second response is to conclude that the instructions simply do not work, and they therefore ought to be abandoned altogether. This has been the implicit response of much of secular Jewry. If, however, I understand that Torah also means *la'tur*, to search, then I open the space for uncertainty and questioning – not as an

oppositional force to Torah but as part of Torah's deepest meaning. At the same time, much of the sophisticated Jewish intellectual world – the kind that marks the halls of the academy – embraces the second meaning, which is all about enquiry and questioning, but rejects both the first meaning and, as we shall see, the third meaning as well.

The third meaning of Torah derives from the biblical Hebrew word *yo'reh* with which it shares etymological roots. *Yo'reh* implies the aiming and shooting of an arrow. The *yo'reh* dimension of Torah is about taking proper aim, and anyone who has ever engaged in archery knows that taking aim is really about seeking deep alignment, as in “*Zen and the art of archery.*” This meaning is about utter clarity of intention. *Yo'reh* as Torah is the seeking of deep alignment with the All that is. This is what one seeks to achieve through Torah. Torah within this meaning describes an inner state of being. It is the inner alignment in which I am love; in which I realize that love, the lover and the beloved are one. And that I am all of that.

This meaning has been adopted as the essential meaning of what passes for spiritual Judaism. The problem is that most of the teachers and consumers of this form of Judaism have abandoned the first two meanings. There is no sense of the law; there is no sense of obligation; there is no sense of Torah as instructions. Moreover there is often a kind of New Age dogmatism in these communities which paradoxically prevents, like all dogmas, genuine inquiry, search or questioning.

The fourth meaning of Torah is “Light,” or “Enlightenment.” The Torah is an enlightenment teaching of a specific nature and aim. Its goal is clear: the deepest possible enlightenment for the greatest number of people; the greatest depth for the greatest span. The Torah teaches the democratization of enlightenment.²⁸ It seeks not to educate the elite, the priests, but rather invites the masses to enlightenment. “You shall be for me a *kingdom of priests* and a holy nation”²⁹ (Exodus 19:6). Priesthood and Enlightenment is then a genuine possibility for the masses and not merely for the elite. This meaning is also a manifestation of love. The experience of enlightenment is demarcated by the certain knowledge that love is the ground of all being upon which all else depends. The core quality of the priest according to the Zohar is the ability to give others the blessings of love and joy.³⁰

Part of our conscious intention in this and future works on Integral Judaism is to reclaim Torah as an enlightenment teaching. This meaning of Torah has been forgotten by both the Orthodox and liberal communities, as well as the academic. The extent to which this idea has been lost was demonstrated to me once again when I was recently skimming Rodger Kamanetz' *The Jew and the Lotus*. In this very popular book, he states in a kind of matter-of-fact way, that both the term and the concept of enlightenment have no place in Judaism. To say that this is an egregious error would be too major an understatement. Not only is “enlightenment teaching” a core meaning of the word *Torah* itself, it is also a core meaning of the word *Zohar*, the title of the most important Hebrew mystical text, accepted as authoritative by every branch of classical Judaism.³¹ In the writing of my teacher Mordechai Lainer of Izbica and his primary student Tzadok HaCohen of Lublin, enlightenment and its achievement is a

major topic of discussion.³² The latter work is studied today as a core text by Orthodox institutions of every ilk and stripe all over the world.

All four dimensions of Torah – Instructions for Living, The Search, Correct Inner-Alignment, Enlightened Teaching and the Democratization of Enlightenment – will find expression throughout our meditations in this work. At times we will be re-reading the instructions of a specific *mitzvah* and give it new meaning and resonance. At other times we will be seekers struggling to extract meaning from an often brutal and pained world. Still at other times we will share core enlightenment teachings of Hebrew wisdom. Integrated within these three meanings of Torah is the realization of its fourth meaning, our essential alignment with the Divine cosmos through its expression in our inner being and external reality. In the end, however, all four meanings are really about different ways of loving.

In this meditation, we will seek to unfold the Torah of Love that is the unique path of Rosh Hashanah as “The Dance of Tears.”

On the Defacing of God

The second sacred methodology which we will unfold in this work, is the “Three Faces of God,”³³ a structure of consciousness made explicit in the great traditions³⁴ and placed front and center with new implications in Integral Theory. The core understanding of this teaching is that in order to realize the basic goal of the Hebrew spirit, to stand “Before God,” what biblical narrative calls “*Lifnei Hashem*,” one must incorporate in some real way the Three Faces of God.

Lifnei is Hebrew not only for “in front of” or “before” God. *Lifnei* is also related to the Hebrew word for “face” or “perspective.” In the language of the Talmud: “Just as [people’s] faces are different so are their perspectives different.”³⁵ This is understood to mean that the infinite uniqueness of every face is but an external expression of the infinite ontological value and meaning of every human being.³⁶ “Face,” in the nomenclature of the ancient masters, is often virtually synonymous with perspective. The well-known phrase of the ancient masters, “there are seventy faces to Torah,”³⁷ indicates that there are seventy co-valid perspectives on every issue of spirit. Every face is a perspective. Human adequacy and dignity derives from the biblical affirmation that every human being holds a unique and infinitely valuable perspective. This is the implicit premise of my book, *Soul Prints*³⁸.

To be *Lifnei Hashem*—“before God”—therefore means to incorporate the different faces of God. This includes as many individual perspectives as possible. The closer one gets to a perspectival thinking the closer one comes to transcending the personal for the transpersonal. This does not exclude the personal. Rather, for the Kabbalist who is true to the Hebraic lineage, it transcends and includes the personal. Incorporating perspectives as a form of standing before God also refers to the three core universal perspectives which we have termed the Three Faces of God, namely:

God in the first person, God in the second person and God in the third person. These are three distinct perspectives of spirit on all of reality. For Mordechai Lainer of Izbica, it is the holding of all three perspectives in an integrated internal experience that produces what he calls *He'arah*; enlightenment.³⁹

The Three Faces

God in the first person is the experience of God flowing through you. God flows through you not by your denial of your unique perspective, or what Carlos Castaneda and many teachers influenced by him referred to as your “personal his-tory”⁴⁰ – rather, your unique perspective is precisely the place in which you, the human being, meet and embrace the Divine. In God in the first person, to awaken means to be lived by love. It is the realization that you are an irreducibly unique expression of the love intelligence and love beauty that initiated and animates all that is. Thus, according to the Hebrew wisdom masters, God in the first person is realized not through generalized meditation, as is usually thought to be the case and which effaces one’s unique perspective. Rather, it is accomplished by what Lainer of Izbica calls *Berur* – literally, clarification or purification. *Berur* is a mystical technique that can take many forms, including meditation. The core of this, however, is that through *Berur* you first clarify and then merge with your radically unique perspective. This is your unique face. It is only through the embrace of your unique perspective that you are able to transcend your narrow human perspective to embrace a Divine perspective. The paradox of Kabbalah, in contrast to the no-self of Terevandan Buddhism, for example, is that it is through your unique face that you embrace your original face. Or, said differently, it is not merely that *the* personal precedes the transpersonal. Rather, the personal itself is the very gateway to the transpersonal. Of course, the Divine perspective naturally includes all perspectives. It thus transcends and includes one’s own unique perspective as well

This move from a sacred but limited personal perspective to an all embracing transpersonal perspective is what Schneur Zalman of Liadi called the move from “our side” to “his side.” Like most post-Lurianic Hebrew mystics, he viewed this movement as the basic goal of all spiritual work. This first path is what is usually referred to as the path of enlightenment,⁴¹ in which the individual actually seeks to attain a state or permanent stage of mystical illumination. This spiritual path was one of the demarcating characteristics of the great mystical revival in Safed in the 16th century. It is for this reason, writes scholar of mysticism Elliot Wolfson, “that, in contrast to the general trend in Jewish mysticism⁴² to avoid writing first person accounts of mystical experience, we find an abundance of such first person testimonies in the Safed period.”⁴³

In the “God in the first person” practice one experiences a level of ontic identity with some dimension of the Divine. For example, according to the school of Izbica the experience of God in the first person is through the realization of the ontic identity of wills between man and God.⁴⁴ Man actually has a first person experience of

the Divine will animating and ultimately merging with his own will in complete identity. Practices such as meditation, which lead to the realization of some form of supreme identity with the Godhead, are aimed at revealing God in the first person. Scholars like Moshe Idel tend to call certain forms of these “God in the first person experiences,” *Unio Mystica or extreme Devekut* experiences. Idel, however, was careful to note in later essays⁴⁵ that after the moment of *Unio Mystica* the initiate returned, revitalized and empowered, to their own unique individuality.⁴⁶ It is Lainer of Izbica, however, who crystallized most clearly the great paradox of Hebrew mysticism: the nondual experience must affirm and not efface the unique individual even as personal uniqueness is the path to the non-dual One.

God in the second person is what Kabbalah scholar Gershom Scholem called “Communion.”⁴⁷ This is the core experience of the human being who is not merged with the Divine but rather stands in relation to God. This is the essence of Hebrew biblical consciousness, and, according to Scholem, defines Hebrew *mystical* consciousness as well. God in second person is all about relationship. Whether the relationship is that of a servant to his master or a lover and his beloved, or a relationship between partners, or even friends, they are all “relating” to God.⁴⁸ All of the above models of relationship find expression in Hebrew wisdom teachings. All are forms of God in the second person

The most powerful form of God in the second person is almost certainly the prayer experience. It is told that when Hassidic master Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev used to pray, he would begin with the standard liturgical form of blessing: “*Boruch Ata Adonai* – Blessed are you, God,” and then break out of the mold of conventional prayer and cry out in sheer joy: “YOU! YOU! YOU! YOU!” He would lose himself in these words, repeatedly shouting in ecstasy, “YOU! YOU! YOU!!!” This is the rapture of God in the second person. For Levi Yitzchak, the blessing is a kind of Buddhist pointing-out instruction. It points, however, not to *sunyata* or emptiness, but to God in the second person. The 16th-century Kabbalist, Yeshayahu ben Avraham, taught the spiritual practice of *Hitbodedut*. In one form, this meant walking alone in the forest “talking to God as you would to your friend.”⁴⁹ In “God in the second person” we meet God and bow. In “God in the second person” we meet God and partner. In “God in the second person” we meet God and love. The key however is the encounter. It is the encounter with God in history and in the lived reality of every human being that is the essence of the “God in the second person” experience.

God in the *third* person is all of the talk that describes and maps the Divine reality of the world. God in the third person could be the physical sciences, social sciences, systems theory, Buddhist Dharma or Jewish Law or metaphysics. Of course, the various sciences, system theories and the like are unconscious face of God; they only become conscious faces of God when they recognize not only the surface but the *interior* depthdimension of reality. All third person maps of reality are God in the third person. Third person perspectives offer detailed maps of reality, whether through the tools of sociology, complexity theory, psychological theory, the sciences, or certain forms of theology and philosophy.

Now here is the key point. In order to attain a significant level of enlightenment, one must engage all three faces of God as one. It is in the integration of the three faces that one attains depth and wisdom. This is of course very different than usual understandings of enlightenment which locate it in a first-person God experience in which individuality is effaced and the separate self is absorbed into the One. Although absorption is a key feature of God in the first person in Hebrew mysticism,⁵⁰ it is only a stage in a larger God-face process that is itself but one of the three major faces of God.

Each face of God has its own natural strength and its own unique shadow. It is only through the integration of all three that one attains the depth beyond the surface. It is only then that one can stand face to face with God or attain what the Kabbalists call *Partzuf Shalem*: the full face of God.

The contemporary world of spirit, however, can be most appropriately mapped as a struggle between the three faces. Each face attempts to dominate or colonize the other two. Each face claims that truth is accessible only – or at least primarily – through the perspective of its own eyes. Both individuals and social systems find themselves tugged between the three faces. Often, a person or a community abandons one face in order to embrace a different face that they feel is truer. In doing so, they feel compelled to reject their previous “face” experience. Soon enough, they begin to feel incomplete and dissatisfied and are often unsure why. They then often wind up reverting to the face they initially rejected, but in doing so they usually abandon the new face they had more recently engaged. The implicit message of contemporary culture, as we shall see below, is that one must choose among the three. This is a tragedy, because the lack of any one of the three leaves one with a gaping hole of need, ethics, desire and illumination.

Ashram, Synagogue and Academy

God in first, second, and third person

Speaking in general terms we might say that ashrams, new age seminars, and spiritual retreat centers such as Esalen, Omega, Hollyhock and Spirit Rock, place an enormous emphasis on God in the first person. The chief activity of the ashram is usually meditation, with additional tracks in various forms of movement, psychodrama and the like. All are God in the first person practices. In meditation, the goal is the realization of the supreme identity between the human being and the god. It is to know the “I am God” to which the novice aspires. The first person experience is also a primary domain of the many schools of Kabbalah which seek *unio mystica* with the Divine, employing a vast array of spiritual technologies. Likewise, in the contemporary Jewish Renewal movement there is an enormous prejudice in favor of God in the first person engagement. This expresses itself both positively and in shadow terms including, a refusal to genuinely bow before a second person God who

makes demands which itself fosters a disguised narcissism. It manifests as well in a tragic refusal to engage in third person the careful processes which characterize law, fairness and integrity before which the first person preference must bow. Without these second and third person dimensions truth, goodness and love are often hopelessly distorted.

The synagogue and the church are the primary proponents of God in the *second* person. Their primary activity is prayer, which involves the human being talking to God. Their secondary activity is the fostering of a “we” space which is called community. Here, in the well-known nomenclature of Martin Buber, man meets the infinite Divine in his fellow and his neighbor. Or, in Levinas’ reformulation of Buber, man meets God in the face of the other

The academy is the primary home of God in the *third* person. The academy is dedicated to objective third-person descriptions of all facets of reality. The social sciences and the hard sciences, as well as moral philosophy and metaphysics, are all ostensibly objective third-person descriptions of reality – God in the third person.

The problem is that each of the above views itself as wielding somewhat of a monopoly on authenticity and genuine spirituality. Synagogues and churches are very suspicious of ecstasy, ashrams and Kabbalah because they are rooted in God in the first-person experience. A recent example is Pope Francis’ scathing dismissal of Buddhism. He confuses the God in the first person emphasis and its non-theistic character with atheism. Not recognizing the more familiar God in second person experience in the Buddhist system has made the pope a fierce spiritual opponent of Buddhism. This kind of dismissal of God in the first person, dripping with invectives of all sorts, is dominant in Jewish intellectual and social circles as well. For many religious philosophers, God in the second person is the fundamental Jewish spiritual moment. Such eminent voices include Eliezer Berkovitz of Modern Orthodoxy, Joseph Soloveitchk, the pre-eminent philosopher and Talmudist of a central stream in 20th century Orthodoxy, Yaacov Reines of the Religious Zionist movement, Gershom Scholem the major voice of contemporary Kabbalah scholarship, the preeminent Jewish historian Salo Baron, most leading Wissenschaft scholars and virtually all the founders of the Reform movement. Berkovitz, for example, in two essays which are representative of his thought, “Crisis and Faith” and the “Philosophy of Encounter” scathingly critiques the aspiration of *unio mystica* as being a fundamental violation of Jewish Theology.⁵¹ He lumps drug-induced experiences of LSD and mystical experiences in the same category, dismissing both as a violation of the core Jewish ethos of “encounter” – God in the second person. To get a sense of the complete rejection of one face of God by another – particularly the absolute rejection of God in first person by the God in second person – there is indeed no better citation than that of Eliezer Berkovitz. In his own words

It is important to distinguish between our interpretation of the prophetic encounter as the basic religious experience and the way of the mystic. The encounter should not be confused with mystical communion. The mystic’s goal is the surrender of personal existence. His desire is to merge with the One, to pour himself into God, to be drawn into the All. The mystic finds his fulfillment in the extinction of his dignity

through being consumed by the absolute. For him individuality is a burden and a shame. Only the One or the All is real, and every form of separateness from it is an unworthy shadow existence. In the encounter, on the other hand, the original separateness is affirmed; in fact, it is granted its highest dignity by being sustained by God. The encounter may occur because the individual personality is safeguarded. When there is encounter there is fellowship and fellowship is the very opposite of the mystical surrender of man's identity in an act of communion. Judaism is not a non mystical religion.⁵² Judaism is essentially non mystical because it is a religion. The mystical communion is the end of all relationship, and therefore, the end of all religion. Judaism is essentially non mystical because according to it, God addresses himself to man, and he awaits man's response to the address. ... Man searches and God allows himself to be found. In the mystical union, however, there are no words and no law, no search and no recognition, because there is no separateness. Judaism does not admit the idea that man may rise "beyond good and evil" by drowning himself in the Godhead.... [The mystic's] worship of the absolute demands the denial of his own separateness from it; thus we are led to the Spinozastic amor dei; since nothing exists apart from the infinite, man's love for God is "the very love of God in which God loves himself."⁵³ One is inclined to agree with those who see in this the monstrous example of absolute self love. The truth is, of course, that where there is no separateness there is no love either. When there is no encounter there can be no care and concern. The mystic endeavors to overcome all separateness; the pantheist denies it from the very beginning. Judaism, on the other hand, through its concept of the encounter, affirms the reality as well as the worth of individual existence. Judaism is not only non mystical; it is also essentially anti-pantheistic.

A similar prejudice appears in Gershom Scholem's work. Much of Scholem's work on Devekut was paradoxically to affirm that *Unio Mystica* was either absent or rare in Jewish mystical sources. According to Scholem, the mystic was engaged in communion, not *unio mystica* with the Divine. In effect, Scholem implied that, even in mysticism, God in the second person – what he called communion – is the primary experience. Contemporary Kabbalah scholar Moshe Idel has spent a good part of his career taking issue with this central assertion of Scholem. He has shown decisively that God in the first person, through many and varied forms of *unio mystica*, is a demarcating feature of Devekut for the Hebrew mystic. Two passages – not from esoteric sources, but each from a mainstream Hassidic master, will serve to illustrate this point. The first is from Schneur Zalman of Liadi, the founding master of the Habad dynasty: “*And we see that when man cleaves to God it is extremely delightful for him, and very sweet, so much so that he will swallow it into his heart...as the bodily throat swallows; and this is true devekut – cleaving – as he becomes one with the essence of God into whom he was swallowed, without being separate [from him] as a distinct entity at all. This is the meaning of the verse ‘And you shall cleave to him’⁵⁵ Mamash-literally.*”

A second passage, from Levi Isaac of Berditschev, raises the possibility that this can be a permanent state of being and not merely a temporary state experience: “*There is a tzadik who (cleaves to the nought) and nevertheless returns afterwards to his essence. But Moses our master, blessed be his memory, was annihilated all the*

time since he was constantly contemplating the grandeur of the creator, blessed be he, and he did not return to his essence at all...since, as it is well known...Moses our master was constantly cleaving to Ayin – nothingness, and from this aspect he was annihilated.”

It is these types of texts, which clearly affirm Idel’s position that God in the first person, in the sense of total identification and absorption in the Godhead, is an important goal of the Hebrew mystic. This scholarly argument has probably been one of the most important discussions in Kabbalah scholarship in recent years. I have shown elsewhere that Idel and Scholem’s positions are not as far apart as they might seem and that they are actually referring to different stages⁵⁶ of the mystical experience. Be that as it may, the choice on each of their parts to emphasize a different moment in the mystical experience is driven not by text but by personal religious and moral inclination.⁵⁷

The energy around this conversation is of course bound up with a deeper argument: What is the essence – or at least the ultimate – in religious experience? Is it God in the *first* person, or God in the *second* person? That is the question. Idel emerges in his personal biography from the ground of eastern European Romanian folk mysticism, which was all about God in the first person experiences. By contrast, Scholem emerges from the central European model, which preferred God in the third person, but at most could tolerate small doses of God in the second person. *Unio Mystica*, God in the first person, was regarded by Scholem, his student Joseph Weiss, and most of the others who followed them, as rooted in a kind of religious quietism or even fatalism. This was for them the great weakness of the God in the first person model. This was too much of a violation of both Biblical and Talmudic personalism as well as the Zionist and western ethics of activism and autonomy which influenced their own values. Since they were explicitly looking to Jewish mysticism as a potential source for the revival of the Jewish spirit, God in the first person kinds of quietism were re-read by them into more palatable second person experiences which never negated the separate existence of the individual.⁵⁸ In doing so, Scholem explicitly states his intention to distinguish Hebrew mysticism from the dominant currents in general mysticism whose language was more that of union than communion. The primary difference is that in communion the unique individual is not effaced, whereas in union the unique individual is annihilated. Writes Scholem: “*Devekut or ‘communion’ with God is not ‘union’ in the sense of the Mystical Union between God and Man and of which many mystics speak.*”⁵⁹ Here, Scholem is describing Kabbalah in general, and Hassidism in particular, primarily through the prism of the Baal Shem’s teaching, even though he himself recognized that more extreme formulations are present in the teaching of the Baal Shem’s foremost disciple, the Great Maggid.⁶⁰ In a parallel passage, Scholem writes, “*It is only in extremely rare cases that ecstasy signifies actual union with God in which human individuality abandons itself to the rapture of complete submersion in the Divine stream. Even in this ecstatic frame of mind, the Jewish mystic almost invariably retains a sense of distance between the creator and his creature.*”⁶¹

Scholem, in these texts, and in many other places in his corpus, has a clear agenda; he is making important orienting generalizations which serve to distinguish

Hebrew mysticism from its non-Jewish counterparts and in doing so makes it more congruent with what he felt to be the essentially personal gestalt of Hebrew wisdom. His particular agenda here is the retaining of the personal, individual moment as primary in Hebrew thought – evidenced by its centrality even at the height of mystical ecstasy – in marked contrast to other mystical systems which highlight “*the abandonment of individuality to rapture.*”⁶² Even when Scholem talks about mystical passages that use the terminology of union, he struggles to blur the clear God-in-first-person sense of the term *Yichud*, which means unification, as in the realization of union. In describing the practitioner of the meditative rites of *Yichud*, Scholem writes: “He breaks down the barriers and brings about unification by making into an organic whole what seemed separated and isolated. He does not become God but he becomes ‘united’ with him by the process in which the core of his being is bound up with the core of all being.”

Scholem’s insistence on retaining God in the second person as the primary model of Hebrew wisdom by blurring the significance of God in the first person texts becomes even more evident in his description of the writings of the Great Maggid. The maggid’s writings abound with passages that seem to reflect strong pantheistic and *unio mystica* orientations, yet Scholem comments:

“*[The Maggid taught that] man finds himself by losing himself in God, and by giving up his identity he discovers it on a higher plane.*” Here, as in many other saying of Rabbi Baer, *devekut* is said to lead not only to communion but to *ach’dut*, union. But this union is not at all the pantheistic obliteration of the self within the Divine mind which he likes to call the naught, but pierces through this state on to the re-discovery of man’s spiritual identity. He finds himself because he has found God...and the radical terms should not blind us to the eminently Jewish and personalistic that they still cover. After having gone through *devekut*, man is still man – nay he has in truth only then started to be man, and it is only logical that only then will he be called upon to fulfill his destiny in the society of men.”

In this passage, however, we already sense a more sophisticated position in Scholem who recognizes God in the first and second person as different levels of consciousness. However, what is clear from Scholem is that first person rapture is a stage on the way to second person address and fellowship. This is of course the opposite of what one might expect from readings in non-Jewish mysticism, where second person is but a stage on the way to the deeper and higher first person experience.⁶³

Similarly, Joseph Soloveitchik’s intellectual enterprise implicitly adopts Scholem’s position on *Unio Mystica*. In his work, *Days of Remembrance*, he writes explicitly: “*Judaism rejects Unio mystica.*” Moreover, Soloveitchik’s more well-known classical essay, *Halachic Man*, is in large part a rejection of the God in the first person posture so prominent in mysticism in general and Habad Hassidism in particular. Soloveitchik’s description of *homo religiosus* is a classic description of the quietist mystical typology. In response to this God in the first person archetype, he writes: “Halachic man is as far removed from *homo religiosus* as east is from west.

” In a like manner, Martin Buber, who began his career in Jewish thought with an embrace of the intense mystical experience as being characteristic of true religion – God in the first person – eventually rejected his initial position and affirmed what he famously called “I-thou” as the demarcating Jewish religious experience.⁶⁴ For the most part, Buber and Soloveitchik’s readings of God in the first person in quietist terms of passivity and resignation were accurate for certain schools of Hebrew mysticism.⁶⁵ However, as I have shown elsewhere and noted above, there is a whole other way to read God in the first person experiences. In this second way, championed by Mordechai Lainer of Izbica and adopted from him by Abraham Isaac Kuk, God in the first person is not emasculating but radically empowering of the individual who realizes his core identity with the Divine spirit or will.⁶⁶ This is critical because it allows for an integral embrace of all three faces of God by circumventing the major critique of first person God paths, as we saw for example in Berkovitz and Scholem, namely that they are emasculating of personhood and unique individuality. For this reason, I will now showing why this critique is not necessarily valid.

The root of the empowerment fostered by the integration of all three faces of God is what I call “non-dual humanism.” Non-dual humanism, which yields a God in the first person religious typology, is significantly different from the quietist-via-passive variety ascribed to God in the first person understandings by proponents of the personalistic God in the second person orientation of Judaic consciousness. To get a deeper sense of this empowered religious type that emerges from a first person nondual God experience, let me cite from my academic work on the subject:

The following is a list of the core characteristics of the realized man according to Hassidic master Mordechai Lainer’s teaching. They point out the highly humanistic undertone of Lainer’s nondualism: Non-dual humanism at its core is God realized in the first person of the human being.

- 1) Affirming and honoring the unique individuality of every person.
- 2) Engendering human freedom and empowerment.
- 3) Affirming the necessity, ontological impact and dignity of human activism.
- 4) Affirming the ontic identity between the human and Divine name as the empowering realization of enlightenment.
- 5) Affirming the ontological dignity of human desire, and viewing it as an important normative guide.
- 6) Affirming the ontological dignity and authority of the human capacity to employ trans-rational faculties, “*Lema’alah MiDa’ato*– above and beyond his common knowing, in apprehending the unmediated will of God.
- 7) Affirming the centrality of will and the ultimate ontic identity between the will of God and the will of the awakened person, who has achieved post-*Berur* consciousness.

8) Viewing not only the Tzadik, but every person who walks in a *Berur*-awakened state, as a source of ultimate moral and legal authority. We have termed this the “democratization of enlightenment.”

What is remarkable about Lainer’s thought is not that all of these features are present all at once. Indeed, many of them could be easily identified in many writers on secular humanism.⁶⁷ What is unique is that all of these flow directly not from a secular perspective but from a radical non-dualism which affirms that all is God. The idea that the human being substantively participates in divinity is the conceptual matrix that radically empowers and frees the human being. Just like the core humanistic principles that find expression in Lainer are not unique to him, neither is the idea of substantive identity between God and Man, a concept deeply rooted in classical Hebraic thought and mysticism.⁶⁸ Indeed, Lainer and Abraham Kuk, who was highly influenced by him⁶⁹, may represent the latest stage in the great Jewish Rabbinic and Mystical tradition of apotheosis. This non-dual tradition, which affirms the possibility of human transformation and ontic identity with some manifestation of the Divine, lies in the conceptual foreground of all of Lainer’s thought. This tradition gives birth to many offspring including the ontic identification between God, Torah, and Israel⁷⁰ the blurring and even identification between the name of God and the name of man, the tradition of the *Tzadik*– who is sometimes seen as a semi-Divine and even Divine figure⁷¹– and the tradition of the erotic merging of the human being and the *Shechinah*. All of these traditions find echo and are expanded in Lainer’s non-dual humanism. What is unique about Lainer is neither his humanism nor his acosmism. His uniqueness lies in his distinctive combination of the two – what we have termed acosmic or non-dual humanism.

According to Lainer, all of the core characteristics of non-dual humanism are manifested by the Judah archetype.⁷² Before discussing the Judah characteristics, it is important to note that, for *Lainer*, living in the way of the Judah archetype is not an option; for those who are called to this life it is an absolute *obligation* which, if ignored, conjures Divine curse.⁷³ Judah is contrasted with Joseph⁷⁴ and sometimes with Levi.⁷⁵

While Joseph and Levi are characterized by Yir’ah⁷⁶ by fear or awe, the Judah archetype is characterized by love.⁷⁷ Judah represents for Lainer the religious typology who has realized his first-person ontic identity with the will of God. He consciously *participates* in divinity, realizing that his name and the name of God are one. His non-dual consciousness is realized through a process of *Berur* in which he further understands that there is no such thing as human action independent of God. Rather, he knows and experiences every action he takes as being fully animated by Divine will. This non-dual realization is radically empowering for him. Judah manifests and is virtually identified with the quality of *Tekufot*, the personal power and sacred audacity which is a direct result of realizing one’s Divine core. He feels himself called by his inner Divine voice,⁷⁸ his own personal revelation, to expand – what Lainer terms *Hitpashtut*– beyond the narrow boundaries foisted upon him by external structures. Therefore, in Lainer’s language, he can naturally be *Mechaven Ratzon Hashem*, “intend the will of God.” Judah affirms the dignity of his *Teshuka*, his desire.⁷⁹

Moreover, he allows himself to be guided by his *Teshuka* once it has undergone a process of *Berur*.

Judah, writes Lainer, time and again, is connected to the awareness of *Ein Lo Gevul*: “He has no boundary.” He is identified with *Ratzon Hashem even Lema’alah Meda’ato*,⁸⁰ beyond his conscious will. He has realized no boundary consciousness. His prayer, repentance, Torah and desire all derive from this consciousness of *Ein Gevul*.⁸¹ This consciousness has normative implications. It moves him – even when he is misunderstood by his own community – to occasionally break the law in order to respond to an order of revelation which is more immediate and personal than the original revelation of Sinai mediated through Moses. His path to “no boundary” consciousness is unique. More than merely participating in the *general* Divine will, he incarnates the *unique* Divine will. Paradoxically, it is through boundary, particularly through his own radically individual nature – what Lainer refers to in the Hebrew as *Perat*, or particular – that he is able to transcend the *Kelalim*, the general principles of law, and access *Peratei Div’rei Torah*, the unmediated revelation of the Divine addressed specifically to him, refracted through the prism of his unique soul. His unique soul, expressed in his unique will, reveals and manifests his ontic identity with the Divine will. He has undergone a process of *Berur* that allowed him to identify his unique soul print (*chelek*) and soul root (*shoresh*), his unique manifestation of the Divine light, the root of his soul. He is particularly connected to his unique *mitzvah* for which he must even be willing to give up his life. Because the very essence of his life essence (*chaim*) is his uniqueness; therefore to live without it would be to not live at all. In short, Judah is the personification of non-dual humanism. Judah is a classic expression of the God in the first person consciousness.

It is evident that Lainer had enormous influence on the greatest of the modern Jewish mystics, Abraham Isaac Kuk.

When Kuk insists in his writing that “I” is “I am the Lord your God,” and sets that up as a major religious model, then he is arguing for God in the first person. In that very same paragraph he teaches that in the realization of “I” is “I am the Lord your God” one claims his essential power – what Rabbi Kuk calls “one’s essential ‘I’.” When his books are burned by those who carefully read them (not just by communities who opposed his Zionism), part of the principled opposition to his teaching is the danger of setting God in the first person as a religious ideal, and not entirely without reason. The great weakness of God in the first person is that it is a great place for the ego to hide. I have known highly sophisticated spiritual egos who found wonderful refuge and great solace in the God in the first person experiences. Often the Eros and power of their God in first person experiences makes those experiences the focus of their spiritual quest and sadly allows them to override elemental dictates of ethos. This is the danger of God in the first person being the exclusive or even primary face of God. While both Lainer and Kuk were cognizant of this danger, and offered sophisticated treatments of the ethical and spiritual work needed to be done to avoid it, the trap still remains a major shadow in all God in the first person paths.

Shifting perspectives, however, we must note that ashram disciples, Kabbalah seekers, and Spiritual retreat center consumers – all God in first person advocates –

have little use for synagogues, and not entirely without reason. They feel unable to connect to the God in the second person conversation. They find the experience of the synagogue to be disembodied, alienating and not trustworthy. In the words of many: “I do not feel alive in the synagogue.” It is more than even that, however. They feel that the externalized voice of God too often overrides their own deepest moral intuitions. Moreover, they feel that such a division between man and God is a product of the limited perception of duality and contributes to a world built on divisions and boundaries. False divisions and boundaries, they correctly point out, are the source of most human suffering. The highly unsophisticated and misguided dismissal of theism that is rampant in both popular and learned Buddhist texts is symptomatic of this tendency. However, on the other side of the divide, a synagogue rabbi once asked me why I bothered teaching at spiritual retreat centers, lamenting that, “There is no sense of commitment or conversation with God; it is just another way for the ‘me’ generation to coddle itself.”

Shifting perspectives once more, we note how obvious it is that the academic world, which subscribes to God in the third person, has little use for, or trust in, either the synagogue or the ashram. The academy rejects their methods as being “subjective,” preferring the method of third person engagement, which it considers to be far more “objective,” and – again – not entirely without reason. However, the ashram and synagogue are equally distrustful of the academy, viewing it as a place where spirit has been killed, stored in formaldehyde, and mounted for intellectual study devoid of all life, commitment, ethos or Eros.

A final example of the great clash of perspectives which underlies some significant part of the Jewish culture wars: There were and are fierce arguments in Jewish thought over the nature of prayer. The simple and direct understanding of prayer is that it is the archetypal expression of the God in the second person relationship. Indeed, some Hassidic masters, together with the likes of the great Orthodox Talmudist and mystic Joseph Soloveitchik, insist that prayer is linked to man’s acute “crisis of need awareness.” For them, it is this sense of man as creature that translates into the prayer of entreaty and is the core framework within which man may approach God.⁸² Some Hassidic masters, however, especially in the school of the Maggid of Mezeritch, insisted that prayer was about the human being collapsing the *Ani* – the separate human self – into the *Ayin*, the infinite pool of Divine nothingness. Human prayer of “mere entreaty” was considered to be of vastly inferior quality to mystical prayer of union with the Divine. As the Maggid of Mezeritch put it: “A person should not pray for his own needs; rather he should only pray for the needs of the *Shechinah*.” Of course, what the Maggid goes on to teach is that a primary goal of prayer itself is absorption into the *Shechinah*.⁸³ Here again there is a felt need to choose between God in the first person and God in the second person.

Of course, within every Jewish movement, one can find occasional lone voices crying for the integration of at least two, and sometimes – although rarely – even *all* three faces of God. However, usually the faces of God and the camps that champion but one face, are in deep conflict with one another.⁸⁴ They are virtually always critical of each other and virtually never work together. In the words of Lainer:

“The life-objective of Ephraim, as inspired by God, is to concentrate on the halachah regarding every matter, and not to budge from obeying its every letter.... And the root of the life of Judah is to focus on the Creator and to be connected to God in every situation. And even though Judah perceives how the halachah inclines on an issue, he nevertheless looks to God to show him the core of the truth behind the matter at hand.... [Judah] looks to God for guidance in all matters rather than engage in the rote practice of religious observances, nor is he content to merely repeat today what he did yesterday...but that God enlighten him anew each day as to what is the God will in the moment. This [quest for ever-fresh enlightenment] sometimes compels Judah to act contrary to established halachah.... But in the time to come, we have been promised that Ephraim and Judah will no longer be at odds with one another (Isaiah 11:13). This means that Ephraim will no longer have any complaints against Judah regarding Judah’s deviation from halachah, because God will then demonstrate to Ephraim the core intention of Judah, that his intentions are for the sake of the will of God, and not for any selfish motif. Then will there be harmony between the two.”⁸⁵

As we have already noted, individuals in their personal journeys, and communities in their development, often go through different stages in their unfolding. Each stage implicitly prefers one face of God over the others. The different stages are usually viewed as inconsistent and contradictory, causing great confusion of identity and direction. However, a closer look at these stages of development, both in individuals and communities, shows that they are often roughly organized around a preference for one or two of the faces of God over the others.

Integral Judaism makes a simple but powerful point. In order to engage the full face of God, to be before God, *Lifnei Hashem*, one must engage and integrate the three main faces of God. In our understanding, this is the underlying core of Kabbalistic *Yichudim* that are engaged in unifying, what were literally called, the “many faces of God.”⁸⁶ Failure to fully engage any one of these three faces leaves the person without some critical tool necessary for spiritual growth or for what Hassidism, based on a rich earlier tradition, called enlightenment. Not only does it prevent spiritual growth, but it also leads to the absolutizing of one face of God over the others, and becomes then a form of idolatry. The ancient rabbis referred to this as the “cutting of the shoots,”⁸⁷ the act of separating the *Shechinah*, God’s lower face, from *Zeir Anpin*, God’s higher faces. Indeed, the biblical text itself frames idolatry as “You shall have no other God *Al Panai*”: literally “upon my face,” which we read to mean choosing one face of God as the only face

Perhaps Tzadok HaCohen of Lublin said it best. To paraphrase his teaching: There are three essential expressions of the Divine, each of which plays an integral role in spiritual life.⁸⁸ They are called “I, You and He.” I implies my integral experience of God, within my heart and within all of which comprises my universe,⁸⁹ for the “glory of God fills the whole earth”⁹⁰ and God “dwells within the innard of the earth.”⁹¹ You implies my imminent relationship with God, my encounter with God as Other, as creation to Creator,⁹² as in prayer and meditation – not through my experience of God’s presence across the length and breadth of creation but through directing my focus toward a specific sacred space like the Holy of Holies in the time that the Temple stood, or – in modern times – eastward toward the Temple Mount.⁹³ He

is the highest level and refers to my transcendent experience of God, my acknowledgment of God as purely unknowable mystery whose existence is unrelated to the known world of creation, for “the universe is not the place of God, but God is the place of the universe.”⁹⁴ *He*, the Zohar states, is “the most concealed of all mysteries, the most secret of all secrets, and cannot be named.”⁹⁵

Lifnei Hashem

The goal of Hebrew consciousness is to be *Lifnei Hashem*, before God, as in God in the second person. And yet the very phrase itself holds God in the first person, concealed in its linguistic wonder. The word *Lifnei*, translated as “before,” or “in front of,” means also “face” and “inside.” In this reading, *Lifnei Hashem* actually implies to be not merely before God in a spatial sense, as in “I am here and God is there,” God in the second person; rather, it is an invitation to encounter God in the first person. *Lifnei Hashem*, to be before God, may also imply being “on the inside of God’s face.” To be before God as a second person encounter gives way to God in the first person, in that the person merges with the Divine face.

Deeper still, in order to be *Lifnei Hashem*, before the face of God, all the faces of God must be present. If one is missing any one of the three major perspectives, then one is missing something essential in the quest for enlightenment: living before God. We need to meet the Divine in first, second and third person. While we have devoted much of our discussion to first and second persons, Third person is equally critical because it gives us a reality map which allows us to understand where we are and to where must go in order to realize our enlightenment. This is the world of the sciences which describe reality in third person, be they the hard sciences of biology and physics, or the soft sciences of sociology, psychology and theology. For the religiously sensitive scientist of the Albert Einstein variety, it is God in the third person who moves him to ecstasy and praise. Thus, examples of the psalmist’s expression of God in the third person would be, “How great and magnificent are your works, O God, how infinitely deep are your thoughts,”⁹⁶ or “The heavens tell of the glory of God.”⁹⁷ Moreover, all of the critical intuitions of developmental thought, levels of consciousness, social policy and more, emerge only from God in third person paths. And yet, the passionate pursuit of God in the third person, as necessary and even intoxicating and illuminating as it can be, is ultimately insufficient. It leaves us lonely. And this divinely invested loneliness is often the impetus to glimpse another face of God.

Loneliness and Fellowship

God in the second person is critical because it invites us to actual relationship with the Divine. It is this relationship which both redeems us from loneliness and invites us to surrender before that which is radically other and beyond our limited

capacities. Yet we can only surrender to God (God in the second person) because we know that we are also part of him (God in the first person). To surrender without the felt sense of identity as God in the first person risks the dangers of divine abuse. Both of these gifts are not available through God in the third person. At the same time, God in the second person often becomes a kind of primitive relationship with a cosmic vending machine; God before whom we are ultimately emasculated and always doomed to failure. It is then that God in the first person redeems us and invites us to full pleasure and power as we realize in deep spiritual practice our ultimate identity with the Divine.⁹⁸ And yet again, as we have already noted, first person by itself without recourse to second person becomes a subtle hiding place of ego and narcissism. So we return to the passionate relationship, dialogue and surrender of God in the second person. Yet, God in the second person does not allow us to access the sacred dharma of spirit, science, psychology, or the social sciences, all of which are indispensable for our illumination. One cannot do shadow work merely by sitting on the meditation mat. One cannot heal either physical or mental illness merely with the wonders of modern medicine, or merely through prayer. And so we seek again God in the third person, the God of the dharmas. And we continue, like the angels in Jacob's dream, ascending and descending on the ladder of divinity, firmly grounded while reaching for the heavens. It is only when we vision all three faces of God that we become Israel –*Sar El*, literally translated as “those who vision God.” Those who vision God in all of his three faces are called Israel. All who are called Israel come to rest before the infinity of Divine wonder, face to face with the Divine, on the inside of God's face.

In the course of our meditation, we will shift to and fro between these three faces of God. At times we will seek to unpack the psychological truth of a particular ritual or narrative. In this, we will be giving third person analysis of other people's first person experiences: God in the third person. Still at other times we will show sacred technologies that seek to realize God in the first person. Occasionally, I will share my own God in the first person experience as a way of seeking a deeper understanding of some truth or wisdom. At other times, we will unpack the unique technologies of Hebrew wisdom for accessing God in the second person. We will show how the wisdom masters envisioned the transition from God in the second person to God in the first person.

All through our narration we will weave several distinct strands. First we will be having a conversation. Thus I will rarely say in a sentence “in one's experience” but will prefer to say “in *your* experience”: God in the second person. Second, we will introduce a series of biblical archetypes. We will engage them in third person through analysis of their patterns and motivations. At the same time, we invite you to access the energy of the archetype in your own first person experience – God in the first person – and engage the archetype in conversation, even invite the archetype – as is the Kabbalistic custom – to serve as your guide and protector in your personal journeys through life: God in the second person. Third, we will introduce maps of reality such as levels of consciousness, developmental stages, or the Three Faces of God. All of these maps are God in the third person. Fourth, we will be discussing the path of tears throughout our conversation. Here again we will sometimes talk about

tears in the third person: what is the physiological biological and psychological nature of tears? More often, however, we will talk in third person about the first and second person experience of tears, both of key biblical archetypes as well as ourselves. Fifth, we will adduce and analyze sacred texts that will help us attain our spiritual goals.

The text itself, as we have already noted, is a third person object, a second person interlocutor and a first person revelation that flows seamlessly between the interpreter and the writ. We are of course well aware that the academy is built on purely third person analysis of text and that the introduction of the other faces of God invalidates thought as being “non academic”—the ultimate pejorative of the scholar. However, Moshe Idel has already ventured to suggest that despite the problematics inherent in such a path – which if Idel did not assert he would lose all standing in the academy – there is some truth in the suggestion that scholars need to also be mystics in order to understand the texts they study. Realizing the unlikely nature of such a reality, Idel writes that at the very least it is highly important that the scholar have some personal contact with genuine mystics. In our terms, Idel is saying that there needs to be second person conversations between the camps of God in the first person and in the third person. Sadly, neither suggestion of Idel has been heeded by the academy, which has led to all forms of shallowness and misunderstanding. A text must be approached through the eyes of more than just one face of God. Depth and wisdom are not available when we deface God in reading a text.

We need to offer the community a new kind of writing that uses the best tools of the academy, merged together with mystical writing from the heart, psychological insight and guidance, spiritual direction, and honest self revelation when appropriate: the Three Faces of God.

Together, all five of these approaches will offer you, the reader, an integrated presentation of the Three Faces of God. It is in the integration and deployment of all three faces that we seek our enlightenment. And it is our humble suggestion that only by accessing and integrating all three perspectives, all three faces of God, can we in turn access a deeper wisdom and enlightenment than that which we have realized at the start of our travels together.

A Word about Sacred Text and the Faces of God

The manifestation of Torah in this world is through the word. The Torah is the discretion of Infinity in a word. The Torah, according to the Kabbalists, whose tradition I have received and attempt to teach in the world, is a living organism held in the vessel of a text. The text is alive with the voice of God. The voice of God spoke to human consciousness at Sinai, the mountain of revelation. At that event, Infinity contracted itself in infinite love and compassion in order to embrace the human being with the Divine word, what we call Torah. In biblical consciousness, then, the voice of God speaks not in the emptiness of what the Buddhists call *Sunyatta* or the Kabbalists call *Ayin*,⁹⁹ but in the fullness of Divine speech.

Perhaps the most important mantras in the entire Hebrew Canon of sacred scripture, the Hebrew Koans *par excellence*, are the seemingly banal phrases such as, “God spoke to Moses” and “Moses spoke to God.” There is a conversation going on. This is not the God in the first person of “I am” meditations so beloved of the mystics. Rather, this is God in the second person, the I-Thou in all of its glory. The Hebrew word for Messiah, for example, is *Moshee’ach*, whose core meaning is conversation.¹⁰⁰ Messianic consciousness is attained when the Divine- human conversation becomes natural and accessible to all beings.¹⁰¹ But there is a secret here, a secret hidden within the *nature* of the conversation. Sacred text does not merely record a conversation that *was*— a conversation that issues commands demanding obedience — rather, sacred text is the vessel which records a conversation that is ongoing. Revelation — the Divine human conversation — never stopped. In the biblical mantra, God’s voice is “the great voice that does not cease” to speak.¹⁰² God did not give the Torah in the past. Rather, God is in this very moment “*Noten HaTorah*”— the present giver of the Torah. This, according to Isaiah HaLevi Horowitz, is why the blessing we recite on studying Torah describes God as *giving* Torah in the eternal present tense and not in the historical past tense.¹⁰³

God spoke to Moses and Moses spoke to God and they continue to speak to each other up to now and in this very moment. For the Kabbalist, this means that God speaks to me here and now even as I speak to God here and now. In the language of the Zohar, “Moses lives in every generation.”¹⁰⁴ Moreover, the Hassidic masters taught, “Moses lives in every one of us.” Thus, we are invited, even compelled by our innermost Moses nature, to continue the dialogue. For the ancient Talmudic sages of the mystical school as well as later Kabbalists, this God in the second person dialogue, expressed in the ongoing revelation of the God voice, often blurred into God in the first person identity with the Godhead and the Torah. This is also the inner and hidden meaning of the Zoharic Mantra, “God, Israel and Torah are one.”¹⁰⁵ God, Israel and Torah — the Divine, the text and the interpreter — are one. For most Kabbalists, this means that the sacred text can only be understood via hermeneutics. The interpreter’s substantive identity with the text he interprets is precisely the source of authority — Divine authority — for the interpretation in that moment. The sacred text is the Torah. It participates in divinity. The sacred autobiography of the interpreter is what is referred to in this Kabbalistic adage of Israel. Israel participates in divinity. God is co-identical with both, Torah and Israel. Thus, sacred text is not weakened by its need to be filtered through the prism of the interpreter. Rather, it is only through this process that the real meanings of sacred text are revealed. Mordechai Lainer of Izbica took this one radical step farther. In his reading¹⁰⁶ there are times when the sacred autobiography not only interprets but even overrides sacred text. If the individual accesses the unmediated will of God and understands that will to be in contradiction to the normative Hebrew law, then it is to the Divine will revealed in the prism of Israel to which one is obligated. When there is a contradiction between the Divine will refracted in the prism of Torah vs. the Divine will refracted in the prism of Israel, the prism of Israel must triumph.

Torah, Israel and God are but different faces of the One. The realization of this identity happens through love, in this case the interpreter’s love of God and Torah, the

Torah's love of Israel and God, and God's love of Torah and Israel. This ontology of identity between the interpreter (Israel), the text (Torah), and the primal author of the text (God), expresses itself in the unique and highly dramatic nature of the authentic engagement with sacred text. By deploying intellectual, meditative and mystical faculties,¹⁰⁷ the lover of Divine text moves to unpack the fresh invitation of Divine voice. The Divine voice speaks presently to the individual and the community in the eternal now. However, it is more than even that. In this ongoing conversation, the interpreter/lover of the text does not merely uncover the original Divine intention. She does not merely reveal that which was ostensibly latent in the text from the time of its inception and only now ready to reveal itself. Rather, the interpreter/lover of text¹⁰⁸ actually participates as a primary catalyst, not only in interpreting, but in actually evolving the Divine voice. Said simply, the hermeneutic act is a catalyst for – and actually participates in – what is no less than the evolution of God. When the Divine lover of text reads and interprets from their own deepest Divine center, the Divine voice in the texts evolves, expressing truths that the original voice which wrote the text “did not know and could not have dreamed.”¹⁰⁹ This is a pivotal deep structure of Isaac Luria's Kabbalistic thought, whose essence was perhaps best captured by Nikos Katzanakis when he said, “We are the Saviors of God.” Said slightly different: we are co-creators with the Divine, responsible for the ever-evolving Divine spirit.¹¹⁰ God's redemption, in a manner of speaking – the evolution of God – depends on us

In these last sentences, we have implicitly moved from the I-Thou – God in the second person – to God in first person. As the *Zohar* creatively renders a *locus classicus* in the Talmud describing revelation: “The *Shechinah* speaks through the voice of Moses.”¹¹¹ And, as we have noted, we are all – at least in potential – Moses. Here we have moved from the relational God in the second person, the God we meet in the ritual formula of “Blessed Source are YOU, God” – as well as in the ongoing biblical conversation – to “I AM,” or God in the first person. It is here that the ontic identity between the human and Divine voice is revealed in the act of sacred hermeneutic.

According to the mystics, sacred hermeneutic is ultimately an erotic act in which the God in the interpreter meets the God in the text and realizes that they are one.¹¹² It is this erotic merger with the Divine in the act of interpreting sacred text which has been the central realization of my own personal path to the Divine. In this meeting, between infinite and finite, the meeting blurs into a merger, a *unio mystica*, achieved through the meditative ecstatic intellectual act of sacred study. Thus, when we engage text, we meet both third person descriptions of reality, a second person encounter with the *Noten Hatorah*, the Torah as given in the eternal now by the eternal Divine Thou, as well as the merger of the mystic with the word of God in which the voice of God speaks through the mystic's Torah in the realization that “I am God.”¹¹³

This hermeneutic process is called by the founder of the Hassidim – Israel Baal Shem Tov – Hamtaka, meaning sweetness. It is the erotic sweetness of the non-dual merger between the sacred text and the sacred autobiography – the consciousness of the text's reader. This is not the first approach to text but rather the third level of textual consciousness. Level one, as we discussed in the preface, is called by Israel Baal Shem Tov, *Hachna'ah*, literally, submission. Utter submission to the text. The

text appears as God in second person and evokes devotion. Devotion to the simple reading and meaning of the text. Level two is the level of Havdalah, literally, separation. The text becomes a third person and is subject to literary, philological and philosophical analysis. Level three is called Hamtaka, literally sweetness. At this level the text appears in first person. The first person of the reader merges erotically with the first person of the text. The three-tiered textualization of Eros climaxing in Hamtaka, sweetness, is the key methodology that facilitates the evolution of consciousness, both of the sacred text and of the textual reader.

Idolatries of Face

As we have seen, the biblical mantra demands that we honor the many faces of the Divine, not one to the neglect of another. “*You shall not have other gods [imposed] upon my face,*” teaches the second of the Ten Commandments;¹¹⁴ this is read by us to mean: “*Do not make a false god by the deification of only one of my faces,*” which is what happened in the incident around the Golden Calf.¹¹⁵ The Golden Calf represented only one of the four external representations of the Divine as revealed in the Merkavah vision of Ezekiel.¹¹⁶ The other three were Human, Lion, and Eagle.¹¹⁷ To be fully in the Divine presence, to avoid the idolatry of but one face, we need to encompass the many faces of the Divine. It is only then that we stand before God – Lifnei Hashem.

In an ancient Talmudic narrative there is a discussion on how to read a sacred text. The Talmud establishes the hermeneutic principle. “There are seventy faces to Torah;”¹¹⁸ that is to say, the fullness of the Divine voice inherent within the sacred text cannot be heard without keeping our ears open to the myriad perspectives that are filtered through the prism of the many faces of the Divine. All seventy faces, however, are but permutations of three primary perspectives – the first, second, and third person encounters. In the text of Torah, in other words, we meet God in the first, second, and third person.

A Word about Sacred Ritual

Every generation needs to re-encounter its rites of passage. Every text and every ritual needs to be re-read in order to understand it in light of the unique spiritual, psychological and social contexts of the generation. Even Torah is subject to what postmodern thinkers have called the Myth of the Given. This myth assumes that the ritual or text exists eternally – with a specific correct interpretation – and it remains for us merely to reveal the objective interpretation of the text. This kind of approach is the subtext of fundamentalism. It insures the petrification of the Divine voice. A deeper understanding is – as we have unpacked in the previous paragraphs – that the interpreter is actually part of the text itself. God Israel and Torah are one. That means that the vessel of the interpreter is one key factor in uncovering the meanings latent in

the ritual or text. Importantly, the interpreter is identified as Israel. Israel speaks not merely of an individual monad but of an individual within a social and cultural context. The text cannot be read without its context. All text is refracted through the cultural, moral and psychological prism of the interpreter. The interpreter himself is rooted in context within context within context. This in no way undermines the power, authenticity and binding nature of the revelation. Nor does it make everything subjective.

The givens in the Torah which are not subject to constant reinterpretation are the core constructs of mitzvah. For example, there is a sacred methodology called shofar. The shofar, a ram's horn, is sounded on Rosh Hashanah, the beginning of the Hebrew yearly cycle. The shofar seeks to connect the human being and the Divine.¹¹⁹ This is a given. There is a Talmudic tradition based on objective principles of legal and spiritual hermeneutic which established the precise way in which *shofar* is to be blown. The number of blasts required for the fulfillment of this ritual, as well as their length and melody, has been pretty well set down by the spiritual legal tradition of the Talmud.¹²⁰ At a certain point these laws regarding the objective requirements of this *mitzvah* were accepted and sanctified by the community of Israel. These minimal constructs are even today accepted as givens by virtually all sectors of the community engaged by the eternal covenant of Israel. However, how to interpret the intent of the ritual is a different matter entirely. This interpretation is re-engaged in every generation through the prism of that generation's unfolding Divine wisdom. Divine wisdom is both beyond and fully embedded in the psychological moral social and spiritual contexts of the generation. On the one hand it is a product of those very contexts. Those contexts themselves, however, are engaged and evaluated based on the collective spiritual wisdom of the community. This wisdom itself is the product of a continuing process of Divine revelation over the generations that form the matrix of communal heart and mind. This deep commitment to an *evolving* Divine wisdom to which the people are dedicated and faithful is the core of the covenant. The promise of the covenant is the commitment to the voice of God that allows one to transcend the superficialities of a particular generation and engage higher truths. This, for example, is the nature of biblical consciousness that defies and ultimately revolutionizes the pagan cultural, moral and social context into which it is born.

Abraham, the first Hebrew is called the ultimate iconoclast. Iconoclast. He shatters the idols of his contexts.¹²¹ He responds to a Divine call, which demands that he go on a journey to his inner self.¹²² The original Hebrew reads *Lech Lecha*, which is commonly understood to mean, "You shall surely go." Re-read by the Zohar in accordance with its literal meaning in Hebrew it is read as *Lech*—"Go"—*Lecha*—"to your Self."¹²³ This going to yourself is accomplished by leaving "your land, your birthplace, and the house of your father, toward the land that I will show you." Abraham responds in kind to an inner Divine voice which is available to every one of us – which allows us to break out of our cultural perspective and evolve our consciousness beyond the limitation of our contexts: "out of our land, our birthplace and our father's house."

In the great paradox of revelation, the voice Abraham hears resonates through the prism of all of the contexts that he is told to leave. As the Divine voice evolves

through the prism of evolving consciousness and culture, Abraham will be able to interpret the Divine call with more and more clarity. At the same time, there is an immutable Divine voice within him and beyond him that calls him to transcend his narrow cultural and psychological categories of interpretation, embracing a higher realization of self and a higher ethical vision. The voice is a given. Its interpretation cannot fall out of certain parameters. However, within those parameters everything is filtered through his cultural prisms.

A great example of the limitations of culture and the ability to transcend them might well be the status of woman in Jewish sources. If one examines the status of woman in the ancient agrarian world – a world in which brute physical strength was essential for the success of the farming community – one sees a clear and unmistakable elevation of the male over the female. This cultural context is virtually unavoidable even for the most evolved and enlightened beings. If one examines, for example, the sayings of Buddha concerning women it becomes painfully clear that he did not escape his cultural context. One finds in Jewish sources, based on the sacred text, a paradoxical mix of incredibly evolved proto-feminist sentiments combined with more average expressions of the cultural context. The given, however, in the textual datum of biblical consciousness is that both men and women are equal expressions of the Divine image: “God created the Adam in his image, male and female did [God] create them.”¹²⁴ Likewise, the postbiblical Talmud establishes a legal principle of absolute equality between men and women: “The Scriptures equate woman to man in regards to all the laws of the Torah.”¹²⁵ In the book of Genesis, women play a pivotal role. The matriarchs often hear and interpret Divine revelation more clearly and wisely than the men.¹²⁶ At the same time, there exist Talmudic statements about women that are, as Orthodox theologian Eliezer Berkovitz has already pointed out, the products of the social and cultural context that produced them.¹²⁷

A second example makes the same point. When exploring the relationship of particularism vs. worldcentric universalism in Jewish sources, one is again struck by paradox. There are very strong strains both in biblical and rabbinic thought of a clear universal worldcentric consciousness that moves well beyond the cultural context of both the biblical and rabbinic periods. Every human being is created equally in the image of God. It is a core biblical and rabbinic motif that every human being is possessed of infinite adequacy, worth, and dignity. Yet, there are other sadly chauvinistic ethnocentric moments in both biblical and rabbinic and later Kabbalistic thought, which reflect the larger cultural contexts of various historical periods and events. It is during such moments that the light of revelation is interpreted through the prism of a narrow chauvinistic and ethnocentric consciousness. Yet, even in these same texts, there are manifold moments when the clear call of higher consciousness shatters the ethnocentric context and the text reaches for worldcentric universal consciousness. It is the job of the master in every generation to distinguish between these shifts and participate in the evolution of the voice of God. In this precise way the sacred tradition evolves and becomes the conveyor belt for the evolution of consciousness of all its adherents.

Ongoing Revelation

Jewish sources, particularly sacred texts and rites, need to be constantly re-engaged in order to uncover the latent and newly emergent meanings which they hold for the prevailing generation. Spiritual atrophy sets in when sacred rites and text become dutiful routines and petrified scripture. Often, in this process of reexamination, we unpack meanings, which, once pointed out, were obviously inherent in the text all along but were overlooked by previous generations.¹²⁸ They didn't have the eyes to see these layering of meaning perhaps because their souls could sing without them. Or they could not discern these layers of meaning because their spirits had not yet evolved sufficiently to grasp them. Yet we, standing on the shoulders of their collective intelligence, reach for the fruit that our spirits demand. For the Kabbalist, text and ritual are not dead recordings of ancient words and deeds but living, pulsating and evolving organisms. The issue is not relevance but resonance. Every epoch syncopates to its own unique music and is stirred by its peculiar rhythms.

Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kuk, the venerable early-twentieth century philosopher and mystic, taught that every generation is part of the unfolding revelation of divinity. Each generation, picking up from where the last one left off, moves closer to understanding the full depth and divinity of sacred rites and passages. In this sense, the “covenant between me and the children of Israel”¹²⁹ is not only *between* God and the people – but “between” the children of Israel...and their children...and their children – a covenant between generations. In Hebrew, Israel is rendered Yisra'el. My teacher Mordechai Lainer of Izbica taught that when you shift the vowels around a bit, it spells Yashar'el,¹³⁰ which implies a direct apprehension of the Divine. This is what “Israel” means for me. The community of Israel, in other words, constitutes those who receive tradition reverentially and yet seek their own unmediated experience of divinity as the lodestone of their spiritual and ethical journey. In this covenant, each generation promises its forbearers to continue the journey of unfolding divinity though the prism of its questing souls.

Re-Reading Rosh Hashanah

In our readings of Rosh Hashanah over the years, it has seemed to us that the classical understanding of Rosh Hashanah as a day of judgment, true and important as it may be, misses something central about the holiday. It is worth recalling the observation of the thirteenth-century scholar and mystic Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman (Nachmanides), that nowhere in the biblical text is Rosh Hashanah identified as a day of judgment.¹³¹ In the meditation of this Neo-Hassidic tract we would like to suggest a fundamental paradigm in our understanding of Rosh Hashanah. This shift will be rooted not in fanciful conjecture but in a close reading of the Rosh Hashanah texts themselves. This is the evolutionary mystical process which evolves the consciousness of the manifest God.

However, all of this in no way implies that we hold the notion of Rosh Hashanah being a day of judgment as in some sense wrong. Of course, Rosh Hashanah is a day of judgment. This expresses our relationship to God as a Divine other, God as second person – as we have seen; a critical face of the Divine. This is the core of the Hebrew belief in ethical monotheism. Ethical monotheism is the direct knowledge, through intense spiritual practice and the gifts of translucent illumination, that there is one God; one God who includes all of reality, who is all of reality. This God, who is ultimately empty of all that is not real, is the ultimate fullness and reality of all. This God is not at all impersonal. This God is personal, though not in the primitive Santa Claus sense where God is a cosmic vending machine for our every desire. Rather, this God is personal Plus, not personal Minus. God is far more than personal but in no sense less than personal. God is Ayin and Sunyata and God knows your name. The primary demand of this face of God is ethical behavior for which we are held accountable and judged in love. The time-honored virtues of compassion, charity, loyalty, honesty, discipline, joy, self-sacrifice and ethical action are the code of allegiance to this God. This is the face of the Divine that we glimpse in Biblical and Prophetic consciousness. This is the Rosh Hashanah of Judgment. However, this is not the end of the story. The Rosh Hashanah of judgment over actions deepens into a Rosh Hashanah of growth and transformation where we are called to reveal and evolve our highest spiritual and emotional selves. This is the realization of our very divinity.

The Path of Tears

In the vision of Rosh Hashanah that we will unpack from hidden strains of texts in the classical sources themselves, God is as concerned with the evolution of our tears as with the rightness of our actions. Indeed, the former shapes the latter. At this level of Rosh Hashanah consciousness, we seek to learn the language of our tears. Tears emerge as the major currency of evolution in the deepening and transformation sought on Rosh Hashanah. At this level of consciousness, the human being is called not only to right action derived from obedience to the Divine will but to right action that emerges from the depth of one's newly realized Divine center. And this Divine center is realized when one becomes a Master of Tears. These two levels of understanding Rosh Hashanah are not in discord. Rather they dance and deepen into each other in an ascending melody of realization.

Levels of Consciousness

The Third Sacred Methodology

What we are teaching here is that Rosh Hashanah can and needs to be understood differently on different levels of consciousness. We approach every text, holy day and ritual on three distinct levels of consciousness, levels that we have

unpacked from the teaching of the Baal Shem Tov the 18th -century Rabbi Israel “Master of the Good Name.” Although the Baal Shem does not use terminology like “levels of consciousness,” my reading of this construct into his thought reflects the deeper intention of his teaching. Each level, to borrow an idea from Hegel, and precise nomenclature from Ken Wilber, *transcends and includes* the previous level. That is to say, each level takes the core truth of the previous level, internalizes it, and then moves beyond it to a deeper level of consciousness.

One can easily map out these levels of consciousness by tracing the key liturgical mantra as well as the key ritual of Rosh Hashanah. The mantra is one word: *HaMelech*, literally translated as the King but more accurately implying “Master of Counsel.” At each one of these levels of consciousness, the term *HaMelech*, which is the central mantra of the Rosh Hashanah liturgy, assumes a different meaning. Similarly, the core ritual of *shofar* blowing means something very different at every level of consciousness. Usually, different interpretations of a ritual or liturgical phrase are understood to be in conflict with each other. They are described in classic study as being in *Machloket*, the oft-used word in Talmudic lingo for conflicting opinions that seem to be mutually exclusive. Integral Judaism, however, does not read these opinion as being either mutually exclusive or in an essential conflict. Instead, integral understanding views them as reflecting different levels of consciousness. These levels of consciousness apply to all areas of human endeavor and consciousness. Therefore, to get a general sense of how these levels work we will first apply them to stages in loving and only then to Rosh Hashanah.

The first of the Baal Shem’s levels of consciousness is termed in Hebrew *Hachna’ah*, generally translated as “submission.” This is the level of falling in love. At this level, each side is in complete submission to the other. “Honey, what movie would you like to see?” one asks the other. The response: “Honey, whatever movie you want is great with me; as long as we are together.” This level of consciousness, which paradoxically appears to be highly personal and relational, is actually highly impersonal. It is about this level of consciousness that poet William Blake wrote, “Love is blind.” One falls in love not so much with the other as with the experience of love itself, or with the sweet seduction of breaking out of one’s own loneliness. However, this level does not offer genuine union with other; rather it offers fusion in which both parties are not in relationship with each other but have both given themselves up on the paradoxically impersonal altar of their love. When this level of *Hachna’ah* is applied to Rosh Hashanah, it is similarly impersonal. At this level, one comes before God the King and creator as a subject and submits in total surrender to the will of the King who seeks nothing but the enlightenment and good of his subjects. At this level, the subject does not dare to speak to the King in second person, but rather relates to the King in third person inaccessible but all knowing cosmic force of law, *dharma*, healing and transformation before whom we are called to surrender. This is the King, the far away and inaccessible great emperor before whom we submit. One did not have a second person relationship with the Holy Roman Emperor. The King in this image incarnates all of reality before whom one bows and pays homage. At this level, the *shofar* trumpets call us to loyalty and alignment to the Cosmic King before whom all of creation bows.¹³²

This is an essential note in the Rosh Hashanah symphony without which the entire composition would lose its transformative texture and sound. And yet one note does not a compelling symphony make. God in the third person. *Hachna'ah*—submission – the first level of Rosh Hashanah consciousness, is essential but insufficient. One of the great weaknesses of third person fealty is that, in the end, genuine surrender without second person relationship does not hold.

Homo Yearnius

The human being is a being of yearning. *Homo Yearnius*. The three primary longings of the human being are for Good, for Liberation, and for Relationship. While this holy trinity was often given different names, some version of these fundamental three longings shows up all over what philosopher Leibniz called “the perennial philosophy,” the great truths about reality shared by all the great wisdom traditions over the ages. Indeed, the perennial philosophy is the history of human yearning that is the history of humanity itself. The Third person encounter with God gives context and guidance for all of these. Understandings of reality derived from many fields of knowledge which inform the great quests for freedom, relationship and goodness, are the stuff of God in the third person. The third person relationship naturally unfolds in the fullness of time to the theologies, the sciences and the various moral and social philosophies and psychologies. All of these are holy. All have a place. All are gazes and glances from the face of God. And yet, third person God by itself is ultimately unable to significantly sate any of these three great longings. The third person God, who is inaccessible to personal embrace or dialogue, ultimately devolves, becoming depersonalized, distant and alienating. The commanding other in the third person cannot hold the attention, let alone the personal loyalty, of his subjects. Third person glimpses of the Divine face are insufficient to redeem the human being from his loneliness, to liberate him, or to foster ethos and compassion as the guiding principles of a life. So man’s consciousness, driven by his yearning for the good, for freedom and for relationship, is moved to ascend and deepen to second person God talk.

The second level of consciousness, termed by the Baal Shem as *Havdalah*, is about separation or distinction. This level is partially captured by the sense of the relatively modern psycho-spiritual term, “individuation.” Continuing our application of these levels of consciousness to loving, *havdalah* is the stage when the two individuals fall *out* of love. If initially the response to “Honey, what movie do you want to see” was, “Anything you want as long as I am with you”—now the response is: “See the movie by yourself”—“I am going somewhere else,” or “I have work to do at home,” etc. In the second stage, the individual breaks the spell of fusion and stands once again as a separate and individuated being. This is often a painful shock that creates great stress and trauma for the relationship, often actually causing its dissolution. However, once this is recognized as a natural and healthy evolution of the consciousness of loving, it can be engaged in an entirely different way. It is at level two where the individuals are invited to do the work and earn the free grace they received from level one, falling in love. Applied to Rosh Hashanah, this second level

of consciousness, *havdalah*, means that the individual moves from object to subject and stands before God as a significant other. In a mirror-like movement, God then emerges from *Deus Absconditus* to *Deus Revalutus*; the hidden God becomes the revealed God.

At level two, God remains the great other before whom we must ultimately surrender, but this time the surrender is of an entirely different nature. There is relationship and dialogue. There is prayerful ecstasy as the lover yearns for his beloved and finds moments of translucent realization with the beloved, sometimes in the fullness of the yearning itself. Coupled with the Eros of prayer, there is dialogic partnership in receiving and unfolding the Divine law. God speaks to man even as man speaks to God. Together, they unfold the law of ethics and holiness, which is the *halachah*, literally the Tao of Jewish tradition. *Halachah* is usually translated as law, but it actually means “the walk” or “the way.” It is to the bar of this ethical and holy law that man is called before in judgment on Rosh Hashanah. One stands then before the King of the world in accountability and judgment, albeit not as an impersonal object, but as a fully engaged and related subject. In this dialogue, in the presence of God as second person, the human being is fulfilled. The God who was the distant *Melech Haolam*, King of the World, becomes a significant other, even a lover. Yes, I stand in judgment before God on Rosh Hashanah, but what ecstasy and joy when I realize that the one who will be judging me, the King, is also my best friend. In the imagery of the twelfth-century master, Rabbi *Shmuel ben Meir* – referred to in the tradition by the acronym of his name as *Rashbam*– this is the essence of the experience of *shofar*, the sounding of the ram’s horn.

The sound of the sacred ritual of *shofar*, which is the *centerpiece* of the Rosh Hashanah symphony, is described in the biblical and prophetic verse as Teruah. “Yom Teruah Yiheyeh Lachem– A day of Teruah it shall be for you.”¹³³ In the descriptive words of Bil’am, the Midianite prophet who was sent to curse Israel: “*Adon-nay Elohav Imo U’Te’ru’at Melech Bo*– His God is with him (Israel), and the Teruah of the King is within him.”¹³⁴ Teruah is usually translated as a shout, a crying out, or a declaration. It is a crying out for compassion and a declaration of Divine kingship. *Rashbam*, however, sensitive to the hidden folds and mystical dance of the Hebrew, finds in *Teruah* a different root, both in language and in being. Teruah, he writes, comes from the Hebrew root of Re’a or Re’ut, “friend” or “friendship”¹³⁵. In the *Rashbam’s* gorgeous reading, the person called before God in judgment hears in the *shofar* sounds a secret code. The *shofar* whispers this code, that Ado-nai Elo-hav Imo, your god is with you... *U’te’ru’at Melech bo*...and the King, who is your very best and most intimate friend, it is he who will judge you, and it is before him that you surrender. God in second person. As we see clearly, both the ritual of *shofar* and the liturgical mantra of *HaMelech*, shift dramatically in the consciousness of second person.

For the masters of the Kabbalah,¹³⁶ the incantation recited before receiving pleasure from the manifest world, or prior to performing a ritual action, captures the dance between first and second person: “*L’shem yee’chud kud’shab’reech’huv’sh’cheentey ahl y’dey ha’hu beed’chee’luur’chee’mu l’ya’chey’d shemyah b’vah*– For the sake of the unification of the Holy Blessed One and the

Shechinah— through this (ceremony or act) —in awe and in love – to unify YaH within VaH (God transcendent within God immanent).” Similarly, this theme is inherent in the intent behind the rabbinically-ordained blessing prayers, which begin with: *Boruch ATAH Ado-nai Elo-henu Melech Ha-Olam*—source of all blessings are YOU God, Sovereign of the Universe.” These mantras of blessings are intended to bring us *Lifnei Hashem*, before God, into the Presence, moving us between God who is described in the third person as *Melech HaOlam*, Sovereign of the Universe, and God who is described as *Boruch Atah*— source of blessings are You – a direct unmediated second person relationship. This is the experience of God in second person who becomes visible in the room through the simple pointing-out instruction of the blessing, *Boruch Atah!* This is much like a person who greets a long-lost beloved for whom one has yearned their whole life, and who then suddenly appears. The reaction would certainly be the likes of: “Is it **You!** Is it **You?**...It’s **You!!** It’s **You!!** ...Oh my God, it’s really **You!!**” It is in this sense, as we suggested above, that the Hebrew ancestor Jacob is deemed ready to represent the spiritual adventure of the Hebrew nation when his name is changed to “Israel,”¹³⁷ meaning, again, *Yashar El*— “direct to God”— a direct and unmediated relationship with the Divine in the second person.¹³⁸The point is clear and powerful: the King, the *Melech Olam*, is indeed *Atah*, You, God in second person. The King has moved from the impersonal third person Emperor to the approachable King who is the context of *Rey’a*, the friend: *Teru’at Melech Bo*, the King who is your friend.¹³⁹ God in second person. This is the ethical yet infinitely loving God of biblical consciousness before whom we stand in judgment on Rosh Hashanah. The second level of Rosh Hashanah consciousness is thus *Havdalah*, separation, individuation.

And yet God as second person does not quite quench the yearning of the human being for Goodness and Liberation, nor does it by itself solve his loneliness or his perpetual crisis of meaning and identity. If Kant and modernity taught us anything, it was this: ethics that emerge only as a response to an other, no matter whom or what that other might be, will ultimately not endure. All ethical collapse results from a failure of Eros. By Eros I mean interiority, the experience of being on the inside, fullness of presence, participating in the yearning force of being and wholeness, the felt reality of the interconnectivity of the all with the all coursing through one’s own being. Interiority, Presence, Yearning and Wholeness are the four faces of Eros. When life is de-eroticized, then the human being becomes lost in the void. He then seeks all forms of Pseudo Eros to fill his very real erotic needs. He gets lost in a-void-dance, dancing around the void in order to dull the pain of the shallow emptiness that his pseudo erotic quests can never fill. It is his desperate need for pseudoerotic fulfillment in all of its forms that caused all ethical breakdowns. The human being “in relationship” with God can go very far, but, like all relationships, it is still insufficient to fully solve the core crisis of meaning and identity in one’s individual existence.

There was a time when getting married was itself the goal. Redemption was achieved when one entered into some form of committed relationship. The connection of love was thought sufficient to fill up and lend meaning to a life. Today we know, both intuitively and based on much empirical data, that while this might have once been true, it is no longer so. Today we know that if one seeks redemption from the relationship itself, then it is doomed to failure. One must first be able to walk through

the void alone before one can walk through it together in a lifetime of commitment with a significant other. The crisis of meaning must be first engaged and addressed *internally* before it can be healed in the arena of relationship. The crisis of my own identity cannot be solved by linking my identity in relationship to an other, no matter how great and noble that other might be. The only true resolution of the human identity crisis is the realization of your identity with the Divine. It is only this Eros that frees the human being from the pathetic grasping at all forms of Pseudo Eros. It is in the realization of my own highest self that I am redeemed and at the same time paradoxically opened to genuine connection. This is precisely the move from God in the second person to God in the first person.

The third level of consciousness mapped by the Baal Shem Tov is termed *Hamtaka*, literally translated as “sweetness.” This is the level of non-duality. This is the place of Eros. God in the first person. This is the place of ultimate realization. Not only am I in conversation with the Divine, not only are we in relationship, but on a deeper plane of reality, I AM. Here, I realize my ultimate identity with the ground of all being, with the Divine, with God. Let me say it again: The only true solution to your identity crisis is to realize your identity with God.

On Rosh Hashanah, as we will unfold, a major path towards the attainment of this non-dual realization is by becoming a Master of Tears. In learning the language of your own tears, you are introduced to the realization of your own highest divinity. This book is about the nature of this Rosh Hashanah practice of tears as the path to enlightenment.

Hidden in the esoteric teachings of the Kabbalah, emerging from this third level of *Hamtaka* consciousness is the radical and liberating third understanding of *Melech*—of Sovereign. In this reading, with deep origins in the Zohar, Luria, Cordovero and early Hassidic masters, but which comes to full formulation in the secret Torah of my teacher, Mordechai Lainer of Izbica, the King is no less than the human being himself who has realized his ontic identity with God. The Midrash already expresses this radical teaching of sweetness when it comments on the verse, “The Song of Songs that is Solomon’s.” Says the Midrash: “[Solomon the King] of whom we say that Peace belongs to him”¹⁴⁰— a play on the Hebrew for Solomon, *shlomo*, which implies “peace.” This is the Kabbalistic parlance for saying that the author of the Songs of Songs, the great love song of the Cosmos, is not the mortal king Solomon, but the ultimate King: God.¹⁴¹

After teaching these texts to my students for some ten years in Jerusalem, I still felt somehow that the full secret of this teaching still eluded me. To try and reveal the secret, which my heart and sacred autobiography drove me to seek to know, I spent two years virtually locked away in the Bodleian Library of Oxford University for 15 to 16 hours a day, virtually lost in a careful yet intoxicated scholarly grail quest, searching for the key to this tradition and these texts. What revealed itself, which I wrote up in a 1,400-page academic work, is roughly the following: It is not that Solomon the mortal did not write the Song of Songs; indeed he did. However, Solomon achieved what Lainer calls *He’arah*, literally translated as “enlightenment.” He became in Lainer’s language “liberated.” He realized his own ontic identity with

the Godhead. He realized, writes Lainer, that he was the King! The radical and passionate love of the Song of Songs flowed from Solomon's realization of his Kingship that revealed in him love, compassion and wisdom. Solomon realizes his supreme identity with the Godhead. In Mordechai Lainer's enlightenment teachings, this secret is the very essence of the fabled Wisdom of Solomon. Lainer further makes the clear claim that he, Lainer, is the inheritor of the Wisdom of Solomon tradition. The King, who is referred to by Lainer by the code names of Judah, David and Solomon, is the one who is so deeply realized that "all of his words, even mundane words (or those said unconsciously and without intention), are the words of the living God."¹⁴²

It is in this stage of consciousness that human *interpretation* of the law can overwhelm the Divine reading of the law. It is just such a moment that is captured in the Talmud when R. Joshua overrides the *interpretation* of the law offered by the Divine voice with the dramatic declaration "It is not in heaven."¹⁴³ In other words, the Divine law is given over to man to interpret and elucidate and God has no right to override the human interpretation of the Divine voice. This is the first glimmering of the principle of non-duality embedded in the core texts of the Talmud itself.

What is critical to understand here is that the human self-understanding as King stems from the insight, fruit of all serious spiritual practice, that all of reality is included in the Divine. Once one realizes that all is the Godhead, then one may draw one of two conclusions: First, one might say, "Well, if all is God, then I must immediately nullify and surrender to God." And that is good. However, one might also say – "If all is God, then I am God as well." And that is much better. The first realization produces what Jewish, Christian and Eastern mystics have called *Via Passiva*, a passivism – even a kind of resignation – which results from the realization that human action is but illusion and the only will which is real is the will of God. The second, far deeper realization understands that if the human being is part of God, then he is ultimately liberated. All of his actions count infinitely. He becomes the language of God; God's adjectives, nouns, verbs, even God's dangling modifiers. His identification with the Divine is not emasculating at all. On the contrary, it is radically liberating and empowering. His realization that there is nothing in the cosmos independent of God, the realization that is formally termed acosmism, yields not a tepid quietism but rather, as we have termed above, an audacious and impassioned "Non-Dual Humanism."¹⁴⁴ He moves beyond choice in the narrow dualist sense and all of his actions flow from his highest and most authentic self. Non-Dual Humanism, the realization that the human being is the King, is for Lainer a radical call to human activism, joy and responsibility.

However, it is even more than that. Implicit in Lainer's teaching is a core Torah of Luria's that becomes fully explicit in the writings of R. Kuk, who calls this teaching "the evolution of enlightenment." Luria's core idea, drawing on extensive earlier sources, both midrashic and Kabbalistic, is that the human being participates in the healing and evolution of God. This is what is called in Luria's thought *Tikun*– the fixing, healing and evolving of God and world both are one. The entire Lurianic system of spiritual practice and intention is aimed very explicitly at the "evolving of the Divine structure"¹⁴⁵ Every human being has, as part of the very essence of their

humanity, a singular and irreplaceable contribution to make toward the evolution of God. This is what we have called “soul print” and in later teachings, Unique Self. This is the third level of consciousness. On this level, when we say *HaMelech* on Rosh Hashanah, we are implicitly recognizing that only by the human being affirming his *own* kingship does *God* become King. soul print or Unique Self means that only when the human being evolves does God evolve. Only when the human being dies to his separate ego self, and steps into his higher authentic self in claiming his soul print, does God evolve and become King. This is the implication of the text in the Hebrew prophetic Book of Zechariah: “On that day... God will be King.”¹⁴⁶ God is not yet King but waits for us to realize our own liberation, through which God is “freed.” It is for this reason that, according to Lainer, the human being who has attained enlightened consciousness can make a decision that contradicts the specific dictate of Torah. For in his enlightened state the human being is merged with the Divine will. The Divine will of today has significantly evolved since the Divine will expressed itself in the ancient codes. Likewise, the evolved Divine will has authority which overrides the old expression of the Divine will as codified in the formal texts and laws.

In one very explicit passage, Lainer talks about levels of consciousness in relation to Rosh Hashanah. In this complex but powerful statement, both his understanding of Kingship and the ritual of *shofar*, from the perspective of the third level of consciousness, that of *Hamtaka*, is clearly stated. *Lainer* talks of two levels of consciousness: Sabbath, (*Shabbat*) and Temple (*Mikdash consciousness*). *Shabbat* in his system parallels the Baal Shem’s level of Havdalah. At this level, man stands in second person relation to God and realizes that all of his actions are nullified before God. Man has no ability to act independently of God. This, says *Lainer*, is the explanation for the law that one does not blow the *shofar* when Rosh Hashanah falls on *Shabbat*. *shofar* is engaged as a human action of *mitzvah* in fulfillment of the Divine will. All human action, however, including spiritual action, is overridden by *Shabbat* consciousness, which proclaims the impotence of any and all human action. All effect of human action, conceived as emerging from a human being who stands independent of God, is recognized on *Shabbat* as being an illusion.

However, Lainer implicitly affirms a higher level, that of *Mikdash* consciousness. This is the level of unity consciousness; the level beyond boundaries where the human and Divine identities merge. At this level, according to Lainer, the human being is *HaMelech*– the King. All of Lainer’s images for this third level of consciousness, Judah, Solomon and David, are archetypes of Kingship. This level is manifested in the reality of the temple in Jerusalem. Temple consciousness in Lainer’s system parallels the Baal Shem’s level of *Ham’taka*– sweetness consciousness. At this level, one blows the *shofar* even on *Shabbat*, because one realizes that there is no human action independent of God.¹⁴⁷ Enlightened human action is the action of God. We are God’s hands, legs, eyes, and hands in the Cosmos.

For the mystic who has reached the third level of consciousness – that of *Ham’taka*–*HaMelech*, the King is none other than the fully realized and enlightened human being. According to Lainer, this is the intent of the *Zohar* when it describes the human spiritual path as the movement from *Meriru* (bitterness) to *Metiku* (sweetness); from the bitter, which is the world of duality, time and suffering, to sweetness, the

ever-present spacious world of non-duality, timelessness and redemption.¹⁴⁸ This lies at the heart of an oral tradition from Lainer's master, Menachem Mendel of Kutzk, that on Rosh Hashanah one must not merely wish a person a *Shanah Tovah*, a good year; rather one must wish them a *Shanah Tovah U-Metukah*, a good and sweet year. For the goal of Rosh Hashanah is not less than transformation of the bitter to the sweet, the movement from separation and suffering to liberation, fullness, Eros and compassion, as it wells forth from the ultimate realization of the human being's participation in the Divine. This is the move from God in the second person to God in the first person. It is in this sense that, together with the early Hassidic masters, we read *Rosh Hashanah* as "Rosh HaShinuy." Rosh means the beginning of, or the entry point. *Shinuy* means change or transformation. Rosh Hashinuy is thus "the portal of transformation." It is Apotheosis: Man transformed into God. It is the realization of the great secret: Man and God are one. Therefore, we must take responsibility for the evolution of God, which is the healing of the world.

Notes

1. For a full explication of Unique Self see *Your Unique Self, The Radical Path to Personal Enlightenment*, Marc Gafni, Integral Publishers, 2012
2. The story evokes the mystical techniques of tears, which we cited from the Zohar earlier, as well as from the works of Vital and Cordovero.
3. Psalms 47:6
4. *DerechHaMelech*, sec. on Rosh Hashanah, p. 190
5. Zohar, Vol. 2, folios 19a-b
6. See Nechemiah Polen, *The Holy Fire; the teachings of Rabbi KalonimusKalmanSchapira, the Rebbe of the Warsaw Ghetto* (London: Aaronson Press, 1944); "Miriam's Dance: Radical Egalitarianism in Hassidic Thought" published in *Modern Judaism*, Volume 12 [1992], Pages 1-21; "Divine Weeping: Rabbi KalonimusSchapira's Theology of Catastrophe in the Warsaw Ghetto," published in *Modern Judaism*, Volume 7 [1987], Pages 253-269. See also Pesach Shindler, "Hassidic Responses to the Holocaust" published in *The Light of Chasidic Thought* (Ktav, 1990: Hoboken, NJ). See also EliezerShwiede's chapter on the PiecetznaRebbe in *From Ruin To Salvation* (Hebrew) (Kibbutz HaMeyuchad, Tel Aviv)
7. *Holy Fire*, pages 159-164
8. Isaiah 63:9
9. *Talmud Bavli, Chagigah* 15b
10. See Gafni –*Reclaiming Uncertainty*, Modan [Hebrew]
11. See first inklings of my discussion on this in, *Commandment to Question, Azure*, Vol. 1, No. 1 and in more depth in Hebrew, in *Reclaiming the Spirituality of Uncertainty*, Chs. 6-7.
12. See discussion along these lines which we are drawing from in Emil Fackenheim, *What is Judaism*, last chapter.
13. This evolution in R. Schapira's thought was already noted by Nechemiah Polen in his doctoral dissertation and in his excellent work *Holy Fire*.

14. *Midrash Eichah Rabbah, Petichta*, No. 24
15. Jeremiah 13:17
16. First Chronicles 16:27
17. See for example Reuven Magoliot in *Shaarei Zohar* (Jerusalem 1956, p. 61b); cf. Polen, Weeping, fn. 33; see also discourse in Derech HaMelech where Schapira himself gives a very different reading.
18. Zohar, Vol. 2, folio 18b: “All of the wisdom of the Torah is within the Song of Songs.”
19. The study of Torah is classical understood in kabbalistic sources dating at least back to the Zohar, as the erotic merger with the Shechinah. Cite example of source.
20. Leviticus 18:5; Eekiel 20:11; *Midrash Vayikra Rabbah* 21:5
21. *Talmud Bavli, Sotah* 21a: “A mitzvah shines only in the moment it is performed.”
22. *Talmud Bavli, B’chorot* 17b
23. *Talmud Bavli, Pesachim* 82b, *Yoma* 69b, *Sanhedrin* 78b; *Shulchan Aruch, Ehven Ha’Ezer* 136:6 93

24. Zohar, Vol. 3, folio 128a [*Idra Rabba, Na’so*]
25. *Kohelet* 1:13 and 7:25; *Midrash Shir Hashirim Rabbah* 1:7
26. See for example the classic article on the reasons of the holocaust that appeared in the Ultra Orthodox publication, *The Jewish Observer*; See my more extended and nuanced discussion of this topic in my Hebrew book *Reclaiming Uncertainty as a Spiritual Value* [Modan], in the Introduction and in Chapter Six.
27. Psalms 19:9; Proverbs 6:23; *Talmud Bavli, Ta’anit* 7b and *Sotah* 21a; Zohar, Vol. 2 folio 166a
28. On the Democratization of Enlightenment see for example the first Bi’ur *Halachah*, a legal essay written by Rabbi Israel Meir Kagan [*Chofetz Chayyim*] and published alongside his more well-known commentary *Mishnah Berurha*, which appears in most contemporary publications of the Shulchan Aruch, one of the most prominent codes of Jewish law. There, Kagan cites Aharon of Barcelona in outlining a six-pronged mandala of enlightened consciousness whose attainment is a constant obligation on every single Jew. The method of attaining this enlightenment is not through altered mystical states but through constant and deep meditation on these truths of consciousness. For a clear statement on the democratization of enlightenment as articulated by one radical teacher, I append the citation on Rabbi Mordechai Lainer of *Izbica* from my dissertation on the same: “The unmediated will of God is at least in potential accessible to anyone.” Contemporary readers of Mei Ha-Shiloach, including Bezalel Edwards, the translator of what is to date the only English translation of Mei Ha-Shiloach, have tried to forcefully interpret Lainer’s understanding of the ability to access unmediated Divine will as being limited to the patriarchs and their like – a very restricted spiritual elite. Edwards, for example, writes as follows in regard to this genre of passages in Mei *Hashiloach*: “it could easily be misunderstood as being antinomian, that God forbid the Torah is not absolute and we may choose to act based on our own perception of what God wants....Of course it is not a way to make anything permitted, as only a fool would interpret it, and some fools in our generations have.” In the next sentence, Edwards tries to explain when it does apply: “It is relevant [only] when we find examples of our forefathers seemingly ‘breaking’ the Torah, when in fact they are doing the will of God. Edwards is simply wrong, ignoring, as ideologues seem wont to do, the MhS text itself. Indeed this writer is content to count himself among the “fools” to whom Edwards makes reference. The nature of Lainer’s presentation usually makes it clear that it is not limited to any special elite nor limited to any particular group. In some sources, this is implicit, and in others – as in the following text – Lainer states it clearly: “In every single second, every person in Israel, from the small to the great (*Mikaton ahd Gadol*), knows what God desires now; they are able to understand through the Binah (*intuition*) of their hearts, that ‘this’ is the will of God, and not

[guide themselves merely] based on the general rules of law.” The egalitarian nature of Lainer’s theology affirms the full dignity of every person, and that anyone – independently of any other channels – is potentially able to access the will of God. See also discussion in Integral Judaism Dialogue, No. 2, with Ken Wilber, Moshe Idel and Mordechai on the Center for Integral Wisdom website. *Under in the thought leader* dialogue portal accessible through the home page. In this dialogue Idel concurred and supported – from sources independent of my presentation – my thesis that the telos of Judaism could be characterized in part as the Democratization of Enlightenment. This means that authentic enlightened consciousness was to be made available through the mechanism of law and mysticism – not merely to the elite but to the broadest possible population.

In the terms of Integral Theory one might say that Judaism’s great contribution was a system of training that fostered the greatest depth for the greatest span.

29. Exodus 19:6

30. Zohar, Vol. 3, folios 8a-b

31. See Moshe Halamish: “The Halachic Authority of the Zohar,” in Halamish, *The Kabbalah in Prayer Law and Custom* [Bar Ilan University Press, 2000]; See also for example the usage of the Zohar in the work of Rabbi Joseph Dov Soloveitchik entitled *Beit HaLevi*. In general, it is worth noting that the popular notion of Kabbalah being the province of the Hassidim while their opponents – known as the *Misnagdim* – were rationalists, is patently false. Both the Hassidim and the *Misnagdim* had their ample share of Kabbalistic masters and miracle-workers in their midst. Rather, the arguments between them had to do with the interpretation of particular mystical doctrines and their social implications, as well as the wisdom in teaching this mystical knowledge to the masses.

32. I have collected in this regard dozens of sources from Lainer’s *Mei HaShiloach*; see for example Vol. 2 *Va’yeshev s.v. Vayehi KeMeshiv Yado*

33. Over the last few years, one of my great conversations with Ken Wilber – from whom I have learned so much and whom I love so much – involved his evaluation of classical religion. Using the color code of Integral Levels of Consciousness, Ken considers classical mythic religion amber (relating to blue in Spiral Dynamics), or traditional. However, most of Ken’s discussion of religion at the amber level of consciousness identifies classical religion with its shadow – chauvinism and dogmatism – more than it does with the core intent, values, and experience of religion. In his introduction to “Up From Eden,” he essentially dismisses God in the second person as unenlightened, religious dogma. Between 2003 and 2005, we had wonderfully creative conversations that evolved an integral view of God in the second person. At the same time as this conversation on God in the second person was discussed between us, Ken was doing hugely important work in developing a post-metaphysics based in part on the reformulation of the idea of perspectives that plays such a key role in all of postmodern thought. The essence of the move that he is making is to suggest that rather than have perspective undermine ontology, as postmodernists are wont to do, we can view perspectives as the source of ontology. This is a critical move which is beyond the topic of this introduction. Ken’s work with perspectives and our evolving of the second person perspective were part of the intellectual firmament that helped birth the description of the Three Faces of God. The core notion of God in first, second, and third person as a core Integral Methodology, was first introduced by Ken’s written oeuvre in *Integral Spirituality*. I’m delighted that our discussions, as well as those with Brother David Stendahl-Rast, Fr Thomas Keating, and many others, on God as the second person – the “You” of the divine – that took place around the same time as he was writing *Integral Spirituality*, were influential in this new evolution of Integral Theory.

34. The Zohar talks about the three perspectives of God as Ani, Atah and Hu, I, You and He. These are the three primordial perspectives of reality. God as An –I is the realization that Ani is the expression of Ayin. Ayin spelled with the same Hebrew letters as Ani, is nothingness or

essence lived in first person as Ani, I. The second person of god is the “You’ who is the Noten HaTorah, the giver of the Torah who is the major character of the both the Bible, the Talmud and the erotic mysticism of Kabbalah. The most powerful appearance of You as the beloved is in the biblical book, the Song of Songs which is the source text for all later erotic mysticism. God appears as He or It in third person, both in the law, which is a third person expression of the divine, as well as in the form of the core reality of all that is (Tzidkat HaTzadik, No. 246). A similar understanding of the three faces of god is central to Kashmit Shavisim

35. *Midrash Bamidbar Rabbah* 21:2

36. Proverbs 21:29; see 16th-century Rabbi Yehudah Loew of Prague [Maharal] in *Netivot Olam*, Vol. 2, folio 192 – Sha’ar Ha’Tocha’chah (beginning): “The face of a person correlates with the essential make-up of the person; for it is through this that he is revealed and identified by others.”

37. *Midrash Bamidbar Rabbah* 13:15-16

38. This was later made explicit in great depth in my more recent work, *Your Unique Self, The Radical Path to Personal Enlightenment*, Integral Publishers 2012, written seven years after the book you are now reading.

39. For an in-depth discussion, see M. Gafni’s Doctorate, section on “Identity of Wills,” section on “Law,” and section on “Judah archetype.”

40. For a critique of Carlos Castaneda, see *Soul Prints*, Part Four, “Living Your Story.” In a recent discussion with Wayne Dyer in Ram Dass’s home in Maui, Dyer was both pleased and surprised by the deep mystical and spiritual grounding of the soul prints idea as I shared it with him. He explained that his early influence was Castaneda, who clearly did not understand the depth of the soul print idea and confused soul print with “one’s superficial story.”

41. Enlightenment is a major idea in Hebrew sources which has been fundamentally overlooked. E.g. Isaiah 11:9, Daniel 12:3; *Zohar, Midrash Ha’Ne’elam*, Vol. 1, folios 113b-114a. See also Integral Dialogue Two between Moshe Idel, Ken Wilber and Mordechai Gafni “On the Nature of Enlightenment in Hebrew wisdom,” in *Journal of Integral Judaism and Integral Kabbalah*

42. See Scholem *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, pp. 15, 16, 35- 37, 211-12

43. See Wolfson Eliot, *Spiritual Ascent in 16th Century Mysticism*, p. 210 and footnotes 6-9

44. See M. Gafni’s Doctorate, section on “Will,” Part Three, for a full explication of this set of ideas.

45. See, for example, Idel’s *Universalization and Integration*, which is more nuanced than his original presentation of Unio Mystica in his seminal work *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*

46. See Idel, *Universalization and Integration*, particularly the last two pages of the article on the nature of the Idel-Scholem controversy on this issue. See also Appendix 4 in M. Gafni’s Doctorate.

47. See Scholem, *Devekut as Communion in Messianic Idea*

48. Proverbs 3:6; *Mishnah, Avot* 2:12 and 3:10; *Rambam in Mishnah Torah Hilchot De’ot* 3:2

49. *Sefer Ha’Sh’Lah, Sha’ar Ha’Otiot, Eymek Brachah, No. 27 and in Ibid., Mesechet Yoma, Perek Derech Chaim, To’chechet Mussar, No. 46*: “Face to face, like the heart of one person sharing with the heart of another, thereby cleaving intimately to the Holy Blessed One in sacred unification; as intimate as you endeavor to be with God, so will God be with you.”

50. See Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, pp. 67- 70

51. See Berkovitz, *Crisis In Faith, Essay Two*, entitled, “Depersonalization”

52. Berkovitz is incorrect in his evaluation of God in the first person; see for example the passage in *Degel Machaneh Efraim*, of Ephraim of Sudykow, on the text “Strangers and Sojourners are you with me,” where he understands the Kabbalistic meditation of participating in the pain of the *Shechinah* as rooted in a non-dual conception of man and God as being a form of fellowship with God.

53. Benedict de Spinoza, *The Ethics*, London, Oxford 1927, 5:36, pp, 226-7

55. Deuteronomy 4:4

56. See Gafni, *Non-Dual Humanism in the Religious Thought*, Appendix Four originally written as part of a doctorate at Oxford University under the co-supervision of Moshe Idel. This appendix was ultimately removed from the doctorate for reasons of space and is published here as Appendix 1. I shared the core points in the appendix as I am about to unpack them with Idel and he generally concurred with my analysis. A more careful examination of the Scholem-Idel controversy demonstrates that their conflict was actually somewhat contrived. Scholem knew well of *Unio Mystica*, and Idel was aware of the personal and human oriented cast of Hebrew mysticism. Each acknowledges the counter position in their respective footnotes and in articles other than the central scholar texts of each usually cited in this controversy. It would appear that Scholem was intent on showing that Kabbalah was in fact activist and humanistic as he tried to view Kabbalah as a potential matrix for the emergence of a new postdogmatic and post-exile Judaism, while Idel was intent on showing that Judaism was authentically mystical and not merely humanistic. Each was playing to a different crowd both within themselves and in terms of the communities each was interested in influencing. In this sense it is fair to say that Scholem and Idel are both not merely scholars but at least to some extent evangelists for the relevance of Kabbalah in the contemporary context.

57. This intuition was confirmed to me by Moshe Idel in a conversation preceding our first dialogue with Ken Wilber on the unfolding of Integral Kabbalah; in the course of discussing the difference between Scholem and himself on the issue of *Unio Mystica* in Hebrew mysticism. My characterization of Scholem and Idel is borrowed from Idel's remarks in that conversation.

58. On Scholem's desire to use Hebrew mysticism as part of the process of Jewish National and cultural renaissance, see essays by Scholem in *Devarim Bego* and *Od Devarim Bego*

59. Scholem, *Devekut, Messianic Idea*, pp. 214-15

60. see for example *ibid.* pp. 214, 227

61. Scholem, *Major Trends*, pp. 122, 123. This is the representative passage in Scholem, chosen by Idel in *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, p. 59, with which he contrasts his own understanding of *unio mystica*. It is perhaps not superfluous to note that Scholem himself uses the term Union inconsistently. While in this passage he disallows union as a major feature, in his *devekut* essay he uses the term union to describe *Yichud* which he understands to be a form of communion and not *Unio Mystica*. Already at this point, one may sense that the difference between Scholem's and Idel's readings might be far less than initially seemed the case.

62. *Ibid.*

63. For a nuanced view of the Scholem-Idel controversy over the nature and primacy of the God in first person and God in first person positions, see Appendix One. This issue has important implications for the nature of the human archetype which Hebrew spirituality meant to evoke.

64. On Buber, see Buber, Yisrael Koren, *HaMistorim Shel HaAretz*, Haifa University Press

65. See, for example, Weiss, *Via Passiva*

66. On the direct transmission of Lainer to Kuk in this regard, see M. Gafni's Doctorate, Part Seven

67. For a convenient overview of the principle of humanism, see *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Vol 3, pp. 69-72; for a more in-depth treatment of the underlying principles of what is generally called Humanism, see Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity*, Harvard University Press, 1989

68. E.g., Exodus 21:6 and 22:7-8; Psalms 8:6 and 82:6

69. On the unnoticed formative influence of Izbica on R. Kuk see M. Gafni's Doctorate, Chapter Seven
70. Zohar, Vol. 3, folio 73a
71. Zohar, Vol. 1, folio 21b, "The *Tzadik* is called *Tz'va'ot*;" Proverbs 10:25, "The *Tzadik* is the foundation of the world," i.e., "The world exists because of the *Tzadik*" (Zohar, Vol. 1, folio 82a); Zohar, Vol. 1, folio 135b, "The *Tzadik* is the life force of the universes;" Zohar, Vol. 1, folio 164a, "As God is called Life Force above, the *Tzadik* is called Life Force below, the Life Force of the universes;" Zohar, Vol. 3, folio 15a, "God governs the human; and who governs God, so to speak? The *Tzadik*. For God decrees, and the *Tzadik* abolishes the decree."
72. The division of the population into distinct religious typologies in which one typology is the common man and the second enjoys a privileged intimacy with the Divine has old roots at the very beginning of Hassidism. See but one example of this tendency in Jacob Joseph of Polnoye's distinction between *Anshei Chomer* – Men of Physicality – and *Anshei Tzurah*, Men of Form. On this distinction, see, for example, Gershom Scholem's "*Ha'Tzadik*," in *The Mystical Shape of the Godhead*, p. 131; see also Ada Rappaport, *God and Man*.
73. See Vol. 2 of *MhS on Ki Tavo sv Arur Makleh Aviv Ve'Imo*
74. The Judah -Joseph contrast has much older roots in classical Jewish sources. See Shaul Maggid, *Hassidism on the Margins*, University of Wisconsin Press, 2003, p. 337 fn. 8. Lainer's reading, however, is highly original and unique in its antinomian and democratic character .
75. See Vol 2 of *MhS on Ki Tavo sv Arur Makleh AvivVeImo and s.v. Arur Ha'Ish*
76. On Levi see for example *MhS Vol. 2 Ki Tavo s.v. Arur Ha-Ish, On Joseph*, see for example *MhS Vol. 1 Vayeshev s.v. Vezeh*
77. For sources on David as an expression of the Judah archetype and Love, see *Wisdom of Solomon*, Appendix One.
78. On the inner Divine voice as personal revelation, see *MhS Vol. 1 Nitzavim s.v. Vehaya*
79. On Judah and *Teshuka*, see for example *MhS Vol. 1 Pesachim s.v. R.Simlai*
80. On the identity between Judah, *Lema'aloh Mida'ato* and *Ratzon Hashem* see *MhS Vol. 2 Tehillim s.v. Temunot*
81. On the Judah typology and *Ein Gevul*, see, for example, *MhS Vol. 2 s.v. Amar Raban*. Although Judah is not mentioned by name, it is fully consistent with the parameters of the Judah archetype found throughout *MhS*
82. For Soloveitchik on prayer, see *Worship of the Heart: Essays on Jewish Prayer* [Ktav, 2003]
83. For an extensive discussion of this *annihilato* dimension of *Hassidic prayer* see Rivkah Shatz, *Hassidism as Mysticism*, Chapter Six. See also Louis Jacobs, *Hassidic Prayer*.
84. The ability to integrate two of the faces of God, first and second person, is for Lainer indicative of a leap in consciousness – what he calls Messianic consciousness.
85. *Mei Ha'Shilo'ach, Va'yey'shev*, folio 14b-15a
86. Zohar, Vol. 2, folio 86b-87a
87. *Talmud Bavli, Chagigah 14b; Midrash B'reisheet Rabbah 19:3; Midrash Shir Hashirim Rabbah 1:27*
88. *Tzidkat HaTzadik, No. 247*
89. Zohar, Vol. 1, folio 261b
90. Isaiah 6:3 and Jeremiah 23:24
91. Exodus 8:18 and Joel 2:27
92. Zohar, Vol. 1, folio 158b
93. *Talmud Bavli, Berachot 30a*
94. *Midrash B'reisheet Rabbah 68:9*
95. Zohar, Vol. 1, folio 49a
96. Psalms 92:6

97. Psalms 19:2
98. *Midrash Tehilim*, Chapter 118 [paragraph 4]
99. Zohar, Vol. 2, folio 64b and 90a
100. Zohar, Vol. 1, folio 25a. For his reading of the Hebrew etymology of the word Messiah, see Nachum of Chernobyl, Hassidic master in the third generation of the Hassidic movement, in his work *Me'irat Ey'nayim* ("Illuminating the Eyes"), sec. on the Torah Portion of Pinchas.
101. Isaiah 11:9 and Jeremiah 31:33; Zohar, Vol. 3, folio 23a. This reading of Messianic consciousness is offered by the Hassidic masters in their reading of the verse in Jeremiah describing the messianic age – *Kulam Yai'du Oti L'Miktanam v'ad Gedolam* "All of them shall know me, from the small to the great" (Jeremiah 31:33) "All of them shall know me through unmediated direct contact" is how this text is read by many mystical masters from Mordechai Lainer of Izbica to Abraham Kuk.
102. Deuteronomy 5:19; Zohar, Vol. 3, folio 261a; Maharal in *Netivot Olam*, Vol. 1, *Netiv HaTorah*, Chapter 7, p. 36. See Primary texts cited in "Kol Gadol Velo Yasaf." See also primary sources cited in Avi Sagi, *Elu VeElu*; see also Idel's discussion of "God Israel and Torah are One" in *Absorbing Perfections*, and full bibliographic outline of this issue in his footnotes.
103. *Sh'lah HaKadosh, Toldot Adahm, Bayt Chachm'ah, tlee'ta'ah, No. 1*
104. *Tikunei Zohar, Tikuna Sh'tin v'Teisha*, folio 114a; *Sh'lah, Mesechet Shavuot, Perek Torah Ohr, No. 92*
105. Zohar, Vol. 3, folio 73a
106. See extensive treatment of this in M. Gafni's Doctorate, Part Five
107. See Wolfson, *Weeping*; "Death and Spiritual Ascent in Sixteenth century Jewish Mysticism" in *Death Ecstasy and Other Worldly Journeys* ed. Michael Fishbane and John J. Collins, State University Press; see also *Doctorate on Prophecy in the Beit Midrash, Sec. Four*
108. Zohar, Vol. 2, folio 99a
109. Third-century Rabbi Yo'see bar Chanina in *Midrash Bamid'bar Rabbah* 19:4 – "Matters of Torah were revealed to Rabbi Akiva that had not been revealed even to Moses." See also Maimonides [RAMBAM] in *Sefer HaMitzvot L'HaRambam, Shoreshe Shey'ni*—"Behold, not every interpretive teaching which the sages derived from Torah was a halachah that originated in the Revelation to Moses at Sinai."
110. Zohar, Vol. 1, folio 35a and Vol. 3, folios 31b and 92b – "Our actions Below awakens action Above"; See also *Sh'lah, Mesechet Chulin, Perek Torah Ohr, No.69*; see also how in the daily liturgy, *baruch she'amar*, we move effortlessly between God in third or first person talk to prayer talk of God in second person
111. *Exodus 19:19*; *Tikunei Zohar*, Folio 79a, and Zohar, Vol. 3, folio 7a
112. *Tikunei Zohar*, folios 82b and 148a
113. See Abraham Kuk *Orot HaKodesh* vol. 3 pp. 140
114. Deuteronomy 20:3
115. Maharal in *Tiferet Yisroel*, Chapter 38, p.115
116. Maharal in *Tiferet Yisroel*, Chapter 38, p. 115
117. Ezekiel 1:10
118. *Midrash Bamid'bar Rabbah* 13:15-16
119. *Psalms* 47:6
120. *Talmud Bavli, Rosh Hashanah* 33b
121. *Midrash Tana D'Bei Eliyahu Zuta* 25:3
122. Genesis 12:1
123. Zohar, Vol. 1, folio 77b-78a
124. Genesis 1:27 and 5:2
125. *Talmud Bavli, Baba Kama* 15a
126. Genesis 21:12 and 25:22-23

127. See Berkovtiz: *Women and Judaism*
128. *Talmud Bavli, Chulin 6b-7a*
129. Exodus 31:17
130. See also *Ohr HaChayyim, Bamidbar 23:8-9*
131. *Derashah HaRamban ahl Rosh Hashanah, in Kit'vei Ha'Ramban, Vol. 1* [MosadHaRav Kuk, Jerusalem ed.]
132. Isaiah 27:13
133. Numbers 29:1
134. Numbers 23:21
135. Quoted in *SeferHa'Sh'LaH, Mesechet Pesachim, Ch. 15*
136. *Zohar, Vol. 3, folio 271b*
137. Genesis 32:28 and 35:10
138. *Ohr HaChayyim, Bamidbar 23:8-9*
139. *Midrash Tehilim 118:4*
140. *Midrash Shir Hashirim Rabbah 1:12*
141. *Zohar, Vol. 3, folio 284b*
142. MhS Vol. 1 *Shoftims.v. para. 2 Shoftim Ve-Shotrim*: “And even if his words seem on the surface to be trivial, they are nevertheless from God.” This is one of many passages of this nature. For a full discussion of the non-dual archetype of Kingship in Lainer’s *Mei HaShiloach*, see M. Gafni’s Doctorate, Appendix One, “Wisdom of Solomon.”
143. *Talmud Bavli, Baba Metzia 59b*
144. This is the very issue at stake in two schools of understanding around the Zoharic mantra, “The *Shechina* speaks through the voice of Moses” (*Tikunei Zohar, folio 71a*). The first understanding, reflecting the theocentric model, and adopted by many Hassidic readers, is that Moses is so completely effaced and not present that he becomes a kind of embodiment of the Divine voice. Hence the Torah is the word of God and not that of Moses, as “The *Shechina* speaks through the voice of Moses.” The *Maggid of Mezereitch*, for example, writes in the Name of the Baal Shem Tov: “The world of speech is the world of consciousness. It is as if the *Shechina* contracts herself in order to dwell within the speech; this is the meaning of [what is written in] *Sefer Yetzira*, ‘they were places in the mouth’ [and this is the meaning of the phrase from Psalms] ‘God, Open My Mouth’...this is the *Shechina*...and he is merely like a *shofar*... for the *shofar* only emits the sounds that are blown into it, and if the blower will separate from the *shofar* then it will emit no voice.” In a second text, a student of the *Maggid* quotes his master as teaching: “It is not he himself who speaks [rather it is as] if the *Shechina* were speaking from his throat.” A similar understanding of the *Shechina* talking from the throat of Moses implies the effacement of the channeler in order to allow the Divine voice to be channeled clearly. This is sharply formulated by Kalonymous Kalman, teacher of the Seer of Lublin, an important direct source in the Hassidism of Lainer’s spiritual lineage. Describing the *Tzadikim* “saying Torah,” *Kalonymus* writes that “the *Shechina* rests on them in those moments and speaks through their throats...and those *Tzadikim* do not know afterwards what they said... for the *Shechina* talks through their throat.” Indeed, both Weiss and Pierkarz read the Hassidic sources adducing this adage as supporting a radically theocentric instrumental model in which the *Tzadik* is the empty vessel, or in Pierkarz’s phrase, the “medium” through which flows the Divine voice. This phrase is particularly important, for while initially the *Zohar* may have used it to explain the attribution of Divine authorship to a book which, according to the biblical text itself, is the word of Moses, it was greatly expanded by many Hassidic authors. This expansion included three basic stages. First, it expanded from Moses “saying” the book of Deuteronomy to the *Tzadik* “saying Torah.” Second, it expanded from the *Tzadik* saying Torah, to all the words of the *Tzadik*. Third, in *Mei Ha-Shiloach*, it expanded from the *Tzadik* to the Judah archetype, which in theory could be any person. These readings of the *Shechina* speaking from the throat of Moses yield a

quietist, religious typology, or at the very least a decidedly theocentric orientation, and are indeed gathered by Joseph Weiss and Rivka Shatz in their classic studies of *Via Passiva* and Quietism in Hassidism. (Shatz's study was preceded and partially rests on a classic study of the earlier work *Via Passiva* in Early Hassidim by Weiss.) As we noted above, it is possible that Weiss' apparent

misreading of Izbica as radically theocentric was in part influenced by his *prima facie* "via passiva" orientation to Hassidism. The primary alternative reading to Weiss, what we have termed the anthropocentric/humanist model, would need to be rooted in a kind of identity mysticism in which man's ontic identity with God was experienced as empowering and not effacing. Weiss however, *prima facie* ruled out such a position in Hassidism. He writes in *Via Passiva* with a kind of dogmatic certainty: "Needless to say 'identity –mysticism' ... has no place at all in Hassidic literature." However, as the example from *Mei Ha-Shiloach* will demonstrate, Weiss is incorrect, for "identity mysticism" lies at the very core of Lainer's theology of acosmic humanism.

145. The second possible reading of the "*Shechina* speaking through the voice of Moses," is not that Moses is effaced, but rather that Moses is so completely *present* that his voice and the voice of the *Shechina* blur into one. In this sense, as we saw earlier, Moses is an expression of the Judah archetype which is characterized by *Hitnasut*, one of Lainer's terms for the radical uniqueness through which one participates in their ontic unity with God. Based on Lainer's and Tzadok's reading of Mosaic prophecy outlined above, it seems reasonable to suggest that this would be their reading of the Zohar as well. However, we do not need to rely on reasonable conjecture since in another passage Tzadok explicitly reads the Zoharic text on the *Shechina* speaking through the voice of Moses precisely in this fashion. Tzadok is discussing the distinction between *Sicha*, which is casual conversation, and which lacks the formal intention of *Talmud Torah* – study of Torah – and formal intention to engage in the sacred *act* of *Talmud Torah*. However, he draws this distinction only in order to collapse it and to suggest that one must begin with formal intention that allows one to arrive at a level where even one's unconscious words are "*Divereit Torah Gamur*," full words of Torah. This as we shall unfold below is precisely the defining quality of Tzadok's teacher, Lainer's Judah archetype: "Even his *Sichat Chulin*, his casual and supra-conscious speech, is Torah." In explaining this concept, Tzadok writes: "In the beginning, it is God's Torah, but then it becomes your Torah [the Torah of the one who is engaging in its study]." Tzadok is citing here a Talmudic passage which interprets a verse in Psalms(1:2) to mean that "in the beginning Torah is [called] by the name of God, and then it is [called] by the name of the person [studying the Torah]" (*Talmud Bavli, Avodah Zarah* 19a). Tzadok goes on to explain that this second level is achieved when the human being realizes his ontic identity with the Torah. It is then that "his very kidneys" become Torah. Tzadok is here alluding to a position which we will show belongs to one of the most importantly underlying structures in Lainer's theology; that is, the ontic identity of names between man and God. According to Tzadok, this is the meaning of the Zoharic claim that "Moses communicated the words of the Torah on his own, for the *Shechina* spoke through his throat...and this is called 'words that come from the heart,' as it said in the Song of Songs, 'My heart is awake,' and God is the heart of Israel...and this is the language [at the beginning of the book of Deuteronomy], 'these are the words he spoke', supra-conscious words...for this is the level of the *Shechina* which spoke through the throat of Moses...that is, from himself...and thus Moses said 'I am not a man of words,' for he was the husband of the *Shechina* [erotically merged with the *Shechina*] so that all of his words were the Torah of God...the highest level of the level of *Sicha* [conversation]...that all of this conversation [even that which is supra-conscious] are words of Torah." Here

again, Moses is described as being not effaced, but as speaking from the depth of himself. According to Lainer and his student Tzadok, when one reaches the depths of “*Atzmo*,” of selfhood, one realizes their identity with the Divine, and all of their words become Torah. The ontological level of “*Atzmo*,” according to both Lainer and Tzadok, emerges from the level of consciousness termed by the Zohar, “The *Shechina* talks from the throat of Moses.” In the giving of the Torah through Moses, the ontic identity between the authentic voice of Moses and the voice of the *Shechina* is revealed. This position is indicative of the nature of acosmic humanism which may well be the demarcating characteristic of Lainer’s thought. What emerges from all this is that, for Lainer, the principle of acosmism does not efface man but empowers him for man is a part of God as well. The Divine voice finds expression in the voice of the unique individual, modeled by the prophet who manifests the God

voice through the clear prism of his *Perat Nefesh*, unique individuality.

146. Numbers 14:17 – “And now, may the power of God be magnified....” *Midrash Eichah Rabbah* 1:33 – “When Israel performs the will of God, they increase the Divine power above....” See also Zohar, Vol. 3, folio 161a, and Maharal in *Gevu’rot Hashem, Hak’damah Shlee’sheet*, folio 19

147. Zachariah 14:9

148. MhS, *Likutim*, Vol. 2, on *Mesechet Rosh Hashanah*, toward end

149. Zohar, Vol. 1, folio 27a; *Sh’lah, Toldot Ahdam, Bais Dovid*, No. 3 and No. 5 apparent