

We are very fortunate that the Master of the Universe has granted us the distinct gift of the very existence of Rav Kook and the added gift that his literary heritage is becoming more and more disseminated. Now, even those for whom Hebrew is not their mother tongue have access to these noble thoughts and ponderings.

We further benefit from hundreds of comments and clarifications of Dr. Polonsky, which convey Rav Kook's teachings at greater depth. He is succinct in his comments, and he fathoms properly the inner reasoning of Rav Kook. His manner of presentation, line by line from Hebrew to English, adds veracity, credibility and accuracy to this work.

*Moshe Zuriel,  
author and compiler of Otzrot ha-Rei'yah  
(five volume encyclopedic work concerning  
Rav Kook's writings)  
and Peninei ha-Rei'yah  
(his commentaries to the Torah)*



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Selected Paragraphs from Arfilei Tohar with Commentaries by Pinchas Polonsky

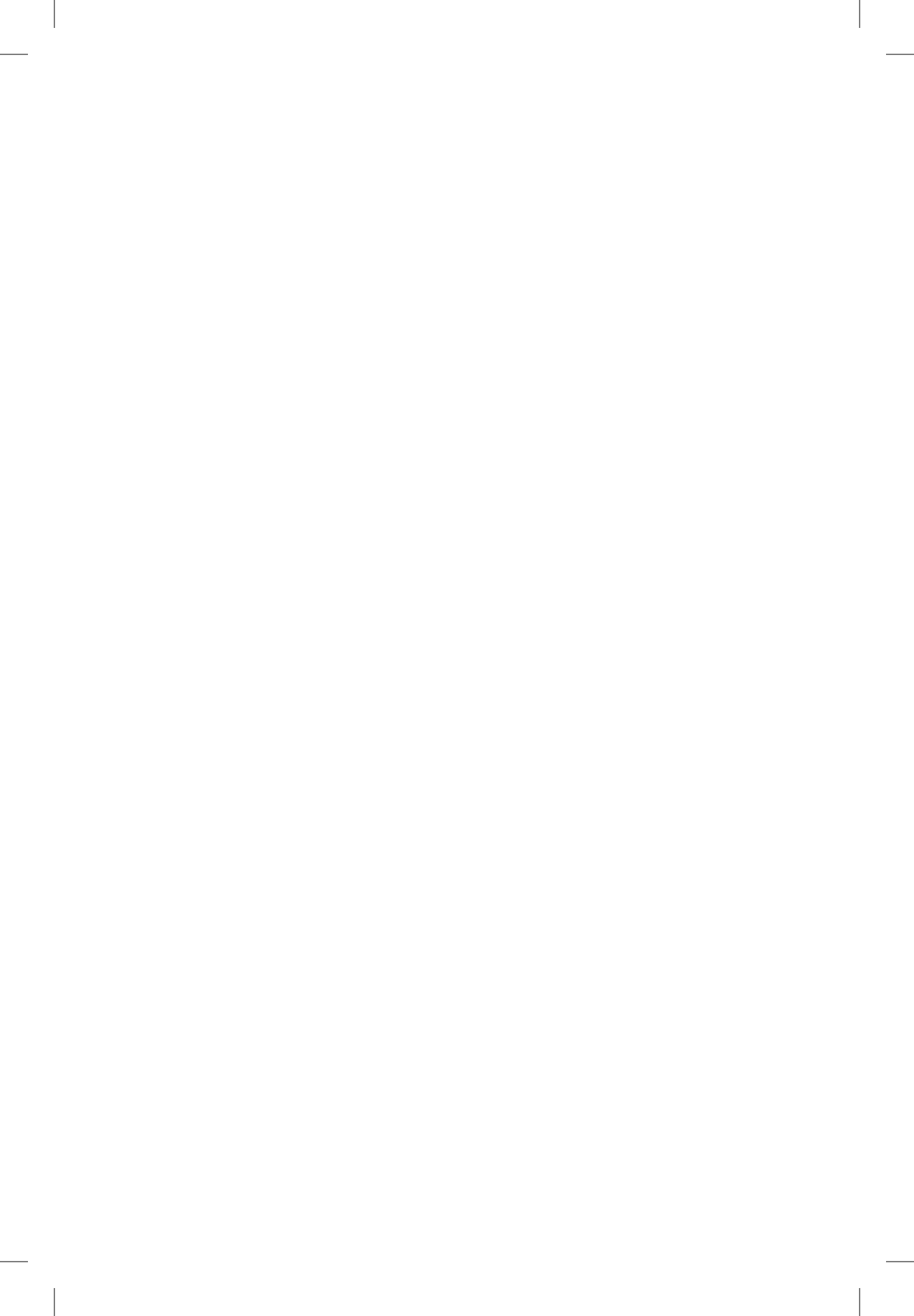


# Selected Paragraphs from Arfilei Tohar

with  
Commentaries  
by  
Pinchas  
Polonsky



**SELECTED PARAGRAPHS  
FROM ARFILEI TOHAR**



**Rabbi Abraham-Yitzhak  
ha-Cohen Kook**

**SELECTED  
PARAGRAPHS  
FROM**

**Arfilei  
Tohar**

**with Commentaries  
by Pinchas Polonsky**

Translated from the Hebrew by Yaacov Dovid Shulman  
Translated from the Russian by Lise Brody



**5773 – 2012**

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has made this publication possible

## ABOUT THIS BOOK

In 2006, *Rabbi Kook: The Man and his Teaching* was published by Machanaim. It was the first major publication about Rav Kook in Russian and contained his biography, essays about his teachings, and Russian translation of his works.

In 2009, thanks to the efforts and support of Galina Zolotusky and Gregory Yashgur, a section of this book, which was written by Pinchas Polonsky and existed only in Russian, was translated into English and published under the title *Religious Zionism of Rav Kook*. Now, once again with Galina and Gregory's support, the second book in this series, a collection of excerpts from Rav Kook's *Arfilei Tohar* with commentaries, comes to light.

The excerpts from *Arfilei Tohar* were translated from the Hebrew by Yaacov Dovid Shulman, commentaries were translated from the Russian by Lise Brody and edited by Ronda Angel Arking.

\*\*\*

Written nearly 100 years ago, *Arfilei Tohar*, with its radical call for changing views of Judaism, remains remarkably topical today. Its ideas may be easier to accept in our times, but their importance has not diminished.

Rabbi Kook undertook the enormous task of modernizing Judaism. This fruit of this modernization can be seen in the creation of the religious Zionist (“knitted kippot”) movement, the settlement efforts in Judea and Samaria, and many other changes. But the process is far from complete. In fact, I believe it has not yet reached the halfway point.

We all participate in the modernization of Judaism, not only when we engage in it directly and intentionally, but through the approach that we model in our daily choices. The future of Judaism depends on the attitudes that we emanate and spread to the surrounding world.

I hope that this book of excerpts from *Arfilei Tohar*, in which I attempt to formulate my understanding of Rav Kook's teaching, will help to advance that process.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Pinchas Polonsky  
Beit-El, Yom Yerushalaim, 5772-2012

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## PREFACE

### About the Title

The book's title, *Arfilei Tohar*, is taken from the Rosh haShana musaf service. The term refers to the cloud that obscured the peak of Mount Sinai when Moses ascended to receive the Torah (see Exodus 20:17 – 20:18.) The Artscroll mahzor for Rosh haShana translates the term as “clouds of purity.”

The word *tohar*, literally “purity,” is associated with the words *tsohar* and *zohar*, which translate to “radiance” and “source of radiance.” The title of the book, therefore, can be translated as *Clouds That Radiate Purity*, or, alternatively, *Obscured Light*.

The *Obscured Light* translation expresses the idea that the higher realms of thought, with which this book is concerned, cannot be understood clearly but only in an obscured way: human understanding inevitably flounders.

Because of this, our perception today of the “higher realm” (and, in fact, the Israelites’ perception of it at the time of the revelation of the Torah on Sinai) is necessarily clouded.

### The History of the Book *Arfilei Tohar*

*Arfilei Tohar* was written by Rav Kook as part of his philosophical journal, in Jaffa, between 1904 and 1914. In the spring of 1914, Kook submitted the manuscript for publication and wrote to his son, Rabbi Tzvi Yehuda Kook (then in Europe), that he wanted to publish it exactly as it had sprung from his pen so that it would be alive and fresh.

In the 1920s and 30s, many excerpts from *Arfilei Tohar*, as well as other segments of Kook's philosophical journal, were included in the books *Orot* and *Orot haKodesh*, which were compiled by R. Tzvi

Yehuda Kook and R. David HaCohen (Nazir), but the book itself was not reprinted in its entirety until 1983. Edits were made to the second edition, which were intended to soften some of Kook's harsher or more radical assertions, and thus to prevent less enlightened readers from drawing incorrect conclusions. (This danger, which was the reason for such a long delay in publishing the complete text, exists, of course, today as well.) When the 1983 edition came out, several scholars of Rav Kook compared it with the first 1914 edition and discovered these revisions.

Finally, in 1994, the original manuscripts of Rav Kook's complete philosophical journals became fully available, with all omissions restored, under the title *Shemonah Kevatsim* (*Eight Journals*; the second journal in the collection comprises *Arfilei Tohar*). Both publications were later reissued.

Unlike *Shemonah Kevatsim*, the 1983 edition lacks paragraph numbers. For this reason, page numbers are used for citations of passages from that volume, and paragraph numbers for excerpts from *Shemonah Kevatsim*.

### **The Beginning of the Era of the Messiah (Sotah 49b)**

One of the most important questions that Rav Kook examines is that of the perception of the Zionist movement, Jewish settlement, and the establishment of the State of Israel as the beginning of the messianic process (*Ikveta de-meshiha*). Rav Kook conducts a religious analysis of many of the phenomena that characterized much of Jewish life at the beginning of the twentieth century: the widespread neglect of the commandments, the loss of interest in traditional religious and Talmudic discourse, and the dissemination of "contemporary" teachings in ethics, natural sciences, and sociology, many of which were contradictory to Judaism. Rav Kook's religious analysis associates the Jewish situation of his time with the celebrated passage from the Talmud (Sotah 49b), which describes the onset of the messianic era:

*In the footsteps of the Messiah insolence (chutzpah) will increase and honor dwindle. The vine will yield its fruit [abundantly] but wine will be dear. The government will turn to heresy and*

*there will be none [to offer them] reproof. The meeting-place [of scholars] will be used for immorality. Galilee will be destroyed, gablan desolated, and the dwellers on the frontier will go about [begging] from place to place without anyone to take pity on them. The wisdom of the learned will degenerate, fearers of sin will be despised, and the truth will be lacking. Youths will put old men to shame, the old will stand up in the presence of the young, a son will revile his father, a daughter will rise against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and a man's enemies will be the members of his household. The face of the generation will be like the face of a dog. A son will not feel ashamed before his father. So upon whom is it for us to rely? Upon our Father who is in Heaven.*

Rav Kook interprets this Talmudic passage not only as an expression of the tragedy, or the birth pangs, that will precede the coming of the Messiah, but also as a detailed description of his contemporary situation. We find references to this passage, for instance, in passages 2, 21, 68, 107, 188, and 247 below, as well as other places in his *Shemonah Kevatsim*.



*Arfilei Tohar, paragraph 1, page 1*

**Just as [we] must elevate [our]  
fallen thoughts and traits**

Just as [we] must elevate [our] fallen thoughts and traits

כשם שצריכים להעלות את המחשבות והמידות הנפולות,

(in which evil and ugliness may be discerned) to the source of their root in holiness, where we see that they are really exalted thoughts and good traits,

שהרע והכיעור ניכר בהן, למקור שרשן בקודש, שאז רואים שהן הינן באמת מחשבות נשגבות ומידות טובות,

so too must [a person] lift up [his] thoughts that are decent but that stand at the lowest level

כן צריך לרומם את המחשבות שהן כשרות, אלא שהן עומדות בתחתית המדרגה,

– where evil and chaos are united with them, even though they face holiness.

שהרע והתוהו מחובר עימן אף על פי שהן פונות לקדושה,

[He must lift them up] to the most elevated level of the ideal sublime –

אל רום המעלה של האצילות האידיאלית,

[a state of being that] is directed only toward total goodness and absolute straightness –

שהיא מכוונת רק אל הטוב הגמור והישרנות המוחלטת,

until the uplifting [of these decent thoughts] grows and [reaches] the supernal world, over which pure holiness rules in its might.

עד שההתרוממות הולכת וגדילה עד העולם העליון, שהקודש הטהור מושל בו בגבורתו.

**Paragraph 1, p. 1**

(1) Thus, even those thoughts and qualities that appear “bad” or “negative” spring initially from the holy and good and must be elevated to their source. In other words, we must develop the good essence that already exists within those negative thoughts

and traits. It will then become evident that the evil is merely superficial, while holiness and goodness are present and merely being misused or sublimated. Therefore, these thoughts and qualities are not intrinsically “bad”; rather, they are simply misguided. The idea of channeling the soul’s evil aspirations into a positive direction (instead of suppressing them) is a classical tenet of Judaism.

(2) Even that which is kosher, or permitted, is not necessarily at the level of the ideal, and therefore must also be corrected and uplifted.

(3) These thoughts and qualities, although they are as a whole directed toward the good, nonetheless contain a certain element of chaos and evil, though this element is weaker than in those that are “fallen and misguided.”

(4) This first paragraph, which serves as a foreword to the book, states that the “kosher” level of thought, understanding, and action (which may have been sufficient for previous generations) is inadequate in today’s world, and that the kosher must be improved until it is directed toward the absolute good – that is, the good of the universe. The book *Arfilei Tohar* devotes itself for the most part to the question of how to move from the “kosher” to the “ideal.”

## The insolence at the time preceding the Messiah comes about

The insolence (chutzpah) at the time preceding the messiah comes about

because the world has progressed to such an extent that it demands an understanding of how every detail is connected to the whole.

A detail that is not connected to the great whole cannot satisfy [a person's] mind.

If the world were engaged in [gaining access to] the light of Torah to such a degree that [a person's] spiritual soul [would] grow to recognize the proper connection between details and spiritual wholeness,

then the *teshuvah* and rectification of the world would be actualized.

However, because [people's] carelessness has led to [a state in which]

the light of the inner Torah – which requires [that a person attain] an exalted state and an inherent holiness – has not appeared in the world correctly,

the demand [of people for the structure of a life in which the details are understood within the [framework of the] whole has come

החוצפה דעקבתא דמשיחא באה,

מפני שהעולם הוכשר כבר עד כדי לתבוע את ההבנה, איך כל הפרטים הם מקושרים עם הכלל,

ואין פרט בלתי מקושר עם הגודל הכללי יכול להניח את הדעת.

ואם היה העולם עוסק באורה של תורה במידה זו, שתתגדל הנשמה הרוחנית עד כדי הכרת הקישור הראוי של הפרטים עם הכללים הרוחניים,

היתה התשובה ותיקון העולם יוצאה אל הפועל.

אבל כיון שההתרשלות גרמה,

שאור תורה פנימית, הטעון רוממות וקדושה עצמית, לא הופיע בעולם כראוי,

באה התביעה של סידור חיים כאלה שהפרטים יהיו מובנים במובן הכלל,

at a time when the complete revelation of the light and the clearing of the path [leading] to understanding has not yet arrived.

בזמן כזה שהגמר של גילוי האור  
וסלילת הדרך להבנה זו עדיין לא  
בא,

And this has caused terrible destruction.

ומזה באה ההריסה הנוראה.

We must employ the supernal remedy,

ואנו מוכרחים להשתמש בהתרופה  
העליונה,

which is [the attainment of] increased strength in [our] spiritual ability.

שהיא הוספת כח בהכשרון הרוחני,  
עד אשר הדרך איך להבין ולשער  
את הקישור של כל עניני הדיעות  
והמעשים התוריים עם הכלל היותר  
עליון, יהיה דבר המובן והמוצע  
בדרך ישרה על פי הרגשת הנפשות  
השכיחות.

Then the common people will, [with their] feeling, directly understand and access a way of comprehending and appraising that which connects all of [their] Torah-[related] knowledge and deeds to the most supernal wholeness.

At that point, the strength of spiritual life will again appear in the world, in deed and in thought, and a universal teshuvah will begin to bear its fruit.

ואז ישוב כח החיים הרוחניים, במעשה  
ובדיעה, להופיע בעולם, ותשובה  
כללית תחל ליתן את פריה.

### Paragraph 2, p. 1

(1) The phrase “insolence at the time preceding the Messiah” refers to the words of the Talmud (*Sotah* 49b), which states: “In the footsteps of the Messiah insolence will increase”. The Hebrew term *chutzpah* can be translated in various situations as “impertinence” or “insolence”. However, in this case it has a more positive connotation; here, the term implies audacity, or the ability to persevere in the face of adversity and to achieve one’s goal with absolute resolution.

The term *chutzpah* was used by Zionists to emphasize the free, bold, pioneering character of the first Zionist settlers in the State of Israel, as well as their psychological superiority over Jews of the Diaspora. Rav Kook, who identified the Zionism of his

times as the beginning of the Era of the Messiah (the Talmud's description of the increase in *chutzpah* clearly correlated with the psychological self-determination of the first Zionists), uses the word to describe the audacious departure from religion on the part of the founders of Zionism. See also sections 68 and 107.

(2) Rav Kook speaks here as much of the contemporary cultural thought (which is manifested in science, ideology, philosophy, sociology, and so forth) as of the projection of this state of things onto religion. The world has now developed and matured to the point where people need a complete picture (such as the modern scientific paradigm or the model offered by physics, in which all parts of the whole are determined by general laws, and it is those laws that humankind strives to discover); the contemporary mind will not tolerate a model in which unrelated parts exist in themselves, disconnected from general principles or philosophies.

In principle, this contemporary state of affairs is a positive thing ("the world has progressed"), for it advances humankind. But it has negative side effects as well. Many individuals in contemporary secular society regard religion in such a way that they generally support its essential values and ideals, but reject those "details" that they see as disconnected from the central goals of the religion. For instance, some people recognize the important idea behind the Sabbath as a weekly day of rest – and even extol the ancient Jewish religion and proclaim the ideal of a weekly day of rest; at the same time, they reject the concrete laws against Sabbath work, as they do not see how these "details" are related to the principle of "rest." Or, for example, while extolling the moral justice proclaimed by the ancient prophets of Israel, some individuals reject the prophets' exhortation to observe concrete commandments, as they see these as unrelated to the general principles and ideals of moral and social justice.

Secular Zionists at the time of Rav Kook saw many of the commandments of Judaism as discrete parts, disconnected from general ideals, and they therefore rejected them.

(3) *Teshuvah* means repentance, return, the rectification of sins and flaws, the lifting of the world to God.

(4) In other words, the rejection of religion in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries reflected not a decline in the spiritual level of the Jewish people (as many in the religious establishment claimed), but, on the contrary, a higher demand for spiritual systems, for a clear understanding of the connections between the concrete aspects of religion and general spiritual principles. At the same time, in the world of Torah studies, no similar intellectual movement took place. Thus, the public consciousness asked for a more advanced and deeper understanding – and the world of the Torah had no adequate response. This is what led to the “terrible destruction” of the traditional framework of Jewish observance.

(5) That is, a “lower remedy” – a simple call to observe the commandments, to return to the earlier Judaism that those people had rejected – would not help.

(6) Developing people’s spiritual intuition and raising the level of Torah study.

(7) That is, until all of this is understood by and evident to the average person.

(8) “Universal *teshuvah*”: This refers to Rav Kook’s concept of the universal elevation of the world to God, described in detail in *Orot haTeshuva*.

*Arfilei Tohar, paragraph 3, page 1*

## The essence of learning Torah for its own sake

The essence of learning Torah for its own sake can come only	עיקר לימוד תורה לשמה אי אפשר לבוא,
after [a person] is capable of [gaining] an understanding – accompanied by feeling –	כי אם על ידי הכשר זה של ההבנה, וההרגשה הבאה עימה,
of how all of the details of the Torah are beloved and holy,	איך כל פרטי תורה חביבים חיבת קודש,
and of how the universal light, which is filled with life and brings life to the world, courses through all of [these] details.	ואיך האור הכללי, המלא חיים ומביא חיים לעולם, מתפלש הוא בכל הפרטים כולם.

### Paragraph 3, p. 1

(1) We normally understand the phrase “to study Torah for its own sake” (and the Jewish tradition emphasizes the importance of precisely such study) as study without practical purpose, study for the sake of studying. Rav Kook casts the phrase in a new light, meaning “to study Torah for the sake of Torah,” that is, for its ability to renew and deepen the individual who studies it. This involves the study of the interconnections between all of the details and specifics of the commandments and the general ideological and philosophical principles. Such study, as demonstrated in the preceding paragraph, is necessary in order to help our generation reach a state of *teshuvah*.

### **An additional note on the connections between Paragraphs 1, 2, and 3**

Just as the “kosher” alone is insufficient and must be raised to a higher level of idealism and sanctity, so, too, the “usual” study of

Torah as no more than a collection of laws is inadequate (especially as this was the type of study that led to its rejection by an enlightened generation). Study of Torah must include the revelation of the meaning of its laws and their connection with general values. This is the message of paragraph 3.

*Arfilei Tohar, paragraph 4, page 2*

## There are various causes of depression

There are various causes of depression.

כמה סיבות ישנן לעיצבון,

[A person] must overcome all of them with the joy of [performing] a mitzvah.

ועל כולן צריכים להתגבר בשמחה של מצוה,

That is a constant joy that suits [the people of] Israel because of the spiritual light that always rests upon them.

שהיא שמחה תדירית הראויה לישראל, מצד אור הרוחני ששורה בהם תמיד.

One cause [of depression] is a tendency, [expressed in] action, for coarse pleasure.

הסיבה האחת היא נטייה מעשית להנאה גסה,

A person's soul is drawn by that to a place of darkness, and [there] it grieves over its descent.

שהנשמה נמשכת על ידה למקום החושך, והיא מתעצבת על ירידתה.

[A person] should transform this great woe to joy,

וראוי להפוך יגון עצום זה לששון,

for when [his] soul [will] rise from the yoke of exile that had burdened it,

כי בעלייתה של הנשמה מתוך עול הגלות שגבר עליה,

a great stream of joy [will] rise up from below, and the sublime, pure [level of reality will] grow ever richer in its spirituality.

הרי זרם גדול של שמחה עולה מלמטה למעלה, והתוכן האצילי הטהור נעשה יותר עשיר ברוחניותו.

### Paragraph 4, p. 2

(1) When we look at the world around us, we see much that grieves us. In many situations, our grief must be overcome by “the joy of performing a mitzvah”; mitzvah – that is, not only by means of gladness and joy, but through the understanding that the grief itself is the point of departure for progress, for the

realization of God's commandments by Israel. For this is the very thing Israel is called to do: to bring the divine light into the world through the realization of the commandments.

(2) That is, the soul ceases to see and distinguish the divine light; the person is mired in the material realm.

(3) The lifting of the soul to higher worlds is the realization of the commandment to return (*teshuvah*). In Rav Kook's teachings, as explained in *Orot haTeshuvah*, *teshuvah* is not only a matter of rectification of misdeeds, but also elevation of the world to a higher spiritual level. Since in the process of its creation the world has been moving away from God, it must return to God; thus, global *teshuvah* is the original commandment – to lift the entire world nearer to God. Return of the individual's soul from the "exile" of materialism is also a form of *teshuvah*.

(4) In other words, pure spirituality, by itself, unconnected to material realization, is not "full-blooded": it is pure – but pale and impotent. Although it is distressing when the soul descends into lower, material worlds, it gains fullness and completion there, it becomes emotionally and existentially richer, and, on its return to the sublime level, it is enriched. This is what comprises joy. Today's descent of the soul is the basis for its future ascent, which will bring it to a more sophisticated level. We should find joy in the awareness of the future ascent of our soul, and of the whole world with it.

### **Additional note on the connection between this paragraph and the preceding one**

When the older approaches to Torah study (which failed to provide a sense of connection between the parts and the whole) cease to be effective, the soul, both individual and national, plunges into the darkness of materialism; in this lower region it is at least able to observe the link between specifics and general values. The individual and social bodies both wish for material pleasures, and they immerse themselves in these; the soul contemplates this and is distressed. This distress must be overcome not by rejecting materialism, but

through an understanding that this descent is historically necessary (and although one need not contribute to it, one must recognize that the world is so ordered), and through the joy of realizing that in the future, with the help of a more full-blooded life, we will rise to a yet higher level. (It is important to note that we are speaking here not of a descent into sin by the breaking of commandments, but of the descent into materialism by grasping for worldly pleasures.) All of this applies, of course, both to the individual and the nation.

## Two levels of Divine Providence

(One needs to distinguish and differentiate two levels of Divine Providence governing the world.) God's guidance [of the universe, as] connected to the moral dimension – whether [in relationship to] individuals or to nations and [other] groups –

is all an extension of the nature of universal morality poured into the essence of being.

This [guidance is alluded to] by the name *Elokim* (“God”).

However, higher than this stands [God's] concealed free will,

which does not correspond to a revealed moral state. Instead, [it corresponds] to the supernal ideal, which is in consonance with the supernal gaze,

transcending the conditions of present-day existence.

The illuminations that come from this state are the lights of the inner soul of all being.

They include the past, present and future, transcending the structure and form of temporal periods.

All of this is encompassed in the name “*Hashem*” as it is structured and in all of the pathways of its permutations.

ההנהגה האלהית, המקושרת עם היחס המוסרי, בין באישים פרטיים בין בלאומים ובכללים,

הכל הוא המשך מן הטבע של המוסר הכללי הנמשך בעצמותה של ההויה, שבשם אלהים.

אמנם למעלה מזה עומדת היא הבחירה הכמוסה,

שאיננה על פי התוכן המוסרי המתגלה, אלא על פי האידיאל העליון שעל פי הצפייה העליונה,

למעלה מהתנאים שההויה נמצאת בהם כעת.

ההזרחות שבאות מתוכן זה הם אורות הנשמה הפנימית של כל היש,

והן כוללות את העבר ההווה והעתיד למעלה מסדר זמנים וצורתם,

וכל זה כלול בשם ההויה, כסדרו ובכל אופני צירופיו.

### **Paragraph 5, p. 2**

(1) The first level of providence is associated with moral law, that is, good is rewarded and evil is punished. Moral laws also include, of course, repentance, forgiveness, mercy, grace, and so forth – that is, everything that comprises divine morality as we understand it.

(2) Thus, the universe itself is essentially moral, created by God in such a way that moral law governs it. (This is discussed in more detail in *Poetry of Being* by Yosef ben Shlomo, Chapter 6, “The Moral Tendency of Being.”)

(3) *Elohim*, usually translated as “God” in the Torah, is associated with divine justice.

(4) This will is determined not according to the balance of past and present moral criteria (merits, sins, mercy, gratitude), but according to the purpose of the universe, that ideal that we must attain in the world.

(5) If the first kind of divine guidance – the providence founded on moral law – proceeds according to the state of the world and of people in the present moment; the second kind – the providence of the higher ideal – is founded on the goal that the world will attain in the future.

(6) That is, the providence founded on the attainment of the ideal takes into account not only the past and present (the cause) but also the future (goal). In order for the world’s future to be what God wishes it to be, certain processes take place in the present. The first type of providence is causative; the second is teleological.

(7) The tetragrammaton, the name of God in four letters (*haShem*; usually written as YHWH in the Torah) is associated with the manifestation of the divine as the God of the Covenant, who transcends the law with His mercy, and whose relationship to humankind is at the highest level.

## **Connection with the preceding paragraph**

It was noted earlier that what today is a cause for distress may in the future become the source of progress and joy. We must overcome distress caused by current circumstances by regarding those circumstances not in isolation, but as a link in the chain of past, present, and future. Then we will see that events and situations have not only a cause but also a purpose.

## The rectification of the political state as a whole

The rectification of the political state as a whole and the rectification of [each individual's] body in particular	תיקון המדינה בכלל, ותיקון הגוף בפרט,
are part of the highest manifestation of holiness	הוא מכלל הופעת הקודש היותר עליונה,
– [a manifestation] so holy that it cannot be illuminated in a revealed fashion by means of a characteristic light that has an obviously holy form.	שמפני רוב קדושתה אינה יכולה להיות מוארת בגלוי באור תכוני שיש לו צורת קודש בולטת,
Rather, the light is wrapped within [this manifestation of holiness] and [clings] to it like a garment.	אבל האור נטוי בה ועימה כשלמה.
The noble strands that emerge from these [rectifications are] practical details directed toward the rectification of the state and [of each individual's physical] health, in the form of Godly commandments. These may be compared to <i>tzitzit</i> .	וקצוות האצילים היוצאים מאלה, פרטים מעשיים לשם תיקון המדינה והבריאות, בתור מצוות, הרי הם כערך הציצית,
And the culture as a whole may be compared to the <i>tallit</i> .	בשעה שכל התרבות בכללה היא כערך הטלית.
The <i>tzitzit</i> bring forth a holy revelation of all of the light hidden in the entire <i>tallit</i> , with [the light's] great revelation and manifestation.	הציצית מביאה לידי גילוי קודש את כל האור המסותר בכל הטלית כולה מרוב גילוייו והופעתו,

[Similarly, the] deeds of Godly commandments and holiness that make [their particular] mark in the totality of human action, [deeds] directed toward rectifying [man's] life-communal and individual –

והפעולות של מצוה וקדושה המסומנות בכללות מעשה האדם לתיקון חייו הכלליים והפרטיים,

actualize the light hidden in the depths of all the structures of human culture.

הן מוציאות אל הפועל את האור הגנוז במעמקי כל סדרי התרבות האנושית,

They bring the revelations [of that light] to the place fit for [the light]

להביא אל המקום הראוי לו את גילוייו,

and make visible the light of eternal life that gives life to everything, including temporary life.

ולהראות את אור חיי עולם המחיה את הכל, אפילו את חיי השעה והרגע.

### **Paragraph 13, p. 6**

- (1) *Tikkun* is a Kabbalistic term that means the rectification of the world – bringing it into conformity with the purpose of creation.
- (2) The government is the national body, and in this sense, the act of rectifying it is parallel to the individual's rectification of his physical nature.
- (3) The rectification of the material body (and, in particular, of the government as the material body of the people) holds such a high potential for holiness that this holiness must be concealed, as such a revelation would cause the world to drown in it, destroying the existing order of the universe.
- (4) See Psalms 104:2.
- (5) This refers to those situations in which the structures of government (or the material body of the individual) are affected in the fulfillment of clear, concrete commandments.

(6) *Tzitzit*: the commandment to put fringes on the corners of garments (Numbers, 15:37 – 41)

(7) *Tallit*: The four-cornered prayer shawl to which *tzitzit* are attached

(8) The *tallit* is “simply a garment”; but people need garments for warmth, for proper appearance, and to construct civilization, through which humankind’s divine potential is revealed. The holiness of the *tallit* is not obvious, whereas that of the *tzitzit* attached to it is open and visible. But it is only the existence of the *tallit* that makes possible the fulfillment of the commandment to wear the *tzitzit*. Yet the *tallit* is also a reservoir of immense hidden holiness, only some of which is revealed through the *tzitzit*.

Note that the word *tzitzit* is derived etymologically from a root meaning to “show on the outside.” Thus the concealed holiness of the *tallit* shows through the *tzitzit*.

(9) In other words, God’s purpose for Creation is the realization of holiness in the material world; therefore, everything material – every person and entity – contains great potential holiness. We see a small obvious manifestation of this holiness (the *tzitzit* in relation to the *tallit*) when the material – including the body, society, the state, civilization – gives us the opportunity to carry out specific commandments. Ultimately, however, it is not these commandments in and of themselves, but of the gradual revelation of that hidden potential holiness contained in the body itself (society, state, civilization). Then, even matters of ordinary, transient life will “make visible the light of eternal life.” Therefore, the rectification (*tikkun*) of the material (including the body, state, and civilization) encompasses immense although not obvious, holiness.

## The *nefesh* of the sinners of Israel in the era preceding the coming of the Messiah

The *nefesh* of the sinners of Israel in the era preceding the coming of the Messiah

– of those who connect with love to matters concerning the entirety of the Jewish people, the land of Israel and the renaissance of the nation –

is more perfected than the *nefesh* of those fully faithful Jews who lack this quality of an intrinsic sensitivity to the good of the whole and the building of the nation and the land.

But the *ruach* is much more perfected in those who fear God and who keep the Torah and the commandments,

even though an intrinsic sensitivity and impulse to act in matters concerning the whole of Israel are not yet as strong in them

as they are in those in whom a spirit of transgression fouls their heart to such a degree that they connect themselves to foreign perspectives and to deeds that pollute their physicality and prevent the light of the *ruach* from being rectified [in them]. As a result, the *nefesh* [of these sinners] too suffers from their blemishes.

The rectification – which will come about via the light of the Messiah

הנפש של פושעי ישראל שבעקבא  
דמשיחא,

אותם שהם מתחברים באהבה אל  
עניני כלל ישראל, לארץ ישראל  
ולתחיית האומה,

היא יותר מתוקנת מהנפש של שלומי  
אמוני ישראל, שאין להם זה היתרון  
של ההרגשה העצמית לטובת הכלל,  
ובנין האומה והארץ.

אבל הרוח הוא מתוקן הרבה יותר  
אצל יראי ד' ושומרי תורה ומצוות,

אף על פי שההרגשה העצמית  
וההתעוררות של כח פעולה בעניני  
כלל ישראל אינם אמיצים אצלם,

ממה שהוא אצל אלו שרוח עיונים  
אשר בתוכם מעכר את לבם, עד כדי  
להתקשר בדיעות זרות ובמעשים  
המטמאים את הגוף ומונעים את אור  
הרוח מלהיתקן, וממילא סובלת גם  
הנפש מפגמיהם.

והתיקון שיבוא על ידי אורו של  
משיח,

[and] which will be greatly aided by the spreading forth of the teaching of the secrets of the Torah and the revelation of the lights of the wisdom of God in all of its forms that are worthy of being revealed –

is that Israel will come together in one bond.

And [then] the *nefesh* of those who are [God-]fearing, who keep the Torah, will be rectified by means of the perfected *nefesh* of the sinners,

who are good in regard to matters of the entire [community] and [in regard to] the hopes, material and spiritual, that can be understood by human awareness and sensitivity.

And the *ruach* of the sinners will be rectified by means of the influence of those who fear God, who keep the Torah and who are great in faith.

And thus a great light will come to both [groups].

The manifestation of complete *teshuvah* will come to the world, and then the people of Israel will be prepared for redemption.

The supernal *tzadikim*, the masters of the *neshamah*, will be the unifying conduits through which the abundant flow of the light of the *nefesh* will pass from left to right and the abundant flow of the light of the *ruach* from right to left.

שיעזור לזה הרבה דבר ההתפשטות של תלמוד רזי תורה וגילויי אורות חכמת אלהים, בכל צורותיה הראויות להיגלות,

הוא שייעשו ישראל אגודה אחת,

ותתקן הנפש של היראים שומרי תורה על ידי שלימות הנפש שבפושעים

הטובים ביחש לעניני הכלל והתקוות הגשמיות והרוחניות המושגות בהכרה והרגשה, האנושית

והרוח של הפושעים יתוקן על ידי השפעתם של יראי ד' שומרי תורה וגדולי אמנה,

וממילא יבוא לאלה ולאלה אור גדול, והופעת תשובה שלימה תבוא לעולם, ואז יהיו ישראל מוכנים לגאולה.

והצדיקים העליונים, מארי דנשמתא, הם יהיו הצינורות המאחדים, שעל ידם יעבור שפע אור הנפש משמאל לימין, ושפע אור הרוח מימין לשמאל.

And the joy will be very great. “Your priests will don righteousness and Your pious ones will sing joyfully” (Psalms 132:9).

And this will be accomplished through the power of the light of the Messiah,

who is David himself, who “lifted up the yoke of *teshuvah*” (Moed Katan 16b). “For the sake of David Your servant, do not reject the face of your anointed one” (Psalms 132:10).

ותהיה השמחה גדולה מאד, כהניך ילבשו צדק וחסידיך ירננו. וזה יהיה בכח אורו של משיח,

שהוא דוד בעצמו, שהקים עולה של תשובה. בעבור דוד עברך אל תשב פני משיחך.

### **Paragraph 21, p. 11**

- (1) In Kabbalistic literature, *nefesh* means the lower, external part of a human’s divine soul.
- (2) Those who break the law of Torah
- (3) This refers to secular Zionists of the early twentieth century. See also the note to paragraph 2.
- (4) These true believers are strongly focused on the book and tradition, and their independent sense is underdeveloped.
- (5) In Kabbalistic literature, *ruach* means the higher, more internal part of a human’s divine soul.
- (6) Because secular Jews have a healthier *nefesh*, the external part of the soul, they better perceive the divinity in the external world, in the life around them and the normal course of history. (This is why they became Zionists, having heard the voice of God resounding in history and calling them to Zion).
- (7) The soul (*nefesh*) of the first group (secular Zionists) is of a better nature than the second group, but is subjected to the powerful negative influence of a spirit of transgression, and so gradually continues to get worse.
- (8) The light of the Messiah refers to the light that emanates from the divine purpose (the coming of the Messiah), rather

than from an evaluation of the ephemeral state of things. In this light, every segment of the Jewish people is regarded not according to its present level, but to the contribution it will one day bring to the future ideal. (See also paragraph 5 above.)

(9) This refers not to “technical” or superficial study of Kabbalah (which has become popular in recent times), but to the deeper understanding the Kabbalah offers into the processes currently taking place among the Jewish people as a whole and in the State of Israel. Such an application of the Kabbalah for an understanding of historical processes in the life of the Jewish people is the Torah of the Messiah’s deliverance. (Note that even in the sixteenth century, R. Itshak Luria, the Arizal, believed that the process of messianic deliverance would require a renewal of Torah, which would be linked to broader study of Kabbalah as a vital component of Judaism.)

(10) Within this unified Jewry, each group will offer the good that it brings, and accept from another group that which it lacks.

(11) That is, the secular Zionists, who are “sinners” in that they transgress many specific laws of Judaism (Sabbath, kashruth, and so forth), are nonetheless “good” in regard to the rebirth of the Jewish nation. Therefore, Rav Kook refers to them as “perfected sinners.”

(12) All progress that can be attained by humankind in the material and spiritual realms, in scientific knowledge, in the social sphere, in emotion, and in art (regardless of religion) is the realization of spirituality.

(13) Each of which made possible the rectification of the other

(14) In other words, repentance and rectification will take on not only an individual but also a national and universal character.

(15) This term can be understood literally as “those possessed of the higher divine spirit.” The word *neshamah*, used here, refers to the Kabbalistic idea of the third level of human’s divine soul,

deeper and more sublime than either *nefesh* or *ruach*. Thus, this refers to those who understand the essence of both groups discussed above, fully realizing the ideals of both – and therefore becoming the authority for each with the ability to influence its adherents.

(16) The “perfected sinners,” possessed of a rectified soul (*nefesh*), are the left side of the Jewish people, whereas the God-fearing Jews are the right side; and with the aid of the “supernal *tzadikim*,” masters of the third level (*neshamah*), the light of rectification of the *nefesh* comes to the God-fearing non-Zionists, and the light of rectification of the *ruach* to the secular Zionists.

(17) See Psalms 132:9.

(18) The Messiah will send the light “from the future” and thus help us to rectify ourselves. Only when we look not to the past, but to the future, only when we cease to evaluate the virtues and sins of different groups, but see their future unity, can we aid in the transfer of positive influence from one group of Jews to another.

(19) The tribe of Judah – and King David in particular – is known for its special powers of *teshuvah*. Striking examples of this in the Jewish tradition are the stories of Judah and Tamar (Genesis 38) and David and Bathsheba (1 Samuel 11; see commentary there and in *Moed Katan* 16b). Therefore, the “Messiah, son of David” has unique powers of *teshuvah*, and in the light of his coming, various groups of Jews will be able to rectify themselves and one another.

(20) See Psalms 132:10. We see here an additional dimension that Rav Kook brings to our understanding of “the Messiah, son of David.” This Messiah is the son of David not only in the sense that he is David’s descendant, but in that he takes up the burden of *teshuvah*: he is able to bring all of the Jewish people to repentance and perfection, both secular and religious.

*Arfilei Tohar, paragraph 22, page 12*

## The more a person loves people

The more a person loves people, the more that one gazes with an approving eye at those who are immersed with all their might in matters of this world and its construction, the more one's mind becomes settled.

If one is capable of turning to the heights, to a supernal spirituality, to Godly perceptions, one will [then] find oneself more at home in his supernal world.

The necessary affairs of the world that are incumbent upon humankind [and] that by their nature interfere with the supernal vision

will not disturb that person so much, because he or she will know that these are being attended to on his behalf by all of those people who find satisfaction in this practical work of theirs.

Ben Zoma said of this: "Blessed is He Who created all of these to serve Me" (Berakhot 58a).

כל מה שהאדם אוהב יותר את הבריות, וכל מה שהוא מביט בעין יפה על השקועים בכל כחם בעסקי העולם הזה ובנינו, כן דעתו מתיישבת עליו.

ואם הוא מוכשר לפנות אל על, לרוחניות עליונה, להסתכלויות אלהיות, יהיה מוצא את עצמו יותר נתון לעולמו העליון,

ולא יפריעוהו כל כך עסקי העולם ההכרחיים המוטלים על האדם, שהם בחיקים סותרים את ההצטיירות העליונה,

שהרי יודע הוא, שאלה הענינים הולכים הם ונעשים בעדו על ידי כל אלה שהם מוצאים קורת רוח בעבודתם המעשית הזאת.

ובן זומא אמר על זה: ברוך שברא כל אלה לשמשני.

### **Paragraph 22, Page 12**

(1) Furthermore, the individual will not be at all angry with others for immersing themselves in worldly matters – and for dragging him or her there as well.

(2) God is, above all, the Creator (Genesis 1:1), and therefore the image of the divine in humanity demands that one live a

creative life, make constructive efforts, and attempt to discover the unknown within one's self and within the world. Those who live only an imitative, routine life sin against the image of the divine within themselves.

(3) In order for spirituality to grow in the future

(4) In sum, the spiritual person attains calm through the understanding that all of these material affairs are necessary and serve as a basis for the progress of the spirit. As a result, such a person will not be angry or irritated by the pressures of practical, ordinary matters.

*Arfilei Tohar*, paragraph 26, page 13

## **There is no room to ask about the source of a person's knowledge of supernal information**

There is no room to ask about the source of a person's knowledge of supernal information.

על הידיעות העליונות אין מקום לשאול מהיכן יודעים אותן.

When we find within the soul a supernal spirit and a treasury of well-arranged knowledge – so that everything is aligned with everything else – [we may know that] this is the pinnacle of clarified [knowledge].

כשמוצאים בקרב הנשמה רוח עליון, ואוצר ידיעות מסודרות, מתאימות זו לזו, זהו היותר עליון שבבירורים.

All knowledge that derives from analysis is merely a means of attaining this supernal knowledge, which the soul pours forth from its deepest depths.

כל הידיעה הבאה מתוך מחקר, אינה כי אם אמצעי איך להגיע לידיעה עליונה זו, שהנשמה מפכה מקרב עומק עמקים שלה.

The most effective means of attaining this supernal trait is clinging to God with all of one's might and studying the secrets of the Torah.

האמצעי היותר מוכשר לבוא למידה עליונה זו, הוא דביקות בד' בכל כח, והגיון רזי תורה.

### **Paragraph 26, page 13**

(1) In matters of supernal knowledge (as distinct from lower knowledge, such as practical halakha,) there is no need to reference classical texts or to seek the origins and bases of such knowledge.

(2) Intuitive knowledge is on a higher plane, inasmuch as it springs from the depths of the soul, and any analytical knowledge of the world is no more than a method, or preparatory stage of approaching intuitive knowledge. (For more detail, see *Poetry*)

*of Being* by Yosef ben Shlomo, Chapter 3, “The Rational and the Irrational.”) At the same time, this in no way means that analytical knowledge is unnecessary. Rather, it is necessary – but only as a preparatory stage.

(3) Study of the deeper meanings of the Torah (together with its usual, more superficial meanings) develops one’s intuition and allows people to see things they have not noticed before in the world around them.

*Arfilei Tohar, paragraph 27, page 14*

## **It is the yearnings that transcend the entire world that give the world life and happiness**

The light of Israel shows how it is precisely the yearnings that transcend the entire world that give the world life and happiness.

אורן של ישראל מראה, איך השאיפות שהן ממעל לכל העולם כולו, דוקא הן מחיות הן ומאשרות את העולם.

Eternity is necessary not only for the sake of eternity but also for the sake of the moment.

לא רק בשביל הנצחה נצח נדרש, כי אם גם בשביל השעה.

And the moment is important because it is one of the revelations of eternity.

והשעה חשובה היא בשביל שהיא אחת מגילויי הנצח,

The world is important because it is one form of the infinite numbers of forms through which the light of the Divine Being is revealed.

העולם חשוב הוא, מפני שהוא צורה אחת מהצורות שאין להן סוף, שאור ההויה האלהית מתגלה על ידן.

### **Paragraph 27, page 14**

(1) The “light of Israel” is the example shown by Israel, that is, the teachings of Israel, as seen through the national-historical experience of the Jewish people.

(2) People often think that for life to be richer and fuller, one must occupy oneself with the affairs of this world, leaving aside “unnecessary” higher aspirations. The reverse is the case, however; the example shown by Israel demonstrates that when a person strives for higher goals, those goals enliven the world, making it richer, fuller, and more complete.

(3) One must not think that eternity is the opposite (much less the enemy) of the present moment. On the contrary, when a

person is connected with eternity, he or she progresses more effectively in the realm of the transient.

(4) The moment is important not in itself, but because without it, eternity would be incomplete. The transient is an integral part of the eternal. On one hand, we must strive for eternity to make the moment more complete; on the other hand, the moment is not something separate and unnecessary, in opposition to the eternal, but is, at the same time, a part of it.

(5) In summary, various religious conceptions, addressing the question of the relationship between “this world” of transient life and “that world” of true and eternal life, generally follow one of two approaches. The first approach sees this world in a positive light, but merely as a preparation for the future world, with no inherent value of its own (this is the usual understanding of the words of the Mishna: “This world is like the antechamber of *Olam haBa*”). The other approach views this world as an obstacle that must be rejected in order to reach eternity. (This spiritualist approach is usually rejected by Judaism, but variations of it can be found in some European sources.) Rav Kook believes that contempt for the material world, which is an element of both approaches, though more sharply expressed in the second, is fundamentally incorrect, and that reality “avenges itself.” Strong souls, sensing the spiritual importance of the material (although such people would never use such words themselves), frequently reject religion, since, in moving to the purely spiritual and severing itself from its foundation in reality, religion loses its vitality and cannot answer the spiritual needs of such people. Accordingly, Rav Kook offers a third approach. He sees “this world” as an integral part of eternity, and thus eternity is filled with the light of transient life, which now takes on a full, spiritual and religious meaning. See also paragraphs 141 and 142 below.

## **At times, when there is a need to disregard words of Torah**

At times, when there is a need to disregard words of Torah	לפעמים [כש] יש צורך בהעברה על דברי תורה,
but there is no one in the generation who can show the way,	ואין בדור מי שיוכל להראות את הדרך,
the matter comes about by means of a disruption.	בא הענין על ידי התפרצות.
At any rate, it is better for the world that such a matter come about by means of an error. In this inheres the principle, “Better that people [do wrong] in error and not with purposeful intent” (Beitsah 30b).	ומכל מקום יותר טוב הוא לעולם שיבוא ענין כזה על ידי שגגה, ובזה מונח היסוד של מוטב שיהיו שוגגין ואל יהיו מזידין.
Only when prophecy is present in [the nation of] Israel is it possible to institute such a matter – by means of a temporary injunction.	רק בשהנבואה שרויה בישראל אפשר לתקן ענין כזה על ידי הוראת שעה,
Then it is done openly, with permission and as a Godly command.	ואז נעשה בדרך היתר ומצוה בגלוי.
But in consequence of the sealing of the light of prophecy, this rectification come about by means of a [long-lasting] disruption	ועל ידי סתימת אור הנבואה, נעשה תיקון זה על ידי פרצה וארוכת זמן,
that, although it dismays the heart from the aspect of its outer being, causes it to rejoice from the aspect of its inner being.	שמראבת את הלב מצד חיצוניותה, ומשמחת אותו מצד פנימיותה.

### Paragraph 30, page 15

(1) The word “when” does not appear in Rav Kook’s manuscript; it was added by the editor in the 1983 edition. The revision somewhat smoothes over the radicalism of Rav Kook’s statement – that there is an inevitable need to disregard words of the Torah.

(2) That is, who can do this in the permitted way, by “temporal decree” (*Hora’at Sha’ah*), a directive to temporarily suspend a commandment.

(3) That is, a spontaneous movement of the people, which “breaks the fence,” a mass disruption of religious law.

(4) If there has been no *Hora’at Sha’ah*, and the rectification of the situation has come about by means of a disruption, then it is better that this should be in the form of a spontaneous action by ordinary people (in error) than that religious people should intentionally break the law.

(5) According to the Torah, a prophet has the right (in a critical historical situation) to suspend certain Torah laws. A classic example of this is the prophet Elijah, who created a religious revolution when he carried out the sacrifice on Mount Carmel rather than in the Temple (I Kings 18:23), as the times demanded this. (It must be noted that the laws of the Torah apply to a stable situation, in which life flows normally. But no stable system can be equated to a critical situation, and it is such cases that the Torah anticipates with the concept of *Hora’at Sha’ah*.)

(6) Inasmuch as in this case, the commandment to obey the prophet – including temporary injunctions – will be carried out.

(7) Breaking the fence – and also breaking the law itself.

(8) The words “long-lasting” were deleted by the editor of the 1983 edition, who saw them as too harsh and drastic.

(9) Because there is a departure from observation of Torah and the commandments.

(10) That is, this change, in the end, is important, and is fundamentally for the better. The “outer” is what exists today; the “inner” considers the future in terms of that deep change in the existing situation that is necessary to build the future in the right way. To prevent an incorrect understanding of the text, the concluding words were revised by the editor of the 1983 edition to read as follows: “although these processes dismay the heart as they are, they cause it [the heart] to rejoice due to the future (i.e., the aim) to which they are directed.”

*Arfilei Tohar, paragraph 33, page 16*

## **Holy people must truly be natural people**

Holy people must truly be natural people,      צדיקים באמת צריכים להיות אנשים טבעיים,

for whom all the qualities of the nature of body and spirit partake of the quality of life and health.      שכל תכונות הטבע של הגוף ושל הנפש יהיו אצלם בתכונה של חיים ובריאות.

And then in their ascent they are able to raise the world – and all will rise with them.      ואז הם יכולים בעילויים להעלות את העולם וכל יקומו עימם.

### **Paragraph 33, page 16**

(1) That is, the idea that a holy person must be not of this world is incorrect. Rather, the righteous should not be severed from nature and life; they should not be locked inside the house of learning.

(2) If holy people are so immersed in Torah and the observance of the law that they separate themselves from the surrounding reality, they will not be able to lift the world – that is, to carry out the divine mission.

## **A person's instinct is swifter and more exact than his or her intellectual recognition**

A person's instinct is swifter and more exact than his or her intellectual recognition.

A human being's greatness [lies in the fact] that one can raise all of one's recognitions to the heights of the most supernal aspect within instinct – from which comes exactitude and swiftness.

In regard to a supernal, exalted [state of being], those people who truly possess divine faith have the mightiest instinct. [In this regard,] all culturally-focused people will ultimately return to them.

[But] in terms of intermediary goals – such as yearning for morality, knowledge, the building up and honor of the [Jewish] nation, and so forth – culturally focused people have the strongest instinct.

Everyone who has a strong instinct [in some matter] is weak in those [other] matters that require [him to engage in] calculation and deliberation.

Therefore the [various] strata of the [Jewish] nation must be bound together so that they will receive illumination of knowledge and strength of instinct from each other, in accordance with the level of the particulars of how these portions are divided among them.

האינסטינקט הוא יותר מהיר ויותר מדויק מההכרה השכלית של האדם.

ומעלת האדם היא, שיעלה את כל הכרותיו למרומי הצד העליון שבאינסטינקט, שמשם לקוחה היא הדייקנות והמהירות שלו.

ביחש להנשגב העליון, בעלי אמונה אלהית באמת הם בעלי האינסטינקט היותר אמיץ, וכל בעלי התרבות עתידים לשוב אליהם.

מצד המגמות הבינוניות, כמו שאיפת המוסר, הדעת, הבנין הלאומי וכבודו, וכיוצא בהן, התרבותיים הינם בעלי האינסטינקט היותר חזק.

כל בעל אינסטינקט חזק רפוי הוא בדברים שהם צריכים חשבון ושיקול דעת.

ועל כן צריכים הם פלגותיה של האומה להיות מאוגדים יחד, כדי שיקבלו זה מזה הארת הדעת, ואומץ האינסטינקט, לפי ערכם של פרטי הדברים שהמניות הללו חלוקות אצלם.

**Paragraph 43, page 19**

(1) Rav Kook identifies three levels of knowledge: instinctive, intellectual, and intuitive. Paradoxically, the lowest level, the instinctive, is in some way akin to the highest, the intuitive. (This is discussed in more detail in *Poetry of Being* by Yosef ben Shlomo, Chapter 3, “The Rational and the Irrational.”)

(2) One would be mistaken to assume that instinct is the simple, primitive part of a person and that in the process of further development and progress it will wither away. On the contrary – in order to become true harbingers of the culture of the future, we must not stray from our instinct and intuition, but develop and attend to them. This applies not only to the higher realms (the striving for the divine), but also to the “middle” realms (the striving for knowledge, morality, and the improvement of the material side of life on both the individual and national level). The most outstanding people in each of these areas are those with strong instinct and intuition.

**Just as supernal holy people have no connection to mundane and trivial concerns / In the days preceding the coming of the Messiah, whoever connects**

Just as supernal holy people have no connection to mundane and trivial concerns,

כשם שהצדיקים העליונים אין שייך אצלם דברי רשות ולא דברים בטלים,

and [their] trait of holiness is beyond any [this-worldly] purpose,

ומדת הקדושה היא למעלה מכל מגמה,

so that it goes without saying that [a holy person] eats in order to learn [Torah], pray, perform mitzvot and the like-this being an intermediate trait –

שאין צורך לומר שאוכל כדי שיוכל ללמוד ולהתפלל ולעסוק במצוות וכיוצא בזה, שזו היא מידה בינונית,

[furthermore,] the essence of [the holy person's] eating and similarly [that person's] speech and all of the movements and emotions of life are filled with holiness and light.

אלא שעצם האכילה, והוא הדין הדיבור, וכל התנועות ורגשות החיים, קודש ואור הם מלאים,

And how much more is it the case that for these people all wisdoms in the world – whether deep or superficial, pure or impure – have an intrinsic [upward] direction,

קל וחומר שכל החכמות שבעולם, הפנימיות והחיצוניות, הטהורות והטמאות, הן לגבי דידהו כולן מכוונות כוונה עצמית,

and everything that enters into the circle of their awareness rises as they rise.

וכל מה שנכנס בחוג ידיעתם הרי הוא מתעלה בעילויים.

It is true that, in practical terms, no one reaches this level, for the Torah has set eternal boundaries [barring certain behaviors] for everyone.

אמנם במעשה לא יגיע שום אדם לידי מידה זו, שהתורה גדרה גדרות עולמים לכל,

But in regard to that which pertains to [the realm of] thought, “boundaries are no higher than ten [handbreadths]” (Shabbat 43a),

אבל מה שנוגע למחשבה שם אין תחומין למעלה מעשרה,

“there is no Satan and no evil occurrence” (I Kings 5:18), and “even the Angel of Death teaches [such a person]” (Shabbat 89a).

ואין שטן ואין פגע רע, ואף מלאך המות מסר לו דבר.

In the days preceding the coming of the Messiah, whoever connects in the inclination of one’s heart to the salvation of Israel possesses the soul of a supernal holy person,

בעקבתא דמשיחא, כל המתחבר בנטיית לבבו לתשועת ישראל הוא בעל נשמה של צדיק עליון,

which cannot be gauged with the measure [meant] for an intermediary [person].

שאי אפשר למודדו במידה בינונית.

### Paragraph 65 – 66, page 27

(1) “Mundane and trivial concerns” are those that are unrelated to the holy and that do not contribute to the realization of the law, but are merely permissible pastimes. The “supernal *tzadik* (holy person)” has no time for these, as all of that person’s life is devoted to a divine mission.

(2) Even a person at the “intermediate level” eats not simply for pleasure; both the food and the pleasure it gives provide that person with the strength to act righteously and carry out the commandments; that said, *tzadikim* must be at a much higher level than this.

(3) *Tzadikim* (righteous people) move all of these things in the direction of their own progress. This includes both “pure” and “impure” wisdoms, from which they are able to extract what is right and direct it toward the holy.

(4) *Tzadikim* elevate all things that fall within their sphere, even the impure.

(5) Inasmuch as the Torah prohibits the breaking of the law and unclean acts, in “practical terms” the *tzadik* cannot be associated with them, or elevate them through actions. However, a righteous person’s thought can touch everything, and thus everything can be elevated because it is connected to that person through the thought.

(6) The expression “no higher than ten handbreadths” refers to the laws relating to the transport of objects on the Sabbath. Higher than ten handbreadths above the earth is “free space.” By association, thought that is higher than ten handbreadths can penetrate areas that practical concerns cannot reach.

(7) That is, the soul of a supernal *tzadik* is free to explore all wisdoms and all things, even the unclean and the angel of death: the *tzadik* will extract from everything something of value. The supernal *tzadik* can extract a kernel of good from everything; however, on the practical level, such a person cannot draw light from what is unclean or from what is unattainable because of the “boundaries set by the Torah” (prohibitions). But in the realm of thought, the supernal *tzadik* can do this. All wisdom in the world, pure and impure, is redirected when it comes into contact with the supernal *tzadik*, so that it follows his or her own vector. In the realm of thought there are no boundaries, and “good thoughts about bad” are permitted.

(8) The period of the *Ikveta deMeshiha* (the period right before the coming of the Messiah), with which Rav Kook identified the Zionist movement. See notes to paragraph 2.

(9) That is, to the resurrection of the Jewish people in the State of Israel

(10) It does not state here that this refers to a supernal *tzadik*, but that the person’s soul is of the same kind as that of a supernal *tzadik*.

(11) That is, this person is a sort of “candidate” to become a supernal *tzadik*. Such a person’s soul is joined to the reservoir from which true powers are drawn. Accordingly, the standard “measure” does not apply to this potential supernal *tzadik*, who is capable of extracting sparks.

*Arfilei Tohar, paragraph 67, page 27*

## **Torah sages are perfected by means of the unlearned masses**

Torah sages are perfected by means of  
the unlearned masses –

for even though the light of the Torah  
constitutes the life of all [people],  
nevertheless it is also “a drug of death  
for those who turn leftward with it”  
(cf. Shabbat 88b),

and it reduces the strength [of sages]  
much more than if they had been  
lacking Torah and [only] simple nature  
had acted upon them in the pathways  
of their lives.

And since all people have a component  
of ugliness, however small, the Torah  
indeed becomes harmful to them  
corresponding to this component. And  
in this area – the harm is incomparably  
stronger than the reward.

And the counter-remedy to the drug  
of death blended into the Torah sages  
is activated by the general connection  
that they have with the unlearned  
masses of the entire [Jewish] nation,

for in this way the latter pour forth the  
influence of [their] natural straightness,  
which has not been at all degraded by  
means of any sophistry.

תלמידי חכמים משתלמים על ידי  
עמי הארץ.

כי אף על פי שאור התורה הוא חיי  
כל, מכל מקום הלא היא גם כן סמא  
דמותא למשמאילים בה,

והיא מגרעת את כחם הרבה יותר  
מאילו היו חסרי תורה. והטבע הפשוט  
פעל עליהם בארחות חייהם.

וכאשר בכל אדם יש שמץ של כיעור,  
נגד זאת השמצה המועטת באמת  
מויקה לו התורה, אלא שההפסד  
יוצא בכפלים אין קץ נגד השכר.

והרפואה הניגודית לסמא דמותא  
המעורב, באה על ידי ההתחברות  
הכללית שיש לתלמידי חכמים עם  
עמי הארץ מכללות האומה,

שעל ידי זה משפיעים הם האחרונים  
את היושר הטבעי, שלא ניטשטש כלל  
על ידי שום התחכמות שבעולם.

[Then] the small drop of the drug of death turns back again into a drug of life.

And in this way it also gives life to the entire people, including among them the unlearned masses.

וחוזרת גם הנקודה הקטנה של סמא  
דמותא להיות חוזרת לסמא דחיי  
ומחיה גם כן על ידי זה את הכלל  
כולו. וגם את עמי הארץ שבו.

### **Paragraph 67, page 27**

(1) See *Shabbat* 88b. To “turn the Torah leftward” signifies a preponderance of judgments; see paragraph 128.

(2) The Torah causes harm to the sage according to the share of ugliness that inevitably exists within the sage’s soul (small as it may be).

(3) The Torah, like an “expanding glass,” inflates all parts of the sage’s soul, the good and the bad; thus, the sage’s inner ugliness, small by nature, also expands, and the harm becomes very great in proportion to the Torah that sage has studied.

(4) The relationship between the sages (*talmidei hakhamim*) and unlearned masses (*am haArets*) is not depicted here in the usual one-sided way (sages are called to teach and direct the simple masses) but as two-directional. As the sages teach the masses and move them forward, so the masses also rectify the sages. This is in keeping with Rav Kook’s overall view, in which each segment of the Jewish people makes a beneficial contribution to the general advancement of all of the other segments, and in which each group has its shortcomings that must be rectified (in particular, by the influence of the other groups; see paragraph 21). It must be noted, however, that Rav Kook lacks the reverence for the common people, which was widespread in some ideological teachings of the time. Beyond doubt, simple people, like all other segments of Jewry, have their merits and their positive influence on others, just as they have their own abundant flaws, which they must rectify under the teaching of others. Accordingly, the rectification of the sage furthers the spiritual advancement of the common people.

## Impurities in understanding of divinity

[Regarding] the impurities in [people's] understanding of divinity, awe, faith, and everything dependent upon these –

as long as the nation as a whole has no need to rectify the ways of its practical life, the damage [that these impurities cause] is imperceptible.

But since the time has come that the national revival must arrive, and the blossoming of the “horn of salvation” in actuality must be revealed, [these] impurities immediately create an obstacle.

The nation can only bond together, and, in the depths of its life, understand the secret of its might and the images of its structures

by means of purified perceptions and actions that emerge with the highest clarity from [people's] pure, true knowledge of God.

This is why a great negative force is aroused [at the time] preceding the coming of the Messiah, [a force characterized by] great insolence.

That negativity will burn away all that is weak and ugly in Godly concepts and [all] that depends upon [those concepts], in the whole of the nation.

הסיגים שבהבנת האלהות, היראה, האמונה, וכל התלוי בהן,

כל זמן שאין האומה צריכה לתקן את דרכי חייה המעשיים בכללותה, אין ההזיק שלהם ניכר,

אבל כיון שהגיע הזמן שהתחייה הלאומית מוכרחת לבוא, וצמיחת קרן ישועה בפועל מוכרחת להיגלות. מיד הסיגים מעכבים,

ואי אפשר לאומה שתתאגד ותשיג בעומק חייה את סוד גבורתה וציורי סידוריה,

כי אם על פי דיעות מזוככות ומעשים היוצאים מטהרתה של דעת ד' אמת בבהירות היותר עליונה.

וזאת היא הסיבה שכח שלילי גדול מתעורר בעקבא דמשיחא בחוצפא סגיאה,

ושלילה זאת תבער את כל מה שהוא חלוש ומכוער בהמושגים האלהיים והתלוי בהם בכללות האומה.

Even though this is terrible to see – because a number of matters of truth, good traits, commandments, and laws seem to be swept away by the stream of negativity –

ואף על פי שנורא הדבר לראות,  
שכמה עניני אמת, מידות טובות  
ומצוות וחוקים, הולכים ונשטפים  
ונעקרים לכאורה על ידי זרם  
השלילה,

nevertheless, everything will ultimately blossom in purity and might with exalted holiness from the seed that is powerful, pure, and exalted, which no negativity will [be able to] reach.

מכל מקום סוף סוף שהכל יצמוח  
בטהרה וגבורה, בקדושה עליונה,  
מהגרעין האיתן הטהור והמרומם,  
שכל שלילה לא תגיע אליו,

Its light will shine as a new light on Zion, with a wondrous greatness

ואורו יזרח בתור אור חדש על ציון,  
בגדולה מופלאה,

beyond any image that the impoverished powers of weary souls – [suffering from] material and spiritual weakness resulting from the long and debilitating exile – can visualize.

למעלה מכל ציור שכחות דלים  
של נפשות עייפות, עייפות חמרית  
ורוחנית של גלות ארוכה ודלולה,  
יכולים לצייר.

### **Paragraph 68, page 28**

- (1) That is, minor errors, irregularities, or snags. As a whole, the Jewish religious interpretations in exile are correct, but there are some impurities, that is, incorrect treatments of certain aspects of Judaism.
- (2) These relatively minor errors and distortions did not particularly cause much harm during the centuries of exile.
- (3) That is, achieve national unity on all levels, including the physical (governmental)
- (4) And the Judaism that has been brought from exile does not have that highest clarity, as it contains impurities. It therefore cannot serve as the foundation on which to build the State.
- (5) This is a paraphrase of the Talmud (*Sotah* 49b): “In the footsteps of the Messiah insolence will increase.” See note to paragraph 2.

(6) Insofar as the renewal of national life requires a relatively clear understanding of the divine, and all impurities impede the advancement of national resurrection, insolence will burn away all that is weak and ugly in the religious sphere. Before the national resurrection, these imperfections did not cause much harm. But now that the resurrection has begun to develop in practice, they have become obstacles, and a “demolition force” will sweep them with insolence from its path.

(7) This is a quotation from the morning prayers. Here, Rav Kook gives it the additional sense that only a new light can shine on the renewed Zion; the old light – the Judaism of exile – is not strong enough.

*Arfilei Tohar, paragrah 76, page 31*

## I love all

I love all.

אני אוהב את הכל.

I cannot but love all people, all nations. From the very depths of [my] heart, I want the glory of all, the perfection of all.

איני יכול שלא לאהוב את כל הבריות, את כל העמים. רוצה אני בכל מעמקי לב בתפארת הכל, בתקנת הכל.

My love for Israel burns more greatly and is deeper, but [this] inner desire spreads out in the force of its love to all, literally.

אהבתי לישראל היא יותר נלהבה. יותר עמוקה, אבל החפץ הפנימי מתפשט הוא בעוז אהבתו על הכל ממש.

I have no need whatsoever to force this feeling of love – it wells directly from the holy depth of wisdom of the Godly soul.

אין לי כל צורך לכופף את רגש אהבה זה, הוא נובע ישר מעומק הקודש של החכמה של הנשמה האלהית.

### Paragraph 76, page 31

(1) The ideal of Judaism is not love for the Jewish people only, but for all of humankind, even for all of creation.

(2) Our love for the world and humanity should not be identical for all things, but should be “graduated.” Our love for those close to us should be greater than our love for those who are distant, and our love for the Jews should be greater than our love for other peoples.

(3) It is right to love all creation, but one should love one’s own people more strongly. Nonetheless, one should in no way limit oneself to love for the Jewish people, since without love for all, even one’s love for the Jewish people will not take the correct form. Love for all creation springs directly from the soul, and without it the soul cannot be fully realized.

### **Additional note**

This excerpt is simple and far from radical; however, it helps us to keep this point in mind.

*Arfilei Tohar, paragraph 84, page 34*

**Consciousness of God flees a blemished, splintered, and incomplete life for a life that is whole, outstanding, and full**

By its fundamental nature, [a person's] consciousness of God flees a blemished, splintered and incomplete life for a life that is whole, outstanding, and full, even in this world.

דעת אלהים מיוסדת לברוח מהחיים הפגומים, המרוסקים והחסרים, לחיים שלמים, מבולטים ומלאים, גם בעולם הזה.

One spark of the light of God that lives in a person's heart suffices to expel infinite instances of darkness.

וניצוץ אחד של אור ד' החי באיזה לב, מספיק כבר לגרש מחשכים רבים לאין חקר.

Those who say that the knowledge of God diminishes the character of life are fools without understanding who are standing on the outside.

טיפשים באין בינה הם האומרים על דעת ד' שהיא ממעטת את צביון החיים. מבחוץ הם עומדים.

And a nation that knows its God must appear in the world with the knowledge of the on-going perfection of life in light of the living God.

ועם יודע אלהיו צריכים להופיע בעולם באותה הידיעה של השתלמות החיים, באור אלהים חיים.

**Paragraph 84, page 34**

- (1) One's "consciousness of God" is not a superficial knowledge of religious law and texts, but rather, a deep sense of one's personal and national life as an unending dialogue with God.
- (2) The purpose of religion is not only to call for the salvation of the soul but to bring the divine light into our world.
- (3) The thirst for a full and vibrant life is a reflection of the fullness and brilliance of the divine.
- (4) When one person begins to feel and manifest this in life, it is passed on to the many others surrounding that person.

(5) They believe that the more energy, light, and color are found in this world, the less can be found in the divine world. But this is incorrect; although it is sometimes thus when the Jewish people are in exile, it is fundamentally untrue in the State of Israel.

(6) They are “standing on the outside,” that is, they see everything superficially. They do not look deeply into things. They are outside of true Judaism, so they are spiritually “outside” of the Land of Israel. (They know only the Judaism of exile. Among these people are both those who are for and those who are against this exile form of Judaism, but they all share an incorrect understanding of Judaism, so that the arguments of its defenders are incorrect, and the arguments of its attackers are irrelevant.)

(7) The Jewish people in its proper state of development.

(8) The most important epithet for God in the Tanakh is the “Living God”; He is joined to all aspects of life, not set apart.

*Arfilei Tohar*, paragraph 92, page 36

## Understanding of divinity at the level of *zeir anpin* and *arikh anpin*

Personal understanding of divinity can be encapsulated in *zeir anpin* (reduced size)

אפשר לכלול בזעיר אנפין ההבנה האישית של האלהות,

[which concentrates one's views of] God as unique, the Creator of all, [Who has made] the world and all beings with the work of His hands.

בתור אל אחד יוצר כל, והעולם וכל ההוויות מעשי ידיו כולם.

But this understanding is small,

אבל הבנה זו קטנה.

and there exists *arikh anpin* (a broader state) [of comprehension that is] much greater than this, and that incorporates everything into a supernal and wondrous unity,

ואריך אנפין גדול מזה מאד, שהוא כולל את הכל באחדות עליונה ונפלאה,

exceedingly higher than the above-mentioned personal thought.

למעלה למעלה מהמחשבה האישית הנזכרת.

### Paragraph 92, page 36

(1) The Aramaic term, *arikh anpin*, is the *partsuf* of the *sefirah Keter*; *zeir anpin* is the *partsuf* of the *sefirah Tiferet*. In Kabbalah, the *partsuf*, or face, is a complex of *sefirot* that appears as the personal manifestation of the divine. The phrase *arikh anpin* (in Hebrew, *erekh apayim*<sup>1</sup>) translates literally as “long face” or idiomatically “slow to anger” and *zeir anpin* as “short,” or “small face” (in conversational Hebrew *zeir anpin* has come to mean “in miniature”). This term also connotes “short tempered” or “impatient.” The *partsuf zeir anpin* signifies divine governance of the world based on the fluid balance of good and evil, on

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus 34:6

reward and punishment that are imperative at the local level at the present time. This type of dialogue between God and man is extremely important; on the individual intensity it can rise no higher than this.

(2) Accordingly, at the individual level of dialogue with God, a person understands that God is the creator. God made the world, He rules it, and He acts in mercy and justice.

(3) This understanding is not wrong. On the contrary, it is necessary and, at its level, correct. However, our task is to rise to a higher level.

(4) The plane of *arikh anpin* is our recognition at the level of the “Providence of Unity.” Everything in it shares a common goal and purpose. (The two levels of divine intervention – Providence of Good and Evil and Providence of Unity – are discussed above in paragraph 5. The *arikh anpin*, the *partsuf* of the *sefirah Keter*, is the original divine will, which strives to advance the world toward its goal; *zeir anpin*, on the other hand, is the practical, “natural” governance of the world. The *partsuf aeir anpin* unites six *sefirot*, from *Hessed* to *Yesod*, which correspond to the six days of creation – that is, to the normal and natural functioning of the world. This is why the dialogue with God at this level is manifested in “natural” divine rule: justice, mercy, and the love of God; while at the level of *arikh anpin*, the original universal design is realized, in accordance with which a person must be part of the divine unity. (The level of *arikh anpin* cannot be attained when a person focuses only on self-examination, as the scale of a single life is simply too small for the “long dialogue” that encompasses human history.)

*Zeir anpin* is “impatient,” in that it consists of short-term reward and punishment, a shifting balance between sins and merits, mercy, and justice. At the level of *arikh anpin* the question of justice does not exist, as everything is one – and everything is meaningful, divine, and good. Therefore, in the dialogue with God at the level of *zeir anpin*, good and evil are distinct: this is good, this is bad; for this you are rewarded, for this punished;

this advances the world, this impedes its progress – and that is, indeed, how the world functions locally. *Arikh anpin*, however, is the all-encompassing unity of the world, in which evil simply does not remain, as there is no room for it (and for this reason, there is no question of justice). For more on this, see paragraph 97.

(5) Our task in the dialogue with God is to rise above the individual level to the national: to rise from *zeir anpin* to *arikh anpin*, from divine governance at the level of good and evil, to divine unity.

*Arfilei Tohar, paragraph 97, page 38*

**When a person sins, that person  
is in the world of separation**

When a person sins, that person is in the world of separation.

בשעה שאדם חוטא הוא בעלמא  
דפירודא,

At that point, every element stands alone. Evil is evil in itself, with an evil and harmful quality.

ואז כל פרט ופרט עומד בפני עצמו,  
והרע הוא רע בפני עצמו, ויש לו ערך  
רע ומזיק.

[But] when a person does teshuvah out of love, the light of the existence of the world of unification – where everything is organized into a single unit – immediately shines upon that person.

וכשהוא שב מאהבה מיד מתנוצץ  
עליו אור ההויה של עלמא דיתודא,  
שהכל מתארגן לחטיבה אחת,

And in [that] universal connectedness there is no evil at all,

ובקישור הכללי אין שום רע כלל.

for the evil combines with the good in order to season it and elevate its precious worth even more.

כי הרע מצטרף אל הטוב לתבלו,  
ולהרים עוד יותר את יקרת ערכו.

And with this, “willful sins are transformed into merits” (Yoma 86b) – literally.

ובזה נעשים הזדונות לזכויות ממש.

**Paragraph 97, page 38**

(1) A person sins when that person sees his or herself as a distinct entity – when every element of the universe is separate, and that person’s self is severed from the source, from God: this is the “world of separation.” Then evil, seen as separate, becomes, in fact, a discrete element of the locality and has the capacity to do harm.

(2) *Teshuvah* (repentance, return to God) springs from the awareness of universal connectedness and unity with God, which, as opposed to the “world of separation,” is the “world of unification.” “*Teshuvah* out of love” is not repentance due to fear of punishment, but from love of God and the desire to find connection with the Eternal.

(3) “There is no evil at all”: there is no room for the concept of “evil”; everything is an integral part of the good.

(4) If we look at the universe holistically, as the “world of unification,” rather than locally, as the “world of separation,” it becomes clear that evil is necessary for the realization of good and in order for that good to reach a higher level. In the holistic view, evil does not exist in and of itself, as it is a necessary element of the overall system. When good overcomes an evil that has been impeding it, the good gains greater worth and deeper understanding; it attains a higher level. That evil, in the universal plan, ceases to be evil. Any evil is evil (and it is indeed evil!) only when it is viewed discretely; looked at holistically, it is a vital component of the good.

(5) One who does *teshuvah* (repents) out of awe or fear – that person’s premeditated sins are rendered as unwitting transgressions. One who does *teshuvah* out of love – that person’s premeditated sins are rendered as merits” (Talmud, *Yoma* 86b), as, in the final account, these sins provide a reason for repentance and return and, thus, brought about movement to a higher level of spirituality.

*Arfilei Tohar, paragraphs 107 – 108, page 41*

**The insolence at the time preceding the  
Messiah is a diminution of light /  
Without the insolence preceding the  
Messiah, it would be impossible to explain  
secrets of the Torah**

The insolence (chutzpah) at the time preceding the Messiah is [the expression of] a diminution of light, which has the purpose of rectifying the vessels.

החוצפא של עקבתא דמשיחא היא מיעוט אור לשם תיקון הכלים,

It is not at all similar to other, [previous] instances of criminality, which were entirely empty, [acting] in a destructive manner.

ואינה דומה כלל למאורעות של עבריינות אחרים, שהם היו לקותות גמורות, דרך הריסה.

However, within this camp of the insolent there are also sparks that must be entirely extinguished.

אמנם ישנם בתוך המחנה הזה של בעלי החוצפא גם כן זיקין שהם מוכרחים להיות דועכים לגמרי,

And that extinguishing will come about as a result of a great illumination of the light of the Torah from supernal might, by means of the appearance of very great tzadikim.

ודעיכה זו תבוא על ידי הארה גדולה של אור תורה מגבורה של מעלה, על ידי הופעת צדיקים גדולים מאד.

“The light of the righteous will rejoice, and the candle of the wicked will be extinguished” (Proverbs 13:9).

אור צדיקים ישמח ונר רשעים ידעך.

Without the insolence preceding the Messiah, it would be impossible to explain secrets of the Torah with an absolute revelation.

בלא החוצפא דעקבתא דמשיחא, לא היה אפשר לבאר רזי תורה בגילוי גמור.

Only due to the coarsening of feelings that results from this insolence (chutzpah) is it possible to receive very exalted intellectual lights.

רק על ידי התעבות ההרגשות שעל ידי החוצפא, יהיה אפשר לקבל הארות שבליות עליונות מאד,

And in the end, everything will return to [a state of] complete rectification.

וסוף סוף שהכל ישוב לתיקון גמור.

### **Paragraphs 107 – 108, page 41**

(1) Rav Kook saw the abandonment of observance of the Torah by many Zionist activists as one aspect of “the insolence at the time preceding the Messiah,” or *chutzpah Ikveta deMeshiha*.

(2) That is, it is necessary in order for these vessels to be better able to receive the divine light. The idea of vessels for the reception of divine light is a fundamental concept of the Kabbalah.

(3) That is, rejection of the Torah in other times.

(4) The rejection of religion by Zionists at the beginning of the twentieth century is very different from similar phenomena in the past, above all in that, in rejecting religion, these Jews did not reject their Jewishness. Rather, they strove to realize it.

(5) Not everything in secular Zionism is good or essential for the rectification of the vessels. It contains elements that will later need to be destroyed.

(6) The sparks cannot be smothered by darkness and prevented from flaring up; they must be dimmed by a much greater light, in which they will be lost, will disappear, as they will cease to be needed.

(7) See Proverbs 13:9. The candle of the wicked will be extinguished and lost in the bright light of the righteous.

(8) This “coarsening” of feelings (simple, without proper admiration) actually leads to the growth, strengthening, and widening of the “vessels,” which will be necessary in order

to receive the greater light. When a people is physically and spiritually weak, it is not able to attain the deep truths of the Torah.

*Arfilei Tohar, paragraph 111, page 42*

## **The feeling of love must develop in all of its details**

The feeling of love must develop in all of its details so that it will display all of its treasures of intellectual, emotional, and imaginative vitality.

Then the treasury of God will rise to the heavenly love that is associated with the name of HashemGod.

Similarly, the aesthetic sense must overall be so well developed that the soul can gird itself with the image of heavenly beauty, such that it will be able to stand at its highest levels.

The literature of the [present] generation and the desire for the expansion of beauty that has taken hold of [the generation] – even though these tend toward mundane matters and are at times extremely polluted –

are nothing else than preparatory levels for the supernal purity of the exalted glory that will appear in the world.

חוש האהבה מוכרח הוא להתפתח בכל פרטיו, להראות את כל אוצרות החיים השכליים, ההרגשיים והדמיוניים שלו,

ואז יובא אוצר ד', להתעלות להאהבה האצילית ששם ד', נקרא עליה.

כמו כן צריך החוש האסתטי בדרך כלל להתפתח יפה, עד כדי שתוכל הנשמה להתאזר בציור התפארת האצילי, באופן שתוכל לעמוד במרומי דרגותיה.

והספרות שבדור, ותאות ההתרחבות של היופי שאחזה אותו, אף על פי שהם נוטים לעניני החול, ולפעמים הנם נטמאים מאד,

אינם כי אם דרגות והכשרים אל הטוהר העליון של הוד של מעלה שיופיע בעולם.

### **Paragraph 111, page 42**

(1) In order to apprehend God's higher love, one must first develop the feeling of love itself. If the feeling of love is not developed in a person, that person will not be able to apprehend God's higher love.

(2) If one does not develop an aesthetic sense, one will not be able to apprehend divine beauty at a high level.

(3) Secular literature or philosophy

(4) The generation wants to develop itself, to apprehend beauty and love.

(5) A person who does not grow spiritually, who does not read secular literature, cannot develop a sense of the awe or of love, so as to apprehend God's glory at the necessary level. Such a person will perceive God at a low level and will be unable to advance from there. Therefore, the literature and philosophy of one's generation and the desire to comprehend the beauty and richness of the world are necessary components of spiritual development. In other words, in this excerpt Rav Kook presents the radical idea that secular literature is needed not in order – as some religious people believe – to learn how nonreligious people live and how to change their mind, or to acquire techniques for influencing the outside world, but for one's own religious and spiritual development. This is not a matter of "pragmatism," but of the inherent value of literature and art, and their importance to the apprehension of the divine. In this sense, we must note that the Torah and commandments, also, are not ends in themselves, but paths to holiness. Thus, in some sense, secular literature and Torah are part of the same spiritual realm.

## To provide a contrast to those studious people who are scrupulous about constant perseverance

To provide a contrast to those studious people who are scrupulous about constant perseverance [in Torah learning], it is necessary that a faculty be found

that shows how the free, inner light may be revealed through [a person's] perambulations and tranquility, [which provide] a breadth of mind

through which [one's] soul rises, soaring in "a vehicle that flies through the air" (Sanhedrin 106b), where it looks for all of its desires, seeks its refined concepts – seeks and finds them.

[Our] generation, which is so weakened by the torments of body and soul, requires the influence of serenity,

for only that will bring about an inner perseverance, which will influence to a proper degree the outer perseverance as well, aligning it with the faculties of the body and spirit – and [it does so] in a way that develops all of the [generation's] hidden ability, with a proper and assured development,

until [that development] will emerge to provide a blessing for each individual and for the world.

לעומת השקרנים מחמירי ההתמדה,  
מוכרח שיימצא כח

שיראה איך מגלים את האור החפשי  
הפנימי, בטויל [רוחני] ובמנוחה,  
בהרחבת הדעת

שהנשמה מתרוממת על ידה, פורחת  
היא במגדל הפורח באויר, ושמה היא  
שואלת את כל מאוייה, דורשת את  
מושגיה העדינים, דורשת ומתמצא  
לה.

והדור הנחלש כל כך מעיני גוף  
ונשמה, צריך הוא להשפעה של  
מרגוע,

שרק היא תביא את השקידה  
הפנימית, שתשפיע במידה הגונה גם  
כן על השקידה החיצונית, להעמידה  
בתכונה מתאמת לכחות הגוף והנפש,  
ולענין המפתח את כל כשרון חבוי  
בפיתוח הגון ובטוח,

עד שיצא לברכה לאיש ולעולם.

### **Paragraph 112, page 43**

(1) In other words, religious study alone is not sufficient for the development of a people. Another strength must also be developed, one that illuminates the soul in life – in tranquility, in the expansion of the mind, and so forth. In addition to the strict study of Torah – which is also necessary – a free spirit must also exist, striving, in particular, for the “common” pleasures of life (i.e., physical, emotional, intellectual, and so forth), as without these life is incomplete. And when life is incomplete, Torah is incomplete.

(2) In the 1983 edition, this was revised to “spiritual journeys” in order to emphasize that these travels in the state of Israel must be filled with a spirit of holiness. However, the phrase does not refer to something purely speculative, but to actual, physical traveling, with spiritual attributes.

Without life’s common pleasures, study of Torah is impossible. It is not study of Torah that stands in opposition to nature that brings blessings to the world, but that which harmonizes with it. For a more detailed discussion of the difference (in regard to the natural) between the nature of holiness in *galut* and in *Erets Israel*, see *Poetry of Being* by Yosef ben Shlomo, Chapter 9, “The Two Kinds of Holiness; The Problem of Evil.”

*Arfilei Tohar, paragraph 120, page 45*

## **When set against the supernal, divine truth, there is no difference whatsoever between imagined faith and heresy**

When set against the supernal, divine truth, there is no difference whatsoever between imagined faith and heresy. Neither gives the truth.

But from our perspective, faith comes closer to truth and heresy to falsehood. And therefore good and evil are derived from these opposites.

“The righteous will walk in them and the sinful will stumble in them” (Hosea 14:10).

And the entire world, with all of its physical and spiritual levels – everything relates to our level [of reality].

In regard to our level, truth is revealed in faith, and that is the source of good. And falsehood [comes] through heresy, and that is the source of evil.

But in relation to the light of the Infinite One, everything is equal.

Heresy, too, is a revelation of the power of life, for the light of life of the supernal radiance clothes itself in it.

And therefore spiritual warriors gather very good sparks from it and transform bitterness to sweetness.

לעומת האמת העליונה האלוהית, אין הבדל בין האמונה המצויירת להכפירה כלל, שתיהן אינן נותנות את האמת.

אלא שהאמונה מתקרבת לגבי דידן אל האמת, והכפירה אל השקר, וממילא נמשך הטוב והרע מאלה ההפכים,

צדיקים ילכו במ ופושעים יכשלו במ.

והעולם כולו עם כל ערכיו החמריים והרוחניים, הכל הוא לערכנו,

ולגבי ערכנו האמת מתגלה באמונה, והיא מקור הטוב, והשקר בהכפירה, והיא מקור הרע.

אבל לגבי אור אין סוף הכל שוה,

גם הכפירה היא התגלות כח חיים, שאור החיים של זיו העליון מתלבש בתוכה,

ומשום כך מלקטים ממנה גיבורים רוחניים ניצוצות טובים מאוד ומהפכים מרירו למתקון.

### **Paragraph 120, page 45**

(1) “Imagined faith” is faith that offers a representation of God, portraying God in one way or another. For more detail, see *Poetry of Being* by Yosef ben Shlomo, Chapter 3, “The Rational and the Irrational.”

(2) That is, like atheism, primitive representational faith is as far as can be from truth; in comparison with divinity, they are equally false.

(3) In other words, from the point of view of divinity, there is no difference between primitive faith and atheism – both are wrong. But from the human point of view, they are wrong in different ways: one leans toward goodness and truth, the other toward evil and falsehood.

(4) That is, the wicked stumble in the very place where the righteous pass.

(5) Rather than to the level of the divine, as God created the world so that humanity could live and act in it.

(6) That is, in relation to the light of the Infinite One, the difference is insignificant.

(7) This is because atheism draws its spiritual strength from the rejection of primitive religiosity, which is, in essence, religious activity. The person who becomes a real, independent atheist is one whose spiritual demands are so high that that person does not tolerate primitive faith. For this reason, such a person’s atheism contains within it the supernal radiance.

(8) The words “transform bitterness to sweetness” were added in the 1983 edition to emphasize that atheism is not good in itself, but that people of a higher level of spirituality, who have become atheists purely because the religion they have been taught is too primitive for them (and they are therefore unable to accept it) extract from atheism sparks of a higher good, and in that way transform their lack of faith into elements of supernal light.

## **When [our] divine enlightenment is small**

When [our] divine enlightenment is small, then the image with which we imagine Divinity is also small.

כשההשכלה אלהית היא קטנה, אז הציור שמציירים את האלהות הוא גם כן קטן.

And since the character of divinity makes clear to a person his infinite smallness,

וכיון שהתוכן האלהי הוא מבאר את ההקטנה האין סופית של האדם לפניו,

the extent to which he becomes a groveling good-for-nothing as a result of a fear of heaven that lacks intelligence cannot be imagined.

אז אין לשער עד כמה האדם נעשה זוחל ובטלן על ידי יראת שמים שאין בה דיעה.

How can a person attain an estimation of the divine greatness in such a way that the inherent form of the beauty of [his] spirit will not be blurred but broaden?

ואיך יבוא האדם לידי השערה של הגודל האלהי, באופן שצורתו העצמית של הדר הנפש לא תיטשטש אלא תתרחב

[He does so] by means of his faculty of knowledge, by means of the liberation of his imagination and the soaring of his thought, by means of [his] knowledge of the world and life, by means of [his] wealth of feeling regarding all being.

על ידי הרחבת כח המדע שלו, על ידי שחרור דמיונו ומעוף הגיונו, על ידי דעת העולם והחיים, על ידי עושר ההרגשה בכל ההויה.

For this, a person must truly study all the sciences of the world, all ideologies of life, all the ways of the various cultures and the content of the morality and religion of every nation and language.

שצריך על זה באמת לעסוק בכל החכמות שבעולם, ובכל תורות החיים, ובכל דרכי התרבויות השונות ותוכני המוסר והדת של כל אומה ולשון,

[Then,] with a greatness of spirit, he will know how to purify them all.

ובגדולת נפש ידע לזכך את כולם.

Obviously, the entire foundation of his knowledge as a Jew [must] be built upon the foundation of the Torah, in its most absolute breadth.

ופשוט הוא שכל יסוד מדעו בתור ישראל, יהיה בנוי על יסוד התורה בהרחבתה היותר גמורה,

And he [must] strive always so that his pathway will not be constricted and his perceptions will not be narrow and fragmented but proceed with breadth and in an assured manner.

וישתדל תמיד שדרכו לא תהיה מצומצמת, ודיעותיו לא תהיינה דחוקות ומרוסקות, אלא הולכות בהרחבה ובדרך בטוחה.

He [must] not bear many fears, which would prevent [his] intellect from doing its work and [his] spiritual faculties from pouring forth their influence.

אל ישיא על עצמו פחדים רבים, שמונעים את השכל מעבודתו, ואת החושים הרוחניים משפעת השפעתם.

He must be courageous. He must know the might, the good and the evil, and the supernal origin from which everything flows in an orderly form – [a form] that gains perfection with his perfection.

רק יהיה בן חיל, ידע את העוין, את הטוב ואת הרע, ואת המקוריות העליונה שהכל נובע ממנה בצורה מסודרת, ההולכת ומשתלמת עם השתלמותו.

And then, in accordance with his soul's greatness, the divine light will shine upon him, his spirit will be great, and the supernal divine humility – which expands all of [a person's] talents – will fill all of his inner being,

ואז, לפי גדלו הנשמתי, תזרח עליו האורה האלהית, ונפשו תהיה גדולה, והענוה האלהית העליונה, המגדלת את כל הכשרונות כולם, תמלא את כל קרביו,

and a heavenly might will strengthen him always. And he will do wondrous things for himself and for the entire world.

וגבורה שמימית תאמצהו תמיד, ויעשה גדולות ונצורות לעצמו ולעולם כולו.

### Paragraph 126, page 47

(1) This occurs, for instance, when a person pictures God as a pedantic judge, concerned above all with obedience to God's

commands, incessantly monitoring people's submission. Such an image of God as the supreme overseer is a monstrous primitivization of both God and the person who so imagines the divine. (See also *First Journal, Shemonah Kevatsim I*, paragraph 75.)

(2) Inasmuch as all people imagine themselves in relation to their idea of God (after all, God created humans in the divine image and likeness), those who picture God as small see themselves as utterly insignificant.

(3) In other words, fear of God without breadth of understanding causes a person to feel worthless.

(4) For a religious person not only is it not forbidden to study everything that exists, it is commanded.

(5) Rav Kook is speaking here of the person who, having knowledge of all human culture, remains true to the Torah, and builds his worldview on its foundation.

(6) If we interpret the words of the Torah too narrowly, we will not be able to build a full-blooded life; we therefore need to apprehend it "in its most absolute breadth."

(7) This refers to such risks as the danger that knowledge of the wide world can lead to rejection of Judaism.

(8) In other words, the person who fears everything will achieve nothing, whereas only the person who understands that truth in is the Torah, but at the same time studies other cultures, languages, and learning, distinguishing and sifting the good from the bad, can rectify the world.

*Arfilei Tohar*, paragraph 128, page 47

## It is proper to yearn to be bound to the entire nation of Israel

It is proper to yearn to be bound to the entire nation of Israel.

ראוי להשתוקק להיות מחובר עם כל כלל ישראל.

The more that a person purifies his thoughts and deeds, the more can he connect to the highest and smallest levels of the entirety.

וכל מה שזוקק יותר את דעותיו ומעשיו, כן יוכל להיות מתחבר עם הדרגות היותר גדולות ועם הדרגות היותר קטנות שבכלל.

If there is smallness and preponderance of judgments [within him], the connection will be less inclusive.

וכפי הקוטן והגברת הדינים, כך יהיה החיבור פחות כולל,

[And then,] if there is a lesser amount of connection with the most degraded level, there will be a lesser amount of connection with the greatest of levels.

וכל מה שיחסר חיבור עם הדרגה היותר ירודה, לעומתו יחסר החיבור עם הגדולה שבמדרגות,

[This is] because complete perfection is connection

כי השלימות הגמורה היא חיבור

with the complete entirety – whatever the manner and [to whatever] measure.

עם הכלל כולו, בכל אופן ומידה שהוא.

### Paragraph 128, page 47

(1) A “preponderance of judgments” (*gevura, din*): scrutinizing the behavior of others for adherence to halakha and the Torah law. If one evaluates others in this way, one’s smallness is revealed. *Gevura* is the “left side” (see a parallel statement in paragraph 67).

(2) Inasmuch as many Israelis do not observe halakha, such a person will be unable to connect with this nonobservant society. The path proposed by Rav Kook is to observe the halakha strictly

oneself, but refrain from judging others on the basis of their observance, as this would render impossible connection with other segments of society. Such a connection can form only on the basis of love (*hessed*).

(3) What appears at the lower level to the person who judges surroundings based on halakha, in fact contains within itself a very important light – insufficiently “refined” perhaps, but very potent. And without connection to that level such a person lacks “fullness of light,” without which that person cannot attain any higher level.

(4) In connection with paragraph 126, we could say here that the person who judges others based on their observance lowers God to the level of simple “law,” thus rendering God “small.” (That is, such a person imagines God merely as one who punishes and rewards. In this way, a person brings down the highest divine holiness, and therefore cannot rise to the highest level and become one with the divine. See also paragraphs 129, 163, 184.)

## A great soul yearns to spread over everything

A great soul yearns to spread over everything, over all stages, to stretch its feet to the end of all rungs – in order to give life to everything, to draw everything close, to raise everything.

To the extent that it stretches forth its feet, it lifts up its entire stature and grows. And with its elevation, it attains supernal levels.

Great and mighty kindnesses appear before it. It straightens out all pathways.

But smaller souls come and prevent it from stretching forth its feet. They press down its stature.

It suffers, shrinks and comes apart. At times, it does the will of those who obstruct [it],

shriveling within a narrow circle. [But] its eyes are lifted up to illuminate everything – including those who obstruct [it],

including all strata above and below. It is filled with hope [that reaches] to the ends of the world, to an inheritance without boundaries, to the inheritance of Jacob, to the heights of the land (cf. Isaiah 58:13 and Yalkut Shimoni, Jeremiah 496).

משתוקקת היא הנשמה הגדולה להתפשט על הכל, על כל הדרגות, לפשוט את רגליה עד סוף כל המדרגות כולן, כדי להחיות את הכל, לקרב את הכל, לעלה את הכל.

וכפי מה שהיא פושטת רגליה, הרי היא מגבהת את כל שיעור קומתה, והיא מתגדלת, ומשגת ברוממותה דרגות עילאות,

חסדים גדולים ועוזים מופיעים לפניו, את כל הדרכים היא מיישרת.

ובאים קטנים, ומעכבים אותה מפשוט רגליה, וממילא כופפין את קומתה,

והיא מצטערת, מתכווצת ומתמקמקת, עושה לפעמים את חפץ המעכבים,

מתקמטת היא בחוג צר, ועיניה נשואות להאיר לכל, גם לאלה המעכבים,

גם לכל השדרות שמלמעלה ומלמטה, מליאה היא תקוה לרחבי עולם, לנחלה בלא מצרים, לנחלת יעקב, לבמתי ארץ.

### **Paragraph 129, page 47**

(1) The more it reaches down to the lower, simple regions of life, to the realization and materialization of all things, the more it increases its own spiritual stature.

(2) It rises to the level of *hessed* (which evaluates all phenomena in life not according to their adherence to Judaism today, but to the progress that they can lead to), and this places it in a positive relationship with all things. The elevation of the soul, made possible, in part, by its assimilation of the lower, material regions, is necessary for correct advancement toward the future; with the help of this the soul can make straight all paths and show that from the perspective of an orientation to the future, there is spiritual and religious meaning in many things in the world which do not seem to us today to be of religious value. See also paragraphs 21, 128, and 163.

(3) The term “smaller souls” refers to people who cannot see in perspective, but are occupied only with observing limitations.

(4) Because they believe that to stretch into these lower regions of existence is not in accordance with their narrow view of Judaism.

(5) Because this great soul does not wish to harm the existing forms of religious and social organization (as it considers these also to be of value, despite the fact that they sometimes obstruct its progress), it avoids coming into direct confrontation with these “small, narrow-minded people.”

(6) Although it cannot always act according to its own higher ideals, inside itself, at least, it must remain faithful to them.

(7) And because it is filled with this hope, it emanates, disseminating hope all around, and in this way helps to move the world forward.

(8) If one does not climb to the heights of the world, one cannot attain the heights of the soul.

*Arfilei Tohar, paragraph 133, page 49*

## Morality will not stand without its source

Morality will not stand without its source.

[That] necessary source is an infinite light that has been rectified [in accordance] with the manifestation of the universes.

When morality without its divine source is consigned to people's hearts, it is diminished and it wilts.

Since morality comes to the world by means of divine conduits, it will always make [the world] fruitful.

And since the means that connect human thought and [humanity's] feelings with the unbounded and all-transcending divine light must exist in a variety of hues, the pathways of spiritual life are therefore different in every nation and established grouping.

But the organizing, uniting matrix must necessarily vanish and encompass everything.

"God will be one and His Name will be one" (Zechariah 14:9).

המוסר לא יעמוד בלא מקורו,

והמקור מוכרח הוא להיות אור אין סוף, אחרי תיקונו בהופעת העולמות.

וכשיהיה נשגר בלב בני אדם מוסר בלא מקורו האלהי, יפחת ויבול.

כשם שבא המוסר לעולם על ידי הצינורות האלהיים, כן תמיד יפרה ממנו.

כיון שהאופן המקשר את המחשבה האנושית והרגשותיה עם האורה האלהית הבלתי גבולית ועליונה מכל, מוכרח להיות בגוונים משונים, בשביל כך שונות הן ארצות החיים הרוחניים בכל עם וקיומן רשום.

אבל המחרוזת המסדרת, המאחדת, מוכרחת לנצח ולעבור על הכל.

ד' אחד ושמו אחד.

### Paragraph 133, page 49

(1) The infinite divine light by itself is perfect; however, in order for it to appear to us in this world it must be "rectified"

accordingly, and this “rectification” occurs by means of the manifestation of the universes, as only in such universes (and with their aid) are we able to apprehend it. In other words, somewhat paradoxically, by means of the creation of universes the infinite divine light is advanced, developed, and improved (rectified) – not in relation to itself (which is unnecessary, as it is already perfect), but in relation to us, in that we now, with the help of the universes, can apprehend it. This remarkably radical theological idea is one aspect of Rav Kook’s mysticism – his vision of the unity of creation, which views this world as an integral part of eternity, and the temporal as necessary for the realization and manifestation of eternity, rather than as superfluous to it or impeding it.

(2) In other words, morality and ethics do not merely spring from a connection with God; they cannot continue to exist without that connection. If the link is broken, morality will begin to wither. An individual person may be quite ethical and moral without connection to God. However, if a secular concept of morality destroys the connection (and morality begins to be based on such ideas as “evident standards of decency,” “live and let live,” or Kant’s Categorical Imperative), then within the framework of society ethics will gradually lose their life force, fade and wilt, and finally become unstable and disintegrate – just as trees, when it ceases to rain, do not immediately wither but remain green for a time and, at a glance, may appear to be thriving without rain, but cannot last long this way. For more detail see also *Poetry of Being* by Yosef ben Shlomo, Chapter 8, “The Profane Spirit and the Ethics of Holiness.”

(3) Since the divine is boundless, it cannot be fully expressed in any one tradition. Therefore, it must be expressed in various forms and must take on a different character with each nation or group. Accordingly, other non-Jewish forms of religious tradition are far from mere “mistakes” or misunderstandings of God on the part of other peoples. The existence of these other traditions is important, as our own Jewish tradition, being

realized and formalized, is inevitably limited in comparison with the boundless divine. This radical religious pluralism is an essential element of Rav Kook's theology.

(4) That is, the unity that runs through the various religious and spiritual models must overcome all differences, as "God will be one and His Name will be one" (*Zechariah* 14:9). In other words, Rav Kook's religious pluralism is more than simply an acknowledgment that there are many acceptable approaches. In the future manifestation of unity ("must necessarily vanquish") all of this variety will not be an array of differences, but one unified picture.

**Concluding notes:** Three main ideas can be distinguished in this paragraph:

1. (a fairly ordinary idea that has been repeated by other writers): that morality will wither if it is severed from its divine source
2. (fairly radical): that the infinite light is rectified by means of the manifestation of the universes.
3. (extremely radical): that any limited, formalized conception is incomplete and, therefore, that religious pluralism is a necessity

The second and third ideas spring from Rav Kook's vision of the parts of the universe as an integral part of the positive manifestation of God.

*Arfilei Tohar, paragraph 139, page 51*

**There is a quality within the particular individuality of every person that is higher and more elevated than [the quality] of the communal nature that exists in the nation**

There is a quality within the particular individuality of every person that is higher and more elevated than [the quality] of the communal nature that exists in the nation.

יש בהאישיות הפרטית של כל יחיד ענין איכותי יותר נשגב ונעלה ממה שיש בהכלל כולו על ידי ערך הקיבוץ שלו,

That supernal individual aspect illuminates and gives life to the entire nation.

והצד העליון הזה האישי הוא המאיר ומחיה את הכלל כולו.

In accordance with the elevated level of the individual, and in accordance with the number of individuals on a high level, the nation is elevated a very great deal in terms of its communal level.

ולפי רוממות הערך של האישיות, ולפי ריבויים של האישים גדולי הערך, הכלל מתעלה מאד מאד בערכו הכללי,

And that communal elevation is entirely in alignment with the most perfect individual greatness.

והעלייה הכללית היא שיהיה לגמרי מתאים אל הגודל האישי היותר שלם.

**Paragraph 139, page 51**

- (1) Each person's individuality is at a higher level (at least in some specific aspect) than society as a whole.
- (2) The right way to advance a society is to support the individuals who are strong or outstanding in each area, and never to try to lower those individuals to the average level.
- (3) Although in his teachings, Rav Kook often points to the importance of society (including the spiritual importance of Klal

Yisrael, the collective of all peoples of Israel), in this fragment he emphasizes that this must not lead to distortions. One must not diminish oneself for the sake of society, much less see oneself merely as a cog in a machine. Rather, people must know that they carry a trait that is at a higher level in them than in society as a whole, and that in this area they must not succumb to social norms (which are below their level), but must lead society, enliven it, and take responsibility for its development.

*Arfilei Tohar, paragraphs 141 – 142, page 51*

**Our temporary existence is a single spark  
of eternal existence, of the splendor of the  
utterly eternal**

Our temporary existence is a single spark of eternal existence, of the splendor of the utterly eternal.

הויתנו הזמנית היא ניצוץ אחד  
מההויה הנצחית של הוד נצח  
הנצחים,

The only way to actualize the treasury of goodness hidden in the content of [our] temporary life is by aligning [our temporary life] with eternal life.

ואי אפשר להוציא אל הפועל את  
אוצר הטוב הגנוז בהתוכן של חיי  
הזמן, רק על פי גודל התאמתו לחיי  
הנצחים.

That [alignment] is an inner recognition that permeates the spirit all of existence.

וזאת היא הכרה פנימית שרויה ברוח  
כל היקום,

Not all the spiritual battles will succeed in moving [that recognition] from its place. [To the contrary, they] completely clear the roads before it.

ולא יועילו כל מלחמות רוחניות  
להזיזה ממקומה, רק לפנות ביותר  
את הדרכים לפניה.

Even that which opposes [that recognition] is, in the depth of truth, supporting it.

ואפילו מה שכנגדה הוא גם כן, בעומק  
האמת, בעדה.

Eternity is the mighty basis of all cultural life in its fullest sense.

142  
הנצח הוא היסוד האיתן לכל חיים  
תרבותיים במלוא מובנם.

The aspiration for the glory of eternity conquers death and wipes away the tear from every face (cf. Isaiah 25:8).

השאיפה אל הדר הנצח, מנצחת את  
המות, ומוחה דמעה מעל כל פנים.

**Paragraphs 141 – 142, page 51**

(1) That is, temporal existence is not the opposite of eternity, but a part of it. This paragraph exemplifies the idea of the unity of

the world, in which the material and spiritual complete, rather than oppose, each other. Furthermore, material life is seen as an integral part of the manifestation of spirit, and the temporal as an integral part of the eternal. In this way, ordinary daily life does not stand in opposition to the spiritual, sublime, and eternal, but is an element of these (see paragraph 27.)

(2) In other words, one cannot fully realize this life unless one sees it as a component of eternal life.

(3) The synthesis of the temporal and the eternal is the true spirituality, which permeates the spirit of all existence.

(4) “That which opposes” refers to those individuals who choose to sever the temporal from eternity, absolutists on the side of “worldly” life (i.e., materialists).

(5) The rupturing of today’s superficial connection between the temporal and the eternal gives the temporal the opportunity to grow stronger independently. This clears the path for constructing a still deeper connection with eternity in times to come.

*Arfilei Tohar*, paragraph 163, page 59

## All descents of supernal *tzadikim* from their glory

All descents of supernal *tzadikim* [righteous individuals] from their glory, from their station, from their health, and from their supernal spirituality

כל הנפילות שצדיקים העליונים נופלים מכבודם, ממעמדם, מבריאותם ומרוחניותם העליונה.

occur only because [these *tzadikim*] have abandoned slightly the intensity of their supernal trait of kindness.

באות רק מפני שהם עוזבים במעט את תוקף מידת החסד העליונה שלהם,

As a result, they are affected by the pollution of the world, which is filled with harsh strictures and accusations.

ומזדהמים על ידי זה בזוהמת העולם המלא גבורות קשות וקטיגוריות.

Instead, they must – since they are the “foundations of the world” (Proverbs 10:25) – always sweeten all of the bitterness and illuminate all of the dark places.

תחת שעליהם, שהם יסודי עולם, תמיד למתק את כל המרירות, ולהאיר את כל המושכים.

### Paragraph 163, page 59

(1) That is, descent occurs because a *tzadik*, or righteous person, has not sufficiently intensified the trait of supernal kindness, and reacts to something with excessive severity. See also paragraphs 129 and 194.

(2) Although there is much that is wrong in the world, when *tzadikim* look at the world, they must find the positive that exists even in bad situations, and they must reveal the good within. And by finding and strengthening the positive elements in such situations, they sweeten, somewhat, the bitterness and illuminate the dark. This is the correct approach in terms of *hessed*. But if, instead of adding light, a *tzadik* becomes judgmental of the

wrong in the world – in other words, when a *tzadik* reveals *gevura* – then that trait will pollute him or her with its critical and negative approach to the world, and that person’s level will descend.

(3) Since *tzadikim* are the “foundations of the world” (Proverbs 10:25), their perception of a situation will strongly influence those around them and thus will affect the situation itself.

(4) When people begin to see (after being shown by a *tzadik*) the positive aspect in a situation that had seemed very bad, they relate to it differently. It often happens that when looked at in isolation, a thing or event seems negative, but when we see its connection with other things as part of a unified world, joined to all of history, its positive meaning is revealed. Then people are faced with less bitterness and trouble to overcome: this is the sweetening of bitterness. For example, Rav Kook wrote during the First World War that for all of the war’s horrors, it was opening the path to the building of a Jewish homeland. War is a very bad thing, but it can ultimately pave the way for something better – in this case, for a restructuring of the world that would lead to the return of the Jewish people, after 2,000 years of exile, to its homeland. With such an approach, the bitterness of war is sweetened by hopefulness.

*Arfilei Tohar, paragraph 176, page 62*

## **The essence of hearing the voice of God is that we take heed of the entire process of the ways of life**

The essence of hearing the voice of God is that we take heed of the entire process of the ways of life in all of their details

– [as applied] to general [national] groups in accordance with the differences between them, and [as applied] to each individual on his or her level –

[as that process flows from] a universal, supernal wisdom that is alive and gives life to all being.

The more clearly that the details flow from the spiritual, supernal, inclusive life – which is the wisdom of the soul of God in the world –

the more a person clearly hears and listens to the voice of God speaking to him, teaching him and commanding him, literally.

“I am Hashem your God, Who teaches you for your advantage, guiding you upon the path that you should go” (Isaiah 48:17).

עיקר השמיעה בקול ד' הוא מה שמקשיבים את כל התהלוכה של דרכי החיים לכל פרטיהם,

אל הקיבוצים הכלליים לפי הבדליהם, ולכל יחיד לפי ערכו,

מתוך החכמה הכללית העליונה החיה ומחיה את כל ההויה,

וכל מה שהפרטים נובעים מתוך החיים הרוחניים העליונים הכוללים, שהיא חכמת נשמת אל בעולם, בצורה יותר ברורה,

האדם שומע ומאזין יותר בבירור את קול ד' הדובר אליו, מורהו ומצוהו ממש.

אני ד' אלהיך מלמדך להועיל, מדריךך בדרך תלך.

### **Paragraph 176, page 62**

(1) To hear the voice of God is to carry on a dialogue with God in one's life. This dialogue is the essence of religion.

(2) To hear the voice of God, to heed the voice of God, is to heed the ways in which God is manifested in the flow of daily life, both on the individual level and on the social and national levels.

(3) Wisdom's most important function is not to dictate a system of behavior, but to enable the person to personally hear the voice of God; and this voice instructs, provides a personal mission and task, and reveals the path that one must follow.

## When people think about divinity, at times their thought proceeds in a form that negates the world

When people think about divinity, at times [their] thought proceeds in a form that negates the world.

כשחושבים על דבר האלהות, לפעמים הולכת היא המחשבה בצורה שוללת את העולם,

That is to say, [they think] that the divine form in its greatness, in its might, in its holiness, in its beauty, in its vigor, in its infinite being,

כלומר שהציור האלהי בגודלו, בעוזו, בקדושתו, ביופיו, בגבורתו, באין סופיותו,

nullifies existence entirely, [so that] everything is considered as nothing, absolutely nothing.

מאפס את ההויה כולה, וכולא כלא חשיבין, לאין דומין

That is the thought which comes from might, and which is clothed in its trait [of might].

זאת היא המחשבה הבאה מתוך הגבורה, והמתלבשת במידתה.

But there is another, more refined form [of a person's thought]: that the divine thought perfects the world, giving all of existence its true worth.

ויש עוד ציור יותר מבוסס, שהמחשבה האלהית משלמת היא את העולם, היא נותנת לההויה כולה את ערכה הנכון.

From this aspect of [a person's] thought, whose source is kindness, [one's] love of the world and of all creatures grows ever stronger,

מצד מחשבה שממקור חסד כזאת, הולכת אהבת העולם וכל הבריות ומתגברת,

[to the degree that] all of the fullness of [one's] divine love and lucid thinking on divinity

בכל המילוא שהאהבה האלהית, והמחשבה הצלולה בענין האלהי,

grows full and takes up more space in the world.

מתמלאת ותופסת יותר מקום בעולם

In this, the thinker is not separated from the world but raises the world to the supernal Eden, to the divine youthfulness and exaltedness.

בזה החושב לא נפרש מן העולם, אלא מעלה את העולם אל העדן העליון, העדנה והרוממות האלהית.

### **Paragraph 184, page 65**

(1) *Gevura* (literally “might”) is one of the *sefirot*. It refers to judgment, law, severity, restraint, and limitation. From a strict point of view, the world is absolutely nothing in comparison with God, and a person who falls into the category of *gevura* in one’s thoughts and feelings toward God will have a tendency to reject this world as insignificant.

(2) *Hessed* (literally kindness) refers to openness, generosity, kindness, and grace.

(3) In other words, two approaches are contrasted here: that of *gevura* and that of *hessed*. The approach based on *gevura*, which sees the world as insignificant in relation to the divine, is too severe; it reveals only the basic parts and overlooks the fine points. With the approach of *hessed*, the view becomes more nuanced; the temporal is understood as part of eternity, and the meaning and value of the world, which now exists in harmony with, rather than in opposition to, the divine, is transformed.

(4) The approach based on *gevura* is not “entirely wrong”; however, it is at a lower level. It is important to remember that *gevura* itself is derived from *hessed*, and so should not be taken on its own, but with an awakening of its root, *hessed*, thus raising oneself (and the whole world) to its higher source. See also paragraphs 1, 27, 128, 129, 141, and 163.

*Arfilei Tohar, paragraph 186, page 66*

## **At times, a person cannot engage in learning Torah**

At times, [a person] cannot engage in [learning] Torah, nor in any [good] deed or mitzvah, nor in any worldly activity,

יש לפעמים שאי אפשר לעסוק בתורה, ולא בשום פעולה ומצוה, ושום עסק עולמי,

because [one's] will to be connected to the supernal form of the pleasant, infinite light gains in intensity.

מפני שמתגבר הרצון להיות קשור בציור העליון של נעימת אור אין סוף.

[One] must then proceed step by step so as not to be separated from this holy yearning, which is the foundation of all and the most supernal enlightenment, which gives life to all human culture and to all of the hues of the various universes in all of existence.

וצריכים אז ללכת בהדרגה, שלא להיפרד מהתשוקה הקדושה הזאת, שהיא יסוד הכל, וההשכלה היותר עליונה, המחיה את כל התרבותיות האנושית, וכל גוני העולמים השונים שבהויה כולה,

Instead, a person must rectify [this] great light by rectifying the vessels [that are to contain it] and drawing down [good, heavenly] desires (in the form of "lines" and "points")

אלא לתקן את האור הגדול על ידי תיקוני כלים, והמשכת רצונות בתור קיום ונקודות,

that will be in alignment with [one's] Torah thoughts, manner of [performing] mitzvahs, [and the way in which one proceeds upon the] pathways of life in this world in all areas of this-worldly behavior.

שהם יהיו מתאימים להגיוני תורה ודרכי מצוות וארחות חיים בעולם בכל ההליכות של דרך ארץ,

With this, a person causes the world to be inhabited by a supernal holiness.

ובזה מיישבים את העולם ביישוב עליון של קודש.

### **Paragraph 186, page 66**

(1) That is, a person so longs to be united with the supernal divinity, which cannot be formalized, that he distances himself from the material world and becomes unable even to take part in ordinary, formally structured religious activity.

(2) That is, one must prepare one's soul to recognize and receive this light.

(3) "Lines" and "points" are Kabbalistic terms. A "point" is an original idea, and a "line" is that idea's further development and revelation. The higher *sefirot* (and likewise, those worlds that are at a higher level than others) are points that contain an original idea in a compressed form; the lower *sefirot* are lines, disseminating these ideas. Here, then, Rav Kook tells us that the light of "heavenly desires" (that is, the original divine will, or *Keter*, which gives life to the universe), must gradually take its form by passing through the structure of worlds.

(4) In the process of being drawn down, the supernal light must take form so as to be in harmony with the spiritually positive aspects of ordinary life, with the normal structure of the natural, lower world.

(5) In this situation, the striving for supernal light will not reject the ordinary world (as may occur in the situation described at the beginning of this paragraph) but, rather, supplement, improve, organize, and enliven it.

*Arfilei Tohar, paragraph 188, page 67*

## **Trivial matters can be elevated only by means of the revelation of secrets of Torah**

Trivial matters can be elevated only by means of the revelation of secrets of Torah.

להעלות דברים בטלים אי אפשר כי אם על ידי גילוי רזי תורה,

When the revelation of the light of supernal secrets comes in a strong flow, [then] all of the lowest elements are elevated, [so that] there appears within them the light hidden in the depths.

וכשהגילוי האור של סתרי עליון בא בשפע, מתעלים כל הדברים הזוהר שפלים, ומתראה בהם האור הצפון במעמקים.

And so in the days preceding the Messiah, “the wisdom of the scribes will rot” (Sotah 49b),

ועל כן בעקבתא דמשיחא חכמת סופרים תסרה,

and many trivial matters will proliferate, in the form of literature and social life. [Then,] as a result of the revelation of the light of the Messiah, all of them will be transformed to holiness.

ומתרבים דברים בטלים רבים בצורה של ספרות, של קיבוץ, ועל ידי התגלות אור של משיח יהפכו כולם לקדושה.

“Its fruit will be for food and its leaf for healing” (Ezekiel 47:12).

והיה פריו למאכל ועלהו לתרופה.

### **Paragraph 188, page 67**

(1) *Devarim betelim*, meaning “trivial matters,” is a phrase used in classical Jewish religious literature to refer to purely worldly, everyday things that bear no relation to holiness.

(2) That is, “trivial matters” cannot be raised by means of general religious practice such as halakha. This can be done only by means of the secrets of the Torah, when deep study of the internal meaning of its commandments and ideals supplements

ordinary religious practice. (For more on the expression “secrets of the Torah,” see the commentary to paragraph 21.)

(3) Because study of the secrets of the Torah reveals the light hidden in the depths of the universe, even trivial matters that seem to be insubstantial will be elevated. This occurs effortlessly, as the place of these matters in the scheme of the universe and in the plan of creation becomes clear, revealing the meaning of their existence.

(4) See *Sotah* 49b. That is, at the beginning of the era of the Messiah (see paragraph 2), classical Jewish wisdom (literally “the wisdom of the scribes,” Judaism of the book) will lose its attraction and its freshness; it will fade and rot, unable to manage the elevation of trivial matters.

(5) And therefore many strong personalities will reject classical wisdom, turning their powers and creative energy instead to secular literature and the building of society.

(6) In other words, things that seemed to be insignificant in the period before the light of the Messiah will now reveal their inner meaning and potential. This is due to the fact that the light of the Messiah (see paragraph 21) values things based not on their degree of accord with the law or formalized sanctity, but on their contribution to the building of the future ideal.

(7) See Ezekiel 47:12. That is, both the results (fruits) and the simple actions (leaves) of these “trivial matters” will be needed and called upon for the general rectification and improvement of the world.

## **When a person suffers from a smallness of faith**

[When a person suffers from] a smallness of faith, it appears [to that person] that when people strive to strengthen their [this-worldly] situation, to fight against the problems that occur in the world, to acquire knowledge, might, beauty, organization – that all of this is external to the divine content in the world.

Thus, a number of people who believe that they stand upon a divine basis are suspicious of all worldly progress. They hate culture, the sciences, political strategies – whether among Jews or non-Jews.

But this is all a great error and a lack of faith.

The pure outlook sees the divine appearance in every improvement of life: individual and general, spiritual and physical.

It measures matters only according to the level of the usefulness that they have or the damage that they cause.

Any movement that engaged in constructive creation, whether physical or spiritual, will never be an entirely negative movement.

מתוך קטנות אמונה נדמה, שכל מה שבני אדם מזדרזים לחזק את מעמדם, להילחם נגד הרעות המתרגשות בעולם, לרכוש להם מדע, גבורה, יופי, סדר, שכל אלה הינם דברים היוצאים מחוץ להתוכן האלהי שבעולם.

ומתוך כך עין צרה צופה מתוך כמה אנשים, שלפי דעתם עומדים הם על הבסיס האלהי, על כל התקדמות עולמית, שונאים את התרבות, את המדעים, את התחבולות המדיניות, בישראל ובעמים.

אבל כל זה טעות גדולה היא, וחסרון אמונה.

הדיעה הטהורה רואה היא את ההופעה האלהית בכל תיקון חיים, יחידי וציבורי, רוחני וגשמי.

היא מודדת את הענינים רק במידת התועלת שהם מביאים, או הקלקול שהם מקלקלים,

ובמידה זו לעולם לא תהיה תנועה חייבת כולה, כשהיא עוסקת לברוא איזה דבר, בין גשמי בין רוחני.

It may have imperfections, but everything in its totality is an element of the divine creation that is constantly acting.

יוכל הדבר שיהיו בה מגרעות, אבל בכללותה, הכל הוא מכלל היצירה האלהית ההולכת ופועלת.

“Not chaos did He create it, but that it be inhabited did He make it” (Isaiah 45:18).

לא תוהו בראה לשבת יצרה.

### **Paragraph 190, page 67**

- (1) To people whose faith is small, it seems that the worldly side of life (i.e., people's efforts to build a healthy society, to advance science, technology, art, and so forth) has no relation to God or to the holy aspects of life.
- (2) That is, such people believe that their approach to religious matters is the only correct one.
- (3) That is, it is a mistake to believe that science, technology, art, and socio-political life have no relation to the divine in the world.
- (4) That is, the broad outlook
- (5) Not according to their conformity with narrow religiosity
- (6) That is, a movement that is concerned with the constructive development of the world and life, even if it moves in a direction that does not lie within the standard religious framework.
- (7) That is, positive elements will unquestionably be found in any such movement.

## **There are certain rectifications of the world that cannot be accomplished by *tzadikim***

There are certain rectifications of the world that cannot be accomplished by *tzadikim*

ישנם תיקוני עולם כאלה, שאי אפשר להם שייעשו על ידי צדיקים,

but only by wicked people and people with blemished views and deeds.

כי אם על ידי רשעים ואנשים פגומים בדיעות ומעשים.

It is true that with *teshuvah* out of love and a great effort to increase holiness in the world [making use of] the straight prayer of *tzadikim*,

אמנם על ידי תשובה מאהבה, והתאמצות גדולה להרבות קדושה בעולם, בתפילת צדיקים ישרה,

the *tzadikim* can also take part in these rectifications – which, in the general course of things, come forth only from the hands of wicked people and those far from holiness.

זוכים שגם צדיקים יוכלו להשתתף באלו התיקונים, שעל פי הסדר הנהוג אינם רגילים לצאת כי אם מידי רשעים ואנשים רחוקים מהקדושה.

These rectifications include societal improvements (such as tools of agriculture and war, some of which the world greatly needs, practical inventions) as well as others that are spiritual improvements involving various technical and intellectual sciences –

תיקונים הללו כוללים תיקונים חברתיים, כמו מכשירי עבודת אדמה, מלחמות, שישנן מהן שהן דרושות הרבה לעולם. המצאות מעשיות, וישנם מהם תיקונים רוחניים של כמה חכמות מעשיות ושכליות,

into the details [of all of which] a soul crowned with piety and a spirit uplifted to holiness cannot penetrate.

שהנשמה המעוטרת בחסידות ובהתנשאות נפש לקדושה אינה יכולה לחדור לפרטים הללו.

Only via the great ascent of the spiritual process can [we] attain this supernal blessing of having all the rectifications of the world brought about by tzadikim and holy people.

רק על ידי עלייה גדולה של המהלך  
הרוחני אפשר לזכות לברכה עליונה  
זו, של כיבוש כל תיקוני עולם על ידי  
צדיקים ואנשי קודש.

### **Paragraph 191, page 68**

- (1) These people are indifferent to spirituality and holiness; they are concerned only with their own material success; nonetheless, they move the world forward.
- (2) The Jewish tradition distinguishes *teshuvah* out of fear of punishment from *teshuvah* out of love for the supernal. The latter is founded on the desire to help realize divine paths in the world. It therefore provides the *tzadikim* with a means to participate in the rectification of the world.
- (3) That is, the condition of the world today, in which the needed material rectifications are carried out by those who are wicked or far from holiness, is flawed; and it will be a great blessing if *tzadikim* are able to do this work. However, the *tzadikim* are not yet ready; they must carry out deep *teshuvah* to open this path for themselves.

*Arfilei Tohar, paragraph 247, page 86*

## **Spiritual rebellion will take place in the land of Israel**

We have a tradition that a spiritual rebellion will take place in the land of Israel and among [the people of] Israel in the period of the beginning of the renaissance of the nation.

The physical tranquility that will come to a part of the nation, who will imagine that they have already attained their entire goal, will diminish [their] soul.

And days will come “of which you will say, “There is nothing desirable in them” (Ecclesiastes 12:1).

The yearning for elevated and holy ideals will entirely cease, and therefore the spirit [of the people] will descend and sink,

But then a storm will come and bring about a revolution.

Then it will be clearly apparent that the strength of Israel lies in eternal holiness,

in the light of God, in the Torah, in the desire for spiritual illumination, which is the absolute might that conquers all of the worlds and all of their powers.

מקובלים אנו, שמרידה רוחנית תהיה בארץ ישראל ובישראל בפרק שהתחלת תחיית האומה תתעורר לבוא.

השלוה הגשמית שתבוא לחלק מהאומה, אשר ידמו גם כן שכבר באו למטרתם כולה, תקטין את הנשמה,

ויבואו ימים אשר תאמר אין בהם חפץ.

השאיפה לאידיאלים נישאים וקדושים כליל תחדל, וממילא ירד הרוח וישקע.

עד אשר יבוא סער, ויהפוך מהפכה

, וייראה אז בעליל כי חוסן ישראל הוא בקודש עולמים,

באור ד', בתורתו, בחשק האורה הרוחנית, שהיא הגבורה הגמורה המנצחת את כל העולמים וכל כחותיהם.

The necessity for this rebellion is the tendency toward the aspect of materialism that must of necessity come into being in the nation as a whole in a powerful form, after periods of many years have passed in which the nation as a whole was completely devoid of the need and ability [to engage in] the material endeavor.

הצורך למרידה זו היא הנטייה לצד החמרות שמוכרחה להיולד בכללות האומה בצורה תקיפה. אחרי אשר עברו פרקי שנים רבות שנאפס לגמרי מכלל האומה הצורך והאפשרות להתעסקות חמרית.

And when this tendency is brought into existence, it will trample with wrath and create whirlwinds.

וזאת הנטייה כשתיולד, תדרוך בזעם ותחולל סופות,

These are the birth pangs of the Messiah, whose pains will refine the entire world.

והם הם חבלי משיח אשר יבסמו את העולם כולו על ידי מכאוביהם.

### **Paragraph 247, page 86**

- (1) This is an internal tradition, which has been passed on to us from the sages of previous generations.
- (2) The “spiritual rebellion” will be a rebellion against classical spirituality – but its purpose will be to change the paradigm of spirituality and to raise it to a new level.
- (3) That is, the beginning of the era of the Messiah
- (4) That is, the material success of religious Zionism
- (5) See *Sotah* 49b.
- (6) That is, most people are fully consumed by immediate material desires.
- (7) The secular pioneers’ initial enthusiasm will dissipate.
- (8) That is, a crisis of national scale, a catastrophe
- (9) It will be apparent that Israel cannot save itself without the help of God.
- (10) It is the holy that will rescue and support the mundane.

(11) The religious aspect, which at first seemed to be opposed to secular Zionism, will be recognized as essential for the Jewish people's survival in the land of Israel.

(12) That is, the necessity of this spiritual development will lead to rebellion against spirituality.

(13) In exile.

(14) That is, each individual, of course, was concerned with material life, but the people as a whole had no opportunity to engage with such things.

(15) The desire to build the material life of the people.

(16) It will trample everything else.

(17) It will inevitably bring about a crisis.

## **Faith with which intellect does not agree arouses anger and cruelty**

Faith with which intellect does not agree arouses anger and cruelty

אמונה שאין השכל מסכים לה,  
מעוררת היא קצף ואכזריות,

because the highest aspect within a person, which is [one's] intellect, is affronted by it.

מפני שהצד היותר עליון שבאדם  
שהוא השכל, נעשה עלוב מחמתה.,

But as for supernal faith – although it is very much concealed, [consisting of] the wondrously hidden ways of God,

אמנם האמונה העליונה, אף על  
פי שהיא כמוסה מאוד, ודרכי ד'  
נפלאים הם,

these [ways] possess within themselves such great pleasantness that the anger that was stirred up as a result of [one's] suppression of [one's] intellect is immediately nullified. [That anger] is itself transformed into great sweetness and pure light because of the divine manifestation that unites with it

יש בהם נועם גדול כל כך, שהקצף  
המתעורר מצד כפיית השכל מתבטל  
מיד, ונהפך בעצמו למתיקות גדולה  
ולאור צח, מפני ההופעה האלהית  
המתחברת עימו,

and [then] descends to the lowly faith, which [in turn] bonds with [a person's] healthy intellect in the revealed world.

ויורדת עד האמונה התחתונה,  
המתחברת עם השכל הישר שבעולם  
הגלוי

[Then] the hidden world and the revealed world come into alignment with each other, and together they build the house of Israel with a doubled beauty. "He will bring forth the main stone, as people cry out before it, 'Beautiful, beautiful!'" (Zechariah 4:7).

ועלמא דאתכסיא ועלמא דאתגליא  
נעשו מתאימות, ובונות יחד את בית  
ישראל, בחן כפול, והוציא את האבן  
הראשה, תשואות חן חן לה.

### **Paragraph 287, page 105**

(1) That is, faith that contradicts reason, or that demands belief without reflection, especially antirational faith (i.e., belief because it is absurd).

(2) And if a person (or society) accepts this type of faith, a deep conflict between faith and reason will arise in one's soul, leading to strong tension in subconscious that might break through to the surface in the form of anger or even cruelty.

(3) In Hebrew *aluv*: demeaned, wretched, impoverished, pathetic

(4) Because the acceptance of such faith debases and insults reason, reason (despite the fact that it was overpowered and suppressed) cannot internally be reconciled. Then the accumulated inner pressure bursts through in the form of anger and cruelty.

(5) Supernal faith is unattainable by reason, just as reason cannot grasp the ways of God. Supernal faith cannot be formalized, whereas lower faith is formalized, and must therefore accord with reason.

(6) That is, the clear sense of the divine manifestation allows reason to step aside without a sense of injury.

(7) That is, in this situation, the lower, ordinary faith, on one hand, springs from the transcendence of reason, and on the other, it does not contradict reason.

(8) The process of supernal faith's descent into lowly faith is its formalization, which, as noted above, must not be in contradiction to reason. Rav Kook emphasizes that reason must not be neglected; it must be seriously considered, not replaced by feelings or imagination.

(9) This is a reference to Rachel and Leah, "both of whom built up the House of Israel" (Ruth 4:11). Rachel (who embodies beauty, Joseph, spirit expressed through material achievement) represents the visible world, and Leah (who is known for "weak

eyes,” Yehuda, David, the spirit of *teshuvah* – remorse, stepping across the material) represents the concealed world. Only the unification of these two aspects can set the Jewish people on the right path.

*Arfilei Tohar, paragraph 290, page 107*

## **When one truly looks at the good aspect of every individual**

When one truly looks at the good aspect of every individual, one falls in love with people, with an inner affection. And one has no need to rely on the slightest trace of flattery,

כשמסתכלים באמת בצד הטוב של כל אחד ואחד, מתאהב האדם על הבריות בחבה פנימית, ואיננו צריך להזדקק לשום אבק של חנופה,

for [one's] interest in the aspect of the good that one always encounters

כי ההתענינות בצד הטוב שהוא פוגש תמיד,

truly conceals all of [people's] bad aspects. "An intelligent man conceals shame" (Proverbs 12:16).

מכסה ממנו באמת את כל הצדדים הרעים. וכוסה קלון ערום.

### **Paragraph 290, page 107**

- (1) Such a person genuinely likes people and does not flatter at all.
- (2) That is, one sees the good in other people.
- (3) See Proverbs 12:16. That is, in order to really love people, one must always look at their good side, and then that love will be natural and unforced.

*Orot Hakodesh III, page 27*  
(*Shemonah Kevatsim I, paragraph 75*)

## **A person may not allow one's fear of heaven to override his natural morality**

A person may not allow [one's] fear of heaven to override his natural morality.

אסור ליראת שמים שתדחק את המוסר הטבעי של האדם,

Were his fear of heaven [to do so], it would no longer be pure.

כי אז אינה עוד יראת שמים טהורה.

The mark of a pure fear of heaven is that it elevates a person's natural morality – which is planted in one's straightforward nature – to higher levels than that which it [could] otherwise stand upon.

סימן ליראת שמים טהורה הוא כשהמוסר הטבעי, הנטוע בטבע הישר של האדם, הולד ועולה על פיה במעלות יותר גבוהות ממה שהוא עומד מבלעדה.

But if we imagine a fear of heaven of such a nature that without its influence on [a person's] life, [one's] life would tend to result in more good and bring about [more] matters that help the individual and the community,

אבל אם תצויר יראת שמים בתכונה כזאת שבלא השפעתה על החיים היו החיים יותר נוטים לפעול טוב, ולהוציא אל הפועל דברים מועילים לפרט ולכלל,

and the influence [of that fear of heaven] would diminish this active power – such a fear of heaven is a flawed fear.

ועל פי השפעתה מתמעט כח הפועל ההוא, יראת שמים כזאת היא יראה פסולה.

### **First Journal, paragraph 75**

(1) It is wrong to allow one's fear of God to displace natural feelings of justice and morality.

(2) When this happens, it indicates that one's fear of God is incorrect and impure.

(3) Fear of God that we receive from the outside, through study of Torah, must advance our innate moral feeling. This illustrates a general principle of Rav Kook's teaching, according to which everything that we learn from the external surrounding world must develop, and not replace, our innate nature and the divine spark that has always been concealed within us.

(4) The progress of the individual or society, even if it is material, is of great religious value.

(5) That is, if fear of God obstructed the developments that were useful to society or the individual

(6) This excerpt is the basis for the concept of conflict between halakha and ethics. Here Rav Kook says that fear of heaven that leads to such a situation is wrong; it contains some mistake that must be corrected. The ideal that we must pursue is an agreement between obedience to God and intuitive ethics. (For a more detailed discussion of this see P. Polonsky, *Religious Zionism of Rav Kook*, Chapter 7; E. Zusman, *Halakha, Poetry and Natural Morality in the Teachings of Rav Kook*, and paragraph 126 of *Arfilei Tohar*, below.)

*Orot*, page 126  
(*Shemonah Kevatsim I*, paragraph 476)

## **Heresy's spirit of smashing through barriers purifies all of the infection**

Heresy's spirit of smashing through barriers purifies all of the infection that has gathered in the under area of the spirit of faith.

רוח הפרצים של הכפירות, מטהר  
הוא את כל הסחי שנתקבץ בשטח  
התחתון של רוח האמונה,

As a result, the heavens are purified

ומתוך כך יטהרו השמים

[so that] the clear light within the character of supernal faith – which constitutes the song of the world and truth of the world – is revealed.

ויראה האור הבהיר שבתכונת  
האמונה העליונה, שהיא שירת  
העולם ואמת העולם.

### **First Journal, paragraph 476**

(1) The verb *lifrots* means literally “to break down a barrier”; *pritsut* is the destruction of barriers, depravity. This term usually denotes a rejection of religion, a breaking of religious rules. In this case, however, Rav Kook uses it to suggest a wind that blows through everything and cleanses it. He is speaking here of the fresh spirit of atheism.

(2) The wind of atheism will cleanse the lower levels of faith, to which primitive, simplistic religiosity has become attached, as atheism ridicules and destroys primitive faith. But in so doing, it merely clears the space for the building of deep and more developed faith.

(3) The song of the world is the poetic truth that exists. Rav Kook believes that poetry can convey what is essential, while prose merely describes and systematizes what is revealed through “the song” (for a more detailed discussion see *Poetry of Being* by Yosef ben Shlomo, Chapter 2, “The General Character of

Rabbi Kook's Philosophy.") When the heavens are purified, supernal faith will be revealed and the song of the world and truth of the world will become clearer.

*Orot Hakodesh III, page 140*  
*(Shemonah Kevatsim III, paragraph 24)*

## “I am in the midst of the exile”

“I am in the midst of the exile” (Ezekiel 1:1). The inner, essential “I” – whether of the individual or of the community – appears within [an entity] only in relation to its holiness and purity [and] in relation to the degree of its supernal power suffused by the pure light of an elevated illumination, flaming within it.

“We and our forefathers sinned” (Psalms 106:6). Adam sinned. He was alienated from his essence. He turned to the consciousness of the serpent and lost himself. He did not know how to give a clear answer to the question, “Where are you?” (Genesis 3:9), because he did not know himself, because he had lost [his] true “I,” with [his] sin of bowing to a strange god. [The nation of] Israel sinned. It “ran after foreign gods” (Deuteronomy 31:16). It abandoned its essential “I.” “Israel rejected goodness” (Hosea 8:3).

The earth sinned [during the week of Creation]. It denied its essence. It constricted its power. It went after [limited] goals and purposes. It did not give forth all of its hidden power so that the taste of the tree would be equal to the taste of its fruit (Sukkah 35a). It raised its eyes to look outside of itself, to think about [its trivial] future, its “career.”

ואני בתוך הגולה, האני הפנימי העצמי, של היחיד ושל הציבור, אינו מתגלה בתוכיותו רק לפי ערך הקדושה והטהרה שלו, לפי ערך הגבורה העליונה, הספוגה מהאורה הטהורה של זיו מעלה, שהיא מתלהבת בקרבנו.

חטאנו עם אבותינו, חטא האדם הראשון, שנתנכר לעצמיותו, שפנה לדעתו של נחש, ואבד את עצמו, לא ידע להשיב תשובה ברורה על שאלת “איך”, מפני שלא ידע נפשו, מפני שהאניות האמיתית נאבדה ממנו, בחטא ההשתחואה לאל זר. חטא ישראל, זנה אחרי אלהי נכר, את אניותו העצמית עזב, זנח ישראל טוב.

חטאה הארץ, הכחישה את עצמיותה, צמצמה את חילה, הלכה אחרי מגמות ותכליות, לא נתנה את כל חילה הכמוס להיות טעם עץ כטעם פרי, נשאה עין מחוץ לה, לחשוב על דבר גורלות וקריירות.

The moon complained [at that time] (Hullin 60b). [As a result,] it lost its internal orbit, the joy of its portion. It was dreaming of a superficial beauty of royalty.

Thus does the world continue to sink, with the loss of the “I” of every [entity] – of the individual and of the whole.

Learned educators come and focus on the superficial. They too remove their consciousness from the “I.” They add straw to the fire, give vinegar to the thirsty, and fatten minds and hearts with everything that is external to them.

And the “I” grows progressively forgotten. And when there is no “I,” there is no “He,” and how much more is there no “You.”

The Messiah is called “the breath of our nostrils, the anointed one of God” (Lamentations 4:20). This is his might, the beauty of his greatness: [that] he is not outside of us. He is the breath of our nostrils. Let us seek Hashem our God and David our king. Let us tremble before God and His goodness. Let us seek our “I.” Let us seek ourselves – and find. Remove all foreign gods, remove every stranger and illegitimate one. Then “you will know that I am Hashem your God, Who takes you out of the land of Egypt to be your God. I am Hashem your God” (cf. Numbers 15:41).

קטרגה הירח, אבדה סיבוב פנימיותה, שמחת חלקה, חלמה על דבר הדרת מלכים חיצונה.

וכה הולך העולם וצולל באבדן האני של כל אחד, של הפרט ושל הכלל.

באים מחנכים מלומדים, מסתכלים בחיצוניות, מסיחים דעה גם הם מן האני, ומוסיפים תבן על המדורה, משקים את הצמאים בחומץ, מפטמים את המוחות ואת הלבבות בכל מה שהוא חוץ מהם.

והאני הולך ומשתכח, וכיון שאין אני, אין הוא, וקל וחומר שאין אתה.

רוח אפינו משיח ד', זהו גבורתו הדר גדלו, איננו מבחין לנו, רוח אפינו הוא, את ד' אלהינו ודוד מלכנו נבקש, אל ה' ואל טובו נפחד, את האני שלנו נבקש, את עצמנו נבקש ונמצא, הסר כל אלהי נכר, הסר כל זר וממזר, וידעתם כי אני ה' אלהיכם, המוציא אתכם מארץ מצרים להיות לכם לאלהים, אני ה'.

### **Third Journal, paragraph 24**

(1) Rav Kook uses a line from Ezekiel, who received prophesy during his exile in Babylon, as the basis for the reflection that our inner “I” is found in exile.

(2) Characteristic of all of Rav Kook’s teachings is the view of the people as a unified national organism, a national personality. Hence he stresses the parallel between the revelation of the “I” of the individual and of the community (the people).

(3) “Its own”: that is, the revelation of holiness and purity in its own soul, not introduced from outside.

(4) “Within it”: the more holiness and purity a person or society has, the more supernal light it can receive. Real holiness is linked to the realization of one’s own divine nature at the individual and national level.

(5) The serpent personifies the inner passions of the soul, distinct from a person’s true essence. In the Garden of Eden, it was still possible to separate these inner passions from the essence of the person; when the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was consumed, these passions entered the person, and it became much more complicated to differentiate them from the self.

(6) In accordance with this archetype, every sin constitutes the loss of one’s true essence.

(7) As Israel, both as an individual and as a national entity, draws its “I” from the divine essence, in bowing to false idols it betrays itself.

(8) This refers to the Midrash, according to which it was originally intended that the earth would produce “the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind” (Genesis 1:11), such that the tree itself should have been edible as fruit, but the earth “willfully” misbehaved, creating trees “yielding fruit” (Genesis 1:12), on which only the fruit was edible, rather than the tree. Thus the earth’s sin preceded human’s sin, and the earth was punished

together with the humans when they were banished from the garden: “Cursed is the ground for thy sake... Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee” (Genesis 3:17 – 18).

(9) That is, the earth wanted to achieve faster results and so put everything into the fruit, rather than the tree, creating a situation that was unstable, and leading to destruction and the fall.

(10) This refers to the Midrash, according to which God originally intended to create two lights of equal size (“And God made two great lights” (Genesis 1:16)), but the moon complained that two kings could not share a crown, for which it was immediately reduced in size. This is why the Torah continues, “the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night.”

(11) That is, pedagogues are concerned only with the transfer of knowledge to the student, rather with developing their “I.”

(12) A person who has no (developed) self cannot come to know the world. (Knowledge of the world is based on the relationship “I – He.”)

(13) A person who has no (developed) self cannot enter into a dialogue with God (which is the relationship “I – You”).

(14) These lines from Lamentations emphasize that the Messiah does not come from without; he is the embodiment of the inner development of the Jewish people, its immanent essence, “the breath of our nostrils.” (In Lamentations, this refers directly to Zedekiah, who was king of Israel at the time of the destruction of the First Temple, but at the same time it explains an important aspect of the idea of the Messiah.)

(15) That is, the religious quest is not carried out through denial of self, or submission to an external power, but through the realization of one’s own potential.

(16) To know is not to receive external information; it is the creation and activation of connection within oneself. For this

reason, knowledge is developed only through the development of the “I.” When we find and purify our “I,” we become able to know God, who has led us from Egypt, from (internal) slavery to freedom.

**Orot haKodesh II, page 193**  
**(Shemonah Kevatsim III, paragraph 63)**

**There are three stages upon which the  
individual and collective perfection of  
Israel must be based**

There are three stages upon which the individual and collective perfection of Israel must be based:	שלש מדרגות הן, שההשלמה הפרטית והכללית לישראל מחויבת להיות מבוססת עליהן,
the return to nature,	השיבה אל הטבע,
to human morality,	אל המוסר האנושי,
and to the national foundation.	אל יסוד האומה.
Supernal holiness rests only upon these three.	והקדושה העליונה חלה דוקא על גבי שלשתן.

**Third Journal, paragraph 63**

(1) In other words, there are three things that we have not yet attained (writes Rav Kook at the beginning of the twentieth century, at the beginning of the process of the Jewish people's return to the land of Israel). Until we achieve these three goals, we will not be able to attain perfection in our individual and national existence.

Over the past 100 years, we have made some progress on the third area (in the national consciousness) but we have yet to develop in the realms of "nature" and "human morality."

(2) For a discussion of the problem of the opposition between "holiness" and "nature," see *Poetry of Being* by Yosef ben Shlomo, Chapter 6, "The Moral Tendency of Being," and Chapter 7, "The Spiritual and the Material: The Sacred and the Profane."

(3) That is, there exists a natural human morality, and religion must accord with that, not contradict it.

(4) The sense of a national dialogue with God; for a more detailed discussion, see P. Polonsky, *Religious Zionism of Rav Kook*.

(5) These are the three most important things that Israel must attend to, both individually and as a people. This signifies that the Jews have lost these three qualities in exile. Therefore, we must return to nature, rather than sitting only within the walls of the house of learning; to human morality, rather than asserting that only what concerns the Jewish people should be of importance to us; and to national consciousness.

### *Shemonah Kevatsim III, paragraph 176*

## **As the spirit of freedom grows more at home in the world**

As the spirit of freedom grows more at home in the world, life is refined and everything is filled with a [good] will.

כשרוח החופש מתאזרחת בעולם, החיים מתעדנים, והכל מלא רצון.

Then the holy feeling of appreciation for the good is powerfully aroused

אז מתעורר בחזקה הרגש הטהור של הכרת טובה,

and leads to a Godly, exalted manifestation, which is connected to the joy and fulfillment of life.

ומביא להופעה אלהית אצילית, קשורה בשמחת החיים ומילואם.

“All of the sacrifices will cease, except for the thanksgiving sacrifice, which will never cease” (Midrash Rabbah, Tsav 9:7). Rather, [the thanksgiving sacrifice will draw] from the essence of all of the sacrifices that will cease

כל הקרבנות בטלים, וקרבן תודה אינו בטל לעולם, אלא מתוך התמצית של כל הקרבנות הבטלים,

to rise straight upward with tremendous strength.

הרי הוא מתמר ועולה ברב כח.

### **Third Journal, paragraph 176**

(1) That is, when it becomes a legal, recognized part of the surrounding social, economic, judicial, and spiritual landscape.

(2) Here we see, first, the combining of the concept of *ratson* (will) with *hofesh* (freedom), that is, will combined with freedom. Freedom is a characteristic of God, and the supernal divine will is connected with the supernal divine freedom. In accordance with this, the personal freedom of the individual is a reflection, a local manifestation of this universal supernal divine freedom. God is free in Himself, and therefore, when one acts more freely, one is closer to God than when one acts under duress. When one

acts freely, one draws nearer to God and so feels better. When one acts under duress, one distances one's self from God, and so feels worse.

(3) Because gratitude is necessary and must always be preserved; it is precisely when a person becomes completely free, and thus manifests goodness, that one experiences gratitude.

(4) In other words, all future sacrifices must be integrated with thanksgiving sacrifices, as, when a person is truly free, that person is filled above all with a feeling of gratitude for all he or she has received. In this sense, the most important approach to the world is gratitude.



# MACHANAIM

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MACHANAIM started in Moscow in the late 1970s as a small group of young people, mostly refuseniks, who met secretly to learn Jewish history and traditions. It slowly developed into an organized underground network of learning. Starting in 1987 and with the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union, most of the original members received their long-awaited permissions to make Aliya, and the majority of MACHANAIM's activities resumed in Israel.

Once in Israel the original MACHANAIM members decided that their experience in Jewish education and their open-minded and non-coercive attitude would be successful with the Russian Jewish immigrants, who were mostly ignorant about their Jewish heritage. Initially, the organization had two primary goals. The first goal was educating the new immigrants from the Former Soviet Union (FSU) about Jewish heritage and culture. The second goal was to provide the same education to Jews remaining in the FSU countries. The dual character of the work in Israel and Russia inspired the name "MACHANAIM," which means "two camps," taken from Genesis 32:3.

Since then, MACHANAIM has developed into a leading organization in the area of Jewish-Israeli education for Russian-speakers both in Israel and abroad. In 2008 MACHANAIM celebrated its twentieth Anniversary.

Descriptions that divided Jewish people into groups such as "religious," "non-religious," or "new immigrants," are no longer relevant. What exists behind the organization now is the unification of the Jewish identity as one people.

Descriptions that divided Jewish people into groups such as "religious," "non-religious," or "new immigrants," are no longer relevant. What exists behind the organization now is the unification of the Jewish identity as one people.

## **MACHANAİM's Main Programs and Functions:**

- Jewish Heritage Ulpan and Seminars
- Book Publishing and Internet Courses
- Educational Tours in Israel
- Teachers' Training Program
- Youth and Children's Programs
- Golden Age Academy
- Giyur (Conversion) Programs
- Jewish Studies for University Students
- Outreach Programs for Jews in the FSU

MACHANAİM has written and published dozens of books and methodological materials on Judaism in Russian. The book Religious Zionism of Rav Kook by Pinchas Polonsky was the first MACHANAİM publication in English.

Dr. Pinchas Polonsky, a mathematician and sociologist, is one of the founders of MACHANAİM. He lives with his family in Beit El and teaches at Bar Ilan University. A prolific writer, he has authored more than 20 books, numerous articles, and Internet and audio courses on Judaism.

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# Conversations

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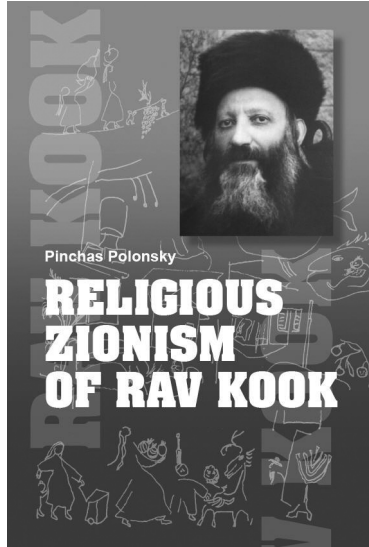
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Chapter 6 of the book “Religious Zionism of Rav Kook” was published as a separate article in the May 2009 issue of Conversations, Orthodoxy and Religious Education. The article can also be found on the web **<http://www.jewishideas.org/articles/rabbi-kook-and-modernization-judaism>**

An article about Machanaim was published in 2010, vol. 7, Orthodoxy and Diversity, and can be found on the web **<http://www.jewishideas.org/articles/machanaim-search-spiritual-revival-judaism-among-ru>**



“Dr. Pinchas Polonsky’s book, *Religious Zionism of Rav Kook*, is an important contribution to Orthodox thought and to all who seek to embrace the tradition while living it fully inside the modern world. Dr. Polonsky brings his own ideas to illuminate or extend Rav Kook’s wisdom. The book is full of fine insights into understanding Rav Kook’s thought; it deserves a wide readership and deep reflection...”

*Rabbi Irving (Yitz) Greenberg, Founding President, CLAL: National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership, 1987-1997; Founding President, Jewish Life Network, 1997-2007*

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