

LESSONS IN קונטרס
החלק א

A TREATISE ON AHAVAS YISRAEL
BY THE REBBE RASHAB

לעילוי נשמת
יחזקאל בן יהודה
שרה בת משה



Zeev Wolfson

PUBLISHER'S FOREWORD

In this chapter, the Rebbe Rashab continues to develop the conceptual basis for the explanation of the unity that should characterize a Jewish community. He brings an analogy from the powers of the soul, in which instance, every power contains the antithetical power within it. As a result, the powers – even though opposite in nature – can function in harmony.

However, the very fact that a power contains its antithesis requires clarification, for it runs somewhat contrary to our logic. The Rebbe Rashab explains this phenomenon by describing the essential unity the powers share as they exist in the essence of the soul. At that level, they exist in an entirely simple state, above any distinction as individual powers. Instead, they feel themselves, as it were, as nothing more than expressions of the soul. Their existence in this manner in the soul's essence makes it possible for each one to contain its antithetical power and for the two to function in unity.

The Rebbe Rashab continues to illustrate this concept by citing the possibility for water and fire to join in unity. He explains that this is possible because the water and the fire are weakened and do not exhibit their essential power. It is their weakening that makes it possible for the presence of the antithetical power within them to be revealed and thus, for them to join with each other despite their difference.

This concept relates to the definitions of the realms of *Tohu* and *Tikkun* discussed in previous and subsequent chapters. Because the *Sefiros* of *Tohu* shined with all their essential power, they could not join with each other. Conversely, precisely because the *Sefiros* of *Tikkun* are modulated by intellect, “weakened,” as it were, they have the potential for connectivity.

The present days anticipate the holiday of Shavuot, the anniversary of the Giving of the Torah, for which the Jews prepared by coming together as “as one man, with one heart.”¹ This is an appropriate time to internalize the above concepts and bring them down from an abstract, theoretical plane to an actual one – simply to join together with every member of our community. Even if we

1. Rashi, *Shmos* 19:2.

see someone whose character seems opposite to our own, we have the potential to join with him or her in brotherly or sisterly love.

These efforts will lead to the fulfillment of our prayers, "Bless us, our Father, all as one;" our oneness will serve as a medium that draws down Divine blessing,² including the ultimate blessing, the coming of *Mashiach*.

Sichos In English

3 Sivan, 5780

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2. *Tanya*, ch. 32.

(ו) וביאור הענין הוא, דהנה, בכל דבר יש בו בהעלם דבר והיפוכו, גם הכחות העצמיים, יש בכ"א מהם ההתכללות מהכח ההפכי. והיינו מצד העצמות שלמעלה גם מהכחות עצמיים, דבהעצמות ישנם כולם בבחי' התכללות ממש.

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ובאור הענין הוא, **To clarify** further the concept of division which brings about unity mentioned in the previous chapter:

דהנה בכל דבר יש בו בהעלם דבר והפוכו, **Concealed within every entity is its antithesis;**

גם הכחות העצמיים, **For example, even each of the soul's essential powers**

In the context of this *maamar*, the term “essential powers” refers to the original potential for the powers of our souls as they exist in a preconscious state.

יש בכל אחד מהם ההתכללות מהפכת ההפכי. **has its antithesis incorporated within it.**

והיינו מצד העצמות **This is so by virtue of the soul's essence,**

שלמעלה גם מהכחות עצמיים, **which transcends even its essential powers**

דבהעצמות ישנם כלם בבחינת התכללות ממש. **and contains all of them in perfect synthesis.**

The Rebbe Rashab is referring to a concept explained in detail in other sources of *Chassidus*:¹ The essence of the soul is a simple, singular entity, above all identification with specific powers or qualities. Every person has a fundamental “I” that cannot be quantified or described in any manner or form. It is a spark of G-dliness and, like G-d, is unlimited, uncompounded, and undefined. However, as a person functions in his everyday life, he uses various powers, for example, intellect and emotion. The relationship between these powers and the essence of the soul requires detailed explanation. On one hand, these powers are very different from the essence of the soul. They have a specific identity and definition, each one related to the function it performs. On the other hand, it cannot be said that their source is outside the essence of the soul. Were that to be true, it would be difficult to understand how they became implanted within the soul.

1. See the series of *maamarim* entitled *BeShaah Shehikdimu*, 5672, Vol. 1, secs. 95-6; *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 23, pp. 57-58; et al.

וכמו עצם הנפש שלמעלה גם מהכחות עצמיים הכלולים בו, ה"ה נושא בעצמו כל הכחות, ושם הם בבחינת התכללות ממש, שהרי אין שם כחות פרטים כלל, אף לא כמו

Accordingly, *Chassidus* explains that within the essence of the soul, there exist all the different potentials and powers that are later revealed. However, they do not exist as distinct entities, but rather as potentials. Indeed, the use of the term potential has to be clarified because a potential does in fact exist, it just has not become actual. *Chassidus* explains this by using the analogy of fire with a coal. Although the fire is not evident or visible, it exists as a separate entity distinct from the coal. However, the analogy is not an entirely appropriate description of the manner in which our different powers exist in the essence of the soul, for the essence of the soul is, as stated above, utterly simple, uncompounded, and undefined. Were the powers of the soul to exist within the essence of the soul as distinct potentials, it would be a compounded entity. However, the fact that later the soul exhibits these powers compels us to say that they exist within its essence in some manner, abstract and rarefied as that level of existence is.

As the powers exist on this level, they are totally at one, both with the essence of the soul and with each other. It is not only that since their individual identities are not defined, they are not in conflict with each other. Instead, at this level, they sense, if that term can be used, themselves as expressions of the soul's essence and not as distinct powers. Therefore, the unity among them is consummate. As such, even when these powers emerge as distinct entities, they contain their antithesis in a concealed state. These concepts are evident from the explanations that follow:

וְכִמּוֹ עֵצִים הַנֶּפֶשׁ
שְׁלֵמָעֵלָה גַם מִהַפְּחוֹת
עֲצָמִיִּים הַקְּלוּלִים בּוֹ, The essence of the soul transcends even the
essential powers contained within it,

הָרִי הוּא נוֹשֵׂא בְּעֵצָמוֹ
כֹּל הַפְּחוֹת, and yet bears them all. The Rebbe Rashab uses the
term "bear" to refer to the manner in which the essence
of the soul contains the potentials for the different
powers in the abstract and rarefied manner described
above.

דָּשֵׁם הֵם בְּבְחִינַת
הַתְּכַלְלוֹת מִמֶּשׁ, Within the essence of the soul, the powers *coalesce*
in total unity,

שְׁהָרִי אֵין שָׁם פְּחוֹת
פְּרָטִים כָּלֵל, for, on that rung, no separate, particular powers
exist,

בלי שום התחלקות כלל, איזה התחלקות שיהי' כו'. ומשום זה, גם בהכחות כמו שהם בבחי' פרטים, יש בהעלם בכל כח מהכח ההפכי, מצד ההתכללות שלהם שבבחי'

As explained at length in *Chassidus*,³ when we proclaim G-d's oneness in the *Shema*, we describe Him as *Havayah echad*, "the one G-d." Seemingly, it would be more appropriate to describe Him as *Havayah yachid*, a term which would emphasize His singular oneness for it describes a uniquely sublime level of G-dliness, a rung above the entire framework of existence. There exist levels of G-dliness on which He relates to the various spiritual and physical entities brought into being. *Havayah yachid* refers to Him as He exist alone, before His conception of these entities.

However, in the *Shema*, the word *echad* is more appropriate. *Echad*, one, being a number, implies the existence of other entities, a two, a three, etc. Similarly, the *Shema* emphasizes G-d's oneness with the created beings as they exist within their individual identities. Nevertheless, we are compelled to say that even as G-d is *yachid*, singularly one, His Being allows for the potential for all existence, albeit in a uniquely abstract manner.⁴ In a somewhat similar manner, the essence of the soul includes within it the possibility for the different soul powers that emerge from it.⁵

ומשום זה, **Therefore**, i.e., because they exist in a state of oneness within the soul's essence and are subsumed within the soul, seeing themselves, as it were, as expressions of it,

גם בהכחות כמו שהם **even when the powers** descend to the level **where** בבחינת פרטים, **they exist as individual entities,**

יש בהעלם בכל כח **each includes its antithesis in a concealed state.** מהפח ההפכי, Fundamentally, every one of the soul's powers is not an individual entity but an expression of the soul. This is also true of the antithetical power; it also is fundamentally an expression of the essence of the soul. Accordingly, every potential has the "space" within it to include a potential that is antithetical to their own being. And since that antithetical potential is also an expression of the essence of the soul, it can exist within the other power.

3. *Torah Or*, pp. 32c, 90c, et al.

4. See the concept of *yecholes* explained in the series of *maamarim* entitled *Yom Tov shel Rosh HaShanah*, 5666, p. 181ff.

5. See *ibid.*, p. 246.

העצמות כו'. וכמו שהוא בכחות הנפש, כמו"כ הוא בכל דבר, וכמו מים, יש בו בהעלם גם מיסוד האש, וכן באש יש מיסוד המים, אלא שהוא בהעלם מאד בתכלית ההעלם. וכמו שהוא בגילוי, הרי יסוד המים הוא מים לבד, וא"א להתחבר כלל עם

מַצֵּד הַהִתְפַּלְלוֹת שְׁלֵהֶם The possibility for this inclusion **results from** their
שִׁבְבַחְיִנַת הָעֲצָמוֹת כּו'. existence **in a state of synthesis in the soul's essence.**

*Chassidus*⁶ uses the following example to illustrate the concept of a quality being included in its antithesis: Our Sages⁷ praise those who experience joy in suffering. Suffering is obviously the opposite of joy. However, when a person appreciates the positive outcome from the suffering he experiences and the lofty Divine source from which it emanates, he can experience joy.⁸

וְכִמּוֹ שֶׁהוּא בְּכֹחוֹת הַנְּפֶשׁ, **This concept applies not only in regard to the
soul's powers**

כִּמּוֹ כֵּן הוּא בְּכֹל דְּבָר, **but to every component of existence.**

וְכִמּוֹ מֵיִם, יֵשׁ בּוֹ בְּהֶעֱלֵם **For example, fire exists hidden within water in
גַּם מִיְסוּד הָאֵשׁ, an elemental state,⁹**

וְכֵן בְּאֵשׁ יֵשׁ מִיְסוּד הַמַּיִם, **and fire in turn contains water in an elemental
state.**

אָלֹא שֶׁהוּא בְּהֶעֱלֵם מְאֹד **However, in each case, the existence of the antithesis
בְּתַכְלִית הַהֶעֱלֵם. is entirely indiscernible; it is utterly concealed.**

וְכִמּוֹ שֶׁהוּא בְּגִלּוּי **In their revealed states**

הָרִי יְסוּד הַמַּיִם **the element of water is solely water**
הוּא מֵיִם לְבָד

6. See *Toras Chayim, Bereishis*, pp. 12b-d, 70c-71b, that explains this concept and also gives a detailed explanation of the concepts that follow regarding the interrelation between fire and water.

7. *Shabbos* 88b.

8. As explained in *Toras Chayim, loc. cit.*, the possibility for the fusion of the different powers of the soul stems from their inclusion in a state of oneness in the soul's essence. However, the actual fusion of the powers as they exist as separate entities results from the weakening of these essential powers and their emergence in a controlled form where they can coalesce with their antithesis that is accomplished through the power of intellect. This relates to the concepts of *Tohu* and *Tikkun* discussed throughout this *maamar*. As the powers exist in the realm of *Tohu*, they are closer to their essential form and therefore, cannot coalesce with their antithesis. It is through their descent into the realm of *Tikkun* that is controlled by the forces of intellect that the possibility for such synthesis is generated.

9. See *Rambam, Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah*, chs. 3-4, on which several of the concepts explained in this chapter are based.

האש, וכן האש א"א להתחבר עם המים, והיינו מפני שהאש שבמים הוא בתכלית ההעלם, שאינו ניכר כלל וכלל גם לעצמו כו', ולכן א"א לו משום זה להתחבר עם האש, להיות בהתגלות³² הוא מים פשוטים כו'. וכמו"כ הוא ביסוד האש כו'. אמנם, כשמחלקים את המים ומוציאים ממנו את האש שבו בגילוי, וכן בהאש מוציאים בגילוי את המים שבו, שז"ע מ"ש בס"י¹⁰ הוציא אש ממים ומים מאש, אז יכולים להתחבר

וְאִי אֶפְשָׁר לְהִתְחַבֵּר כָּלֵל עִם הָאֵשׁ,	and it cannot coalesce with fire at all.
וְכֵן הָאֵשׁ אִי אֶפְשָׁר לְהִתְחַבֵּר עִם הַמַּיִם,	Similarly, fire cannot coalesce with water.
וְהֵינּוּ מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהָאֵשׁ שְׁבַמַּיִם הוּא בְּתַכְלִית הַהֶעְלָם,	The rationale is that the elemental dimension of fire that exists in water is in a state of ultimate hiddenness,
שְׂאִינּוּ נִכָּר כָּלֵל וְכָלֵל גַּם לְעַצְמוֹ כּו',	to the extent that it is not evident at all, not even to itself.
וְלִכֵּן אִי אֶפְשָׁר לוֹ מְשׁוּם זֶה לְהִתְחַבֵּר עִם הָאֵשׁ,	Therefore, for this reason, it cannot join together with fire,
לְהִיּוֹת בְּהִתְגַּלוּת הוּא מַיִם פְּשׁוּטִים כּו'.	for, in its revealed state, it is simple water.
וְכִמוֹ כֵּן הוּא בִּיסוּד הָאֵשׁ כּו'.	Similar concepts apply to the element of fire.
אֲמָנָם כְּשֶׁמְחַלְקִים אֶת הַמַּיִם	However, when water is broken into its fundamental components,
וּמוֹצִיאִים מִמֶּנּוּ אֶת הָאֵשׁ שְׂבּוֹ בְּגִלּוּי,	the elemental dimension of fire that was within it is extracted and revealed,
וְכֵן בְּהָאֵשׁ מוֹצִיאִים בְּגִלּוּי אֶת הַמַּיִם שְׂבּוֹ,	Similarly, from fire, when the water contained within it is extracted –
שְׂזֵהוּ עֲנִין מֵהַ שְׁפָתוֹב בְּסִפְרֵי יִצְרָה הוֹצִיא אֵשׁ מִמַּיִם וּמַיִם מֵאֵשׁ,	this is the meaning of the statement in <i>Sefer Yetzirah</i> , ¹⁰ “He extracted fire from water and water from fire” –

10. Cited thus also in *Toras Chayim* (loc. cit.), and elsewhere, though the actual source in *Sefer Yetzirah* is unclear. Perhaps ch.1:12: “Four: Fire from water,” and 3:2 (Mantua edition): “For fire contains lit., ‘bears’ water.”

ולהתכלל יחד כו', כי האש שבמים עם המים שבאש יכולים להתחבר, ועי"ז מתחברים המים עם האש, כי המים, ע"י שמחלקים אותו לחלקים ומוצאים בו הכח ההפכי, עי"ז נחלש כחו, וכמו"כ האש, ע"י ההפרדה וההתחלקות שמוצאים בו ההפכי, נחלש ג"כ, ואז יכולים להתחבר יחד כו'. ונמצא דההתחלקות הזאת היא דוקא סיבת ההתכללות כו'.

אז יכולים להתחבר ולהתפצל יחד כו',	the two elements can, at this point, coalesce.
כי האש שבמים עם המים שבאש יכולים להתחבר,	The “fire” within water and the “water” within fire can coalesce
ועל ידי זה מתחברים המים עם האש,	and in this way, water can be joined with fire.
כי המים על ידי שמתחלקים אותו לחלקים	This is possible because when water is broken into its fundamental components,
ומוצאים בו הכח ההפכי, על ידי זה נחלש כחו,	and its opposite quality is discovered within, its distinctive power is weakened.
וכמו כן האש,	The same is true in the case of fire:
על ידי ההפרדה וההתחלקות	Through being separated and broken into its fundamental components,
שמוצאים בו ההפכי נחלש גם כן,	its opposite quality is revealed and it – as explained above regarding water – is weakened.
ואז יכולים להתחבר יחד כו'.	Then, this weakening makes it possible for the two opposing elements to come together.
ונמצא דההתחלקות הזאת היא דוקא סבת ההתפלות כו'.	Thus, it is this division that is the cause of their mutual incorporation. With the examples in this chapter, the Rebbe Rashab illustrates the principle he stated at the previous chapter: that when entities are fundamentally one, division will enable a more perfect unity. In their initial essential state, although the different qualities coexisted in a state of oneness, that was possible because their individual natures had yet to be expressed. When they are brought together and synthesized as

קיצור. בכחות העצמים, באש ומים, ובכל דבר, יש, בהעלם, גם מהיפוכו. ע"י ההתחלקות וגילוי העלם זה, יכולים להתכלל.

explained here, they are joined in oneness even as their different and opposite natures have been revealed.

קצור. Summary:

- בכחות העצמים, באש ומים, ובכל דבר, יש, בהעלם, גם מהיפוכו. **Within each of the essential powers, similarly within fire and water, and in every element of existence there exists its antithesis in a concealed state.**
- על ידי ההתחלקות וגילוי העלם זה יכולים להתכלל. **Through a process of division, this hidden quality can be revealed and the two elements may coalesce, achieving a more perfect unity.**

(טז) מ"ש בס"י: כן הוא גם בתו"ח שם ובכ"מ, וצ"ע מקומו. וראה בס"י פ"א: ארבע אש ממים. ובפ"ג מ"ב (דפוס מנטובה): שהאש נושא מים.

(31) ראה לקמן ע' כד ואילך. וש"נ.

(32) בהתגלות: אוצ"ל: שבהתגלות.

💡 POINTS TO PONDER 💡**◆ Creativity**

◆ Emotional Control

◆ *What insight can you glean from Heichaltzu chapter 6?*

