

LESSONS IN קונטרס
החלוצ

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

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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 Concealed within every entity is its antithesis;
בהעלם דבר והפוכו,

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 has its antithesis incorporated within it.
ההתכללות מחפץ ההפכי.

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

שלמעלה גם which transcends even its essential powers
מהכחות עצמיים,

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

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

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.

As the powers emerge from the soul's essence, they go through several stages until they reach a level, a state where they are able to affect a person's conscious functioning. Initially, as explained in the previous chapter, they are expressed as separate and distinct potentials. The presence of the antithetical powers are not felt within them – to the extent that it could be said that they do not exist there at all.

Afterwards, as the powers begin to emerge on a conscious level, they are filtered through the medium of intellect. This causes them to be "weakened" and enables them to function in harmony with their antithetical power. These concepts are evident from the explanations that follow:

וְכִמּוֹ עֵצֶם הַנֶּפֶשׁ The essence of the soul transcends even the
שְׁלֵמָעֵלָה גַּם מִהַכּוֹחוֹת essential powers contained within it,
עֲצָמִיִּים הַכּוֹלִלִים בּוֹ,

הָרִי הוּא נוֹשֵׂא בְּעֵצָמוֹ and yet bears them all. The Rebbe Rashab uses the
כָּל הַכּוֹחוֹת, term "bear" to refer to the manner in which the essence
of the soul contains the potentials for the different

הכחות, ושם הם בבחינת התכללות ממש, שהרי אין שם כחות פרטים כלל, אף לא כמו הכחות העצמיים (שהם בלתי מציאות נכרת, ומ"מ הם בבחי' כחות כו'), ג"ז אינו שייך לומר שם, ומ"מ בהכרח לומר שהוא נושא כל הכחות, שהרי ממנו נמצאים כל הכחות כו'. וצ"ל שהם שם בבחי' התכללות ממש, שכולם הם דבר אחד ממש (כענין יחיד

powers in the abstract and rarefied manner described above.

דָּשֶׁם הֵם בְּבִחִינַת הַתְּכַלְלוֹת מִמֶּשׁ, Within the essence of the soul, the powers *coalesce* in total unity,

שֶׁהָרִי אֵין שָׁם כְּחוֹת פְּרָטִים כָּלֵל, for, on that rung, no separate, particular powers exist,

אֵף לֹא כְּמוֹ הַכְּחוֹת הָעֲצָמִיִּים not even in a state of essential powers, above the possibility for conscious expression.

(שֶׁהֵם בְּלִתִּי מְצִיאוֹת נִפְרָת, (In their initial, preliminary state of emanation from the essence, the soul's powers cannot be said to exist as discernible entities.

וּמִכָּל מְקוֹם הֵם בְּבִחִינַת כְּחוֹת כו'), Nonetheless, in potentia, they still exist as powers.)

גַּם זֶה אֵינוֹ שָׁיָךְ לִדְבַר שֶׁם, Even this cannot be said regarding the existence of the powers within the essence of the soul. As mentioned, it is inappropriate to speak of any distinct potential existing within the essence of the soul.

וּמִכָּל מְקוֹם בְּהִכָּרַח לִדְבַר שֶׁהוּא נוֹשֵׂא כָּל הַכְּחוֹת, Nevertheless, it is a logical imperative that the essence includes the possibility for all the powers within itself,

שֶׁהָרִי מִמֶּנּוּ נִמְצָאִים כָּל הַכְּחוֹת כו'. for all the powers do emanate from it. Thus, if they emanate from the essence of the soul, at the very least, a potential – abstract and rarefied as it may be – for them must exist within the essence.

וְצָרִיךְ לִדְבַר שֶׁהֵם שָׁם בְּבִחִינַת הַתְּכַלְלוֹת מִמֶּשׁ, This being so, it must be said that on that level they are included in absolute synthesis, in such a way that they are actually as one, שֶׁכֻּלָּם הֵם דְּבַר אֶחָד מִמֶּשׁ

כו'31), 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

בלי שום התחלקות כלל, **with no distinctions at all**, transcending any conception of **differentiation whatsoever**.
איזה התחלקות שיהיה כו'.

(כְּעֵינֵן יְחִיד כו'), (The manner in which the potential for the soul's powers exist in its essence **resembles the concept of *yachid***.)²

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

וּמִשּׁוּם זֶה, **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,

גַּם בְּהַכּחוֹת כְּמוֹ שֶׁהֵם **even when the powers** descend to the level **where**
בְּבְחִינַת פְּרָטִים, **they exist as individual entities**,

יֵשׁ בְּהֶעָלֵם בְּכָל כָּח **each includes its antithesis in a concealed state**.
מִהַכָּח הַהֶפְכִּי, Fundamentally, every one of the soul's powers is not an individual entity but an expression of the soul. This is also

2. See chs. 20ff., where the Rebbe Rashab explains this concept at length.

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.

שבבחי' 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

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.

מִצֵּד הַהִתְפַּלְלוֹת שְׁלֵהֶם The possibility for this inclusion **results from their**
שֶׁבְּבַחֲיָנִת הָעֲצָמוֹת כו'. **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 הַנֶּפֶשׁ, This concept applies not only in regard to the
soul's powers

כִּמּוֹ כֵּן הוּא בְּכָל דָּבָר, but to every component of existence.

וְכִמּוֹ מִיָּם, יֵשׁ בּוֹ בְּהֶעֱלֵם For example, fire exists hidden within water in
גַּם מִיִּסוּד הָאֵשׁ, an elemental state,⁹

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

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.

בתכלית ההעלם. וכמו שהוא בגילוי, הרי יסוד המים הוא מים לבד, וא"א להתחבר כלל עם 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

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

וּכְמוֹ שֶׁהוּא בְּגִלּוּי In their revealed states

הָרִי יְסוּד הַמִּים the element of water is solely water
הוּא מִים לְבַד

וְאִי אֶפְשָׁר לְהִתְחַבֵּר and it cannot coalesce with fire at all.
כָּלֵל עִם הָאֵשׁ,

וְכֵן הָאֵשׁ אִי אֶפְשָׁר Similarly, fire cannot coalesce with water.
לְהִתְחַבֵּר עִם הַמִּים,

וְהֵינּוּ מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהָאֵשׁ שֶׁבַּמִּים The rationale is that the elemental dimension of
הוּא בְּתַכְלִית הֶהָעֵלֶם, fire that exists in water is in a state of ultimate
hiddenness,

שֶׁאֵינוֹ נִכָּר כָּלֵל וּכְלָל to the extent that it is not evident at all, not even
גַּם לְעַצְמוֹ כו', to itself.

וְלִכֵּן אִי אֶפְשָׁר לוֹ מְשׁוּם Therefore, for this reason, it cannot join together
זֶה לְהִתְחַבֵּר עִם הָאֵשׁ, with fire,

לְהִיּוֹת בְּהִתְגַּלּוּת הוּא for, in its revealed state, it is simple water.
מִים פְּשׁוּטִים כו'.

וּכְמוֹ כֵּן הוּא בִּיסוּד Similar concepts apply to the element of fire.
הָאֵשׁ כו'.

אָמְנָם כְּשֶׁמַּחֲלֻקִּים However, when water is broken into its fundamen-
אֶת הַמִּים tal components,

וּמוֹצִיִּימָם מִמֶּנּוּ אֵת the elemental dimension of fire that was within it is
הָאֵשׁ שֶׁבּוֹ בְּגִלּוּי, extracted and revealed,

את המים שבו, שז"ע מ"ש בס"י¹⁰ הוציא אש ממים ומים מאש, אז יכולים להתחבר 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

וְכֵן בְּהָאֵשׁ מוֹצִיָּאִים בְּגִלּוּי אֶת הַמֵּיִם שָׁבוּ,	Similarly, from fire, when the water contained within it is extracted –
שֶׁזֶהוּ עֲנִיֵן מֵה שְׁכָתוּב בְּסֵפֶר יִצְרָה הוֹצִיא אֵשׁ מִמֵּיִם וּמִמֵּיִם מֵאֵשׁ,	this is the meaning of the statement in <i>Sefer Yetzirah</i> , ¹⁰ “He extracted fire from water and water from fire” –
אֲז יְכוּלִים לְהִתְחַבֵּר וּלְהִתְכַלֵּל יַחַד כּו',	the two elements can, at this point, coalesce.
כִּי הָאֵשׁ שֶׁבַּמֵּיִם עִם הַמֵּיִם שֶׁבַּאֵשׁ יְכוּלִים לְהִתְחַבֵּר,	The “fire” within water and the “water” within fire can coalesce
וְעַל יְדֵי זֶה מִתְחַבְּרִים הַמֵּיִם עִם הָאֵשׁ,	and in this way, water can be joined with fire.
כִּי הַמֵּיִם עַל יְדֵי שְׁמִחָלְקִים אוֹתוֹ לְחֻלְקִים	This is possible because when water is broken into its fundamental components,
וּמוֹצִאִים בּוֹ הַכַּח הַהֶפְכִּי,	and its opposite quality is discovered within,
עַל יְדֵי זֶה נִחְלָשׁ כּחוֹ,	its distinctive power is weakened.
וְכִמּוֹ כֵן הָאֵשׁ,	The same is true in the case of fire:
עַל יְדֵי הַהִפְרָדָה וְהִתְחַלְקוּת	Through being separated and broken into its fundamental components,
שֶׁמוֹצִאִים בּוֹ הַהֶפְכִּי	its opposite quality is revealed and
נִחְלָשׁ גַּם כֵּן,	it – as explained above regarding water – is weakened.
וְאֲז יְכוּלִים לְהִתְחַבֵּר יַחַד כּו'.	Then, this weakening makes it possible for the two opposing elements to come together.

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.”

יכולים להתחבר יחד כו'. ונמצא דההתחלקות הזאת היא דוקא סיבת ההתכללות כו'.
קיצור. בכחות העצמים, באש ומים, ובכל דבר, יש, בהעלם, גם מהיפוכו. ע"י
 ההתחלקות וגילוי העלם זה, יכולים להתכלל.

וְנִמְצָא דִּהְתַּחֲלָקוֹת הַזֹּאת הִיא דְּדִקָּא סְבִית הַהִתְפַּלְלוֹת 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 explained here, they are joined in oneness even as their different and opposite natures have been revealed.

קצור. Summary:

בְּכַחוֹת הָעֲצָמִים, בָּאֵשׁ וּמִיִּם, וּבְכָל דָּבָר, Within each of the essential powers, similarly within fire and water, and in every element of existence

יֵשׁ, בְּהֶעֱלֵם, גַּם מִהִפּוּכוֹ. there exists its antithesis in a concealed state.

עַל יְדֵי הַהִתְחַלְקוֹת וְגִלּוֹי הָעֵלֶם זֶה Through a process of division, this hidden quality can be revealed and

יְכוּלִים לְהִתְפַּלֵּל. 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 💡

♦ **The Triggerer**

When I see that fellow in shul he poshut gets on my nerves, his Hashkofos trigger this deep frustration and anger within me. Whose problem is it?

♦ **Absolutes**

How often can one find an argument that one is absolutely wrong and the other absolutely right?

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



