

Chanuka, India, and the Structure of the Soul

Chanuka, the quintessential festival of lights, has much to teach about travelling to the heart of consciousness—giving us genuine wisdom and insight, and connecting us to our true vision and voice.

Imbalanced perceptions of the nature of the universe can yield mistakes in formulating an authentic philosophic worldview. The light of Chanuka comes to repair this imbalance. This talk, given on Chanuka by Rabbi Yitzchak Ginsburgh to Israelis on their return from India, discusses how to achieve a consciousness of our soul's Divine image.

(29 Kislev, 5763) “We must live with the times”, a Chassidic aphorism, refers to the importance of seeing the connections between the events taking place in the Jewish calendar, and our inner and outer world.

We must be candles that shine. Each one of us should receive the light of Chanuka in order to shine it to the outside, and in a copious manner. When each individual's lights and wellsprings shine to the outside, this reveals the Moshiach [Jewish Messiah].

Our sages have said that we may not derive physical benefit from the lights. We may look at the candles, but not use them. The more we look at the candles, the more we become the candles. The essence of our souls is drawn into the light. Gazing transforms us. The darkness recedes. The whole person is drawn after the light of the candles.

One of the verses customarily recited before lighting the Chanuka candles is *כי אשב בחושך השם אור לי*—“Though I dwell in the darkness, G-d is my light.” My existential point of departure is darkness, yet G-d is my light. To unite with the light is to become the light. Wherever one travels in the world, one is directed by Divine providence. *מהשם מצעדי גבר כוננו ודרכו יחפץ*, “From G-d are the footsteps of Man...”

G-d brings a person to a place in order to find his own holy sparks that have awaited him, or her, from the six days of creation. It is specifically the traveler, the person who searches for what seems to be missing, who can redeem these sparks, which are really the highest parts of his own soul. This is how he finds his true self.

This is true of any place to which Divine Providence brings a person, but even truer of India, which has always been a spiritual vortex for souls. The Kuzari (by Rabbi Judah Halevy) comments that India is one of the most special nations on earth. The Brahmin¹ elite descend from the sons of Abraham's concubines, whom Abraham sent to the East. He gave them gifts: a spiritual path, and powers which are right for them², and which prepare them to grow, develop and be ready to absorb and receive the light of holiness. This light will soon become the world's lot when we, the children of Isaac and Jacob, will merit to enlighten every corner. This will be achieved with the coming of Moshiach.

¹ Brahmin is named after Abraham.

² They are right for them, yet not right for Israel, which has its own path.

Acknowledging Chasidic Meditation

Learning Kabbalah and Chasidut ought to always involve *hitbonenut* (the process of self-reflection using the power of *bina*, understanding). Jewish meditation does not involve repeating a mantra a million times. Rather, it involves looking into an idea, in order to enter it deeply, connect to it, and make a spiritual unification between the light of the idea (and the G-dly life force which creates it) and one's soul. Everything we read and think ought to be done through *hitbonenut*, or Chasidic meditation.

What motivates a person to travel? The word *tiyul* [trip] comes from the Talmud. *Tiyul b'pardes*³ is not a physical trip. It refers to a trip to upper words, to find the secrets of Torah, to find the Master of the World and the secret of how He creates the world and my soul; to see in detail Who He is, What he is, and to recognize my relationship to Him. The sages mention *tayalim*. *Tayalim* are those who make unifications...they don't need to work. All they do is travel; they make unifications. It's a very high level.⁴

Hodu (the Hebrew word for India) means "Give thanks", which is, indeed, a very Jewish concept. The entire difference between an Indian (*Hodi*) and a Jew (*Yehudi*) is just the letter, *yud* at the beginning. An Indian is close to a Jew. Sometimes a Jew has the *yud* [the essential point of connection] but is missing the *hodi* (acknowledgment), and he or she needs to go to India to find it.⁵

Chanuka is a very dear holiday, when it is quite apropos to give thanks. *Al haNissim*, the prayer of thanks recited on Chanuka [and Purim], ends with "to thank and praise Your great Name. The Jewish sages established "these eight days of Chanuka" for this purpose, through lighting candles and keeping the many customs of this very delightful holiday. The Baal Shem Tov loved Chanuka, whose message is light. He publicized the fact that "G-d is my miracle" always--the supernatural force within Nature and the Light of the world Who gives the power to overcome darkness. The miracle within nature is that "He is the One who gives you strength to succeed." Abraham was the first person to publicize this light.

טבעתי ביוון מצולה "I have drowned in *yevain metzula*, the depths, of logic and nature." (Psalms, ch. 69) *Yevain* also spells *Yavan*, Greece. Whoever learns the dualistic philosophy of Greece, which deals only in natural forces, is liable to drown in the depths [of belief in nature/science alone].⁶ But G-d gives us a way out of this. The hint is that in order to emerge unscathed, one must elevate and transform Greek wisdom.

³ The *pardes* פרד"ס (lit: orchard) is symbolic of all 4 levels of Torah study: a) the simple meaning b) the hinted meaning c) the homiletical midrash d) the secrets, including Kabbalah and Chassidut. Note that the word "paradise" comes from the word, "pardes".

⁴ Our sages stated: "All paths are considered dangerous". Even our wise rabbi-travelers contended with the spiritual dangers of travel. The Baal Shem Tov taught that there are seven positive things we can learn from a thief. One of them is that he puts himself in danger. מעמיד עצמו בסכנה. If a person seeks the truth, he or she will be protected.

⁵ *Hod*, the eighth *sefira* counting from *Chochma*, signifies gratitude, acknowledgment and receptivity.

⁶ This is true of the average person. However, great tzadikim such as Maimonides and the Tzemach Tzedek [third Rebbe] of Lubavitch were able to digest this knowledge without harm. There are many anecdotes about the Rebbes of Lubavitch dissuading the study of philosophy because its premises were lacking a spiritual dimension. As the third Lubavitcher Rebbe, author of Tzemach Tzedek, piquantly commented to his chassid: "My intestinal tract is strong, so it can digest snakes and scorpions. Yours is not as strong, so you should avoid it."

G-d is my Light. Though still a Surrounding Light (*ohr makkif*)—having yet to penetrate my consciousness—it is accessible via our faith and our thanks. For, to thank, is to recognize its existence, as it penetrates like oil, little by little, into every place, including into my darkness.

Seeking the Secret of Consciousness

The simple level of Torah study [the *peshat*] is compared to water. Wine [*sod*] is called the secret of Torah, while oil is the secret of secrets [*razin d'razin*]. The secret of secrets is always about carrying a paradox, which only Moshiach can reveal. Moshiach, the king whose head is anointed with oil, receives the secret of secrets of the Torah. Chanuka is the holiday of Moshiach.

The travel of a Jew is to a place he/she has never been---all in order to reach *hodaya*, thanksgiving.

A secret doesn't necessarily contradict logic. It's merely unknown, except to special people. Wine is not necessarily about a paradox. But oil always refers to the ability to carry logical opposites.

Oil, the secret of secrets, always carries a paradox. The hidden Wisdom of Torah (סתר) has a sharp, internal, hidden logic which contradicts (סתירה) Greek logic. The true, deep secrets of Torah hold an inherent contradiction of Greek logic. The war with *Yavan* [ancient Greece] was about this. Jewish wisdom values what is beyond the mind as a matter of principle. The wisdom of the Torah is merely a means to draw what's above the intellect into reality, making a "dwelling place for G-d below." Torah has an incisive intellect. It's not all about emotion. Mainly, it is above intellect.

This holiday is about oil and light. Oil is called "*Shemen lamaor*"—"oil for illumination". So, the point of paradox is to illuminate the darkness.

How do we meditate? We use the Hebrew language, the source of secrets. *L'taye!* לטייל has a few roots in Hebrew. Kabbalah teaches that a person will travel afar in search of his shadows (Singular: צל *tsel* ; plural: *tslaim* צללים, also means musical notes). You may be happy at home, conscious and aware of your inner light, yet also be aware of needing to search for something, though you may not know what. If you lack the consciousness of your shadow, then it will bother you. You aren't yet aware of the layer of *tal* [dew], or the shadow upon your head, which is the higher awareness of G-d.⁷

One of the roots of *tiyul* is *tal*, and this is because, on an internal level, *tal* and *shemen* are the same.

Kabbalistically, *Tal* and *shemen* are related, as oil is the complement of dew.

So, *tiyul* טיול, *tal* טל and *tsel* צל are related etymologically as well as conceptually.

10 times *Shemen* [oil]=*tal* [dew]= 390

שמן=טל(10)

⁷ The shadow, or צלם is the Divine image in which Man was created..."the human soul mirrors the attributes of its Creator, serving as His facsimile, or "shadow", within the created realm." See Ginsburgh, Yitzchak. 5764/2004 *Consciousness and Choice: Finding your Soul Mate*. Jerusalem: Gal Einai Institute, pp.83-84; footnote 30

Multiplying *tal* ten times gives us *shemen*. Dew and water each have their own identity, yet *tal* is the root of *shemen*, within the general category of water.⁸

The word *tal* comes from the Aramaic word for *tsef*. In Hebrew, a temporary hut, or *sukka*, is called *tsef yomam* (shade by day).⁹ In Aramaic it is called *m'talaya*. Why is "secret" water from heaven called *tal*? The dew forms a layer (שכבת הטל) which covers the entire globe each morning. L'tayel means to look for my *tal*, my cover; in other words, I seek consciousness by mirroring God's Infinite Light. My soul passively reflects His will. The 3 letter root of צל is צלל (we see that the plural is צללים). This indicates that צל is cognate with צליל which means a musical sound,¹⁰ and with צלילה--diving. The יון מצולה (*yevain metsula*) is the deepest depths which we must transform by finding our shadow there. I may sink within the depths, yet I can also dive in, to find and transform my shadow from within that place.

Chanuka, holiday of light, and secrets of secrets, carries the transformation of shadows into light. In the northern hemisphere, when darkness covers the earth, Chanuka is in winter. Though I dwell in darkness, in winter's absence of light, it is G-d, Who is my light. I continually add light, starting with one candle, and adding incrementally, one at a time, and infinitely, to the number 8.

צל is the secret of צלם, the Divine image in which Adam has been created. Unconsciously, a traveler seeks his shadow, so he comes to a place where he can admit to its existence. One of the best places to find it is in *Hodu*, India.

Everything in the world has a צל. But a Jew has an additional shadow--an additional צל, or צל-ד indicated by the final Mem ד. The צלם is thus a shade on a shade [called *bavua d'bavua*]. Only in *kedusha*¹¹ do we have this. The first צל is the *raz*, the secret. The second צל, the shadow on the shadow, is the *razin d'razin*, the secret of secrets. The principles of acknowledgement and thankfulness pertain to this level.

צלם, the word for the Divine image, has three letters and three levels, each of which connects with the *neschama*, which connects with human body. צ hints at all levels of the conscious soul, which generally has three layers: the intellect, the emotion, and the imprinted, innate behavior (מושכל מורגש מוטבע). Each of these 3 sets corresponds to 3 sets of *sefirot*: *chochma, bina, daat; chesed, gevura, tiferet; netzach, hod, yesod*. Inter-including these three levels will give us 3 times 3 = 9, multiplied by 10 *sefirot* [G-dly attributes]. This gives us 90 specific, conscious levels of soul. *Tzadik* (צ)=90, is the letter which begins the word צלם.

[*Tzadik* also means "a righteous person".] We are talking about someone whose education and nurture helps him or her to grow into a righteous, healthy individual, a *tzadik*. Still, this is only the beginning of the search, and even a *tzadik* must "go afar" to find the missing parts of himself. In your own home, you can complete the צ, but to complete the ל and the ד you must travel afar.

⁸ Torah perceives water as a general category which includes all liquids. Oil, though, is the sine qua non of liquids, as it both floats above and permeates.

⁹ The verse, "G-d is your shadow at your right side" is interpreted by the Berditchever Rabbi to mean that the shade of the *sukka* comes from the musical tones of the shofar. Sukkot is called, "in the shadow of Faith". Chanuka's first candle is the revelation of this shadow for the eyes to see.

¹⁰ Dew, too, has tones.

¹¹ The Hebrew concept of holiness, *kedusha* refers to that which is set apart.

In chapter 39 of Psalms¹², King David states: אך בצלם יתהלך איש “Man walks but in darkness; [all that they stir is but vanity; he gathers yet he knows not who will bring them in].” A Jew travels through life, by Divine providence, in order to complete his Divine image (to find the ל [*lamed*] and the mem ם of צלם). *Lamed* is called *makkif hakarov*, or the close, surrounding shadow. The final, closed ם [*mem*] is the *makkif harachok*, or the distant, surrounding shadow. *Lamed* corresponds to the *chaya*, while *Mem* corresponds to the *yechida* (see Fig. A)

נר"ן *Neran* [the acronym for *nefesh*, *ruach* and *neshama* --the lower 3 levels of the soul], is a revealed light, called “a straight, upside down candle”. This is the conscious feeling of a person. Above that is an encompassing, *makkif* light, which is said to be “touching but not touching” [נוגע ואינו נוגע]

On the third night of Chanuka, the נר"ן [acronym for *nefesh*, *ruach*, *neshama*] or the צ of צלם, is completely revealed. The ל (which corresponds to the *chaya*) is rectified on the fourth night. By the fifth night, we reach the closed ם, corresponding to the *yechida*.

<i>Name of Soul Level</i>	<i>Conscious Soul-Powers</i>	<i>Letter of Divine Image</i>	<i>Light of Chanuka</i>
Nefesh נפש	Innate powers	צ	First 3 lights of Chanuka
Ruach רוח	Emotional powers		
Neshama נשמה	Intellectual powers		
<i>Super-conscious Soul Powers [Shadows]</i>			
Chaya חיה	Close soul-consciousness [<i>makkif hakarov</i>] Power to “touch and not touch”; consciousness enters and immediately retreats, so as not to overwhelm recipient	ל	Fourth light of Chanuka
Yechida יחידה	Distant soul-consciousness [<i>makkif harachok</i>] experienced as the essential point of the soul	ם	Fifth light of Chanuka (includes nights five through eight)

Fig. A

The fifth light of Chanuka is a *moshiach'dige* light, as the Hebrew word for “pertaining to *Moshiach*” has the same letters as the word for “fifth” [*moshichi-chamishi* חמישי-משיחי] Therefore, chasidim have always

¹² By Divine providence, 39 is the gematria, or Kabbalistic numerical value of *tal*, or dew.

considered the fifth light of Chanuka to be the dearest, because it reveals all five levels (*neran-chai=nefesh, ruach, neshama, chaya, yechida*) of the Jewish soul. On the 3rd night, the *neran* was revealed, which is the \aleph of the $\aleph\lambda\mu$. Yesterday, on the fourth night, the *chaya* was revealed. And tonight, the fifth, we reveal the *yechida*, the hidden *mem* of *tselem*. Even though we keep adding candles until we reach eight—*shemona*, related to *shemen* (essence of the oil; the secret of secrets) the number which is above nature-- there's a climax on the fifth night. In India one reveals one's *yechida*--the closed *mem* of *tselem*. The *tzadik* is internal, while the *Lamed* and *Mem* are the two shadows.

Chassidic meditation isn't about superficial comparisons, correspondences and terminology. It must flow with genuine content, without which it's not *hitbonenut*. [This is why we are going into all of this detail.]

All levels of the *nefesh Elokit*, the G-dly soul of the Jew, reveal the light of G-d. G-dly emotions, as opposed to ordinary, natural emotions, shine with the light of *kedusha*. The special love Jews have for each other flows from the revelation of their G-dly light. A person does good things because he is good. It flows almost automatically from his or her essence, which is the G-dly soul. The same applies, but even more so, to the intellect of the Light of Torah, which is G-dly. All the soul-powers of the G-dly soul express G-dliness.

To say this simply: since there are five levels of the soul, why do we condense it into three? Put another way, why are there only three letters in the word $\aleph\lambda\mu$? Before, we said that the 3 lower levels (*nefesh, ruach, neshama*) are all conscious. Above the conscious powers, we have two other, super-conscious, powers, which are infinitely far from each other--- even further than intellect from the emotion, or emotion from action. Each exists in its own right. One *makkif* is close (it corresponds to *chaya*), and another *makkif* is completely far. It is the essence of the Jew, the *yechida*, and the closed μ of the $\aleph\lambda\mu$ *tselem*. This is why in general, the *neschama* is divided into the three letters of $\aleph\lambda\mu$.

Everything holy is connected, in a simple experience, to G-dliness. The first G-dly experience, the *tzadik*, can be known close to home, without travelling. The *lamed*, has us travelling to places with which we are more or less familiar, even though we may have never been there. This is the *makkif hakarov*—a place which is more or less familiar and homey. But to reach the *makkif harachok*, we must travel very far away, to a place where we have no connections, where we are complete strangers. That is the place where our essence awaits to be revealed.

Basic Levels of Trust in Divine Providence

- 1) Realizing G-d is with me at every step; that I can trust Him and that He loves me and does only good. This feeling (expressed in Psalms as "Israel trusts in G-d") comes from the \aleph of the Divine image. (This is the general level that includes the next 3 specific levels.)
- 2) Feeling, on a most basic level, that G-d brings me to the place where I need rectification (*tikkun*), protecting me from all negative forces.¹³ "From G-d are set the footsteps of Man, and He desires his path." G-d takes me to the right place, and brings me success. This is the experience of *nefesh*.
- 3) When, further, I feel how G-d loves me, then it is natural for me to reciprocate that love. This is the experience of *ruach*.
- 4) Going to Torah sources for guidance and inspiration for contemporary issues. This is Providence at the level of *neshama*.

Fig. B

The Baal Shem Tov taught that Divine providence covers even the smallest details of life. He considered the highest form of Divine providence to be the study of "*Torah I'shma*"-- for the sake of Heaven-- for Torah is infinite. I can open any one of millions of pages of Torah, and find the exact answer that I need right now in my life. Like the chasidim of Chabad-Lubavitch, who customarily open a volume of Igrot Kodesh (The Correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe), and--"bull's-eye"--they get exact answers to their questions. The Torah speaks in real time, enlightening and guiding my life. It's not just an old-fashioned book written thousands of years ago. All I need to do is open the book, and G-d is communicating with me. This is the experience of Divine providence at the level of the *neshama*, the G-dly intellect, in all its strength.

If I walk into the street this morning and, G-d forbid, I get into an accident, yet, by a miracle I am saved-- this is the revelation of the *nefesh* in all its strength. Because I realize that G-d performed a miracle for me. I can feel a reciprocal heartbeat of love "as water reflects water" because I know G-d cares about me.

But perhaps I haven't even got consciousness enough to thank Him for it. Or, maybe I do realize that I was saved by a miracle, and feel His love and want to return that love. If there is an authentic, reciprocal love on my part, this is considered to be Divine providence at the level of *ruach*, the spirit of life.

When I feel the main lesson-- that G-d shows us a path, in a wondrous, miraculous fashion, from within the Torah--this is Divine Providence at the level of *neshama*. So, these three levels (*nefesh*, *ruach*, *neshama*) are an experience of G-d at the level of Divine providence, where He sees and manages creation.

¹³ N-tz-l **ל-צ-ל** is the root meaning "to save".

A quantum leap beyond Divine providence would be to sense the emergence of existence, including my own, each and every moment.

About wisdom, our sages have stated: “איזהו חכם הרואה את הנולד” “Who is wise? The one who sees what will emerge from his actions.”¹⁴ It’s about consequences, cause and effect. Yet another way of interpreting this: “Who is wise? One who experiences how all of existence is continuously born out of absolute nothingness.” To experience an inward light (*ohr pnimi*) is to feel the essence of *Havaya* (see glossary) in reality. It includes seeing how everything—body, soul, nature, even my very self-- comes into existence at every moment, out of nothingness. This is a quantum leap from the previous level where we felt G-d’s love and providence *upon* us. A person can believe that “In the Beginning, G-d created the Heavens and the earth.” I may believe He is here, managing things, and loves me. This is just the basis. But to feel G-d *in* my life is to experience continuous creation out of absolute nothingness. This is the experience of *chaya*, an experience of the point of *chochma*. “Who is wise—the one who sees what is born”—refers to this level. It is *dveikut*, a cleaving of the soul to G-d, and not only a process of *emuna*, faith. It is called *makif hakarov* because it’s close to every Jew. As wondrous as this may be, this consciousness is not difficult for a Jew. It is not far from you. It’s a close, Surrounding Light—very close to you. It is not a matter of belief, it can actually be experienced.

This close, surrounding light is said to be “*touching, yet not touching*”. To find this experience of continuous creation--of the world and of yourself-- you need to travel to nearby places within the Land of Israel. That’s how you find the close surrounding light. Then, if you merit, through study of Torah, and specifically the inner dimensions of Torah, you may become refined and receptive enough to continually receive authentic messages. However, if your wisdom faculty is not refined, then the messages you receive are very likely to be imaginary.

True, the above could conceivably be achieved in your own territory. But to skip,¹⁵ to be able to feel the continuous creation, you need to travel. Yes, it is close, but still, travel is necessary. You need the *tal*. You need the dew. You need to reveal, to bring down, a shadow. Divine providence isn’t shadow. It’s a revealed light. To truly connect to G-d, you need to reveal one shadow.

A further quantum leap [one level higher] than *chaya* is the *yechida*, the closed *mem* [of *tselem*], the “secret of secrets” רזין דרזין ---truly a paradox.

We use the word “paradox” advisedly. It may seem like a cute joke, but it is no accident that the word *paradox* can be seen as “*para adumah* --with the English ending--*ox*. Our sages have said that the Red Heifer [*para*

¹⁴ See Ethics of the Fathers, chap. 2:10 where seeing “what will be born” is considered one, among a few, good paths to choose.

¹⁵ “The voice of my Beloved, here it comes! Skipping on the hills, jumping over the valleys.”—Song of Songs. (Note that voice is connected to the צל- צליל.) The Fathers (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) give us power to skip. The Mothers (Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel and Leah) give us power to jump, which is higher than skipping. In other words, the ability to come to a completely new place is in the merit of the righteous women.

adumah in Hebrew] is the secret of paradox.¹⁶ It is considered to be the most hidden mitzvah. Perhaps it takes a trip to India [where oxen run around the streets] in order to find this paradox!

There is a kabbalistic concept revealed by the holy Baal Shem Tov: “G-t iz altz, und altz is G-t!”, meaning “G-d is All, and All is G-d!” This is a true paradox.

Torah-based paradox is achieved as another existential, quantum leap above the concept of continuous creation. It’s a revelation that seems to contradict what we previously said, that G-d continuously creates, in His goodness, everything, including, mainly, our very beings—“out of absolute nothingness” [*yesh m’ayin*].

There is a verse that states: **כִּי מִמְךָ הַכֹּל** “Everything is from You.” Everything is veritably a part of You. It is not something which was non-existent; it is from You and a reflection of Your Essence. This seems to imply that it was always there [not continuously created]. As long as G-d creates the world, He is using a light that “fills all worlds” [*memalle kol almin*]. A yet deeper light is the one that “surrounds all worlds” [*sovev kol almin*]. These lights work in tandem to bring the universe into existence at every instant. But the Filling Light and the Surrounding Light are not G-d Himself.

When we say that there is a revelation of the *yechida* in the soul, that “G-d is All and All is G-d”, this is a revelation of the Essence of G-d Himself, so to speak. This two-part formulation was originated by the Baal Shem Tov. The concept exists in a hidden manner within the Kabbalah, but the Baal Shem Tov revealed it. When the shadow of shadow, the oil, or the hidden teachings of Torah, are revealed (as they are through Hasidic teaching), Moshiach comes. When the Baal Shem Tov asked Moshiach, “When is my Master going to come?” he was answered: “When your teachings will be spread to the outside.”¹⁷

Each side of the paradox contradicts the other. To say G-d is All means there’s no world. This contradicts the previous statement that “All is G-d”, where each second I feel that all, including myself, is coming into being, out of absolute nothingness. Every moment, there’s G-d, the Creator, and we, who are being created. It’s not a duality, where G-d enters a ready-made world to rule, supervise and bestow good. To say that nothing can lift its hand on its own without the help of G-d is this first level [G-d is All], the **א** of **אל**.

Yet, to say only that “G-d is All” would imply the world itself doesn’t exist; it leads to viewing the world as an illusion. That sounds rather like an Indian belief, wherein only one side of the paradox is emphasized. This is an imbalanced perception that sees only a partial truth, and which certainly ends up degenerating into idolatrous practice and philosophy. All idolatrous religions, especially those of India, emerged out of split thinking. They err in an extreme way toward one or another partial conception. So, immediately, in response to the error, we say, “No! All is G-d!” Each of the phrases contradicts the other. One side of the sentence says that G-d creates the world every moment. The other side says, “there is no world.” A mistake in one part generates a mistake in the other part. In saying only “All is God” by itself, divorced from the other half (“G-d is All”) one can mistakenly come to identify the world itself with G-d—to the extent that one can, G-d forbid, bow to idols or cows.

¹⁶ Since the waters of the Red Heifer paradoxically purify the impure, yet make impure the man who prepares and carries them.

¹⁷ “The outside” is taken as a relational word; the ‘outside’ of one level can become the ‘inside’ of the next level. “Outside” can also mean our brains, in relation to the spiritual source of the brain.

Human Consciousness of G-d's Relationship with the World

G-d is Master of the world	G-d and world; Physical and spiritual are two separate entities, seemingly far apart and unrelated	Lower consciousness possessed by created beings
"G-d is All!"	Only G-d Exists. This perspective sees the physical world as illusory or meaningless	"G-d is all and All is G-d!" Higher, messianic consciousness achieved through Torah ensures a balanced perspective that can contain the paradox Both are true simultaneously Panentheism ¹⁸
"All is G-d!"	Only the world exists. This perspective leads to Pantheism	

Fig. C

Only when these two ideas are taken together and balanced through Torah and Chasidut (the world of *Tikkun*)-- when these two completely opposite phrases, "G-d is All and All is G-d!" are expressed in one breath-- can we begin to make any sense of the paradox. It's the contradiction of each side of the statement that yields the truth. All the beauty of this holiday, Chanuka, and the true beauty of Judaism, is because it is capable of carrying opposites.

The Baal Shem Tov says that this is the consciousness of Moshiach. Allowing this "far away" super-consciousness of the fifth light of Chanuka to permeate our consciousness is what brings Moshiach. To access this shadow, we need to travel afar, all the way to India. There are other far-away places—but *Hodu* is an excellent place for finding the distant *makif*.

In this generation, there are many Jews travelling to India. Most Jews today, by Divine providence, have not been raised to learn Torah, have not been educated with a consciousness of Judaism. They have not been raised as the *tzadik* of the $\Delta\lambda\psi$. Why is this?

But this is the crucial point. If everyone were to be born into an observant environment, who knows whether they would ever awaken to the higher levels, to reach for the shadows? Almost certainly, those born with the *tsadik* of the $\Delta\psi\lambda$ would be content to remain at their current level (on the level of ψ), and not grow toward the λ and Δ of the $\Delta\lambda\psi$.

¹⁸ Not to be confused with Pantheism

So, Chanuka is a holiday where we can transform the shadows into lights. It is a very good time to travel to the *pardes*, and to search for the surrounding lights, for the *tslalim*.

Between Praise and Thanksgiving

At the end of the Chanuka prayer there are four words: להודות ולהלל לשמך הגדול "To thank and to praise Your Great Name". Among all holidays, only Chanuka includes expressions of *Hallel* (praise) and *hodaya* (thanksgiving). We recite the prayer "v'Al haNissim" in all of our prayers on Chanuka; after eating and in every one of our *Shemona Esrai* (Eighteen Benedictions) prayers. Chanuka is the holiday which has the perfection of both.

On the three biblical holidays-- Pesach Shavuot, and Sukkot--we say *Hallel*, but not *hodaya*. We don't say the v'Al HaNissim prayer. On Purim, we do say *hodaya*, but not *Hallel*, for various reasons. Purim would be another good holiday for a trip to India!

It's interesting to note that in Dharamsala, most of the travelers come only in the summer. So, first thing, our blessing is that we should merit to firmly establish a warm and open home which will draw those hearts who seek their shadows—specifically in winter, on Chanuka. It's easier to catch shadows in the winter, a time when there are more shadows. We hope that this will become a place where we can celebrate both Chanuka and Purim. Chanuka even more so, because on this holiday, we have a complement--both praise and thanks. On Chanuka, we say *Hallel* on all eight days, as opposed to other holidays when we do not recite full *Hallel* during the entire holiday. Even on the seventh day of Pesach [the day when the Sea was split] we say just half-*Hallel*. No other holiday but Chanuka, expresses the fullness of praise and thanks to G-d for the miracles He wrought.

We say להודות ולהלל לשמך הגדול *To thank and praise Your Great Name*. What is the difference between "to thank" and "to praise"? "To thank" is about light. "To praise" is about עלי ראשי בהלו נרו "When He shines [b'hilo] His candle upon my head" [referring to the fetus in utero, which studies Torah before it is born]. *Hallel* is a language of light.¹⁹ To thank refers to faith, emuna—something that wasn't revealed consciously, but now becomes clear, so I now thank and acknowledge it. Generally, Chasidic teaching places *hodaya* and *hallel* as the *makkif harachok* and the *makkif hakarov*; to both the ם/ the distant surrounding light/*yechida*, and the ל/close Surrounding Light/*chaya* of the Divine image. להלל To praise, corresponds to the *chaya*. The main praise is for bringing the world into existence every moment. The main principle of *Hallel* is to thank G-d for the experience of my continuous creation at every moment. The main principle of *hodaya* is to thank [and this is what we seek in *Hodu*, India] for something which you can't imagine truly. All you can do is to state the paradox in one breath. Remember: do not get stuck at either of these points, even for an extra second, because then you immediately fall (G-d forbid).

¹⁹ Note the similarity of the word *hilo* to the word, "halo". Also to the word "hale".

Giving Birth to the Future

This holiday is about a candle,²⁰ and about thanks. Together, they teach that thanks itself must become enlightened.

The five levels of *neshama* are “a candle atop a candle”. The first 3 levels of an inner candle: “The candle of G-d is the soul of Man”. Then we have “When He shines [*b’hilo*] His candle **upon** my head”, the candle above the head of the fetus. This close candle is the *chaya*, the *hallel/praise*.

A secret of Chanuka: why did Divine providence ensure that Chanuka fall on the 25th day of Kisleiv? Kabbalistic and Chassidic teachings state: *זה היום הרת עולם*, “This [Chanuka] is the day on which the world was conceived [as in pregnancy].”²¹ “In the Beginning, G-d created...” Created, or *Bara*, in Hebrew, means “going out, emerging, maturing”. All Kabbalah is about pairing, pregnancy, giving birth, growing and maturing. The beginning of the world’s creation took place on the 25th day of Elul; this means that it went into ‘pregnancy’ within the thought of G-d on the 25th of Kisleiv, 9 months ‘earlier’.

Accordingly, the candle of Chanuka is the selfsame candle which burns atop the head of the fetus in utero. Chanuka is the holiday of [the soul’s] going into pregnancy. What allows mastery of the Torah? It is the candle of *chaya* of *chochma*. *הנולד את הרואה את חכם איזהו חכם* The fetus becomes prepared for the process of seeing the world being born, each moment as it unfolds. Within the creation out of nothing, there are all the stages. First, nothingness, then a tiny drop, then a fetus, and finally, birth---all of this in an instant, out of absolute nothingness. Again, there’s a candle on the head of the fetus for this reason.

Even though we have 3 letters, aspects, of the tselem, it’s written: “Still, Man carries himself through the Divine Image.” *איש יתהלך איש אך בצלם יתהלך איש* Each level of the soul is an aspect of the heart. The center of the *neshama* is in the heart. In *Sefer Yetzira* it says *לב בנפש כמלך*. “The heart in the soul is as the King.” “The King”, *מלך*, is an acronym for *מח-לב-כבד* [brain, heart, liver] and the brain must rule²² the heart; while the heart must rule the liver *מוח שליט על הלב ולב שליט על הכבד*. Essentially, each level is called “heart”. The heart is the most general level of the inwardness of the soul. Accordingly, it says that the three letters of *צלם* are three levels of heart: heart within heart within heart. One of the first kabbalists, who lived a thousand years ago, was Rabbi Abraham Abulafia. He wrote (in his book The Form of the Jewish Heart) about 2 *lameds* which face each other and join to form a Jewish heart.

²⁰ Every candle has a dark (blue) aura and a light (white) aura. The dark aura is the Light After the *Tzimtzum* [Contraction]. The white aura is the Endless, Infinite light of before the Contraction. This is the white light which is on the head.

²¹ This verse is always read on Rosh HaShana, because it is the actual day of Man’s creation, and Man is called “*olam katan*”, a microcosm. Chasidism interprets it according to its innermost sense.

²² The emergence of the world from Nothingness into Existence is called Seder Hishtalshelut, the chain of descent, which is reflected in this descent from brain, to heart, to liver.



(source: <http://www.inner.org/goldjewelry/aboutjewelry/aboutmysticalheart.php>)

The צלם is the lower or inner heart, whose צ (*neran*), is within the ל (*chaya*), which is within the ד (*yechida*). The Kabbalah says that this is heart, within a heart, within a heart.

Mantra or Not?

When you set out to learn meditation, be aware that Jewish meditation is completely different than Eastern meditation. Jews don't recite a mantra a million times. A mantra may bring a person into a colorful and interesting world. Yet it isn't the true path for a Jew. It brings one into an imaginary dimension, and sullies the *neshama*.

Notwithstanding our hesitance to use mantras, Jews do recite verses of Torah as an entryway into divine meaning and knowledge. For example, a central verse recited twice daily, the Shema prayer. שמע ישראל הויה אחד. When Jews repeat a Torah verse, it's not just about the sound, it is about the inner content.

Different tzaddikim had special verses which they would repeat. The famed Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz, a student of the Baal Shem Tov, whose main life-lesson was that we should not "kid" ourselves, used to repeat a sentence over and over and over, as he walked: נחני בדרך אמת, "Lead me in the path of Truth; lead me in the path of Truth". Another famous tzadik, Rabbi David of Lelov (a student of the Maggid), would repeat: תשמרני "Guard me." (In Yiddish: "hit mir op") This would keep a coal of conscious connection and enthusiasm (*esh kodesh* אש קודש) burning for G-d, through the holy speech of the heart.

So, "G-d created one thing opposite another". On one hand we deny the approach which uses a mantra, and on the other hand, we affirm the power of holy speech. A word or a verse in Torah has infinite spiritual energy and potential for a person to connect to G-d.

A Heartwarming Jewish Future

Let's focus on the four words of praise and thanks: "To thank and to praise Your Great Name". להודות ולהלל לשמך הגדול is a verse whose sound (צליל) is full of *lameds*. Meditating on this verse, we find that altogether, there are 6 *lameds*. In other words, taking R. Abulafia's formulation, there are three hearts in this verse. The

entire verse begins and ends with a lamed; it is surrounded, so to speak, by a heart. That is to say, thanks and praise naturally exist within the Jewish heart. Meaning that our thanks and praise must come from our hearts.

There are 20 letters in this phrase. The first and 20th form a heart. Since it's an even number, there are two middle letters. The midpoint would therefore be the tenth and eleventh letters—the two *lameds* of the word ולהלל :

להודות ולהלל לשמך הגדול

Beside this, there are another 2 *lameds*: one in להלל and the other in לשמך. Now, counting from the beginning of the phrase, these are in the 8th and 12th places. Counting from the end of the phrase, they occupy the 9th and 13th places.

8 and 12=20 , while 9 and 13=22

Counting the first ל as number 1, and the last ל as number 20, we get 21 which is the *gematria* [see glossary] of a holy Name, Ehyeh (“I will Be”). It's also the *gematria* of Hodu.

21 = אהיה = הודו = Ehyeh = Hodu

When you go to Hodu, you don't know exactly what you are seeking. Just as you seek *hodaya*, since this is your source and essence as a Jew, so do you seek the *yechida*. Hodu is 21, a holy name, Ehyeh, the Name of the Exodus from Egypt. Moses in Egypt asked, “What Name shall I use when speaking to the Children of Israel?” and the answer came: “Ehyeh asher Ehyeh!-I will be that which I will be!”, or “I am destined to be [born]!” This is name of Redemption, *Geula*. Who says Ehyeh? Someone who doesn't yet exist. Yet he is promised that he is destined to become. This is the Name sought by Jews travelling to India, whether consciously or not. In all the Bible, this Name אהיה appears only the three times mentioned in this one verse [Exodus 3:14]. The third mention is, “[...and G-d said] So shall you speak: ‘Ehyeh has sent me to you.’”

In the *Haftarah* of *Shabbat Shuva*, we read: אהיה כטל לישראל “I will Be [Ehyeh—a Name of G-d] as dew to Israel”. This can be reconstructed as “Ehyeh—[is] as a dew for Israel”. This Name, Ehyeh, is especially apparent to sincere Israelis with pure hearts, who travel in order to seek the Truth. (Israelis especially like travelling--more than anyone else!)

All the 3 pairs of *lameds* in the phrase “to thank and praise Your great Name” hint to the Name Ehyeh (mentioned 3 times, as noted)--the Name of *Geula*. We should meditate that the inner heart (the heart which is the צ of צלם) is surrounded by the heart of *chaya*, which is surrounded by the highest heart, the *yechida*---as indicated by the entire phrase. All of these are in the one heart---the “heart within heart within heart”.

May we merit the revelation of all hearts. The Baal Shem Tov had a lot of energy in his hand, and would bless children by placing his hand upon their hearts and saying: “*zol zein a varmer Yid!*” “Be a warm Jew!” This blessing would last the child its entire life. Today, we go in the path of warmth and light by living a Jewish life deeply rooted in Torah and *mitzvot*, including Jewish customs. The warmth of Chanuka is reflected in the modern Hebrew word for potato pancakes (customarily eaten on Chanuka): לביבות *l'vivot*, cognate to *levav*

[לבב]-- a hint to the 3 hearts. We ourselves should be candles that shine light. The goal is to become Jews who have real, Jewish warmth.

Glossary

Gematria- the numerical values of letters and verses form spiritual, equivalent ideas.

This is a study which must be approached carefully, based on precedents.

Geula- Redemption from exile

Hallel הלל - Thanksgiving prayer, recited on many Jewish holidays

Havaya--הויה--the four-letter Name of God (Y-H-V-H) which means “He was, He is, He always will Be”

Hodaya--הודיה--the act of giving thanks

Hodu—הודו--1. imperative verb-- give thanks; acknowledge 2. India

Hitbonenut התבוננות(Jewish Meditation)- achieved through focus on Torah learning in a deep, receptive way

Lamed- Hebrew letter ל with “l” sound

Mem- Final Hebrew letter ם with “m” sound, coming at the end of a word

Nogaya נוגאנו nogaya

Shemen שמן – oil—in Chasidic literature, this refers to the soul of the Torah, its secrets, and to Divine Wisdom

Tal (plural, טללים tlalim)- dew

Tiyul טיול –trip or tour

Tsel צל (pl. צללים)-a surrounding shadow which is higher than revealed light

Tsil צליל (plural - צללים) - musical tone

Tsadik-Hebrew letter צ with “ts” sound; This is also the word that means “righteous one”