

ב"ה

**SOUTH HAMPSTEAD
SYNAGOGUE**

INTRODUCTION TO KABBALAH

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5th Lecture

OUTLINE OF COURSE

(21/02) 1 History of the Kabbalistic Tradition:

a) The Bible, Talmud and Zohar

b) From 16th Century Tsfat to the modern period

(7/03) 2 Applying Kabbalah in the life of the Individual (1)

Torah Study and Mitzvot

(14/03) 3 Applying Kabbalah in the life of the Individual (2)

Prayer and Meditation

(21/03) 4 Kabbalah in the Life of a Family: Shabbat; Marriage

(28/03) 5 Kabbalah: the Global Perspective:

From Creation to Redemption, the Jew and the World

TWO ASPECTS OF TORAH

Revealed Torah

Mishnah, Talmud and
Code of Law

...explain how to keep
Jewish Law and live a
Jewish life-style

Inner Dimension

“Kabbalah” expounded
in Chabad teachings
...explain the kavvanah,
the meaning
the effect and purpose..
of keeping Jewish law
and living a Jewish
life-style

LEVELS OF EFFECT

INDIVIDUAL

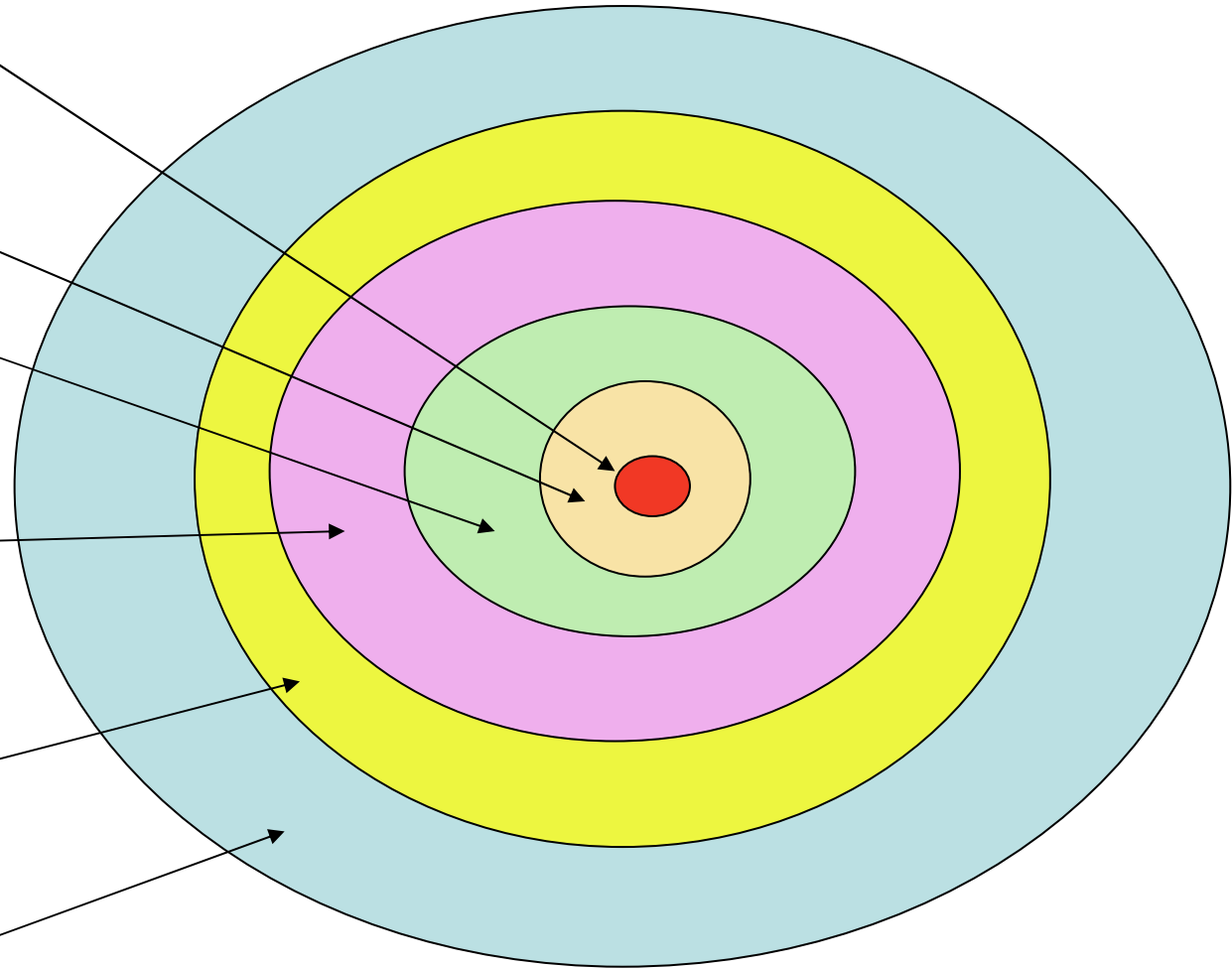
FAMILY

COMMUNITY

JEWISH
PEOPLE

GENERAL
SOCIETY

WORLD



SOME BASIC QUESTIONS...

- What *is* 'Existence'?
- Does it have a purpose?
- If yes, what is that purpose?
- Can I help the achievement of that purpose?
- If yes, how?

בראשית ברא אלקים...

- “In the beginning, G-d (Elokim) created...”
(Elokim expresses the Attribute of Severity)

The Creation of the universe was/is a step of self-concealment of the Infinite Divine.
This concealment enables the creation of a finite realm: the universe as we know it.

The Divine Purpose

דירה לו ית' בתחתונים

“G-d created the world in order that there should be a ‘dwelling’ for the Divine in the lower realm.”

Tanya ch.36

THE PROBLEM

לא יראני האדם וחי...

“man cannot see Me and live..”

(Exodus 33:20)

“WORLD” AS “CONCEALMENT”

הָעוֹלָם

HA-OLAM - THE WORLD

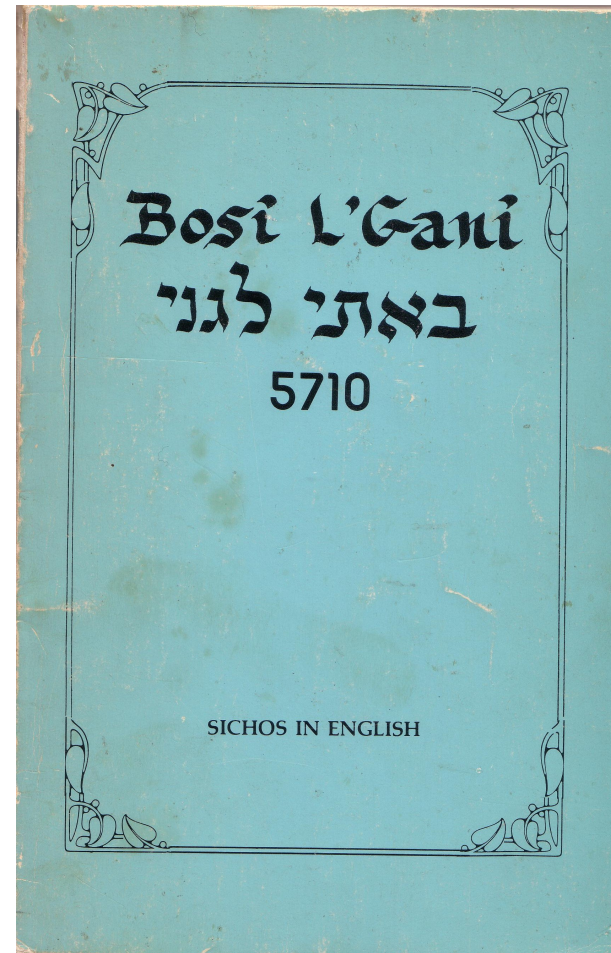
הַעֲלָם

HE'-LEM - CONCEALMENT

THE GOAL

..the ultimate goal of existence is that in the finite realm of the Creation, called 'the Lower World', the Divine radiance and Essence will be revealed, recognised by human man and woman, with life, peace and joy

*“I Have Come
into My Garden”* -
a kabbalistic-
chassidic
tract by Rabbi
Yosef Yitzhak
Schneerson



Rabbi Yosef
Yitzhak
Schneerson
6th Habad
Rebbe
(1880-1950)



“I HAVE COME INTO MY GARDEN”

(Song of Songs 5:1)

The Midrash explains that the ‘Garden’ means the Garden of the world, which originally meant the Garden of Eden. The verse “I have come into My Garden” refers to the moment that the Divine Presence was revealed in the Sanctuary built by Moses and the Jewish people at Mount Sinai. At this point the Divine Presence returned to the ‘Garden’.

THE GARDEN OF EDEN

In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve were together with the Divine Presence.

This gives an image of the goal of Creation

THE LONG WAY ROUND

- Then came the error of eating from the Tree of Knowledge...
- This was followed by more errors: Cain killed Abel, and further errors... violence, idolatry..

The Divine Presence withdrew from the world.
The Midrash describes seven levels of
withdrawal.

THE ROAD BACK

The Midrash describes seven Tzaddikim (righteous men) who began drawing the Divine Presence back to the world:

Abraham – Isaac – Jacob – Levi
- Kehat – Amram – Moses

Moses was the seventh
“and all sevenths are precious”

THE DIVINE REVELATION AT SINAI

At Sinai, the
Divine was
revealed as
at it will be
at the time
of the
Messiah

(Tanya, quoting
Zohar)



RE-ENACTING SINAI FOR ALL TIME

- According to Nachmanides, the building of the Sanctuary in the wilderness, and later the Temple in Jerusalem, was in order permanently to re-enact the revelation of the Divine which had taken place at Sinai.

THE SANCTUARY

“and they shall make for Me a Sanctuary,
and I will dwell within them”

Exodus 25:7

“it does not say within *it* but within *them*,
within each individual”

Rabbi Yosef Yitzhak, quoting earlier sources

THE DIVINE DWELLING WITHIN EACH INDIVIDUAL

Through the study of the Torah and observance of the Mitzvot, the Divine dwells within the individual, in his or her own inner Sanctuary.

TRANSFORMATION

The Sanctuary was made of planks of wood.

The plank is called “keresh” קרש.

The effect of the inner Sanctuary is to transform ‘falsehood’, “sheker” שקר into something positive: a Sanctuary for the Divine.

Through Torah and Mitzvot one is transforming oneself, and also, ultimately, transforming the world.

BACK TO THE GARDEN OF EDEN!

THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE

They ate from the Tree of Knowledge too early. If they had waited till Shabbat there would have been no problem.

Talmud

THE TREE OF LIFE

They should have eaten from the Tree of Life first. Then they would have been able to remain in the Garden.

Zohar

WE CAN EAT FROM THE TREE OF LIFE

- The Zohar describes the kabbalistic tradition as the 'Tree of Life'. Study of these teachings expressed in an appropriate form helps each man and woman achieve the indwelling of the Divine, through the details of daily Jewish life.

DECONSTRUCTING THE DIVIDE

- The Torah tells of the error of eating from the Tree of Knowledge, at the wrong time: the power of sin.
- The Kabbalists speak of the power of holiness and Repentance.
- The Baal Shem Tov spoke of the power of the spirituality within each individual.

Private and General Redemption

Private Redemption

The individual achieves a level of inner spiritual liberation which can be described as a 'personal redemption'

General Redemption

The Temple is rebuilt in Jerusalem, the Jewish people return to Jewish life and are free from any kind of oppression, there is peace in the whole world and the Gentiles keep the Seven Noachide Laws.

- The Private Redemption, having a Jewish life-style for oneself and one's family, and reaching out to others in the community, leads towards the General Redemption.
- Part of the process is awareness of the direction and the goal, the *kavvanah*.



Yearning for the Redemption is repeatedly expressed in our prayers, and in the forthcoming Seder Night celebration:
Next Year in Jerusalem!