

Lectures In TANYA

Transcribed & Translated from
the Lectures of Reb Yoel Kahn

- Preview Edition -



Lectures In **TANYA**

Of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi
Likkutei Amarim

— Preview Edition —

Perek 02 Part 01

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The lectures of **Reb Yoel Kahn**

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TANYA

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Publisher's Foreword

To learn in-depth, is to clarify and refine the concept. There must constantly be the study and review of the core matter, for it is through this method of study that one will reach the truth¹.

Reb Yoel Kahn (chief oral scribe of the Rebbe) gave many Lectures on Chassidus. One famous series was the in-depth lectures he gave on Tanya almost 40 years ago.

Reb Yoel's lectures on Tanya are in-depth, frequently repeating what was taught in the previous lectures many times over, but each time a little differently, with a little more depth. After listening for some time one comes to realize that he has begun *living* the Chapters of Tanya.

This booklet is an attempt to harness those lectures and transcribe them on paper, however, this project is still at a premature stage and therefore will portray an array of unprofessionalism. This transcription and translation was not looked over by the lecturer, and therefore it is the product of the publisher's understanding of the recorded lectures alone. It is with the hope that the readers will share their thoughts and give the much desired feedback in order to develop this project further², until, G-d willing, there may be many more such booklets.

This in no way replaces the original Tanya, heaven forbid, but is rather an attempt to bring the in-depth learning of Chassidus in general, and of the Tanya in specific, to the English speaking community.

Therefore it is strongly advised to study this booklet with the original Tanya in front of you.

This project has used the original English translation of the Tanya, the notations of the Rebbe and indexes published by Kehot Publication Society. and was done so with permission.

1. Sefer Hamamarim 5670 p. 4.

2. seeingchassidus@gmail.com.

May this project only assist and benefit the public, fulfilling the command to “spread the well-springs abroad,” so that finally the whole world may be filled with the knowledge of G-d, beginning the era of the ultimate redemption.

A project of “**SeeingChassidus**”

9th of Shvat, 5783 ‘Year of Gathering’

Perek 02 part 01

In the previous chapter the Alter Rebbe explained how there exists a paradoxical dilemma in man's divine service. For we are taught one should consider oneself a Rasha, something that will lead to the grievance of heart, and yet, at the same time, one is commanded to serve Hashem with joy. The Alter Rebbe continued to explain how there truly exists five ranks, explaining then various definitions of the ranks. The two ranks of 'Tzaddik' and 'Benonei' were the main focus of the chapter afterward. The Alter Rebbe then clarified that the true nature of the aforementioned titles are indicators of man's inner self-discipline over his evil nature. At the end of the chapter the Alter Rebbe begins the explanation of our unresolved dilemma, teaching how in truth there exists two souls (Nefashos) within each Jew. The Alter Rebbe then explains the makeup of the first soul, how it originates from the 'Klippos' and 'Sitra Achara', and how it gives life to the body, together with the evil characteristics that stem from it.

Now the Alter Rebbe begins to explain the second soul:

PEREK BEIS V'HANEFESH HASHENIS B'YISROEL - CHAPTER TWO, THE SECOND SOUL IN A JEW...

We observe already how the Alter Rebbe calls this soul (Nefesh Elohis) "the second soul", implying that the soul focused upon at the end of the previous chapter (Nefesh Habahamis) is the "first". The reason for this is because the Nefesh Habahamis enters the body right at the time of birth, and the G-dly soul does not enter right away, rather at a later time, hence achieving its name "the second soul".

However, this proves to be difficult, for we already stated how every Jew has two souls. Therefore, to say that at the time of birth a Jew contains only one soul would be weakening this very statement. Rather, in truth the meaning of the title "the second soul" is due to its *concealed nature*. For in truth¹ (like we said in the first chapter) every Jew has *two*

1. The previous explanation is truthful as well. However, it does not explain the true reality of the matter, for although the G-dly soul is only *active* at the age of thirteen

souls, this is true even from the time of birth. But because the Nefesh Habahamis has a *revealed* nature, it is therefore felt consciously in the body from birth, and is active from the beginning. Thus as a result, it is called “the first” soul. However, unlike the Animalistic soul, the G-dly soul is felt within the body only later on, and is called “the second” soul therefor.

The Alter Rebbe continues to explain the origin of this second soul that exists in all Jews:

This soul is truly a part of G-d² above (‘Chelek Elokah Mima’al Mamash’), as it is written³ ‘and He (Hashem) breathed into his nostrils the breath of life’, and ‘you have breathed it [the soul] into me’⁴.

The terminology used by the Alter Rebbe is a quote from the verse in job⁵ (iyov), here however, the Alter Rebbe adds the word – ‘Mamash’ (ממש) – ‘actual’ (truly). The Alter Rebbe writes this in order to explain the true essence of this soul. The Alter Rebbe does so by quoting the verse⁶ describing the creation of Adam – ‘Vayipach B’apav Nishmas Chayim’ – ‘and He (G-d) breathed into his nostrils the breath of life’. The significance of this verse (here) is its description of *how* G-d created man, it was done through blowing life into his nostrils. This is different than the way all other matter was created, which was that G-d uttered ten utterances⁷, and thus they came to be.

In truth, both are the product of breath, for speech is also through breath. The difference however is in the *transmission* of the breath.

[or according to some opinions earlier on (See Shulchan Aruch Harav Mahadura Basra end of chapter 4. See also Lekkutei Sichos vol.3 p.763).] yet it was already there from the time of birth, albeit concealed, and therefore inactive. For further study see Midrash Koheles 4:13. Also Tractate Nedarim 32b.

2. Study Sha’ar Ruach Hakodesh 5b (the Jerusalem 1974 edition).

3. Genesis 2:7.

4. See Tractate Brachos 60a.

5. Job 31:2.

6. See footnote 3.

7. See Avos 5:1.

Indeed when one speaks it is accomplished through breathing, however the breath is not the focus, rather the formation of different syllables – formulating a comprehensive sentence – is the focus. Thus the breath exhausted through speech is “extraneous” – “Chitzoniyus” – and it is not the desired result.

When one exhales on the other hand, the breath exhausted alone is the very focus. Thus it is an innermost – ‘Pnimiyyus’ action

– For it is the desired result.

Thus in the morale, regarding the creation of man over all other created matter – all matter was created through extraneous (Chitzoniyus) forces of G-dliness. Man however was created through an innermost (Pnimiyyus) force of G-d.

The Alter Rebbe continues to explain the above concept:

It is written in the Zohar⁸, ‘He who exhales, exhales from within him’, that is to say, from his inwardness and his innermost being, for it is something of his internal and innermost vitality that man emits through breathing out with force.

The Alter Rebbe teaches that in addition to the Pnimiyyus force used when exhaling – for it is the breath that is the focus of man, and it is the objective he seeks alone – there exists another quality, reaching further inward. This is the manner *how* one exhales. One can simply exhale without any effort, this is more casual, and therefore does not reach so much his ‘innermost vitality’. Another way is through blowing out air with effort, this is more intensive, and thus reaches further within his ‘innermost vitality’.

8. It appears that this is not found in the Zohar nor the Tikkunei Zohar in front of us. But this is to be found in the works of the Kadmonim (medieval scholars). See ‘Shefa

Tal’ in the preface. See also Nachmanides on genesis 2:7, and the ‘Bachye’ on Parshas Yisro (exodus 20:7) [footnote from Igros Kodesh of the Rebbe volume 20 p. 131].

Like the Zohar teaches, the breath is from ‘his inwardness and innermost’, it is his ‘innermost vitality’. In other words, G-d, so to speak (Kaviyochol), *blew* a breath of life from his inwardness and innermost energy, into man, thus creating him.

Furthermore, there exists another difference in the creation of man over all other created matter.

It is written⁹ regarding the first day of creation, ‘and G-d said there should be light and there was light’. We observe how there is a cause and then an effect that follows. There is the utterance of G-d, and then the effect of it – the creation of light. Therefore, the utterance, and the creation, are not fully united.

However, we see by the creation of man that the breath – the very *means* of his creation – and his *actual* existence – the actual beginning of his being, are united as one, as it is written³ ‘and He (G-d) breathed into his nostrils the breath of life’, It is thus the very “breath” of G-d that is the life of man.

This is why the Alter Rebbe adds the word ‘Mamash’ (actually), for the *creation* of man is the very actual breath of

Life itself, and is an actual part of G-d above (‘Chelek Elokah MIma’al Mamash’) therefor.’

The Alter Rebbe continues:

So too, allegorically speaking, have the souls of Jews risen in the divine thought¹⁰, as it is written¹¹ ‘My firstborn son is Israel’, and ‘you are children unto the Lord your G-d¹²’. That is to say [the creation of the soul is] just as a child is derived from his father’s brain.

9. Genesis 1:3.

10. See Bereshis Rabah ch.1. See also Lekutei Torah (17:3 and onward) on the verse in Shir Hashirim starting with the

word ‘Yonasi’.

11. Exodus 4:22.

12. Deuteronomy 14:1.

The difference between speech and thought is similar to the difference (explained above) between speaking and exhaling. Regarding emitting a breath – speaking is an extraneous (Chitzoniyus) method, and exhaling is an innermost (Pnimityus) method. So too is with regards to speech and thought – Speech is a *vehicle* for the transference of thought. This means that through the vehicle of speech, one can now give someone *else* access to his own *inner* perspectives – which are stored in thought. Without speech however, no one else could ever gain access. Thought, on the other hand, is the very consciousness of the soul. It is *nothing* but the life of the *soul*, for it is the *activity* of the soul itself. Therefore, speech is extraneous to the soul, for it is for the surroundings ('Zulas'), and not necessary for the function of man alone, thus as a result, one ceases to speak. Thought, however, is the inner activity of the

Soul, and therefore continuously flows as long as the soul is clothed in the body, never ceasing.

Another detail we observe when meticulously observing the terminology the Alter Rebbe uses, is the emphasis on the word 'Olu B'machshava' – 'risen in thought'. With this the Alter Rebbe refers to the *essence* of thought, whereas it is not only innermost *relative* to speech¹³, but rather the *essence* of thought itself. It is the very pinnacle of thought. For here we are speaking of the deepest thought, penetrating to the core.

An example to clarify the above: were one to find himself in a life threatening situation, he is now tasked with survival, and therefore must think how to find a way to survive, these thoughts are the furtherance of his life. Now these thoughts are not merely activity, but the very *life* of the soul. Here too, the thought of the Jew has *risen* in the divine thought, reaching the depths.

To explain this concept further we will bring a concept discussed in

13. Like we explored above.

elsewhere in Chassidus; it states¹⁴ ‘great is the power of the son over his father’¹⁵, the question that arises is straightforward, how can the son – a product of the father – be superior? The explanation given is as follows: there exists within each soul ‘revealed faculties’ (‘Kochos Hagluyos’) and ‘hidden faculties’ (‘Kochos Hanistaros’). Therefore, it is possible for the son to be superior to his father because the son is a biological product of his father, created from a drop of semen which developed into a child through pregnancy. The drop of semen comes from the father’s brain, and therefore, the son has now been given revealed faculties, and hidden faculties, *all* that is contained in his father’s brain (psyche). Hence, when the son now shows extreme talents, unknown to be amongst his father’s capabilities, it poses no question, for the father had contained them all along, yet it was only hidden and unconscious. The son, however, has now successfully brought them out from his hidden faculties to his revealed and conscious faculties, thus receiving the praise ‘great is the power of the son over his father’.

Thus the Alter Rebbe continues:

So – to use an anthropomorphism (‘Al Derech Mashal’) – the soul of each Jew is derived from G-d’s (blessed be he) thought and wisdom.

This means to say, just as the son is from the ‘Atzmiyus’ – ‘core essence’ of his father (like explained above), so too anthropomorphically, each Jew is derived in the same way. This clarifies what we explained earlier, how man is created in a manner unlike any other creation, for man is derived from the innermost thought (like explained above).

Yet, the Alter Rebbe writes that the soul is derived from ‘G-d’s thought and wisdom’, this is unlike the child who is derived from his father’s actual essence – ‘Atzmiyus’ (for the son is a biological product

14. See Tractate Shevuos 48a and references there.

15. יפה כח הבן מכח האב.

of his father¹⁶), why then does the Alter Rebbe say that they are same – ‘just as a child is derived from his father’s brain, so – to use an anthropomorphism – the soul of each Jew is derived from G-d’s thought and wisdom’ – they aren’t the same!

Furthermore, this would mean something contrary to what the Alter Rebbe teaches at the beginning of the chapter – ‘*The second soul of a Jew is truly part of G-d above*’, however, here it appears the second soul of a Jew is only derived from G-d’s thought and wisdom?

Therefore, the Alter Rebbe continues and explains:

For He (G-d) is wise – but not through a knowable wisdom¹⁷, because he and his wisdom are one.

Thus, the ‘thought and wisdom’ of G-d do not mean what we (mortals) think it means. The thought and wisdom of G-d are unlike that of man. Rather, G-d and his wisdom are entirely one. Henceforth, the second soul of the Jew is an (actual) true a part of G-d above, and at the same time, deriving from G-d’s thought and wisdom.

The Alter Rebbe continues to explain, further elucidating this concept:

And as Maimonides (the Rambam) says¹⁸ that ‘He (G-d) is the knowledge (‘Mada’) and the knower (‘Yodeah’), etc., and this is not within the power of any man to comprehend clearly, etc.

16. For further study see ‘Yonas Eilem’ beginning of chapter 2. Tosfos beginning with the word “Mikami” on Tractate Yevamos 3a. Rashi beginning with the word “K’ba’al” on Tractate Kesubos 92a.

17. Quoting from the preface to ‘Tikkunei Zohar’.

18. The quote of the Alter Rebbe here is not the exact terminology of Maimonides,

but rather quoting from three different works of Maimonides I. Mishneh Torah Hilchos Yesodei Hatorah Ch. 2 Halachah 10. II. Ibid Hilchos Teshuvah Ch. 2 Halachah 5. III. The end of ‘Shemoneh Perakim L’Harambam’. See also Moreh Nevuchim vol. 1 Ch. 68, and Vol. 3 Ch. 20 and 21.

This ability of G-d is beyond man entirely. When one knows something, the knowledge of that object exists independently, and the mind (man) that has gathered this knowledge of that object, exists independently. Therefore, the knowledge (the object), and the knower (man) are separate. However, G-d is the knower *and* the knowledge, for there is nothing other than him (G-d).

The ‘Maharal’¹⁹ however argues with Maimonides, stating that Hashem is above all limitations, therefore, above any definition or title (for they are all limited), and cannot be called “the Knower” or “knowledge” therefor. Yet, the Alter Rebbe quotes Maimonides, and even writes (as we will see shortly) in a note (Hagha), how all the Kabbalists agree with Maimonides. Yet, the claim of the Maharal is legitimate! G-d is above all titles and definitions, how then can we attribute the title of “knower” and “knowledge” to G-d?

It is explained elsewhere in Chassidus, that both claims (of the Maharal and Rambam) are correct. Hashem is above all created limitation, thus – ‘Kadosh U’muvdal’ – ‘Holy and separate’ from the world, proving the Maharal’s view.

Yet, Hashem is constantly creating and conducting the world, by means of many ‘Tzimtzumim’ – ‘contractions’ and ‘Yeridas Hamadregos’ – ‘descent of levels’ (this concept will be explained later on²⁰) ,thus ‘clothing’ his power in the attribute of wisdom (Sefiras Hachachma) and subsequently, in the world. Thus Proving Maimonides view – ‘He (G-d) is the knowledge and knower etc.’, for in truth both are attributed to G-d, for there is nothing – even *material* – but rather only him (G-d).

19. In the preface of his work titled ‘Gevuros Hashem’.

20. see Hagha below. See the part II of

Tanya ‘Sha’ar Yichud V’haemunah’ chapter 4. And is explained briefly here in Perek 04

Part 02.

HAGHA (NOTE):

The Alter Rebbe continues to explain (that majority of kabbalists have sided with the view of Maimonides):

And the sages of Kabbalah have agreed with him (Maimonides), as is stated in ‘Pardess’²¹ of Rabbi Moses Cordevero²². Even according to the Kabbalah of the Arizal (Rabbi Isaac Luria) Maimonides statement stands. This is so only when applied to the mystic principle of the “Clothing of the Light” (Hislabshus Ha’Or) of the “En sof” (infinite), blessed be he, through numerous contractions (Tzimtzumim) within the vessels (Keilim) ChaBaD (acronym for ‘Chochma’ - wisdom, ‘Binah’ - understanding, and ‘Da’as’ - knowledge) of the world of emanation (‘Olam Ha’atzilus), but no higher than Atzilus.

The Tzemach Tzedek explains the reason why the Alter Rebbe writes ‘*also according to the Kabbalah of the Arizal...*’ singling him out from amongst the Kabbalists, is because the Arizal teaches the wonder (Hafla’ah) of the infinite power of G-d more than any other kabbalist, hence, one would assume the Arizal would side with the Maharal’s view, opposing the view of Maimonides. Therefore, the Alter Rebbe emphasizes how even according to the Kabbalah of the Arizal, the view of Maimonides is correct. For according to the Arizal’s mystic principle of “Clothing of the Light” of the En Sof (infinite) in the vessels of ChaBaD, this would be defining (somewhat) the “infinite light” (Or En Sof), which is now clothed within the faculties of Wisdom, understanding, and knowledge much like Maimonides, who states that the title “knower” and “knowledge” is indeed befitting to G-d.

However, this is only the *result* of the numerous contractions the

21. ‘Sha’ar Atzmus V’keilim’ Ch. 4.

22. See Perek 01 Part 03 footnote 4.

infinite light went through, for only when clothed and contained in the faculties of wisdom, understanding, and knowledge (in the world of emanation) would it become befitting to give the title “knower” and “knowledge” to G-d, for there he has contracted his infinite light to become contained in such definable faculties.

Yet, this is only in the world of emanation, where there exists such contractions, producing such definable faculties. However, *‘G-d himself is exalted above all’* – which is the aspect the Maharal focuses upon. Therefore, the Alter Rebbe now continues to explain the perspective of the Maharal:

For, as is explained elsewhere²³, the ‘En sof’(Hashem), Blessed be he, is infinitely exalted over, and transcends, the essence and order of ChaBaD, which in relation to Him are material action (Asiyah), as is written²⁴ ‘You (G-d) have made them all with wisdom’.

The Alter Rebbe now continues (in the main Text (“Pnim”) of Tanya):

And this (how G-d is the “knower” and “knowledge”) is not within the power of any man to comprehend clearly etc²⁵. As it is written²⁶, ‘can you by searching find G-d?’, and it is also written²⁷, ‘for my thoughts are not your thoughts’, etc.

Like we said, the inability of man to comprehend such a thing, is because the object of knowledge, and the knowing of man, are separate, whilst by G-d they are one.

We thus are left with an apparent dilemma. For we previously have explained the statement of the Alter Rebbe how the Jewish soul is truly

23. See Sha’ar HaYichud VeHaemunah (Tanya part II) ch. 9.

24. Psalms 104:24.

25. Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Yesodei

Hatorah Ch. 2 Halacha 10.

26. Job 11:7.

27. Isaiah 55:8.

an actual part of G-d above. And yet, the origin of the soul is derived from the thought and wisdom of G-d. Yet this is not a contradiction, for He (G-d) and his wisdom are one.

However, the Alter Rebbe now explained (in the Note) how the title “knower” and “knowledge” are the result of the numerous contractions etc. , while G-d alone is exalted over, and transcends, the essence and whole order of these intellectual faculties. This then would mean, the thought and wisdom of G-d are *not* G-d himself. Henceforth, although He and his wisdom are one, still, thought and wisdom are the *contracted power* of G-d, and in no way G-d himself (heaven forbid). Therefore, the Jewish soul which is derived from G-d’s thought and wisdom cannot be a truly a part of G-d above?!

The Alter Rebbe in ‘Likuttei Torah’²⁸ asks this question and gives two explanations:

- I. Indeed, the Jewish soul is derived from the thought and wisdom of G-d. Yet, since G-d and his wisdom are one. The soul, in turn, is also one with G-d. Just as a child is derived from his father’s *brain*, and yet is the very biological product of his father, not only deriving from his father’s intellectual faculties, but a part of the core essence of the father *himself* (Atzmiyus), so – to use an anthropomorphism – this is the case with the Jewish soul, it too is from the essence of G-d (Atzmiyus).
- II. The soul, as we explained²⁹, is made up of five “levels”. The lower three – ‘Nefesh, ‘Ruach’ and ‘Neshama’, are derived from G-d’s thought and wisdom. However, the higher two – ‘Chayah’ and Yechidah’, which are the core of the soul, is truly a part of G-d above, and derives not from G-d’s thought and wisdom, but G-d himself (Atzmiyus) (so to speak).

28. Parshas Vayikra.

29. perek 01 part 05.





