



Devekut

The Prophetic / Meditative Traditions (Kabbalah) of Bonding With G-d

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Chapter 10 – Using Psalms and Prayers

The most simple and direct technique of using words of prophecy for meditation is something known by many. Simply all one has to do is read the TaNaKh and allow its words to arouse comfort within one's soul. Countless numbers have experienced the calming and therapeutic affects of simply reading one of the most beloved Biblical books, the Book of Tehilim (Psalms).

The first step to calming the storm of the mind is simple. One must be thrown a rope from the other side of consciousness and then let the Power of that other side guide you through the storming mind. The Power on the other side of consciousness of which I speak is the spiritual forces who serve HaShem as His agents. These are the words of the Torah (TaNaKh, Bible) themselves, that often are personified to us in the form of Malakhim, the angels. This technique of using words of Torah to focus the mind / soul is tried and true, although the malevolent forces of the evil side also throw their rope out to those trying to reach them.

When the mind enters into the state of the storm and thoughts and impression bombard the conscious trying to force it to return to awareness, the words of prophecy (in our example Tehilim) help calm the mind, comfort it and focus it. The soothing affect of the recitation of the words and verses give the mind something to focus upon mentally and to feel emotionally. In this way one is holding tight to a metaphorical rope as one is pushed around within one's mind by the gushing forces of the hale winds of conflicting thoughts.

Reciting the words enables the mind to focus and to withstand, but they do even more than this, they begin to carve a path, one that the mind can use to penetrate into the depths of the unconscious mind.

In order to understand this concept, I must quote a saying from the holy Zohar, the most important and authoritative text of the later Kabbalists. The Zohar (Ekev 73a) states that



HaShem, His Torah and Israel and all one. This statement means that there is an integral connection between HaShem and His Torah and that this connection extends towards the mind / soul of collective Israel.

Understand that from a spiritual point of view that which emanates from a source always remains connected to that source, regardless of its distance in time and space. Whenever there has been a bond, the spiritual residue of that bond maintains attachments between the bonded things long after the initial point of bonding in time and space. These spiritual facts are even true here in our physical world in such a wide variety of relationships that it would require another book just to briefly mention them all. Let us take this spiritual law and apply it to our context.

As the Zohar quoted above states, the original Biblical Hebrew words of prophecy or those spoken in Ruah HaKodesh emanate from the specific Divine source of holiness. As such, regardless of how far they travel from their source, they are nonetheless connected to that source. Therefore, even if these holy words were spoken by G-d to a prophet thousands of years ago, in a place thousands of miles away, the distances in time and space have no effect upon the never-ending Divine power concealed within the words themselves. The holy words, therefore, are as pregnant with spiritual power as they were at the first moment when they emanated from the mouth of the prophet.

When we recite the holy words of Torah, the prophets or the Ketuvim (other scriptures) our recitation of the same words spoken or written by the prophet connects us with the mind / soul of that prophet, as he now abides in his spiritual abode which by not being part of our physical universe makes him much "closer" to our blessed Creator.

When we here in this world recite the words of the prophet or of the Sage, we are in essence bonding with the prophet or Sage himself in his present spiritual form in another dimension. According to the above rule, the words spoken by the prophet or Sage are still connected to him, their source, and the words also connect the prophet or Sage to HaShem who was their Original Source. Thus through the words of the prophet or Sage recorded for us in the Torah (Bible) and even in the Talmud or Zohar, we connect spiritually to their authors and through the authors we connect to the Ultimate Author, the Holy One, blessed be He. This is how the student prophets of yesterday and the Kabbalists of today manage to maintain open lines of spiritual communication.

Getting through the entanglement of our confused minds is no easy task and is actually impossible without intervention from the spiritual force that resides outside of consciousness and our physical plane. Yet, merely reciting once or twice certain words from the Torah will not have the overwhelming affect of comprehensively cleansing the mind of years of garbage buildup. There is a great rule of Torah, "k'bolo Kakh Polto." As



something is absorbed, so is it released. In other words, as our minds have become ever so much contaminated and confused over many years void of spiritual content, therefore correspondingly it will take much time and effort in order to clean up our internal mental messes.

There are a number of steps to be taken to clean up our internal mental messes. Some of these steps are small and relatively easy; others are more difficult and require much effort if not outright sacrifice on part of the practitioner.

Working at cleansing the mind begins with simple and easy steps. Our prophets and Sages were masters of the meditative path and thus over the centuries molded the observance of Torah Law, ritual and prayer to properly reflect certain spiritual values that enable all who practice them to take initial steps into spiritual awareness.

As we have mentioned in previous lessons, the commandments of the Torah (the mitzvot) are specifically meant to be actions performed by us and not just concepts to be contemplated. The reason for this is that by physically acting out a spiritual concept (which is what the Biblical commandments really are), we in essence manifesting that spiritual concept in physical form here on our physical earth.

The ritual acts of Torah observance serve as the vessels, and the vehicles for the spiritual components within them to manifest within the relative dimensions of time and space. Once manifest in our physical world by our performance of the mitzvot, the spiritual concepts contained within them, having their source in the Divine have now succeeded to travel from their Ultimate Source to their ultimate goal, which is being manifest here on earth at the hand of human beings. This in essence creates the metaphorical rope that now can connect the most mundane physical to the most sublime spiritual. Our spiritual connection thus lies before us.

One of the most profound mitzvot that was ordained by HaShem but formulated by the later prophets and Sages was the order of our daily prayers. Within traditional daily prayers there is concealed an entire order of spiritual service to the Divine that is patterned upon and spiritually reflects the ritual offering of sacrifices in the Holy Temple of ancient Jerusalem. In essence all those who recite their daily morning prayers are performing spiritually the same type of service with the same spiritual influence as did the ancient priests who stood before the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy Temple.

Remember the first principle of the Law of Connection (Hok HaKasher): what was once connected always stays connected (HaKashur Pa'am, Kashur Tamid). Therefore, when one today recites the Torah sections of the Biblical sacrifices and incense offerings one is in essence vibrating the spiritual component within these words and thereby causing



the opening up of a channel to their invisible source in the higher planes. Regardless of one's level of devotion or intent, the mere recitation of the words of Torah begins a process that can possibly reverberate deeply in one's mind / soul. This rule hold true for all Torah observance.

In the Talmudic book of wisdom entitled Pirkei Avot, one of the great Sages Rebbe Meir is quoted as saying that one should observe the mitzvot of the Torah even without sincere devotion, for by doing so sincere devotion will be cultivated. This must be understood within the context of the Law of Connection.

In our present physically oriented state of mind, spiritual components play a very small and insignificant role. Our Sages were very well aware of this state and knew that G-d would not intervene personally anymore than He already had to rectify this situation. HaShem has already given us the Torah, the words of the prophets and the council of the Sages. What more do we want? What more do we need?

The entire prophetic path is open before us, all of us, if only we make the efforts to walk down it. Realizing our lack of spiritual vision, guided by Divine direction, our Sages were directed to make our spiritual path easy to access. Our Sages therefore followed in the footsteps of the prophets before them and concealed within their words clues and codes how to walk the spiritual path. This is why our Sages are called the Benei N'vi'im (sons of the prophets). Although they are not prophets, they are their faithful students, and as such merited to be titled "sons."

As I mentioned at the beginning of this lesson, one of the greatest meditative tools ordained by our Sages was the recitation of Psalms. Every prayer service recited daily is replete with the recitation of different Psalms. The Psalms recited in daily prayer serve to maintain a spiritual connection in the mind / soul of the even the most spiritually depleted individual according to the principle outlined above.

For those who wish to delve beyond the beginning phases, our Sages have encouraged individuals to take up the Book of Psalms (Tehilim) and to read from them continuously. Indeed, the constant reading of Psalms can actually induce a trance like state for the reader. While in this trance state induced as it was by the Psalms, the mind / soul of the reader can travel into the inner space of the recesses of the unconscious and spiritual world, with the reverberations of the Psalms serving as one spiritual guide.

In actuality what this means is that when one directs one's mind in the direction of holiness, then the autonomous power of the Holy kicks in, takes control and begins to show the mind / soul lessons about spiritual truths that the individual upon recovering full consciousness can absorb and integrate into one's daily living. This is the way that

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spiritual concepts and forces become manifest here on earth. They become manifest through us. We become their vessels, all the while that we open ourselves up to do so.

This technique of Psalm recitation was actually used by the later Biblical prophets with some Psalms dating back to Moses. The words have their source in the Highest Holiness. Their mere recitation opens up great channels of spiritual influence to those who wish to embrace them and recite them over and above the required portions of daily prayer. With all this concealed potential, there are even more refined and greater ways to unleash their untapped spiritual power. That will serve as our next lesson.