



לְקוּטֵי אַמְרֵי תַנְיָא

Tanya

RABBI SCHNEUR ZALMAN OF LIADI

A LUCID TRANSLATION AND GUIDE,
INCLUDING FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS

INSTALLMENT 12

THE BOOK OF THE BEINONI

CHAPTER 3 | PART 1



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ב"ה
זאת חנוכה דחנוכה התשפ"ה

Dear Friend,

We are delighted to share with you the next segment from the forthcoming Chabad.org Tanya with a lucid translation and guide, including fundamental concepts.

This installment includes part 1 of chapter 3 of The Book of the Beinoni, the first book of Tanya.

As always, we thrive on your feedback. Please send all feedback and suggestions for the Chabad.org Tanya team to tanya@chabad.org.

With blessings,

The Chabad.org Tanya Team

פרק ג'

CHAPTER THREE

KEY WORDS TO KNOW FOR THIS CHAPTER

Sefirot (sg. *sefirah*): Ten divine, harmonious modalities by which G-d creates and conducts His world.

G-d is often described in kabbalistic literature as “the Infinite Light,” or just “The Infinite.” Everything within our world, on the other hand, is finite. The *Zohar* describes a kind of interface, a medium between the infinite and the finite, by which the infinite G-d directs His finite creation. These are the ten *sefirot*. Without them, we could not imagine any relationship between the Creator and the created.

Sefirah is from the word *sapir*, which conveys brilliance and translucence. The ten *sefirot* serve somewhat as prisms to G-d’s light. Out of infinity emerges a spectrum of ten distinct modalities of being. The matrix of ten *sefirot* becomes, as far as the creatures of G-d’s world are concerned, a kind of divine personality, intellect and emotions, by which He relates to us and we relate to Him.¹

Everything in the universe is a reflection of these ten *sefirot*. They underlie every event and detail of the creation, from the largest to the smallest, granting them existence, imbuing them with life. If a fruit tastes sweet to you, it is because that fruit receives sweetness from the *sefirah* of *chesed*. If the nighttime sky or a mighty mountain strikes awe in your heart, you are experiencing the *sefirah* of *gevurah*. In the beauty of a tree or a peacock, you see the *sefirah* of *tiferet*.²

At the beginning of the previous chapter, you learned that your second soul is a sample of the divine. As she descends to this world, she too follows the course of the Infinite Light, investing her intense light in ten faculties to interface with the universe she enters.

Being a divine soul, these faculties of hers are also “in the image of G-d” – stepped-down, micro-versions of the ten *sefirot*.³ Her psyche acts as a microcosm, a miniature model of the inner workings of the cosmos. As Solomon wrote, G-d placed the entire universe in the heart of each human being.⁴

The intellect and emotions of your divine soul are not artifacts of a creation vainly attempting to emulate its Creator. They are the real thing, the divine as it squeezes itself into our world to become a visceral, blood and flesh being.⁵

For an elucidated version of the classic passage of the Zohar on the ten sefirot, see Patach Eliyahu at chabad.org/6529620

1. *Likutei Torah*, Emor, 32a; R. Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch, the Tzemach Tzedek, *Biurei HaZohar*, vol. 1, p. 70; *B’Sha’ah Shehikdimu* 5672, rev. ed., vol. 1, pp. 269ff. 2. *Torah Ohr*, 13b–14a. 3. Genesis 1:27. 4. Ecclesiastes 3:11. 5. *Torat Menachem – Hitva’aduyot* 5750, vol. 2, p. 482, n. 20.

INTRODUCTION

You've just discovered you have a divine soul. How do you tap into her energy? How can you channel it into down-to-earth reality?

In this chapter, Rabbi Schneur Zalman maps out the psyche of this divine soul to reveal his key strategy to harnessing its power.

This divine soul, it turns out, is a complete being of her own. She has her own mind, understanding, and awareness. Most importantly, she has the capacity to feel emotion – divine emotions of love and awe that can entirely transform human life.

If you would have direct access to those emotions, you would live life on an entirely different plane. But you don't. You can't tell your heart, "You must love. You must rejoice. You must yearn for union with G-d."

True, there are moments, even seasons in life, when you are inspired, when you can feel the pulse of your soul. Seasons such as Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur when your soul soars high. Life events that shake you up and lay bare your deepest self. That day that seemed like any other until a flash of inspiration burst unexpectedly out of the clouds – a call from heaven to return home.

Yet, they run their course, they carry you, and then you fall back to your old self on the same cold earth, as though you just awoke from a dream.

It's not that these episodes were inauthentic. It's that they never belonged to you. They came, they went, and nothing changed. No investment, no returns.

How can you trigger that inspiration on your own? Because that's the only inspiration that is lasting and real. If you don't take yourself somewhere, you never really went there. If you can't ignite your own heart, it doesn't truly belong to you.

Here, Rabbi Schneur Zalman shows you the gateway that leads to your heart. It is your mind. Focused, spiritual contemplation. Ponder the divine with an obsession until it becomes real to you, and your divine soul will enter your heart in all its power.

It's not a direct path – it's not "do this and within five minutes you will feel fantastic." True emotional attachments don't come that way. Asking

yourself, “Do I feel spiritual yet?” is not much different from asking, “Am I having fun yet?” All that’s achieved quickly and easily falls into the category Rabbi Schneur Zalman calls “vain delusions.”


Rather, it’s the longer-but-shorter path that Rabbi Schneur Zalman mentioned on his title page: Go this route, do the work, and in due course you will find yourself a different person, inspired and motivated from the inside out.

פרק ג'

CHAPTER THREE

THE FACULTIES OF YOUR SOUL

וְהַיְהִי, כָּל בְּחִינָה וּמְדֻרָגָה מִשְׁלֵשׁ אֵלּוּ: נֶפֶשׁ רוּחַ וְנִשְׁמָה – כְּלוּלָה מְעֻשָׂר בְּחִינּוֹת, כְּנֶגֶד עֶשְׂרֵי סְפִירוֹת עֲלִיוֹנוֹת שְׁנֵשֶׁת־לְשָׁלוֹ מִהֶן, Now, the divine soul, on each of her three distinct levels of *nefesh*, *ruach*, and *neshamah*, consists of ten faculties corresponding to the ten *sefirot* of the higher, divine world. These faculties are actually micro-versions of those *sefirot*, the outcome of a long process of descent through the chain of countless spiritual worlds.¹

הַנְּחָלְקוֹת לְשֵׁתִים, שְׁהֵן: שְׁלֵשׁ אִמּוֹת וְשִׁבְעַת כְּפֹלוֹת; Those ten *sefirot* are divided into two categories. Three are called “mothers” and seven are called “doubles.”² 

פִּירוּשׁ, חֻקְמָה בִּינָה וְדַעַת, The three mothers are:

- *chochmah* (wisdom or conception),
- *binah* (understanding or comprehending),
- and *da'at* (knowing, consciousness, and bonding).

וְשִׁבְעַת יְמֵי הַבְּנִיָּן: חֻסֵּד גְּבוּרָה תַּפְאֲרַת כּו'. The seven doubles are the seven powers by which the world was constructed in the seven days of creation:

THREE MOTHERS AND SEVEN DOUBLES

These mysterious terms are a quotation from the ancient kabbalistic text, *Sefer Yetzira* (the Book of Formation), describing the ten *sefirot*.

The three mother *sefirot* align with the three mother letters, א מ ש. The remaining seven are called “doubles” because they each have two modalities. One modality is harsh, precise,

and judgmental. The other is soft, liberal, and compassionate. These are represented by the seven letters of the Hebrew alphabet בגד כפרת, each having a strong and a weak pronunciation.

(The remaining 12 letters correspond to the twelve lines that connect the *sefirot* with one another.)

1. See *Tanya, Igeret HaKodesh*, nos. 15 and 25. 2. *Sefer Yetzira* 1:8.

- *chesed* (benevolence),
 - *gevurah* (might),
 - *tiferet* (beauty),
- ... and four more.

וְכַד בְּנַפְשׁ הָאָדָם, שְׁנַחֲלֶקֶת לְשֵׁתַיִם: אֵשֶׁל וּמְדוּת. As it is above, so too in the divine soul within a human being. The ten faculties of the soul are divided into two categories: intelligence and emotions.

הַשֶּׁל כּוֹלֵל: חִכְמָה בִּינָה וְדַעַת, Intelligence comprises *chochmah*, *binah*, and *da'at*.

וְהַמְדוּת הֵן: אֶהְבֵּת ה' וּפְחָדוֹ וְיִרְאַתוֹ וּלְפָאָרוֹ כו'. The emotions are love of G-d, awe and reverence towards Him, a drive to glorify and praise Him, as well as others along the same lines.

וְחִכְמָה-בִּינָה-דַעַת נִקְרְאוּ אִמּוֹת וּמְקוֹר לְמַדוּת, כִּי הַמְדוּת הֵן תוֹלְדוֹת חִכְמָה-בִּינָה-דַעַת: *Chochmah*, *binah*, and *da'at* are called the mothers and the wellspring of the emotions because emotions are the children of the mind. 🕒

🕒 CHILDREN OF THE MIND

This is a feature of the human psyche that is crucially important to know: Emotions don't exist in a vacuum. As you think, so you feel.

If you think frightful thoughts, you will experience fear. If you think happy thoughts, you will be happy. If you never think about a person at all, you can't expect to love that person. If so, without ever thinking about G-d, how can you expect to feel any attachment to Him?

Upon this foundation, Rabbi Schneur Zalman introduces a practice around which his entire approach revolves and to which he will return again and again in this book: focused meditation.

Your brain is a powerful device; wherever you point it, there it will take you. Focus it firmly and steadily on some insight of divine wisdom and let your thoughts carry your heart to that place.

For practical guidance in the relationship between your thoughts and emotion, see Ten Hacks for Mental Control That Every Human Being Should Know at www.chabad.org/4619360

THE TEN SEFIROT AND FACILITIES

In this chapter, Rabbi Schneur Zalman introduces us to the divine *sefirot* and the general dynamic between them. The same dynamic that exists above exists within your own soul: The higher three together give birth to the lower seven.

The names and particulars of the *sefirot* are not of concern to us yet. However, since reference to the *sefirot* abounds, it's good to know their names and meanings.

