

The divine presence is felt as the idea of Schechina which has had a varied THEOLOGICAL, literary and semantic history.

In Rabbinic literature the Schechina is a felt presence of the divine mainly on an interpersonal level: Thus in the talmud it is stated:

*Rabin b. R. Adda says in the name of R. Isaac:*

*How do you know that the Holy One, blessed be He, is to be found in the Synagogue? For it is said: God standeth in the congregation of God. (Psalm 82:1)*

*And how do you know that if ten people pray together the Divine presence (Schechina) is with them? For it is said: 'God standeth in the congregation of God'.*

*And how do you know that if three are sitting as a court of judges the Divine Presence is with them? For it is said: In the midst of the judges He judgeth. (Psalm 82:1)*

*And how do you know that if two are sitting and studying the Torah together the Divine Presence is with them? For it is said: Then they that feared the Lord spoke one with another; and the Lord hearkened and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before Him, for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon His name. (Malachi 3:16) (What does it mean: 'And that thought upon His name'? — R. Ashi says: If a man thought to fulfill a commandment and he did not do it, because he was prevented by force or accident, then the Scripture credits it to him as if he had performed it.) And how do you know that even if one man sits and studies the Torah the Divine Presence is with him? For it is said: In every place where I cause My name to be mentioned I will come unto thee and bless thee. (Exodus 22:21) Now, since the Divine presence (Schechina) is even with one man, why is it necessary to mention two? — The words of two are written down in the book of remembrance, the words of one are not written down in the book of remembrance. Since this is the case with two, why mention three? — I might think the dispensing of justice is only for making peace, and the Divine Presence*

*(Schechina) does not come to participate. Therefore he teaches us that justice also is Torah. Since it is the case with three, why mention ten? — To a gathering of ten the Divine Presence (Schechina) comes first, to three, it comes only after they sit down.*

(Berachoth 6a)

*When two scholars are amiable to each other in their discussions in halachah, the Holy One, blessed be He, gives heed to them, for it is said, Then they that feared the Lord spoke one with another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard. (Malachi 3:16)*

(Shabbat 63a)

*[T]wo that sit together and are occupied in words of Torah have the Shechinah among them ... [T]hree that have eaten at one table, and have said over it words of Torah, are as if they had eaten of the table of the place, blessed is He, for it is said, And he said unto me, This is the table that is before the Lord. (Pirke Aboth 3).*

Maimonides<sup>1</sup> regarded the Schechina like the Memra, the Yeḳara, and the Logos, as a distinct entity, and as a light created to be an intermediary between God and the world; while Nahmanides, on the other hand, considered it the essence of God as manifested in a distinct form. That the Schechina not an intermediary is shown by the Targum to Ex. xxxiii. 15, xxxiv. 9 (l.c. pp. 5, 34), where the term "Schechina" is used instead of "God." The word often occurs, however, in connections where it can not be identical with "God," e.g., in passages which declare that "the Schechina," or, more explicitly, that "God allows His Schechina to rest," on such a one.

In the mystical literature schechina consciousness takes on new meaning with notion of the term *hashraa*. *This term will be discussed later.*

The Tomer Devorah is a classical cabalistic text, which devotes a chapter to each of the 10 sefirot or divine potencies showing how we must emulate the creator by copying His virtues in each of these potencies. The last is the sefira of *malchut* representing the Schechina.

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<sup>1</sup> "Moreh," i. 28 i. 58, 73, 88, 286, 288; iii. 43, 93

The chapter speaks of how we may become imbued with Her presence by serving Her needs:

I am reading it with a view to seeing the notion of *hashraa* meaning literally physical soaking in halacha for say koshering meat which requires rinsing, salting and *hashraa* or soaking. I would like to suggest that we take the word at face value, meaning soaking of the Divine in human flesh.

In the following translation (By Dr Louis Jacobs) of the Tomer Devorah written by Rabbi Moshe Cordovero<sup>2</sup> there is much mention about Schechina. The very word has been defined in many ways through the course of our tradition. Here it is used in its Kabbalistic sense.

### תומר דבורה פרק

ומאד מאד צריך זכירות ועיקר השמירה בהיותו  
שומר עלמו מן הסרהור:

### פרק תשיעי

**האריך** ייבילי האדם עלמו במדות המלכות. ראשונה  
לכלן שנה יתגלה לבו בכל אשר לו וישים  
עלמו חמיד כעני ועמיד עלמו לפני קונו כדל שאל  
ומתחן ולהרגיל עלמו במדה זו אפילו טיביה עשיר  
יחשוב שאין דבק עמו מכל אשר לו מאומה והוא  
נעזב צריך לידחמו הפורח חמיד שאין לו כל דבר אלא  
הלחם אשר יאכל ויעים לבבו ויענה עלמו, ומע גם  
נעזב הפלוסוף שזו סוגלה נפלאה ולהסך מזה נאמר  
ורם לבקר ושכחתי ששכחתי הטריוויותי מלויים שם, ודוד  
התהגג במדה זו הרבה שאמר כי יחיד ועני אני,  
טהרי כל אשרי ביות כל אחד ואחד צריך להעזב  
לעלמו מהכלם אליו אפילו אשרו ופניו מה יועלוהו  
בהיותו נשפט לפני הבורא אז בעת הלקק נשמתו  
כלום ילווהו אלא עד קפדו מה הם לו בעת דימו

<sup>2</sup> Moses Cordovero, *The Palm Tree of Deborah*, trans. Louis Jacobs, New York Sepher-Hermon Press, 1960

*How should a man train himself to acquire the quality of Sovereignty?*

*First and foremost he should not be proud in his heart[1] because of all that is his, but he should behave constantly like a beggar, standing before his Creator as a poor man begging and offering supplication. Even if he is wealthy he can train himself to behave in this way by considering that none of his possessions are attached to him and that he is forsaken requiring the mercies of Heaven at all times, for all he has is the bread he eats, and he should humble his heart and afflict himself.*

*Especially at the time of prayer[2], for this is a wonderful aid. Of the opposite it is said: "Then thy heart[3] be lifted up, and thou forget.'" For the forgetting belonging to the Outside Ones[4] is found there. David behaved in this way to great extent when he said: "For I am solitary[5] and afflicted." For all the people of his household have themselves to consider. What are they all to him? What can even his wife and children do for him when he is judged before the Creator or when his soul departs? Can they accompany him beyond the grave? Of what use are they to him from the entrance of the grave and onwards? He should therefore humble himself and perfect himself according to the secret of this quality.*

*A second method is explained in the Zohar[6] and it is very important. He should exile himself from place to place for the sake of Heaven and in this way he will become a chariot to the Exiled Shekinah. He should imagine: 'Behold I have gone into exile but, behold, my utensils go with me. What shall be with the honor of the Most High seeing that the Shekinah is in exile without Her utensils which are lacking as a result of the Exile?' Because of this he should be satisfied with as little as possible, as it is written 'Prepare thee stuff for exile'[7] and he should humble his heart in exile and bind himself to the Torah and then the Shekinah will be with him. And he should carry out divorces, divorcing himself from his house of rest constantly, after the fashion of R. Simeon and his company who divorced themselves to study the Torah. And how much better if he bruises his feet wandering from place to place without horse and chariot. Concerning him it is said: 'His hope[8] (sibhro) is with the Lord his God.' which they explained[9] from the expression shebher ('to break'), for he breaks his body in the service of the Most High.*

*A further most excellent quality of Sovereignty from the gate of divine service as a whole is to fear the Lord, the honored and the awful. Now, behold, fear is very dangerous[10] in the making of a flaw and to allow the Outside Ones to enter, for it he is afraid of sufferings or death or Hell, behold, this is the fear of the Outside Ones; for all these things are from the Outside Ones. However, the main fear is to fear the Lord, which is achieved by considering three things: the first is that the greatness of the Creator is above all existing things. Now, man is afraid of the lion, the bear, the robber, fire and falling masonry, yet these are but puny deputies. Why then should he not fear the Great King? And his fear should be constantly on his face because of His greatness. And he should say: "How dare despicable man sin before such a great Lord?" Behold, it it were*

*a lion it would eat him, but merely because of the Holy One, Blessed is He, is patient is this a reason for not fearing Him?*

*Secondly, he should consider the constancy of Providence, that He looks and gazes at him. Now, a slave is afraid in the presence of his master and man is always in the Creator's Presence Whole eyes are open to all his ways. He should be afraid and terrified to nullify His commands.*

*Thirdly, He is the root of all souls, all of which are rooted in His **Sephiroth**. And since sin makes a flaw in His Palace how should he not be afraid to soil, with his evil deeds, the King's Palace?*

*Fourthly, he should observe that the flaw in his deeds pushes away the **Shekinah** from above. He should fear to cause this great evil of separating the love of the King[11] from the Queen[12]. This kind of fear is that which puts man on the right path for the perfection of this quality and by means of it he cleaves to it.*

*Furthermore, a man must be very careful to behave so that the **Shekinah** cleaves always to him and never departs. Now, it is obvious that the Shekinah cannot be with a bachelor for the Shekinah is mainly from the female[13].*

*Man stands between the two females, the physical female below who receives food, raiment and conjugal rights[14] from him, and the **Shekinah** who stands above him to bless him with these which he, in turn, gives to the wife of his covenant[15]. This is after the pattern of (the sefirah of Tiferet or) Beauty, which stands between the two Females: the Higher Mother[16], which pours out all that it requires, and the Lower Mother[17], which receives from it food, raiment and conjugal rights, namely lovingkindness, justice, and pity as is known. And the Shekinah cannot come to him unless he resembles the Supernal Reality.*

*Now, a man separates himself from his wife at times for one of three reasons:*

- 1. when she is in her period of separation*
- 2. when he studies the Torah and lives apart from her during the week-days[18].*
- 3. when he journeys from home and keeps himself from sin.*

*During these times the Shekinah cleaves to him and is bound to him and does not leave him so that he be not forsaken and separate but always the perfect man, male and female. Because, then, that the Shekinah unites with him a man should take care that She does not depart from him while he is traveling. He should be industrious and profit [19] by reciting the traveller's prayer[20] and by holding fast to the Torah, for by virtue of this the Shekinah, which guards the way, stands by him always when he takes care not to sin and to study the Torah. So, too, when his wife is in her period of separation the Shekinah stays with him if he keeps the laws of separation properly.*

*Afterwards, on the night of her purification or on the night of the Sabbath or on his homecoming from the journey each one of these is a time of dutiful cohabitation. The Shekinah is constantly open above to receive holy souls so it is likewise fitting that he have congress with his wife and by virtue of this the Shekinah will always be with him. So it is explained in the Zohar[21] to the first section of Genesis.*

*Congress with his wife should only take place when the Shekinah is in Her place, that is between the Two Arms[22]. During a public disaster, however, when the Shekinah is not between the Two Arms, it is forbidden, and so it is stated in the Tikkunim to Genesis[23].*

*He who wants to be united with the King's Daughter, that She never depart from him, must first adorn himself with all the adornments and fine garments, and these are all the Tikkunim of the qualities mentioned[24].*

*After he has so adorned himself he should intend to receive Her while studying the Torah and bearing the yoke of the precepts, according to the secret of the perpetual union. Immediately then She becomes married to him and never more departs from him. But this is conditional on his purity and sanctification and when he is then so pure and holy he can intend to fulfil for Her the duty of providing Her with food, raiment and conjugal rights which are the three things a man is obliged to do for his earthly wife.*

*The first is to provide Her from the Right with the flow that is Her food by virtue of his deeds.*

*The second is to cover Her from Power so that the Outside Ones have no dominion over Her, namely, that there be no trace of the evil inclination in the carrying out of the precepts, not for the benefit of the body nor for the hope of illusionary honor, for instance; for then the evil inclination is present in that precept and She flees from it, for it is shame. Therefore he should cover the shame and hide Her ever that it have no dominion over Her. How should he do this? By doing all his actions for the sake of Heaven and without any trace of evil inclination. Tephillin[25] and Tzitzith[26] are also powerful in shielding Her[27] that the Outside Ones have no dominion over Her and he should be accustomed to wear them.*

*Thirdly, to make union with Beauty during the time of reading the Shema and by setting aside periods for the study of the Torah. And when he sets aside a period for any*

*purpose he should intend that this is the time of the Shekinah[28], the King's Daughter. And there is a hint of this in the Tikunim[29].<sup>3</sup>*

This work which internalizes the qualities of all the sefirot, as character refining traits ends with *malchut* or kingship but literally the lowest of all the sefirot. Rabbi Cordovero aligns this with the Schechina the Presence of God in this world, the immanent divine which was described in chapter 25 of Exodus when constructing the Sanctuary or *mishkan*.

"They shall make for me a Sanctuary - so that I may dwell among them"  
(Exodus 25:8)

"Sanctuary" is the translation of the word *mishkan*, from the root sh-khaf-nun, dwell.

<sup>3</sup> Footnotes: to the above text:

1. not be proud in his heart. For the Sefirah Sovereignty is the lowest of the Sefirah, receiving from all the others.  
2. Especially at the time of prayer. V. Zohar III, 195a, where it is said that the prayer of the poor takes precedence over the prayer Moses or David or of any other man. 3. Then thy heart. Deut. 8:14 4. the Outside Ones. The kelipot. 5. For I am solitary. Ps. 25:16 6. in the Zohar. II, 198b, Soncino Vol. 4, p 171: 'Now you exalted saints who endure bodily affliction in wandering from place to place for the sake of the Holy One, Blessed is He, how much more are you worthy that miracles and acts of redemption should be performed for you, and that you should win the life of the world to come!' 7. Prepare these stuff Ez. 7:3 8. His hope. Ps. 146:5 9. they explained. Zohar II, 198a. By a change of vowel points in the verse is made to read: 'His breaking (shibero) is for the Lord his God.' 10. fear is very dangerous 'There are three types of fear: two have no proper root, while the third is the real fear. There is the man who fears the Holy One in order that his children may live or lest he be punished. . . Another man fears the Holy One because he is afraid of punishment in the other world. . . The genuine type of fear is that which makes a man fear his Maker because He is the mighty ruler. . .' (Zohar, Prologue, 11b, Soncino, Vol. I, pp. 47-49) 11. love of the King The Sefirah of Beauty. 12. from the Queen The Sefirah of Sovereignty. 13. from the female 'For all females are in the shelter of the Shekinah, and it abides with one who has a wife, but not with one who has none. . .' (Zohar I, 228b). 14. food, raiment, conjugal rights. Ex. 21:10 15. wife of his covenant Mal. 2:14 16. Higher Mother the Sefirah of Understanding. 17. Lower Mother the Sefirah of Sovereignty. 18. during the week-days But not during the Sabbath: 'How often are scholars to perform their marital duties? Rab Judah in the name of Samuel replied: Every Friday night' (Keth. 62b) 19. industrious and profit a Rabbinic expression, v. Pes. 50b. 20. the traveller's prayer Ber. 29b-30a. 21. 'It is incumbent on a man to be ever "male and female" in order that his faith may be firm, and that the Shekinah may never depart from him. What, then, you will say, of a man who goes on a journey and, being absent from his wife, is no longer "male and female?" His remedy is to pray to GGod before he starts his journey, while he is still "male and female" in order to draw to himself the presence of his Master. When he has offered his prayer and thanksgiving and the Shekinah rests on him, then he can depart, for through his union with the Shekinah he has become "male and female" in the world as he has "male and female" in the town. . . When he does reach home again, it is his duty to give his wife some pleasure, because it is she who acquired for him this heavenly partner. It is his duty to do this for two reasons. One is that this pleasure is a religious pleasure, one which gives pleasure to the Shekinah also. . . The other is, that if his wife becomes pregnant, the celestial partner imparts to the child a holy soul. . . In this way, the students of the Torah who separate from their wives during the six days of the week in order to devote themselves to study are accompanied by a heavenly partner in order that they may continue to be "male and female." When Sabbath comes, it is incumbent on them to gladden their wives for the sake of the honor of the heavenly partner, and to seek to perform the will of the Master, as has been said. Similarly again, if a man's wife is observing the days of her separation, during all those days that he waits for her the heavenly partner is associated with him, so that he is still "male and female." When his wife is purified, it is his duty to gladden her through the glad performance of a religious precept. All the reasons we have mentioned above apply to this case also' . Zohar I, 49b-50a, Soncino Vol. I, pp 158-159. 22. The Two Arms Lovingkindness (Chesed) and Power (Geburah). 23. Tikunim to Genesis Tikk. 69. 102b Called by C. "to Genesis" because the passage is in the form of a commentary to a verse in Genesis. 24. Tikunim of the qualities mentioned i.e. the Tikunim of the Sephiroth mentioned in the previous pages of the book. 25. Tephillin Phylacteries, worn in obedience to the Rabbinic interpretation of Ex. 8:9 and 16, Deut. 6:8 and 6:18. 26. Tzitzith The fringes to be attached to the corners of garments, Num. 15:37-41. 27. in shielding Her V. Zohar I, 23b. 28. the time of the Shekinah The Hebrew for 'conjugal rights' is 'onah', lit. 'time'. 29. Tikunim V. Tikunim, Tikk. 6, 18a

The "schechina" also derives from this root of dwelling, the indwelling of the divine associated with the verb *hashraah* meant in the mishna as "soaking". The divine soaks us in its presence.

Following the mystics of Safed the students of the Baal Shem Tov derived new meanings to the notion of Schechina consciousness.

In the following dense discourse by the Alter Rebbe of Chabad an off-hand reference to dancing reveals the place of the body and dance in his spiritual architecture of life.

Working the verse "and the sea saw and fled" in Psalm 114 he contrasted the sea fleeing with the hills dancing:

הים ר א ה וינס כו. החרים רקדו כאילים כו. והנה ציל למת המרים רקדו והים ר א ה וינס. ובשילית במספת פסחים שלו פי' כי הוינס הוא הנעבדות מיראה והריקוד הוא הנעבדה טאמנת. והוא בחי' שני ונתי' עניו. והנה התגלות המלך אור' בחי' שני' שבבחי' התגלות המלך שמתחת והיא החרים שהם מרות האצילות ששמים שמתחת המלך אורים אורים למיטת כסוד לפני המלך ולכן רקדו. ובחי' ע ב ד ששבוטו בויראה אור' התגלות המלך האצילות המפורד ביומיו וזוהו חיים ששמים שיש בחי' כסוד לפני המלך אור' וזוהו חיים שני' (ועמי' ששני' שני' ונתי' חיי' בני השמי' בת עי' שדי' חת' בת כו. ועי' רבות בשלש פס'י' מ"ב מ"א מה' מרת אסר' לו' הים לפני אלוה' יעקב לפני יראתו של המלכות והוא עי' ויראה חכם ורעו' ורעו' ויעמוד מרועי' עי' ונתי' חיי' חיים ראת וינס רבות מדרב' מרשת' א' ודרי' ג' ובפי' עכ' נב' אתה עובר חיים את הריקוד ד' רצ"ב ג'. כתיב ס"ה פ"ז וחי' חיים סע"א ח"ל ע"כ.) ולתפני' את בתוספת ביאור' תנת' מתחלת ימי' תלמוד' עי' ששני' של' ס' ח' וס' נתי' קרע' הים ומבאר' בפס'ית' שהוא כי' חיים לוח' התעשות. וזיי' ובני' ישראל' חללו' כתיב' חיים הים. והעני' כי' נשמות' תלמוד' עי' ששני' שני' של' ס' ח' וס' נתי' קרע' הים ומבאר' בפס'ית' שהוא כי' חיים לוח' התעשות. וזיי' ובני' ישראל' חללו' כתיב' חיים הים. והעני' כי' נשמות'

**צווחה**

**לקוטי**

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מהשתלשלות הפך מים ליבשה בד. וז"ש גזרה מה תצעק אלי בעתיקא תליא מילתא שמשם נמשך הנח להיות בחי' לידה. והנה בגילוי הארה זו אזי החרים רקדו כו. הרים הם תגי'ת. וגבעות תגי'ת דבריאה או נתי' דאצי'. ולהיות שהם למעלה מבחי' ים שהוא הצמצום כנ"ל. לכן רקדו כאילים שבגילוי אור' הסובב נכללו כביטול גר' בפני אבוקה והיינו שהאורות דתיקו המלוכשוי' בכלים נסתלקו מו הכלים ונכללו באור זה המקיף כנ"ל. והנה שגם מדי שבת בשבתו יש עליית העולמות אך הכל מדרגא לדרגא עשוי' ביצירה ויצוי' בבריאה כו' ונקי' הילוך. אבל הריקוד הוא עלי' הגדולה שלא בהדרגה כלל דהיינו באור הסובב כנ"ל. כאילים שאין בהם דעת ושרש בחי' זו הוא למעלה מהדעת (עמ"ש בד"ה ותוסף אסתר בעניו מה קול גדיא כו' ע"ש) אבל הים סופא דכל דרגי' המסתיר ומעלים וכשראה גילוי אור' הסובב לא ה' יכול להתכלל בו כנר בפני אבוקה כמו החרים שהרי הוא המעלים לכן וינס העברת והסתלקות והוא עדי"מ באדם שבהשתלשלות מהשכל כו' עד לדבור אבל כשנופל ריבוי אור' שלמעלה מהשכל אזי נפסק הדיבור ואישתק. וז"ש משה כמד פה וכן צולתא בחשאי כו' ) ועמ"ש בביאור ע"פ אלה מסעי גוי' בעניו מ"ב מסעות ומיס ימים דמסירת העומר.) וכ"ו מלפני אדון חולי' ארץ גילוי אור' הסובב כנ"ל ההפכי הצור וחלמיש מוציא איש להיות אגם מים דהיינו מגבורה לחסד שנתבטלו ממצויאתם המל' יב'. (ועמיש בדיה מי מנה עפר יעסב ויהים עליהם מלמעלה.) וכנודע בעניו ונעשה שלום בין מיכאל כו'. וכ"ז היה בפסח אשר פסח ה' בחי' דלוג בלא אתעדל'ת' מדלג על החרים כו', אבל אח"כ מצות ספירת העומר מ"ט יום ממחרת השבת הוא בחי' אתערו'ת' דלתא ועי'ו' היה אח"כ בשבועות פנים בפנים מתו תורה. (ועמ"ש עוד מענין הים ראה וינס בביאור ע"פ במדבר סיני באתל' מועד ע"פ המדרש רבה במדבר פרשה א' עי'פ הים ראה וינס ע"ש):

למקורו הוא רחניות המהוה וא"א להיות מציאת נשמה ומלאך שהם והניף ידו על הנער בעים רוחו והכחו לשבעה גזולים (בישעיה

ס"י י"ג) הנה ים סוף הוא בחי' מלכות דאצילות שהיא בחי' דבור העליון שהדבור הוא סופא דכל דרגיו שבדבר ה' שמים נעשו וכל העשרה מאורות הם המשכות מעיים דאצילות ומתלכשים באותיות הדבור יורו את הוא ההמשכה מבחי' כחמה ב'ו' והדבור הוא מעלים ומכסה על אור ההמשכה. כמו ע"מ בדם הנה אותיות הדבור הם כלי להשכל והמרות שהם נמשכים ומתלכשים ב"י אר"מ האותיות הם מעלימים על השכל שבתוכו ומצפינים אותו בתוכן שהרי הקטן אף שמבין כל האותיות והתיבות ואומרו היטב עכ"ל אינו מבין כלל ההשכלה שבתור האותיות רק מי שהוא עצמו חכם מקודם אזי מבין מתוך האותיות כיו אבל מהות האותיות עצמן הוא כחי' העלם לגבי מהות השכל והמדות. ולכן למעלה שהתהווה החכמה דבי"ע הוא רק ע"מ הדבור עליון ולא כמו במשל שהלומד הוא חכם מקודם. הרי א"כ הדבור והאותיות דמל' דאצי' הם מעלימים ומצפינים על החבי"ד והמדות דאצילות המתלכשים בהדבור של א' יתגלה כ ל ב בבריאה כי אם איזו הארה מועטת מאד כמו בחי' האור הנמשך ע"י העשרות

כוי (ועמ"ש מזה בדי"ה שניו נעדר הרחלים) וזהו ענין ים שנקרא עלמא דאתכסיא. א"נ מה שהדבור נקי העלם היינו לפי שמה שנמשך מהשכל ומתלבש בהדבור זהו רק חיצוניות השכל אבל פנימי השכל א"א להתגלות כלל באותיות ודבור כוי (ובמ"ש נמ"א גניאר ע"פ ני ביום הזה ינפר). ועניו קריעת ים סוף היינו שמאתכסיא נעשה אתגליא דהיינו של א' יסתייר הדבור עליון על האורות עליונים המלוכשים בו שהם השכל והמדות עדי"מ שהם ע"פ דאצילות כ"א שיתגלה ממש לנשמות דבריאה ג"כ כמו שהוא הגילוי באצילות. ולהיות שנינו קרי"ס הוא התחברות הבריאה עם האצ"י ממש כלי פרסא ומסך בחי' נפרדים רק שהם באהבה כו' אלא כשאיו האלקות בגילוי בראי' ממש. והעלם והסתיר זה הוא ע"י המל' בי זה כלל גדול שהמל' היא הגורמת להיות בחי' יש כנ"ל ונק' ל כ כ' אימא תתאה מטרוניתא אם אם הבנים המ"ש כסש"ב בשם הזהר\* (ועמ"ש בביאר ע"פ יונתי בעניו יפתי

ונמא- ע"פ למען תירא לקמן בפי' ואתחנן). ולכן הנשמה היא בבחי' עיבור במל' כי בשמע"צ שאומרים מוריד הגשם נמשכים הנשמות ברחם הגוף ושהים שם ז' חדשים עד ז' של פסח זמן הלידה. עדי"מ בגשמינות שלהיות התהוות מהות ולד מן הטפה צ"ל עיבור ושיהיו ז' חדשים ברחם הגוף שבמשך זמן זה ע"י שאוכל ושותה ממה שאמו אוכלת ושותה ומשך בו חיות עד שעושהו להיות יש. כך הנשמה דאצי' שהיא בחי' איז בכדי שיותהה להיות בחי' יש הוא ע"י שמתעבת ברחם הגוף ושותה שם ז' חדשים\* ואוכלת ושותה כו' שנמשך שם אורות עליונים. והנה ב'ו' של פסח הוא לידת הנשמות. והעניו כי בכדי שיהיה בחי' לידה ופתיחת הרחם להיות הנשמה יוצאת מן העלם לגילוי צ"ל המשכה והארה במדת המל' מלמעלה מהשתלשלות (ובמ"ש במ"א ע"פ מאמר אחת פי' מניחם דרמ"ש בעניו כאיל תערוג. ועמ"ש במ"א ע"פ למילדות העבריות אשר שם האתח שפרה פי' ה' הנה היינו ה' ראשונה דשם הוי' שבה ועל ידה נמשך כח הלידה, וביאר ענין ה' יובן קמ"ש ר"פ לר לך בעניו ה' שנותחם לארבע שיהא נקי אברהם כוי (ע"ש). וזהו מ"ש יולר ה' את הים ברות קדים עזה כי ע"פ השתלשלות משכל למדות עד ממשכה הדבור א"א להיות המשכה מבחי' האר"י בבחי' היש אלא ע"י גילוי הארת הסובב שמקורף לאבי"ע שכולם שוים קמ"י. וז"ש רוח קדים כוי שעייז היה קיים כי הים המכסה ומסתיר אינו א ל א בבחי' השתלשלות א ב ל בגילוי הארה שלמעלה

(י' ע"י הווספות. ו' וזוהו שם ז' חדשים: בדפוסים הקודמים נדפסו תיבות אלו בשטה ל"ו, אמנמלפמי"ש הם הוא יתור לשון, וכאן נראים תיבות אלו נצרכים אלהענקלמעייובולואהעמדנוסנא-אבלככתי"א. 4. >5 איז ת"י אלו ככלל: !: ! י"י ע"פ— מאמר הזהר: נתקן ע"פ לוח התיקון ונת"י 559.4. x y ל"י ט"ב: לכאורה צ"ל: י"א (פסוקטו).

ישראל עלו במחשבה ואז נקי אחים ורעים להקב"ה. ופי' אחים ורעים היינו להיות כי קוב"ה הוא בחינת אור א"ס ב"ה כשמלוכב במדות דאצילות כי א"ס ב"ה בעצמו לאו מכל איבון מדות איהו כלל ולא יתכן על העצמות קריאת שם כלל אלא רק על בחי' התגלות ואז נקי הוי' יו"ד כחמה ה' בינה ברי. והנה ס"ר נשמות ישראל שנמשכים מס"ר אותיות המחשבה נקי אחים לקוב"ה שהם המדות וכמו עדי"מ במחשבת שכל שהאותיות הם עצמם א' עם מהות השכל שבתוכם וכו' מחשבת המדות עם המדות כיו ואז הם בחי' אלקות ממש כי באצילות איהו חיותהו וגרמוהי חד במ"ש במ"א (ועמ"ש בפי' יתדו נדיח עור את יו"ו השנת ובדיה אני ישנה גני רעיתי ונז"ל שזורה אז גני ירושלים ע"מי ושמתי נדנד) ובכדי שתתהוו הנשמה בבחי' יש להיות בחי' נברא

שהוא בחי' נפרד מאין ממש שהרי בהיותה באצילות היא בחי' אלקות ממש בי גם מה שנקרא בשם אותיות מחשבה הכל לשכך האזן. אבל כי לא מחשבותי מחשבותיכם כתיב הוא ע"י מדת מלכותו ית' (ונמ"ש באגה"ק נד"ה איתו יחיותי) שהיא הנקי לברש להעלים ולהסתיר עד שיוכל להיות בחי' יש וכמ"ש ה' מלך גאות לבש כי מדת המלוכה היא הלבוש הגורם להיות התהוות היש כי אין מלך בלא עם והיינו נפרדים דוקא שעליהם יתכן המלוכה להיות בבחי' התנשאות עליהם ו ה ם יהיו " באימה כו' שהרי על מאה בנים לא יקרא האב מלך. ולכו נקי כי הגה כל מה שיש ברבשה יש בים רק שאין נראין לעין כי מי הים מכסים עליהם, וכך למעלה הנה אותיות יהי אור יהי רקיע המחיה את כל העולמות הם באצילות והים שהוא המל' מכסה עליהם בלתי יתגלו לנבראים המתהווים מהם שאם היו מתגלים היה הגשמיות ב ט ל ברוחניות כמשל ביטול זיו השמש במאור עצמו ואינו נראה ליש אלא במקום שאין המאור נראה כיו. כך גשמייות המתהוות היה בטל

*Every day of Pesach we say the Hallel prayer, which contains a description of the exodus from Egypt, the splitting of the Red Sea, and many other miracles connected with these events. "The sea saw and fled, the Jordan turned backward. The mountains skipped like rams, the hills like young sheep." (Psalms 114:3) What quality do the mountains have that causes them to skip, and why do the waters flee?*

**...where all souls share a common root and are like brothers to one another...**

*Rebbe Shneur Zalman of Liadi explains that these two miracles represent two kinds of service to G-d: one motivated by fear, the other by love. The sea, like a servant, flees when the king reveals himself because he is afraid that the king is displeased with him. The mountains, like a loyal minister, are joyful when the king arrives and greets him, eager to carry out his every command. This joy is expressed by the skipping of the mountains which represent the world of Atzilut, where all souls share a common root and are like brothers to one another and to G-d.*

*The concept of the source of the souls in Atzilut is connected with another miracle that occurred during the parting of the Red Sea. The Jewish People walking on dry land in the middle of the sea is similar to the way their souls rose in the mind of G-d. How are these two things connected? According to the Arizal, the Seventh Day of Pesach, a commemoration of the parting of the Red Sea, is also the day when the souls of the Jewish People were "born" - or brought down from Atzilut. True, they already had souls, but this event was the revelation of the higher level of the souls.*

### **How did this "birth" take place?**

*As mentioned above, all souls have their source in Atzilut where there is a complete unity among them and with G-d. This level of unity is ideal, but for a soul to exist as a separate entity and to be born, it must descend to the lower level of Beriya through malchut. This process is similar to that of speech.*

### **Before one speaks, the words are not yet formed...**

*Before one speaks, the words are not yet formed, but the idea of what is going to be said is unified in the mind. Even when the idea of the words begins to emerge, this idea is still one idea. Once the words descend to a lower level and leave the mouth, they are separate from the intellect. Malchut represents the mouth in the process of speech, and it also represents the sea, the part of the physical world which is concealed from view under the water.*

*The concealment by the aspect of malchut is necessary for any birth or creation. Created things do not see or hear the words of G-d as the words are creating them; if they could perceive these words, their existence would be nullified to the words, just as rays of the sun can hardly be distinguished from the sun itself. Even the angels in the higher worlds understand clearly that they are created from the speech of G-d, and this knowledge fills them with awe and love for their Creator. However, the process of their creation is concealed from them also in the aspect of malchut.*

### **One can reach higher levels by "skipping"...**

*The concealment period or "pregnancy" of the souls begins on Shemini Atzeret. The souls are brought from highest aspect within Atzilut to malchut of Atzilut where they remain for seven months until they descend on the seventh day of Pesach. Just as the human fetus receives nourishment from its mother while it grows in the womb, so the souls receive their nourishment from malchut of Atzilut. The souls remain there for seven months until they descend on the seventh day of Pesach. When we ask for rain on Shemini Atzeret, we are also asking for a successful "birth" of the souls seven months later.*

*What energy propels the actual birth and creates "contractions"? The energy must come from a higher level than Atzilut in order to "shake up" Atzilut and release the souls. This energy is the light from the first letter "hei" in G-d's name and serves as a catalyst for the "birth". The impact of this energy from beyond the levels of the worlds is like the supernaturally strong winds that G-d sent to split the sea. The energy that propelled the winds is from the encompassing light and breaks the sea, which conceals the supreme levels of G-dliness. When the encompassing light split the sea, the mountains, representing the sefirot of chesed, gevura and tiferet, **began to dance, since these attributes are above the level of the sea, which represents concealment.***

*The skipping of the mountains shows us that, at such a time, one can reach higher levels by "skipping" from the lowest to the highest levels instead of merely "stepping", progressing one level after another in sequence. The seventh day of Pesach, then, is like a day of renewal for the souls of Israel, a day when any Jew can "skip" to his or her highest spiritual potential.<sup>4</sup>*

The dance then represents skipping because the act represents a connection to a higher level of divine light than the hierarchical step work from level to level. The notion of skipping or *dilug* applied to God's ability to over reach and ignore the facts on the ground because of His love for Israel and skip over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt with the death of the firstborn. This skipping is used by the rebbe to apply to the spiritual movement as opposed to the step by step work of the spirit as is usual. The opposition of the sea which flees representing the concealment of the divine light as opposed to its revelation and the ensuing response of dancing.

Dancing and joy is especially prominent in the works of **Reb Nachman**:

Rebbe Nachman says that the way to release oneself from illness is to be joyous. When a person is happy, they are able to reflect upon themselves and their lives. This brings a person to complete teshuvah (repentance) and health. Rabbi Nossou once remarked that the evil inclination cares less about the sin than about the depression that follows it. By means of the depression, it can further trap the person and gain much more than

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<sup>4</sup> From Yehoshua Metzinger's translation

from the first sin. If we make the mistake of committing a transgression, we should be remorseful but not allow ourselves to become depressed. It is vital to fight depression as one would fight their greatest enemy, run from it as they would from death itself.

When a person becomes ill, their legs feel heavy. When you feel depressed or sick you can feel this heaviness. Man's right and left legs correspond to the sefiros (spiritual realms), netzach and hod. The judgment for a person's sins corresponds to these sefiros. If you are sick or depressed, **Rebbe Nachman recommends that you dance**, elevating these divine judgments back to their source, binah, which corresponds to one's heart. "Through dancing and body motions, joy is aroused."<sup>5</sup> The Baal Shem Tov used to dance in order to increase his religious hislahavus – enthusiasm - and d'vekus – connection to Hashem. He taught his followers, "The dances of the Jew before his Creator are prayers." "All my bones shall say, Hashem, who is like unto Thee?" (Psalm 35:10).

In Likutei Mehoran I 54, Reb Nachman speaks about joy, music and dance:

*"It was through music that prophetic spirit rested upon the prophets (see II Kings 3:15) . A musical instrument is a vessel containing air ( ruach=spirit). The air in the instrument is a mixture of good and bad. On the one hand there is the anxious, depressed spirit – a bad spirit, as we find in the case of King Saul: "and an evil spirit terrified him" ( I Samuel 16:14) . On the other hand, there is a good spirit, as it is written: "Let Your good spirit lead me in an even land" (Psalms 143:10) . This good spirit is the spirit of prophecy: holy spirit. But when good and bad are mixed up, it is impossible to receive true prophecy.*

*"The musician playing the instrument must gather the good spirit – the spirit of prophecy – and separate it from the sad, depressed spirit. He must understand music in order to know how to sift out and gather up the parts of the spirit and put them together in order to construct the melody, namely the joy, in order to build the good, prophetic spirit, which*

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<sup>5</sup> Sefer Hamidos on Simchah

*is the opposite of the depressed spirit. He must move his hand up and down the instrument in order to channel the joy and bring it to perfection.*

*And when the prophet hears a melody from an expert musician, he receives a spirit of prophecy, the very spirit that the musician gathered with his hand and separated from the depressed spirit. Thus the attendants of the depressed King Saul said to him of the young David: "And he will play with his hand and it will be good for you" ( I Samuel 16:16 ) .*

*"Accordingly, by playing the musical instrument with one's hand, one sifts, purifies and elevates the good spirit and separates it from the bad. This is the way to overcome the evil spirit of folly that seeks to spoil and upset the good, prophetic spirit. The bad spirit is dissipated through the joy that comes through the hand of the player.*

*"For the root of the power of the spirit of folly lies in sadness and depression. Therefore the only way to receive a holy spirit of prophecy is through joy – the joy created by the hand of the player. Thus, "It was when the musician played that the hand of God was upon him" ( II Kings 3:15 ) ; "and he will play with his hand and it will be good for you". The player who has the power of the hand can sift out the good spirit from the bad and thereby subdue the evil spirit.*

And in Likutei Mehoran 1:41...

*"Dancing for joy over a mitzvah is a wonderful thing. There are times when it is a mitzvah to drink wine, as on Shabbat and festivals, or at weddings and other religious celebrations. If you drink on such occasions, do not drink to excess but in moderation. Your intention should be for the sake of Heaven, to experience the true joy of Israel , which is to rejoice in God, who chose us from all the nations.*

*"As the joy begins to radiate within you, it will spread to your legs until you literally start to dance for joy. This will banish the forces of impurity, which take hold of the legs, mitigating harsh judgments and enabling you to receive blessings.*

*“The fervor with which you dance is “a fire offering, a sweet savor to the Lord” (Numbers 28:8) . However, when a person dances with the heat of the evil inclination, this is a “strange fire” (Leviticus 10:1) , while the wine he drinks is the “wine of drunkenness”, which allows the forces of impurity to take hold .*

*“Holy dance has the same power to sweeten harsh judgments as a redemption performed by a Tzaddik.”*

The Baal Shem Tov said, “The main rule in serving Hashem is that you should keep yourself from sadness to the very best of your ability.” “Without joy, it is impossible to be attached (*dveykut*) constantly to Hashem.”<sup>6</sup> When you perform a commandment with joy, it is a sign that your heart is completely with Hashem. Nothing in the world is more pleasant than a mitzvah performed with gladness.

In all these writings of the lives and aphorisms of the Holy Rebbes there seems to be an notion whereby joy is an act of will followed by ecstasy that leaves behind the mundane and, in the movement of dance, a spirit settles on the person who is somehow elevated.

Often there is much prior suffering and the paradoxical effect of dancing and joy despite is palpable.

I feel the Schechina present in the dance: an incarnation of the Divine in the very movements which brings me to the possible notion of incarnation of the spirit in the flesh. This might sound Christian however the notion of *hislabshut* is deeply within the province of kabbalah and is noted mostly in Chabad literature.<sup>7</sup>

The Kedushat Levi on Parshat Shmini writes:

“And it is known that the Alshich commented on the verse “And they shall make for Me a sanctuary so that I may dwell in it” (Exodus 25:8) that Israel should not think that the divine rests only in the sanctuary alone but the main idea is for the Schechina to

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<sup>6</sup> Likutei Yeharim 18 and 19

<sup>7</sup> See for example Likutei Sichot: Parshas Matos-Massei 5722

“rest” (*hashraa*=soak) on Israel. Therefore it states “I will dwell” on Israel not merely on the sanctuary” ...thus the *hashraa* of the Schechina in the sanctuary was not for the sacrifices rather to demonstrate God’s love for His people, for it was an auspicious time for Israel was on a very high spiritual level, for God does not need sacrifices. The verse thus states “for on that day I will appear to you” meaning *hashraa* of the schechina will descend upon you, for your sake, not for the sake of the sacrifice.”

For Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev the divine indwelling or *hashraa* came out of God’s love for His people and mean the very material descent or soaking of the schechina within each.

The Degel Machaneh Efraim stretches this notion of Schechina consciousness even further:

זאת תורת הבהמה והעיף להבדיל בין יח ה  
הכאכלת ובין החיה אשי לא תאבכ, יש בכאן רמו בענ'נא דפקח לפעניד ב' קבכת'  
מרבות' שתככיכת כקראת חית כמ"ש ביחזקאל היא הח ת אשר ראיתי על כיי  
כבר וכ! הקיא ריל ג"ב כקראת חיה כמיב גער היה  
קכה גס והשבה' חיה רעה מן הארץ וזהו בה' חמץ ומכת חמץ היינו בחינת הקיא  
כדאיהא בזוה"ק גער חית קנה היינו חית קנ חמץ יישאר ה' ויהיה מכה וזהו "ל  
להבדינ נעשות הבדכה והפרשה 3 ן תהיה הכאככה היינו מצה שהוא בחינה  
השכינה כ3 כול שנקראה חיה והיא הנאכלת בפקמ וב', המיה אקר כא האכל ה  
ינו אמץ שהיא במיכה הקיא הנקראת ג"ב חית וכא האכל בפקח שלא יהיה מלק  
לקי\* בתוך הקדושה כלל גס רמו מיה הכאככה לשון 'מיד כמו ויאכל לחס והיינו  
השכינה כביכול המהימדה כס דודה והחיה אקר לא חאכל היינו בחינה הקיא  
שאקור  
כעשוה שס יחוד חיו והבו

Degel Machaneh Efraim: Parsha Sh'mini

“This is the law pertaining to animals and birds in order to distinguish between those that may be consumed and those that are prohibited.” Here is a hint (*remez*) regarding the notion of Passover for I received from my masters the idea that the schechina is called by the name *chaya*..and the *sitar achra* is also called by the name *chaya*..so making a distinction between pure and impure animals means distinguishing between the schechina represented by matzo and that aspect represented by chametz.

The Degel is suggesting that schechina consciousness comes down as *chaya* and that it is critical how it manifests itself below in the real world and that it could go either way, either to the side of holiness or the ‘other side’.

I believe that the power of music and dance that these zaddikim insist upon is found in the bringing of the spirit into the body itself which reflects upon the the body-as-temple notion. The body is the very housing for the soul which, once incarnated in the flesh, transforms it in a mysterious way. However this needs to be made conscious. The ritual acts of Torah and mitzvot in performance make conscious the need to include the body itself in holy acts of ritual meaning. Music and dance also have the power to bring down into the flesh itself the sacred consciousness of the soul.

In our spiritual recovery we too need to become more aware of this dimension of incarnation of soul. Unfortunately our upbringing culture and western education has done much to split our heads from the body and we walk around as disembodied intellects. In our healing work the use of music and dance as therapy is vital to bringing back the body into consciousness, the body in sickness and illness, the body in addiction and the body that is being “inscribed” pathologically by self-mutilation.