

# Healing with God's Love

Kabbalah's  
Hidden Secrets

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*with Peggy Bagley*



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## PREFACE

# God's Healing Prayer— Exodus 15:26

“He said, if you will heed the Lord your God diligently, doing what is upright in His sight, giving ear to His commandments and keeping all His laws, then I will not bring upon you any of the diseases . . .”

I became interested in the Jewish model of healing when I realized that no doctors could help me with my disease of Klippel-Trenaunay syndrome, a debilitating vascular disorder which impeded my ability to walk. My doctors said that both my legs needed to be amputated. I was devastated by this diagnosis, but because of my strong faith, I knew that God would not abandon me. I turned even more deeply to my faith and learned of a Jewish healer, Rabbi Daniel Dresher.

I will always remember when Rabbi Dresher first told me there are healing mysteries in the Bible. He said I could obtain healing through prayer, that healing is Biblical. I was amazed when I turned to Exodus 15:26 and read: “He [God] said, if you will heed the Lord your God diligently, doing what is upright in His sight, giving ear to His commandments and keeping all His laws, then I will not bring upon you any of the diseases . . .”<sup>1</sup> Rabbi Dresher and, later, his nephew Rabbi Dr. Yaakov Dresher directed me to Hebrew texts with amazing, holy, meaningful, and highly effective insights for healing.

Rabbi Daniel Dresher died many years ago, and Rabbi Dr. Yaakov Dresher, z”l,<sup>2</sup> passed away in April of 2013. He was my mentor and very dear friend. It was he who really showed me, through texts and the example

of his practice, that Jewish healing practice has an enormous moral component. It is beyond moral. It is all about God.

As Melinda Stengel and I discussed in our book *This Is for Everyone*, and Peggy and I will show in more depth here, the letters of the Hebrew alphabet are very powerful. When we invoke their energies for healing, it is essential to do so with good motivation and in the right spirit. The more understanding we have of God's nature and our relationships with it, the better suited we are to heal.

Jewish tradition gives us many names through which to approach understanding God's nature. Many of them address God's transcendent or "masculine" qualities. *YHVH*, for example, pronounced *Yod Hey Vav Hey* and written in Hebrew as יהוה,<sup>3</sup> is a name for the transcendent or masculine aspect of God. The sequence of letters *Yod Hey Vav Hey* is energetically so strong and powerful that Kabbalists call *YHVH* the Face of God or *Tetragrammaton*.

When the Lord first revealed this name to Moses through the burning bush in Exodus, Ch. 6, He also revealed that prior to this holy encounter between them, God had appeared to the patriarchs in feminine form as *El Shaddai*, which translates as God of Breasts. God appeared to the matriarchs and patriarchs, as told in the Book of Genesis, as a nurturing deity expressing feminine qualities. God now relates to Moses that, in the future, we must also recognize God's masculine Name, the God who governs the universe, the God of history.

*El Shaddai* corresponds to the immanent nature of God, Her Feminine Presence. God's immanent Feminine Presence is also called *Shechina*. Through the *Shechina* we gain direct experience of the transcendent deity, and through the *Shechina*, healing takes place. Embrace *YHVH* by embracing the sacred Feminine, and none of the diseases that plague the world will hurt you.

Healing begins when we embrace this awareness of unity. When we see ourselves as separate from God, we are prone to illness. But when we know that God is in everything and that we need to repair the unity of all things in God, we are on the road to wellness. When we recognize that each of us is divine because each of us is part of God, we are on the way to complete healing.

When the Romans destroyed the Jewish temple in 70 AD and exiled the people of Israel, the *Shechina*, the Feminine Presence of God or God's indwelling Presence in Creation, went into exile with them. Because of Her enormous compassion and love for them, She exiled Herself from Her male consort and there was a metaphorical split in the Divine. The transcendent male aspect of God, *YHVH*, also known as *HaKodesh Barchu*, *The Holy One, blessed be He*, continued to govern the universe, and God's feminine nature, the *Shechina* or Indwelling Presence, went into exile with the Jewish people.<sup>4</sup>

Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi (1745–1812) explains the exile of the *Shechina* in his magnum opus *Tanya, Igeret HaKodesh* 31. In this work, he elaborates on how the Kabbalah views the causes of illness. We learn that, just as illness is a result of our false belief that we are separate from God, illness also is the result of the *Shechina's* suffering in Her exile and in Her separation from Her male consort. Unity, our belief in the unification of everything in God, leads to healing. Separation, our belief that we are all separate beings and that the *Shechina* is separate from *YHVH*, leads to illness and disease.

The cause of the destruction of the ancient temple was “baseless hatred” of Jew against Jew during those times. This caused the temple to be destroyed, the exile to take place, and the Feminine Presence of God to separate from *YHVH*. I further believe that the metaphorical split in the Divine, with illness and disease as a result, was caused and continues to be caused by hate in this world — not only hate by Jews against fellow Jews, but hate for all people by all people. Only true love brings about healing and wellness. This true love needs to be predicated on the idea that everything and everyone is made up of the stuff we call God.

Love is the antidote that will bring about healing. Love is the life-giving blood that unites us and God. We need to focus on the *Shechina* and alleviate Her suffering by bringing Her out of Her exile.

Love — true love — brings unity, the recognition that we are all one and one in God. “All” here applies equally to Jews and non-Jews. We need to undo the exile that is based on separateness, and we need to bring together, through love, the unity of God in everyone and everything.

This is a profound secret of Kabbalistic healing: Not only is it through

the *Shechina* that we gain direct experience of the transcendent Deity, but it is through our embracing of the *Shechina* that healing takes place. The Feminine aspect of God plays a most important role in healing.

Throughout this book we show in different ways how, when we elevate the *Shechina* and when we recognize the importance of *YHVH's Shechina* in our prayers, we will achieve healing. This is a very important theme that I constantly embrace when I do healing with my parishioners. The results are extraordinary.

Remember: When you pray for healing, you are to pray for the *Shechina*, for God's Indwelling Presence. It is said that She is the aspect of God that is intimately connected with all the souls of Israel. She is also called the "Community of Israel," a way the ancients tried to make their contemporaries aware that all Jewish souls were bound together as one single soul.

Such was the thinking of the originators and creators of the early Kabbalah, and even the writers of the later Kabbalah of the Middle Ages. They wrote this way to give the Jewish community hope for survival in the face of the great tragedy of the Roman destruction of the ancient temple in 70 AD and the equal tragedy of the Jewish massacre and expulsion from Spain in the fifteenth century — to give the Jewish people of their times a theology of hope.

I believe that if these same Kabbalists and rabbis were alive today, they would recognize that the Feminine Presence of God is in all people, not only Jewish people. Conditions today, with suffering in Rwanda, Syria, Israel, and throughout the world, require us to recognize that the Presence of God dwells within each one of us, regardless of ethnicity or personal religious upbringing. I believe that the thinking of the ancient rabbis was right on the mark for that time, and that thinking on this point has evolved.

We now can understand, thanks to their amazing insights, that God does not live in the heavens alone, nor does She live only in the souls of Jews. She lives within all of us and loves all of us. This awareness allows us to realize that She is One, and that when we pray for Her healing, we pray for everyone's healing. The child who suffers heart disease in Syria, the child who suffers heart disease in Austria, and the child who suffers heart disease in a Birmingham hospital — when we pray for the healing of the *Shechina* who lives in all these children, we are also praying for

our own child with heart disease. This was the amazing realization of the thinkers of the Kabbalah.

If you understand how we are all connected, and if you focus on how the *Shechina* suffers together with all those who suffer, if you identify your personal pain with Hers, you are no longer alone. When you pray for others as well as yourself, knowing you are no longer alone, you become a direct conduit of healing for yourself and others.

When you pray for the diminution of your own disease, you need to pray not only for yourself; you need to pray for the well-being of others with this same disease. You must pray with great passion for their well-being. When you pray this way, you will be privy to a great secret of healing. You become a vessel drawing in divine light for yourself and those around you. You draw down the Transcendent Light of *YHVH*, lift up the *Shechina* Light — *Adonai ADNY ׁןןן* — and allow healing to take place.

There are other Kabbalistic healing insights that we learn from Exodus 15:26. First, illness is connected to ethical action: There is an ethical basis to health and illness, and a direct correlation between the human healer and the Divine healer. God is clearly teaching us that if we want to escape disease, we need to practice ethical precepts. We need to be good.

Righteous behavior allows us to bring the Divine energies in every cell into balance. The unhealthy person's cells are out of balance, weighed down by *Shechina* energy only. Ethical behavior with *kavvanah* meditation lifts up the *Shechina* and joins Her with the aspect of the Divine that brings good health and balanced Divine energies into every cell.

This great secret teaches that there is an ethical and moral basis for health. It is important to obey the Ten Commandments and other *mitzvot* (plural of *mitzvah*) commandments, conscious connections, actions in harmony with the Higher Mind. *Jewish medicine, distinct from the medical model taught at American universities, is completely related to moral, ethical, and spiritual values.* Kabbalah teaches that it is not enough to repair a broken arm or treat a cancer with sophisticated chemotherapy: If we want real healing, it is crucial to bring in the moral context of a person's illness. There is more to illness and healing than meets the eye.

We reveal many secrets about correlations between health and morality

in this book. If we don't mention moral practice in a specific meditation, remember always that it is essential for you to love the person you are praying for, love yourself, and love God. You need to actually *feel* love and compassion during your healing meditative practices. Without love, all the technical knowledge won't work. For healing to take place, spiritual technology must be joined with love. We can't emphasize enough how important that is.

When we consciously unite the male and female Divine energies, we embrace what the great healing Kabbalists taught again and again — something most often spoken of today as mindfulness. The Kabbalists, in doing their healing, highlighted the importance of embracing the present moment, recognizing the Divinity within this very moment. *This idea of uniting the Male and Female aspects of God is a key principle*, possibly the single most important secret we are trying to teach here.

There is divinity in everything and in every moment. You must not only embrace this idea, you must make it your own. When you recognize the importance of attending to the Divine at every moment, when you consciously recognize that God is not only a He but also manifests the great Feminine Principle, and when you understand that you are given the *mitzvah*, the command, to unite male and female in every holy moment — then you will begin to be an instrument of God who is not only *aware* of healing, but one who actively *promotes* healing. We thank our wonderful teacher Rabbi Dr. Yaakov Dresher, z"l, and our mentor Rabbi Daniel Dresher, z"l, for bringing us to understand this.

In addition to our beloved teachers and mentors to whom we dedicate this book, we want to thank Officers Joel Bemis and Dino Amato, two Chicago cops with whom we have shared wonderful scotch and even more wonderful spiritual and theological discussions. These two guys are the best, and we love them. Jewish tradition shows enormous respect for non-Jews who embrace the principles of virtuous living that we aspire to. We call such people righteous. Joel and Dino are righteous.

We also want to thank Congregation Bene Shalom for their kind support of us. We particularly extend our appreciation to our dear friend Nona Balk, assistant Rabbi Shari Chen, cantorial soloist Charlene Brooks, Ava Eres, and temple president Rita Carroll. All were instrumental in ensuring



that the temple continued to run smoothly while we were working on this book. Peggy and I also want to thank Paul Cash, our editor and publisher, for his tremendous faith and support as we brought this project to fruition.

DOUGLAS GOLDHAMER

PEGGY BAGLEY

OCTOBER 2014

## NOTES

1. Throughout this book, we will use *The Torah: A Modern Commentary* (Union of American Hebrew Congregation, New York, 1981). Commentaries by W. Gunther Plaut.
2. z"l is a contraction from the Hebrew *zichron le tov*, which means *May he be remembered for the good*.
3. Readers unfamiliar with Hebrew should note that the letters *YHVH*, *Yod Hey Vav Hey*, are read from right to left in the Hebrew characters, so that the first *Yod* י is at the right, the first *Hey* ה to its left, the *Vav* ו to the left of that, and the final *Hey* ה all the way to the left: יְהוָה
4. Another Rabbinic narrative teaches that the *Shechina* left her male consort when God expelled Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. Her compassion for Her children was so great that She followed them into exile.



# Introduction

Life is full of synchronistic moments. In 1976 I was diagnosed with Klippel-Trenaunay syndrome, a rare vascular disease. It had caused blood clots in my left leg for many years, forcing me to walk first with a cane and later with crutches.

Before this diagnosis, doctors had been treating me for a propensity for blood clotting by surgically removing not only the clots, but also the veins in which they were located. Several surgeries had left me in excruciating pain. It was only through my own research that I discovered I had been walking around with Klippel-Trenaunay syndrome all my life.

When I showed the surgeons my discovery, they suggested amputation of my left leg, and perhaps my right leg as well. Amputation was a common treatment for Klippel-Trenaunay.

Understandably, I did not want my legs to be amputated. At that time I was dating the girl who would later become my wife. I thought, would she stay with an amputee? I soon realized that I had misjudged her. Peggy is a beautiful angel, and we have now been married for thirty-three years.

As I refused to have my leg amputated, the doctors said they could not help me except by prescribing blood thinners and pain medication. So, I searched for alternative healing. I had graduated from rabbinical school, and felt that I always had a very close friendship with God, which inclined me to be very open to alternative healing. I soon met a mystical rabbi, Rabbi Daniel Dresher, who taught me new ways to meditate and pray. His approach was based on certain ways of using the ancient Hebrew letters, Kabbalistic *kavvanot* or meditative activities, and spiritual healing techniques practiced by ancient Kabbalistic communities.

Rabbi Dresher was a Hasidic teacher with enormous patience and

tremendous learning. He welcomed Peggy and me into his home, even though I am not an Orthodox rabbi. It was here that he did Kabbalistic healing with me and shared his vast store of knowledge about healing with us every week.

After almost a year of weekly visits, of learning, praying, and meditating, I was greatly healed. I put away my crutches and canes and began applying these healing techniques with members of my own congregation who were experiencing various diseases. I saw that ancient Hebrew meditative spiritual techniques, combined with Western medical knowledge, could achieve phenomenal results. I shared my newfound insights in a book with Melinda Stengel on Jewish mysticism and the healing arts, entitled *This Is for Everyone*.

Subsequent to my healing and writing that text, I have continued to practice Kabbalistic healing meditations with many members of my community. I have refined old healing methods and studied many more Kabbalistic texts in these intervening years. I continually see that our esoteric Jewish tradition is rich with diverse healing techniques. Furthermore, I have seen the efficacy of these healing *kavvanot* with members of my congregation and even asked some of them to share their remarkable healing experiences with you.

For this book, I have invited Peggy Bagley, my wife and best friend, to collaborate with me. She is a superb writer and, more importantly, an intuitive spiritual practitioner who often prays with me and the people with whom I do healing.

This new book is filled with spiritual techniques and Kabbalistic meditations that we did not discuss in *This Is for Everyone*. I have seen such great success with these healing meditations through the years that I now want to share my discoveries. Peggy and I also go into great depth to explain beautiful Kabbalistic concepts that are the basis and source for these meditations.

After several years of practicing and teaching spiritual healing, I received a telephone call from an old friend. She asked if I could please meet with her sister, who was very ill with a cancer that had metastasized to her liver. I flew to her home city and, through a series of events, met Rabbi Dr. Yaakov Dresher, the nephew of my previous teacher Rabbi Daniel Dresher.

The chances of my meeting Rabbi Yaakov were almost impossible, had not God directed our meeting. In addition to his rabbinical ordination, Rabbi Yaakov chose to pursue a Ph.D. in mathematics. He was thrilled to meet me and talk about his favorite uncle Daniel. He took me under his wing, and directed me to many new Kabbalistic sources. For thirteen years, he taught me Kabbalistic healing meditations and prayers that I had not studied with his uncle. This is why Peggy and I dedicate this book to the Dresher family — Rabbi Daniel Dresher, z”l and Rabbi Dr. Yaakov Dresher, z”l.

If you think that this sounds like a fantastic story, you are right. So let me come clean. I want to share something with you here that I did not share in my first book, for fear then that people would think me crazy. It cannot be a coincidence and happenstance that I met both Rabbis Dresher. What’s unusual here is not simply that God is directing my life. Rather, it’s what I mean when I now can say that I *see* God directing my life, and that you also can see God directing yours.

It is not so difficult to accept that God is involved in our lives and has a plan for each one of us, even though most of us can’t see it. It’s another thing to *see* it. Let me tell you how I came to actually see it.

When I wrote *This Is for Everyone*, I shared with no one except my wife Peggy what I share with you now. Yes, Rabbi Dan Dresher taught me and instructed me and prayed with me and directed me to Hebrew Kabbalistic texts, and that was a remarkable experience. But what is even more amazing to me is that I had already learned some of these prayer techniques in a dream, a year before I met him. I understand that this sounds incredible. I myself would have difficulty believing what I am about to say if this hadn’t happened to me.

I had just come home from a meeting Peggy and I had with a surgeon at Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago. He said clearly that if I didn’t want to die of gangrene poisoning in the future, I would have to have my left leg amputated. I was in a terrible mood and wondered why a good person like myself, who had dedicated his life to teaching Torah in sign language to both deaf and hearing children, would be rewarded with such an ominous decree. I thought the Talmudic rabbi, Rabbi Yossi Ha-Gelili in the Talmud was right: “No good deed goes unpunished.”

It was with this in mind that I went to sleep that night. I was so angry at God that I refused to say my bedtime prayers, which include the *Sh'ma*.<sup>1</sup> That night I had what can best be described as a supernatural experience. I had a dream, and in my dream a voice spoke with me, instructing me on how to do the Healing Prayer that I outlined in my first book. When I woke up from the dream, I immediately ran up the stairs to my study in the attic and wrote down as much as I could of the healing prayer that I had experienced in my dream. I regret to say, I put the notes aside for the next six months.

When I later met Rabbi Dan Dresher, and he began instructing me and teaching me mystical meditations, I saw that some of these *kavvanot* prayers were identical to the ones I had received in my dream. I was so amazed when I compared my text and notes to his text and notes that I had an epiphany! They were the same! I knew God was working in my life. Like Jacob, I awoke out of my sleep and felt, as Jacob had said, "Surely God is in this place and as for me, I never knew it" (Genesis 28:16).

The ancients are right. We can find God in our dreams. This is not to say that every dream leads you to the Presence of God. *Au contraire!* I have seen that most of my dreams are the result of a great pizza with all the toppings at 11:30 p.m., or the sortings-out in my mind of a very difficult day at work. But with the aid of meditative techniques, we can dream those heavenly dreams that bring us into the Presence of God or His angels.

One of the pleasures of my ministry is to lead our Sunday morning children's worship service. I learn so much from young children. But there is one principle that seems a bit difficult for them to comprehend — the principle is that God is everywhere. When I ask them, "Where is God?" their first response is always "He is in heaven" rather than "She is everywhere." They wonder, if God is everywhere, why is there sickness in my home? Or why does my Aunt Edith still have cancer? Or why does Bob the bully always get away with teasing me?

Adults also wrestle with this problem intellectually: If God is everywhere, why does slavery still exist in the Sudan? Or in Niger? If God is everywhere, why did Auschwitz happen? How could God allow twenty

innocent children to be murdered in Newtown, Connecticut? Closer to home, if God is everywhere, why did my daughter die of a brain tumor?

I think the reason my Sunday school children and many adults have a difficult time comprehending that God is everywhere, is because until we have a real religious experience, this great fact is very difficult to understand. Jacob, for example, knew that God was in Be'er Sheva, his childhood home in the Negev area in southern Israel. His parents Isaac and Rebecca were devout believers and they taught all their sons the importance of embracing God in their lives. So this was "normal" for him. But when Jacob later found God also in a strange place — in the strange dream he had of a ladder with angels going up and down, from earth to heaven and heaven to earth — he was overwhelmed. It was a true religious experience, to find God equally present in that Egyptian desert so far from his home. He formed a strikingly new thought "Surely God is in this place and as for me, I never knew it" (Genesis 28:16).

Jacob realized that God is everywhere. In the dream, God makes it very clear that He is not just another local deity. He says to Jacob: "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham, thy father and the God of Isaac . . ." (Genesis 28:13). And with this revelation comes a renewal of God's promise to be wherever Jacob is: "I will be with you, protecting you wherever you go . . ." (Genesis 28:15). Jacob is so inspired and amazed that he shouts, "This place is the place of God. This is the gate of heaven." He concludes with conviction, "Here is the House of God." Equally, here is the Gate of Heaven, and both are wherever we seek them.

This seems like a simple thought. God is up and down, west, south, east, and west. God is everywhere. And yet, I see that with my Sunday school class, or my teachings at the synagogue, people have a hard time grasping that God is not only in the synagogue sanctuary or church chapel, but everywhere. Each community wants to grab hold of God and monopolize Him and call Him by a specific name which identifies Him as theirs and theirs only. It is hard for people to grasp that the God of the Eskimo is the same God as the God of the Jew, and that the God of the Jew must be equally revered as the God of the Baptist. Because there is only one God and God is everywhere. We need to realize that God is as close to us as the air we breathe.

Indeed, this Life Force that we call God is Breath. The Hebrew word for breath is *Ru'ach*. *Ru'ach* also means spirit, and *Ru'ach HaKodesh* means Holy Spirit or Holy Breath. Another name for *Ru'ach* is life energy. In China it is called chi, and in Japan it is ki or qi. In India, this *Ru'ach* is identified as prana, the Sanskrit word for energy. Eastern thought sees chi pass through different meridians that correspond with various organs of the body. The French philosopher Henri Bergson called this life energy the *élan vital*. In the second verse of its opening chapter, the Hebrew Bible calls it *Ru'ach Elohim*, the Breath of God.

This Breath is the Source of all life. Our covenant with God allows us to enter into a relationship with the Holy Spirit and receive His breath. And when we know how to become one with God's Breath and receive it rhythmically throughout our body, there is healing. Rabbi Nachman of Breslov wrote in his magnum opus, *Likutei Moharan (Collected Writings of Our Teacher)*, that there is a direct correlation between the Psalms and the Divine Breath. He writes that when a person recites the Psalms with the right focus and intention, the reader's own breath inspires the Divine within the words.

It is generally known among Kabbalists that all life originates from a single source called *Ayn Sof*, the One without End. It is the origin and fountain of all energy. This *Ayn Sof* that we call God is really the Life Force that energizes the whole universe. If we could see the Unseen, we would see the movement of a conscious, compassionate, caring, intelligent Energy that moves from the unseen worlds right down to the physical world. This Energy is filled with consciousness and awareness.

In Judaism, God's Energy travels through the human body and is transformed by unique transformers of Energy which we call *Sefirot*.<sup>2</sup> Eastern thought also sees the energy body as having unique points, which they call chakras. These chakras are whirling energy centers. Some systems count the major chakras as numbering eleven or seven. The chakras control, energize, and are responsible for the proper functioning of different parts and organs of the physical body, including the endocrine glands, which receive energy from some of the major chakras. But, whereas the chakras are seen as spiritual energy centers of the human body, the *Sefirot* are not only energy centers but also energy transformers. The similarity between



the two is that each chakra or *Sefira* is related to different organs or limbs.

The Kabbalah teaches that this Energy we call God manifests itself as a dichotomy of positive and negative aspects. These opposites attract and cause life. These opposing fields are explained by the *Sefirot*. The *Sefirot* teach how God's energy flows freely from the *Ayn Sof* into every human and everything that occupies our world. God's energy flows freely from the *Ayn Sof* through us and back to Him.

According to Judaism, Creation is not a static event but a dynamic experience. God continually creates the world in which there is a free flow and exchange of energy within each human, and also from God to humans and humans to God. This free flow is not automatic. For the free flow to take place, we have to learn how to work these *Sefirot* or transformers of energy in God and in ourselves. This involves the use of meditations, *kavvanot*, visualizations, and the imaginative faculty, *ko'ach dimyon*. The meditative practices that we find in numerous Kabbalistic texts encourage the flow of God's Energy and allow us to be filled in the best possible way with His Breath. These visualization and imagery techniques, together with breathing techniques, are what the Kabbalists call *kavvanot*, or meditative activities. These spiritual meditative activities allow the practitioner to work in harmony with the Life Force of God.

Jewish tradition holds that around 1200 BCE there was a huge revelation in which God gave the Torah. The Torah is a holy contract or covenant between the two parties. Kabbalists maintain that an esoteric reading of this covenant reveals secret mystical principles that teach how human beings and God can work together to the benefit of spiritual and physical healing.

There is a continuous and constant relationship between the physical and the spiritual. When we recognize this integral relationship, which occurs at all levels, there is great healing. While *Ru'ach* means breath or wind at the physical level, it can be transformed to another level of experience. The same word can mean Holy Spirit when written as *Ru'ach HaKodesh*. But just writing *Ru'ach HaKodesh* is not enough. The internal dynamic of the person inhaling and exhaling *Ru'ach* is what transforms one's sense of the physicality of the world to a high sense of spiritual presencing. When this transformation takes place, profound healing occurs.

Rabbi Yaakov's teachings emphasized the importance of *Ru'ach* and

meditative breathing techniques. His uncle, Rabbi Dan, emphasized visualization; but Rabbi Yaakov, though also embracing and mandating visualization techniques, focused equally on breathing techniques for healing. Rabbi Yaakov said constantly that we must identify physical *Ru'ach* with spiritual *Ru'ach*: They are inseparable. Physical and spiritual realities are always together. He taught that a secret of healing is to understand that Kabbalah is holistic.

One Sunday he took from his bookshelf a very large Hebrew volume, published in Jerusalem. It was the book mentioned above, the *Likutei Moharan (Collected Writings of Our Teacher)* by Rabbi Nachman of Breslov. Rabbi Nachman was a mystical rabbi who lived in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. His *Likutei Moharan* is a multi-volume work that teaches there is a powerful relationship between the body and the soul, which has far-reaching implications for physical healing. If we tend to the soul, and correct the transgressions we make and have made in life, this will lead to physical health. He taught that there are soul counterparts to the organs and limbs of the human body. Rabbi Yaakov showed me, in Rabbi Nachman's text, how *Ru'ach* must be understood both physically and spiritually. If we understand this, there is the reward of healing and good health.

Life depends on breath. And what is breath? It is the exhaling and the inhaling of *Ru'ach*. When a person is completely embracing God, speaking Torah and prayer, that person is exhaling and inhaling *Ru'ach HaKodesh*, the Holy Spirit.

We find in Genesis 1:2, "The *Ru'ach* of God hovered over the face of the waters." That is, when a person studies Torah, which itself is like water, then the *Ru'ach* (Breath) of God which is the *Ru'ach HaKodesh* (Holy Spirit) hovers over and breathes life into that person. It is impossible to live without Torah. And we see in the *Tikkunei Zohar 13*, "Were it not for the *Ru'ach* of the lobes of the lungs, fanning and cooling the heart, its heat would consume the whole body."<sup>3</sup>

*Likutei Moharan* teaches in this section that there is more than a mere "correlation" between physicality and spirituality. When a person breathes with awareness, there is an actual awareness that one's breath *is* the Holy Breath of God, especially when praying or studying. The physical and the

spiritual come together. This *Ru'ach* is none other than the Holy Spirit that one inhales when one breathes words of holiness.

We must maintain a balance between the physical and the spiritual in our lives. Just as we must continue to burn God's flame in our hearts so that we are passionate about becoming one with God, we must recognize that our lungs work in harmony with our heart so that our heart runs smoothly and does not overheat.

The Kabbalah teaches that energy vibrates. And since everything is made up of energy, everything is made up of God. Aspects of reality that we call spiritual, such as angels and spiritual beings, move with faster vibrations. Aspects of reality that are more physical, such as rocks and trees and skyscrapers, move at much slower vibration rates. The human being is made up of all aspects of reality, and as such is a microcosm of reality. We are made up of *Sefirot* that pulsate very quickly and *Sefirot* that vibrate much less quickly. We are made up of flesh and blood and are also composites of feelings and thoughts and soul. The faster energy vibrates, the closer we are to a state of spirituality. But the slower the vibrations, the more we are experiencing the physical world.

God is in every cell of our body. God is the basic stuff out of which we are all made. Rabbi Yaakov taught me that when our energy increases, our cells vibrate more strongly. Theologically speaking, this is what is meant by activating the Presence of God within us. We do this when we increase our energy, and when our cells vibrate at faster speeds, these cells influence other cells to vibrate similarly. (For more on sympathetic vibration, see Chapter 8.)

Rabbi Yaakov taught that we can learn healing modalities that activate another person's awareness of the Presence of God. When we do this kind of Kabbalistic healing with someone who is ill, we help that person rise into a more spiritual dimension in their consciousness — by inspiring him (or her) to recognize that he can activate the Divine Spirit within him. When he does this, *assisted by Kabbalistic meditative techniques*, he heightens his energy levels to higher and faster vibrations. This illustrates Rabbi Nachman's thesis that there is a direct correlation between the spiritual and physical bodies of every human being.

It is worth briefly mentioning here that a person's malady can be caused

by having too much energy or overactive cell vibrational activity in one part of the body. We will discuss this later, as well as other Kabbalistic explanations for the origin and cause of disease. But in general, when a person recognizes that God is everywhere, including within every cell of his body, this recognition will heighten his vibrational cellular activity and that will lead to good health. In this book, Peggy and I teach how to facilitate such healing in oneself and in others.

In the Reform Jewish tradition, we read from the Hebrew Torah every Sabbath. My congregation's synagogue is very blessed to have an old Torah that was rescued along with some others from Nazis who seized them during the Holocaust. When we established our synagogue in 1972, it consisted mostly of deaf people. I wrote a letter to a foundation that had collected these sacred scrolls, asking if our nascent congregation could acquire one of the Torahs. I knew that Hitler had murdered more than ten thousand deaf people only because they were deaf. To my great pleasure, the Westminster Project sent us one, free of charge. We read this Torah regularly on our Sabbath and at bar and bat mitzvahs and Jewish holidays.

When I visited with Rabbi Yaakov, I saw that his community did not *read* from the Torah. During the weekdays and on Sabbaths, they would *chant* from the Torah. Our ancient mystical tradition teaches that a person chanting has the power to influence his cellular vibrations, which has a correlative effect on his physical and spiritual development. Chanting, of course, is also embraced by Buddhist monks, and in the Latin of the Catholic Church, among other religious traditions.

As a Kabbalist, I know that it is not simply chanting that influences the vibrational activity of our cells. Some ancient languages are more rich in vibrations than others. We see this, for instance, with Sanskrit and with Hebrew.

We understand the Hebrew language to be very sacred. According to Jewish tradition, inherent in each letter are electric-like forces that God uses to create the Universe. "For when the world was created, it was the supernal letters that brought into being all the works of the lower world, after their own pattern. Hence, whoever has a knowledge of them, and is

observant of them, is beloved. Both on high and below.”<sup>4</sup> Jewish tradition maintains that God continually creates day and night.

ל	Lamed has the sound of l	א	Alef silent letter
מ	Mem has the sound of m	ב	Bet/Vet has the sound of b or v
נ	Nun has the sound of n	ג	Gimel has the sound of g
ס	Samech has the sound of s	ד	Dalet has the sound of d
ע	Ayin silent letter	ה	Hey has the sound of h
פ	Pey/Fey has the sound of P or F	ו	Vav has the sound of v
צ	Tzadik has the sound of tz	ז	Zayin has the sound of z
ק	Kuf has the sound of k	ח	Chet has the sound of ch
ר	Resh has the sound of r	ט	Tet has the sound of t
ש	Shin/Sin has the sound of s or sh	י	Yod has the sound of y
ת	Tav has the sound of t	כ	Kaph has the sound of k or kh

Not only are these letters sacred, but each of the twenty-two Hebrew letters is a specific energy force. They are what God used in various combinations with one another to create the Universe. We humans can use these Hebrew letters to create on Earth.

We can tap into the forces and energies of the Hebrew letters when we recite our prayers in Hebrew. We can see each of these twenty-two energy forces through its different shapes and feel each one through its different sounds. Most importantly, each letter is rich in vibrations that have enormous power in healing. That’s why, when we recite certain healing prayers in English rather than Hebrew, the prayer doesn’t have its full power.

Even though the Hebrew words can be translated into English, their vibrational energy forces cannot. This is why I have transliterated all the healing prayers in this text, so we can receive the healing vibrational effect

of these letters by reciting them aloud. *The sound and vibration of Hebrew letters can create profound healing* — this is a great Kabbalistic healing secret.

In this text, we also offer Hebrew mantras to bring about physical healing through the vibrational forces in the pattern and order of words.

Of all the Jewish holidays, the religious holiday that best celebrates the mystery and magic of the Hebrew language is *Shavu'ot*, known also as Feast of Weeks or Feast of the Pentecost. Though *Shavu'ot* corresponds in the liturgical year to the celebration of Pentecost, it is not an equivalent to the Christian celebration. *Shavu'ot* is the holiday that commemorates God's giving of the Torah to the ancient Hebrew people. Included in the Torah reading for that day are the Ten Commandments.

These commandments correspond to the Hebrew phrase, "God said," which appears ten times in the opening pages of the Torah. These ten phrases, "God said," also parallel the ten *Sefirot*. So, inherent in the Ten Commandments that we read on *Shavu'ot* are the instruments with which God created and creates the Universe. These are the Hebrew letters and the *Sefirot*, which are the DNA of everything created.

There is a magnificent meditative spiritual exercise that is done with the first Hebrew word of the Ten Commandments — *Anochi* — which means "I." "I am the Lord your God who brings you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" (Exodus 20:2). Reciting *Anochi* as a mantra, with special emphasis on *Ru'ach*, breath or energy, heightens vibrational cell activity, which aligns/identifies the meditator with the Presence of God.

The mantra *Anochi*, pronounced in three syllables, *ah-no-keh-yeh*, greatly energizes the human body. This is so because of the unique forces in the letters that make up the Hebrew word, and because the unique vibrations of the sound of *Anochi* have tremendous power. The articulation of this word resonates with many of the *Sefirotic* energies of the human body and leads to cellular balance and health. This first word of the Ten Commandments can be used as a mantra to be said every day before your healing prayers. This mantra has enormous healing power. More on this later.

## HOW TO: How to Identify the Inner I with the Greater I

Find a comfortable place and use this room, or part of this room, as your holy sanctuary. You should meditate in the same room every day, as then you will increase the energy in that place. The ancient Kabbalists call such a special place your *mi'at meekdash*—*small holy place*.

1. Sit comfortably in a chair with your back upright and your feet on the floor. Loosen any belt or tie or clothing that might bind you. Close your eyes.
2. Focus on your breath. Be aware of your inhaling and your exhaling. Do this for about two minutes.
3. Breathe in gently, slowly and deeply, through your nostrils a long breath. Hold your breath for a few seconds and, as you exhale through your mouth, pronounce the *ah* sound, feeling it vibrate deeply in your belly.
4. Breathe in gently, slowly and deeply, through your nostrils a long breath. Hold your breath for a few seconds and, as you exhale through your mouth, pronounce the *no* sound, feeling it vibrate deeply in your heart area.
5. Breathe in gently, slowly and deeply, through your nostrils a long breath. Hold your breath for a few seconds and, as you exhale through your mouth, pronounce the *khey* sound, feeling it vibrate inside of your head.
6. Do this meditation ten times.

With this meditation we identify the Inner I within us with the Greater I of the Universe, that is, the *Shechina* within us with the transcendent male aspect of God, and so we become one with God. We see ourselves and we return to the recognition that we are not alone, we are not separate, but we are one with God.

Illness is a result of a faulty *weltanschauung* or worldview that accepts the individual as separate from God. Healing happens when the individual recognizes that s/he and God are not two separate beings, that God is hidden in everything. When we recognize the unity of all things in God, we have healing. This meditation is a mantra meditation that recognizes and affirms our oneness with God.

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