

The Seven Sabbaticals of Life

The Extended Biography of a Human Being

Lesson 2: Days of Moshiach, Living Again and Beyond

Overview:

- The real extension of understanding the stages that the soul travels through only comes when we consider the final four levels out the seven. We are not meant, according to the Sages, to remain in the Garden of Eden forever as a disembodied soul. There is something far greater about being a soul in a body down here in this world. However, the true revelation of this fact will not be entirely clear until the world has undergone a complete transformation in the Messianic age. This transformation refines our perception of the material world to such a degree that it affords new possibilities to the body, opens the door to the resurrection of the dead and ultimately to immortality within an enduring utopia carried out into the extreme future.
- Our fourth sphere in the model we are using is called *netzach* [נצח] which evokes the dual connotation of victory [נצחון] and eternity [נצחיות] which combine to suggest the concept of enduring success. This is the precise meaning of the Messianic revolution. The world is changed on a permanent basis. It is the state of redemption after which there can never again be another exile. Amongst the obstacles to be overcome is the apparent concealment of the Divine with creation. In order for the natural order of limitations within the world to be completely overthrown, the world must itself become a dwelling place for G-d below.
- While it may be considered part of the Messianic age, the resurrection of the dead [תחיית המתים] is also a stage unto itself which could be regarded as a post-Messianic reality. Of the emotive spheres, it is *hod* [הוד] which is here understood as acknowledgement [הודאה] that acts as the fifth stage in the journey of the soul. Just like the Jewish practice of reciting the words of the *Modeh Ani* [אני מודה] 'I acknowledge' prayer upon awaking in the morning, thanking G-d for restoring the soul back into the body after sleep (which is likened to death), so too, we will all be in a state of continual acknowledgement at the time of the collective resurrection of all souls in the future.
- For our sixth chapter, we reach a clear post-Messianic reality which is referred to as the seventh millennium [אלף השביעי]. This era comes after the conclusion of normal history and constitutes the principle reward of the world to come. In the emotive spheres, it is the aspect of *yesod* [יסוד] foundation] that settles reality into a state of final equilibrium providing a permanent foundation for life in the soul. Associated with the procreative organs in Kabbalah, the properties of *yesod* are identified with pleasure, particularly the pleasure and satisfaction that comes from being connected and creative. All is provided as the entire experience of the world becomes that of one great Sabbath. This is also a time of radical life extension as we move higher and higher in our spiritual consciousness.
- Lastly, our seventh stage takes us from here to eternity. The image of eternity in Kabbalah is approximated with the idea of 50,000 Jubilees [נ' אלפי יובלות] each of which is itself a Great Jubilee year [יבול הגדול] which comes every 50,000 years. Thus, in actuality, we are talking about a time period or time cycle (for there are opinions that there are multiple cycles of the period) of 2.5 billion years. This is a time when G-d's kingdom or *malchut* [מלכות] will reign forever within the world. As the seventh and final stage of the soul, the notion of kingdom carries the connotation of a domain of influence. The awareness of the Creator's ongoing influence that governs every aspect of the universe continues forever during this extended time.

In Summation:

- Our seven-stage Kabbalistic model for expanding our consciousness of the full life of the soul helps to address the question of how the meaning of life outlasts the length of life. This model serves to facilitate a broader understanding of where we come from in terms of the formation of a sense of self, the shift of consciousness from being disembodied to embodied, and the goal of transforming the physical world to recover an even more profound awareness of the advantage of being a soul in a body. The goal of creation is being in the world—but a world that has been refined to the point of also being a dwelling place for the Divine.