

Mysteries of the Soul

Spiritual text 3 - connecting the 3 degrees of the soul

Spiritual text: *Zohar, highest grade of faith*

The 'personality-soul' (nefesh) stands in intimate relation to the body, nourishing and upholding it; it is below, the first stirring. Having acquired due worth, it becomes the throne for the 'soul' (ruah) to rest upon, as it is written, 'until the spirit be cured upon us from on high' (Isa. 32:15). And when these two, personality-soul and soul, have duly readied themselves, they are worthy to receive the 'spirit-soul' (neshamah), resting in turn upon the throne of the spirit (ruah). The spirit-soul stands preëminent, and not to be perceived. There is throne upon throne, and for the highest a throne.

The study of these grades of the soul yields an understanding of the higher wisdom; and it is in such fashion that wisdom alone affords the linking together of a number of mysteries. It is nefesh, the lowest stirring, to which the body adheres; just as in a candle flame, the obscure light at the bottom adheres close to the thick, without which it cannot be. When fully kindled, it becomes a throne for the white light above it, and when these two come into their full glow, the white light becomes a throne for the light not wholly discernible, an unknowable essence reposing on the white light, and so in all there comes to be a perfect light.

It is the same with man who arrives at perfection and is named 'holy' as the verse says, 'for the holy that are in the earth' (Ps. 16:3). It is likewise in the upper world. Thus, when Abram entered the land, God appeared before him, and Abram received nefesh and there erected an altar to like grade of divinity. Then he 'journeys toward the South' (Gen. 12:9), and received ruah. He attained at last to the summit of cleaving to God through neshama, and thereupon he 'built an altar to the Lord,' whereby is meant the effable grade which is that of neshama. Then seeing that he must put himself to the test, and pass through the grades, he journeyed into Egypt. There he resisted being seduced by the demonic essences, and when he had proved himself, he returned to his abode; and, actually, he 'went up out of Egypt' (Gen. 13:1), his faith was strong and reassured, and he attained to the highest grade of faith. From that time, Abram knew the higher wisdom, and cleaved to God, and of the world he became the right hand.