

The Kabbalistic Underpinnings of U-vikkashtem mi-sham

That Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik זצ"ל had a huge impact on Jewish thought in the twentieth century and beyond is so obvious to the readership of this journal that repeating this assertion borders on tautology. However, given the monumental significance of his *oeuvre*, it would seem that we should pay extra attention to the essay that the Rav himself felt was his most important.

The Rav maintained that *U-vikkashtem mi-sham* “surpasses [*Ish ha-Halakhah*] in substance and form.”¹ Rabbi Shalom Carmy reports that the Rav regarded *U-vikkashtem mi-sham* as his most important theological contribution.² Rabbi Reuven Ziegler, in his magisterial work *Majesty and Humility: The Thought of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik* provides this remarkable background:

His son-in-law and disciple, Rav Aharon Lichtenstein, describes the circumstances of its writing: “He wrote it as one possessed. At times he

1. Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *Community, Covenant and Commitment: Selected Letters and Communications* : ed. Nathaniel Helfgot (New York and Jersey City, NJ, 2005), 322.

2. Reuven Ziegler. *Majesty and Humility: The Thought of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik*. (Boston, Jerusalem, and New York, 2012), 344.

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sat down to write in the evening, and he would continue without stop till dawn. [His wife] z”l, concerned for his health, would object, ‘Why? Can’t it wait until tomorrow?’ But he, deep in spiritual and emotional struggle, remained adamant.”³

Yet, notwithstanding the importance that the Rav attributed to this essay, many have pointed out one serious difficulty at its very heart. The work lays out a process whereby the human being can attain *devekut*, or “cleaving” with God. The epistemological basis for this process is a concept known as *aḥdut ha-maskil ve-ha-muskal*—“the unity of the Knower and the Known.” The editors’ introduction to the English translation of *U-vikkashtem mi-sham*⁴ summarizes this esoteric idea as follows:

In many instances of human knowledge—for example, “I know that the table is solid”—there is a differentiation between the knower, the subject, and the known, the object. Even in a statement like “I know that I exist,” I split my personality, as it were, between the knowing subject and the known object. For God, however, as explained by Maimonides in the Mishneh Torah, there is a perfect unity—the knower is one with the known and with the knowledge. Further, God’s knowledge of the world is one with knowledge of Himself, for the world cannot exist separately from God. The world is not an independent object.

The thesis that the knower is one with what is known is expounded by Maimonides in *Hilkhot Yesodei ha-Torah* (2:10) with reference to God, and in *Guide of the Perplexed* (1:68) with reference to the human being. There is, to be sure, a certain type of knowledge in which one merely “photographs” what is known, with no active, creative input. But in other cases, the sort the Rav is interested in, cases of active, creative knowledge, the knower unites with the known. “When one grasps the intelligible essence of an entity, one penetrates it and unites with it. . . .” When the individual unites with the world, he also unites with his Creator. For the world, the creation of God’s thought, is the object of both God’s knowledge and human knowledge. “By knowing the world the individual knows his Creator and cleaves to Him,” for “man and God are united in knowledge of the world.” God is united with the world, man is united with the world, and man is thus united with God.

The Rav’s employment of this concept,⁵ and its central role in

3. Ibid.

4. David Shatz and Reuven Ziegler, “Introduction,” Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *And from There Shall You Seek*, trans. Naomi Goldman (New York and Jersey City, NJ, 2008), xxv. All quotes and page references from *U-vikkashtem mi-sham* in this paper are taken from this translation.

5. The Rav’s invocation of *aḥdut ha-maskil ve-ha-muskal* was not limited to

the essay, confront those who dissect the Rav's philosophical body of work with a major dilemma. "The unity of the knower and the known" is fundamentally an Aristotelian concept, and although the idea was expanded by Maimonides, this concept has long been considered obsolete by the modern philosophical community. The difficulty lies with the idea that when one grasps the intelligible essence of an entity, one penetrates it and unites with it. The Rav, however, citing a basic tenet of Kantian thought, has argued repeatedly that the essence of an entity is in fact unintelligible and cannot be grasped.⁶

The problem has resulted in no small level of cognitive dissonance for some of the Rav's most prominent students:

– *Shalom Carmy*: I cannot imagine the Rav, in any of his major philosophical works. . . resting so much on a consciously archaic philosophy.⁷

– *David Shatz*: R. Soloveitchik's enlistment of the principle of the identity of the knower and known . . . is problematic on several counts. . . . However common the principle was in medieval and kabbalistic thought,

U-vikkashtem mi-sham. The idea formed a central part of a number of lectures presented by the Rav at Yeshiva University. In 1971 the idea was discussed in detail in a lecture entitled *On the Nature of Man* (later summarized in *Shiurei Harav: A Conspectus of Public Lectures of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik*, ed. Joseph Epstein [New York, 1974], 68-70) and in more detail in *Noraos Harav*, Volume 15, prepared and edited by B. David Schreiber [Lawrence, NY, 2005] as well as a second lecture in 1974 titled *Torah and Humility* (*Shiurei Harav*, 34-37). The idea appears yet again in "Al Ahavat ha-Torah u-Ge'ulat Nefesh ha-Dor," in *Besod ha-Yahid ve-ha-Yahad*, ed. Pinchas Peli (Jerusalem, 1976), 410.

6. The Rav, in fact, makes this argument in *U-Vikkashtem mi-sham* itself: "Aristotelian physics attempted to explain reality through its true, qualitative essence. But it failed and misled people for many centuries, because it led them to believe sincerely in the possibility of intellectual enlightenment about qualitative being. . . . The deeper truth that has been revealed to them is that they must give up the vain attempts of the ancients to understand the essence of phenomena, and concentrate instead on creating abstract constructions composed of mathematical formulas which parallel concrete objects." *From There Shall You Seek*, 14. See also "Mah Dodekh mi-Dod," in *Be-sod Ha-Yahid ve-ha-Yahad*, ed. Pinchas Peli (Jerusalem 1976), 221. See Aviezer Ravitzky, "Rabbi J.B. Soloveitchik on Human Knowledge: Between Maimonidean and Neo-Kantian Philosophy," *Modern Judaism*, 6 (2), 157-188 for his attempt to resolve this problem, and cf. David Shatz, "Science and Religious Consciousness in the Thought of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik," in Shatz, *Jewish Thought in Dialogue*, (Boston, 2009), 145-54, who points out difficulties in Ravitzky's approach. See also Dov Schwartz, *Haguto ha-Pilosofit shel ha-Rav Soloveitchik* (Ramat Gan, 2008), 2:145-149.

7. Shalom Carmy, "On Cleaving as Identification: R. Soloveitchik's Account of *Devekut* in *U-Vikkashtem mi-sham*," *Tradition*, 41, 2 (Summer 2008), 107.

the equation is obscure and not adequately justified in the modern epistemologies on which R. Soloveitchik builds.⁸

— *Reuven Ziegler*: Anyone who—like the Rav—relates to the Rambam with the utmost respect and seriousness must confront the question of his philosophical datedness.⁹

The puzzlement is palpable. Why would the Rav rest so much of his thesis on a philosophically outmoded theory in the essay he considered his most important?

Natural Consciousness and Revelational Consciousness in Naḥmanides

What motivated the Rav to assign *aḥdut ha-maskil ve-ha-muskal* such a pivotal role in this essay? On one level, the answer is simple. Both R. Ḥayyim of Volozhin in his *Nefesh ha-Ḥayyim* (6:4) as well as the *Tanya* (chapter 2) cite *aḥdut ha-maskil ve-ha-muskal* as the path to achieve *devekut*, and the Rav was obviously keenly aware of the precedent set by these earlier works. However, these works are fundamentally kabbalistic and not philosophical; the Rav would not simplistically force-fit others' kabbalistic ideas into an otherwise philosophical work.

It is therefore important to understand that *U-vikkashtem mi-sham* contains a strong kabbalistic undercurrent. *U-vikkashtem mi-sham* lays out a process to reach *devekut* by employing not only philosophical but kabbalistic concepts. We will now establish how *aḥdut ha-maskil ve-ha-muskal* stands at the center of a Kabbalistic subtext in this essay.

At its outset, *U-vikkashtem mi-sham* sets up a confrontation between two conflicting human drives: the “natural consciousness” (*toda'ah tiv'it*) and the “revelational consciousness” (*toda'ah gilluyit*). Through the natural consciousness, the human being searches for God's presence in his encounter with nature, as he attempts to demonstrate the sublime truth of the verse: *the heavens declare the Glory of God, the sky proclaims His handiwork* (Ps. 19:2). He tries to hear the whisper of the Master of the Universe in the bubbling of every crystal spring, in every sunrise and sunset.

8. Shatz, “Science and Religious Consciousness,” 153.

9. Ziegler, 370.

Yet, God is not clearly revealed. He is hidden from view: “Behold I come to you in a cloud” (Ex. 19:9).¹⁰ God is in close proximity to human beings, but an obscuring cloud intervenes. The cloud is any manifestation of nature or the human being that promotes the illusion that the world operates autonomously, concealing the reality that God is responsible for all that occurs on earth. The illusion that the world functions autonomously without Divine involvement is a direct result of sin. Correspondingly, the *Shekhinah* or Divine Presence resides in transcendence, removed from creation. “Your sins have separated between you and your God” (Is. 59:2). Were people not led astray by sin, they would sense God in every breath, in the very rhythm of life. The natural consciousness therefore fails to fulfill humanity’s quest for God to unambiguously reveal His presence.

Suddenly, at the height of the human being’s confusion and when he least expects it, God overpoweringly reveals Himself at Sinai. This experience produces the revelational consciousness.

Let us pause here for a moment.

The kernel for the idea of a natural and a revelational consciousness can be found in the Rav’s explanation of a passage from Nahmanides’ commentary on the Torah. In his (unpublished) 1977 *Yarḥei Kallah* in Boston, the Rav spent much time explaining the phrase: *le-shikhno tidreshu u-vata shamah*: “you shall seek his habitation and come there” (Deut.12:5). In the first part of the commentary, Nahmanides explains that the adverb “there” refers to the future *Beit ha-Mikdash*. God does not tell the Children of Israel where the Temple is to be built. Instead God insists that they search for its future location by honing a sixth sense, to intuit the holiness of place. However, Nahmanides then veers from simple *peshat* and segues into *sod*, signaling his intentions by introducing the words *ve-al derekh ha-emet* (lit. “via the way of truth”).¹¹ Nahmanides now introduces a new subject for the adverb “there”:

ועל דרך האמת לשכנו תדרשו, לכבודו תדרשו, ובאת שמה, לראות את
פני האדון ה' אלקי ישראל וממנו אמרו חכמים שכינה.

10. On the cloud as a symbol of God’s unknowability, see also Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed* 3:9.

11. In another *Yarḥei Kallah* on the topic of shofar, the Rav again carefully parsed a portion of Nahmanides’ commentary on the words *zikhron teru’ah* that was once again introduced by the words *al derekh ha-emet*. Nahmanides provided a Kabbalistic interpretation of the *mizvah* of shofar based on the *sefirot* of *gevurah*, *hesed* and *tif’eret*. See *Noraos Harav*, 6, prepared and edited by B. David Schreiber (Lawrence, NY, 1997), 297-312.

Via the way of truth [Kabbalistically], *you shall search for his dwelling* [means] you shall search for His glory—and *go there* [means] to see the face of the Master, the God of Israel, and from here [the word לַשְׁכֵּנוֹ] the Rabbis derived [the term] שְׂכִינָה.

Here now is an abridged and edited transcript of the Rav parsing this brief section of commentary.

Kevod (Glory) always suggests *Malkhut*, as in the phrases *Kevod Malkhuto*, *Hod Malkhuto*. *Le-shikhno tidreshu* means you should search for God at the level of *Malkhut*.

Ha-Kadosh Barukh Hu reveals Himself to us through the universe and sometimes outside and beyond the universe. *Malkhut* or *Shekhinah* means the presence of God in the Universe, in the world. Nahmanides explains that man must search for God within the world; in every experience he is confronted with, he must recognize the presence of the Almighty. *Leshikhno* means for His abiding, for His residing, for His being present; search His presence right here and now. *Le-shikhno tidreshu*: search for God and you will find Him. To fulfill the *le-shikhno tidreshu* imperative, the Torah imposed *birkhot ha-nehenin* [blessings on food]. In every drink of water, in every bite of an apple, in every reflection of light, God reveals Himself.

However, if you do come to the realization that He is present in every experience, you will not stop there. *U-vata shamamah*—you will come a little further. Where is the *shammah*? *Lir'ot et penei ha-adon Elokei Yisrael*. You will be confronted by God from outside and beyond the universe. *U-vata shamma*: you will come further than your destination, *lir'ot et penei ha-adon Hashem Elokei Yisrael*: to see the God who revealed Himself to Israel at Sinai. *Va-yered Hashem al Har Sinai*, [and God descended on Mount Sinai (Ex. 19:20)]—from outside of the world, from beyond the world, from His transcendental abode. The revelation at Sinai is not represented by *Malkhut* but by the *Malka Kaddisha*.

The Rav further explained that Friday night is dedicated to *Shekhinah*, as we invoke Creation within our *Ma'ariv* prayer (“You sanctified the seventh day . . . as the culmination of the creation of heaven and earth . . . then the heavens and earth were completed . . .”). The theme of Shabbat morning is God in transcendence, when we invoke Mount Sinai in the *Shaharit amidah* (“. . . a crown of glory You placed on [Moses’] head when he stood before you on Mount Sinai. He brought down in his hands two tablets of stone. . .”).¹²

12. Since the passive *Shekhinah* hidden in creation is the theme of Friday night, the Shabbat, which derives its holiness directly from God, is in the female gender

In light of the Rav's explanation of this passage, we can posit that the natural consciousness described in *U-vikkashtem mi-sham* is a phenomenological portrait of man's response to the *Shekhinah*, while the revelational consciousness is man's response to the *Malka Kaddisha*.¹³

Kabbalistic eschatology sees the *Shekhinah* uniting with the *Malka Kaddisha*, the lower *sefirah* of *Malkhut* uniting with the upper *sefirot* of *Keter/ Hokhmah*. In a course given at the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies in the 1950's, the Rav expanded this idea as he explained the Kabbalistic significance of the three Shabbat meals.¹⁴

On the night of Shabbat, the *Shekhinah* (*Deus mundo*) arises from the depths of thinghood. Haunted by loneliness and frightened by the muteness of mechanistic existence, it is transformed to the bright light of a personalistic existence. The *Shekhinah* takes the upward path toward merger with the *Malka Kaddisha*. Shabbat day belongs to *Malka Kaddisha*, God as living master of the universe, the *Deus Persona*, as experienced through the apocalyptic vision of the moral law. While in the weekdays there is passivity to the muteness of the *Shekhinah*, on Shabbat, the *Deus Persona* descends from the infinite recesses to meet the *Shekhinah*.

The great eschatological vision of the union between *Shekhinah* and *Malka Kaddisha* is represented on Shabbat afternoon.¹⁵ This is the *Ze'ir Anpin*, the "Little Faces" represented by the third meal which takes place in the twilight of the day.¹⁶ The last meal is of joy but also parting because the unification of *Shekhinah* with *Malka Kaddisha* is never realized: it is in the realm of eschatology, a dream for the distant future.

(*ve-yanuḥu vah*). The theme of Shabbat morning is the active, revealed *Malka Kaddisha*, and the Shabbat is therefore in the masculine gender (*ve-yanuḥu vo*).

13. A significant difference between Naḥmanides' formulation and *U-vikkashtem mi-sham* is in their respective portrayals of man's response to the natural consciousness. While in Naḥmanides the natural consciousness can lead the individual to an unequivocal recognition of God's existence, in *U-vikkashtem mi-sham* the natural consciousness leads to a conflicted conclusion. Furthermore, to Naḥmanides, God's revelation is a direct result of the success of the natural consciousness in revealing God's presence, while in *U-vikkashtem mi-sham* this revelation occurs in the wake of its failure.

14. The following quotation is based on the unpublished lecture notes of Rabbi Robert Blau.

15. This unity is the theme of the *Shemoneh Esrei* of *Shabbat Minḥah* (*Attah eḥad ve-shimkha eḥad*) and the prepositional phrase referring to Shabbat in the plural (*ve-yanuḥu vam*), reflects the merger.

16. Referring to the *Shabbat zemer*, *Atkinu Se'udata*, recited during *se'udah shelishit* (the third Shabbat meal). The Rav did not explain the significance of the term "Little Faces."

Setting the Stage for *Ahdut ha-Maskil ve-ha-Muskal*

As *U-vikkashtem mi-sham* continues, the human being is overpowered by the Sinai experience and shocked by the strictness and inflexibility of the Sinai message. He oscillates between fear and awe, repulsion and attraction, as the revelational and natural consciousness draw him in different directions. Although reconciliation is initially found through *imitatio Dei*, the path does not end there, but rather in *devekut*, the most exalted stage of religious consciousness.

In an important chapter that seems to have been glossed over, the Rav argues that the model for *devekut* between man and God can be found in the union of the *Shekhinah* with the *Malka Kaddisha*. The following is an excerpt from chapter 11 of *U-vikkashtem mi-sham*:

Prophecy proclaimed that the eschatological mission of Judaism is the full realization of the singular name, venerated in the councils of the holy ones: "On that day the Lord will be One and His name will be One" (Zech. 14:9). . . . The Kabbalists, who hear the weeping of the downcast *Shekhinah*, had this vision of the End of Days: "He said to the moon that it would regain its glorious halo" (prayer of *kiddush levanah* [sanctification of the new moon]). The *sefirah* of *Malkhut* (kingship)—the *Shekhinah* that unites with the world—will rise to the heights of the *sefirah* of *Keter* (the crown). "For the sake of unifying the Holy One, Blessed Be He [i.e., the *Malka Kaddisha* – A.L.], and His *Shekhinah*, hidden and unknown,¹⁷

17. The Rav actually omitted a phrase from this kabbalistic meditation at this point: the "le-shem yihud"—"to unite the Name *yod-hei* and *vav-hei* in complete unity (for the sake of all Israel)." The meaning of this omitted phrase can be inferred from an observation that the Rav made elsewhere regarding the last two lines of the *Ashrei* prayer. Although most of *Ashrei* is taken from Psalm 145, the last line is taken from Psalm 115. In his comment, found in R. Zevi Yosef [Herschel] Reichman, *Reshimot Shi'urim al Massekhet Sukkah* (New York, 1989), 235-36, the Rav explains the reason for the appended verse as follows:

"My mouth will declare the praise of Hashem (*yod-hei-vav-hei*), and all flesh will bless His Holy Name (Ps. 145: 21)." The complete four-letter Name represents God in the messianic era when He will be universally recognized. At that time, God's praise declared by David, the Psalmist, will ultimately be shared with the rest of humanity. However, "we (Israel) will bless God (*yod-hei*) from this time and forever . . ." (Ps. 115:18). Prior to the messianic era, while evil still exists, God is represented only by the two letters *yod-hei*, because His Name and sovereignty on earth remains incomplete. (See Rashi on Ex. 17:16.) Israel alone among the nations bless Him now despite His hidden countenance.

In light of this explanation, *yod-hei* represents the hidden *Shekhinah*, *vav-hei* represents the *Malka Kaddisha*, and *yod-hei-vav-hei* represents their eschatological union. As God becomes One, His Name also becomes One.

for the sake of all Israel,” whisper the Kabbalists just before they perform a commandment. The agony and nightmare of the creation, its loneliness and desolation, are transferred to the bosom of the Infinite and are transformed, as it were, into the mysterious pains of the *Shekhinah*. . . . The *Shekhinah* itself, as it were, is in need of redemption, and man prays for the redemption of the *Shekhinah*, with which he too will be redeemed.

Those who instituted the *Kedushah* [the communal prayer whose theme is sanctification] added a prayer to Ezekiel’s prophecy [of “Blessed be the glory of the Lord from His place,” Ezek. 3:12]: “From His place may He turn toward us with compassion,” “From Your place, our King, may You appear and rule over us.” When will You leave Your place, which is separated and removed from the creature you made, and gather us unto You? Jewish thought interpreted the foundational principle of divine providence as cleaving to God, as the desolate reality holding fast to the living, eternal Reality. . . . In the eyes of the Halakhah, this cleaving is not a vague hope sunk in some faraway eschatology, but a clear notion that can be grasped by a halakhic apprehension and whose fulfillment is rooted in the real present. The eschatological “tomorrow” is linked by the Halakhah with the simple, dismal “today.”¹⁸

The Rav argues that, in an attenuated sense, the End of Days union between *Shekhinah* and *Malka Kaddisha* provides the model for *devekut* between God and the human being not in the indeterminate future but in the here and now.¹⁹

18. *And From There You Shall Seek*, pp. 82-83.

19. Note that the Rav regularly applied messianic/eschatological prophetic statements to the individual in contemporary times:

The curse of “and the Lord scattered thee among the nations” refers not only to a nation, but can also apply to the individual sinner. His capabilities, his spiritual powers, his emotions and his thoughts are without internal cohesion; he has no single axis around which his personality revolves. For such a person repentance leads to “the ingathering of the exiles,” meaning the reunification and concentration of the personality which has been shattered to smithereens as a consequence of sin. So says the second Rabbi of Lubavitch: “It is written: ‘If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee’ (Deut. 30:4) How the matter of ingathering applies to the individual self must be understood, for normally gathering and concentration pertain to the realm of the many. But Scripture spoke metaphorically in the phrase ‘be driven out unto the utmost parts,’ and the intention was the dispersion of the sparks of the light of the spirit (which is one) in many strange and very remote places, for ‘God’s light is man’s soul’ (Prov. 20:27). The human soul, born in God’s image, is fathomless and it contains in itself vast areas in which its sparks and particles can be dispersed so that ingathering and concentration are necessary also with every individual and this is

In everyday language, we refer to people or items as subjects or as objects. For example, if one writes a letter, the writer is the subject. He or she is engaged in a creative activity, while the letter is a passive object, the item being acted upon. This simple concept is applicable to virtually anything in the world. On a metaphysical level, one can conceptualize the *Malka Kaddisha* as pure “subject”: incorporeal intelligence. He acts and is not acted upon, He perceives and is not perceived, He is the knower and is not known. However, in the guise of *Shekhinah*, God is object. He is hidden in nature—in the Rav’s words, He resides “in the depths of thinghood.”

The union of *Malka Kaddisha* and *Shekhinah* can thus succinctly be described as the union of knower and the known. The subject-object dichotomy dissolves as God becomes One and His Name becomes One. The Aristotelian concept resonates pitch-perfect with the Kabbalistic.²⁰

Once the Rav suggests that this Divine union is the model for *devekut* between man and God, he did not need to search far to find the metaphysical basis for such an idea. The principle as it relates to God Himself appears in Maimonides in the *Mishneh Torah*, in *Laws of the Foundations of the Torah*, while in the *Guide for the Perplexed*, Maimonides “expanded this principle, introducing it into the realm of man.”²¹ The Rav posits a means for the human being to achieve an analogous union in the parallel realm.

As explained earlier, the natural consciousness described in *U-vikkashtem mi-sham* is a phenomenological portrait of the human being’s response to the *Shekhinah*, while the revelational consciousness is

the main point of the well-known phrase ‘the ingathering of the exiles. . . .’

There is great significance to this analogy which compares individual exile and the ingathering of the exiles of all of Israel in the political-geographical sense (to some extent, we see it happening now in our day, not exactly as prophesied, but there has occurred a beginning of the ingathering of Jews from all the remotest corners) to the idea of self-exile and the ingathering of the exiles in the metaphysical-spiritual sense as it applies to the sinner. Through repentance, the sinner also gathers together the dispersed sparks of his spiritual self in order to reintegrate his personality. Pinchas Peli, *Soloveitchik on Repentance: The Thought and Discourses of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik* (Jerusalem, 1980), 329-30.

David Shatz similarly notes that “while [the Rav] does refer to the notion of redemption in history, he often presents redemption as an event that takes place within the human psyche.” (“A Framework for Reading *Ish ha-Halakhah*,” in *Turim: Studies in Jewish History and Literature, Presented to Dr. Bernard Lander*, ed. Michael A. Shmidman [New York, 2007], 180). See, for example, *Redemption, Prayer and Talmud Torah* (*Tradition* 17:2 [Summer 1978]: 69) and *Family Redeemed*, ed. David Shatz and Joel B. Wolowelsky (New York, 2000), 73.

20. Presumably this is the reason that *aḥdut ha-maskil ve-ha-muskal* is specifically invoked as the basis for *devekut* in both *Nefesh ha-Hayyim* 4:6 and *Tanya*, chapter 2.

21. *And From There You Shall Seek*, 97.

the human response to the *Malka Kaddisha*. The Rav uses the Kabbalistic vision of the *Shekhinah-Malka Kaddisha* merger as a model for an analogous merger in the individual. Towards the conclusion of *U-vikkashtem mi-sham*, the Rav lays out the union of the natural consciousness as represented by the hidden *Shekhinah* and the revelational consciousness as represented by the revealed *Malka Kaddisha*.²²

The blurring of the gaps that separate the free personal moral law from the compulsory revelational command causes an experience of total freedom-- as if the divine commandment were identical with the demands of the creative rational consciousness. The commandment creates an uninterrupted passageway into secret spiritual foundations, and there man discovers that the revelational commandment actually expresses the longing and heart-stirrings of his hidden existence, which he had not been aware of until now. Man finds the revelational command within himself. Supra-rational necessity joins with the normative consciousness, and together they are absorbed into one ontological/supra-ontological consciousness. It is for this reason that the great Jewish sages were not tormented by the war against their instinctual drives, a war so common in the lives of the gentile sages. Devotion to religious life, even if it begins through compulsion, is maintained out of freedom, joy, and longing. "I will take pleasure in Your commandments, which I have loved; . . . this is my comfort in my needy state, as your words have given me life" (Ps. 119:47, 50). The revelational statutes are the individual's pleasures and sole comfort. He worships God out of love. [The act of] cleaving to God has absorbed into itself the absolute, supra-rational, supra-natural command.²³

Devekut finds its ultimate realization in this fusion.

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22. See Lawrence Kaplan "Motivim Kabbaliyyim Be-haguto shel ha-Rav Soloveitchik: Mashma'uttiyyim o Ituriyyim?," in *Emunah bi-Zemanim Mishtanim*, ed. Avi Sagi (Jerusalem, 1996), 75-94. Kaplan argues that when the Rav employed Kabbalistic themes in his written works, he did so primarily as a homiletic device. Indeed, in specific cases he examines his point is compelling. However, in light of the extended quote from chapter 11 of *U-vikkashtem mi-sham* above and the analysis here, Kaplan's generalization clearly does not apply to *U-vikkashtem mi-sham*—Kabbalah lies at the very heart of this essay.

23. *And From There You Shall Seek*, 128-29.