

Sivan: Loving Integration

Section 1: Sivan is where the heart is

Sefer Yetzirah (The Book of Formation) is the earliest extant work of Kabbalah. It is traditionally attributed to Abraham (18th Century BCE) and/or R' Akiva (2nd Century CE). In it, each month is associated with a Hebrew letter, a constellation, a part of the human body and a human emotion, sense, or faculty. These are the keys to the month's psycho-spiritual opportunities and challenges.

Sefer Yetzirah 5:7 (GRA version, tr. R' Aryeh Kaplan)

He made the letter Zayin king over motion
And He bound a crown to it
And He combined one with another
And with them He formed Gemini ('Twins') in the Universe
Sivan in the Year
And the left foot in the Soul
Male and female.

ספר יצירה ה:ז
המליך אות ז' בהלוך
וקשר לו כתר
וצרפן זה בזה
וצר בהם תאומים בעולם

וסיון בשנה
ורגל שמאל בנפש
זכר ונקבה

R' Tzadok haKohen Rabinowitz of Lublin (1823 – 1900), usually referred to as Rav Tzadok, was a major figure in Polish Chasidut. His classes on Shabbat and festivals were transcribed by his students and compiled in Pri Tzadik after his death. He ties something together for us here...

Pri Tzadik on Rosh Chodesh Sivan 3

The Zayin of Sivan includes the seven [lower] attributes which is the unification of the Holy Blessed One and the Shechinah.

פרי צדיק לראש חודש סיון ג
והז' כולל כל הז' מדות
והיינו זיווג
קוב"ה ושכינתיה

R' Moshe ben Ya'akov Cordovero (1522 – 1570), known by the acronym Ramak, was a significant teacher of Kabbalah in Safed (Tzfat). His work, Pardes Rimonim (Orchard of Pomegranates), was the first systematic summary of, and guide to, Kabbalah. How does he understand Tiferet (Beauty, Harmony), Malchut (Sovereignty, Synergy or Integration) and Shechinah?

Pardes Rimonim 23:13

The abundant flow and the upper light from Tiferet to Malchut, which is the souls of the righteous ones, completes Shechinah.

פרדס רמונים כג:יג
מלוי השכינה הוא השפע והאור העליון
הבא מן ת"ת אל המלכות
והם הם נשמות הצדיקים

R' Tzvi Elimelech Spira of Dinov (Poland and Hungary, 1783 – 1841) was the founder of the Dinov Chasidic dynasty. His widely beloved major work, the Bnei Yissascher, focuses on the spiritual background and work of each month. What do the twins of Gemini represent for him and what is the significance of their connection to Malchut?

<p>Bnei Yissascher on Sivan 1:3</p> <p>On the very day of Shavuot [the Israelites] were made into a sacred people in unity with their Creator, like twins, as it were. And also between the people, “Israel camped there” (Ex. 19:2) is singular because they were “united like one person” (Judges 20:11). And so the Zohar points out that 'Te'omim' (twins) can have the same numerical value as 'Malchut'.</p>	<p>בני יששכר על סיון א:ג</p> <p>ביום הזה דייקא נעשו עם הקודש באחדות עם קונם כביכול כתאומים וכן בינם לבין עצמם ויחן שם ישראל ולשון יחיד כאיש אחד חברים ועפ"י האמור בזהר תומי"ם חסר בגימטריה מלכות</p>
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How does the teaching below suggest we consider our spiritual work around Shavuot? How does this complement what we have learned above?

<p>Pardes Rimonim 21:8</p> <p>Sometimes all the Sefirot are united, and sometimes they are each in their own designated place... Pesach is Chesed, and Shavuot is Tiferet, Rosh Hashanah is Gevurah, Sukkot is Yesod and Shemini Atzeret is Malchut, and Chanukah and Purim are Netzach and Hod.</p>	<p>פרדס רמונים כא:ח</p> <p>פעמים כלם יחד ופעמים במקום מיוחד ... כי פסח הוא חסד ושבועות ת"ת ור"ה גבורה וסוכות יסוד וש"ע מלכות וחנוכה ופורים נצח והוד</p>
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Section 2: From ruthlessness to harmony to loving synergy

We have seen that Shavuot is the festival of Tiferet. The megillah (biblical scroll) read on Shavuot is the book of Ruth, which will help us understand our work at this season. Before we look at Ruth, we need to be aware of two highly disturbing back stories which provide the context for it. In each case, what are the root problems underlying the atrocious behavior of the townspeople?

<p>Genesis 19:1-9</p> <p>And the two angels came to Sodom at evening. And Lot sat in the gate of Sodom and Lot saw them, and rose up to meet them, and he fell down on his face to the earth, saying: 'Look, my lords, please turn aside, into your servant's house, and stay all night, and wash your feet, and you will rise up early, and go on your way.'</p> <p>And they said: 'No, we will stay in the street.' And he pressed them greatly and they turned to him, and entered his house and he made them a feast, and he baked matzot, and they ate.</p>	<p>בראשית יט:א-ט</p> <p>וַיָּבֹאוּ שְׁנֵי הַמַּלְאָכִים סָדְמָה בְּעֶרְבַּי וְלוֹט יֹשֵׁב בְּשַׁעַר־סְדֹם וַיִּרְאֵהוּ לֹט וַיָּקָם לִקְרֹאתָם וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ אֲפָיִם אֶרְצָה וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה נְאֻמְדָּנִי סוּרוּ נָא אֵל־בֵּית עַבְדְּכֶם וְלִינֹו וְרוּחְצוּ רַגְלֵיכֶם וְהִשְׁכַּמְתֶּם וְהִלַּכְתֶּם לְדֹרְכְכֶם וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹא כִי בְרוּחֹב נָלִין וַיִּפְצַר־בָּם מְאֹד וַיִּסְרוּ אֵלָיו וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל־בֵּיתוֹ וַיַּעַשׂ לָהֶם מִשְׁתֶּה וּמִצּוֹת אָפֶה וַיֹּאכְלוּ טָרֶם יִשְׁכְּבוּ וְאֲנֹשֵׁי הָעִיר אֲנֹשֵׁי סְדֹם</p>
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<p>But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, from young to old, all the people from every part of the city, surrounded the house. And they called to Lot, saying to him: 'Where are the men that came into you tonight? Bring them out to us, and we will know them.'</p> <p>And Lot went out to them, to the door, and shut the door after him.</p> <p>And he said: 'Please, my brothers, do not commit such evil.</p> <p>Look, I have two daughters that have not known man. Please, let me bring them out to you, and you do with them as is good in your eyes, but to these men do nothing, since they've come under the shadow of my roof.'</p> <p>And they said: 'Stand back.' And they said: 'This one came here as an alien, and now he's playing the judge! Now will we deal worse with you, than with them.'</p>	<p>נִסְבּוּ עַל-הַבַּיִת מִנְעַר וְעַד-זָקֵן כָּל-הָעָם מִקְצָה וַיִּקְרְאוּ אֶל-לוֹט וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ אֵיךְ הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר-בָּאוּ אֵלֶיךָ הַלַּיְלָה הוֹצִיאֵם אֵלֵינוּ וְנִדְעָה אֹתָם</p> <p>וַיֹּצֵא אֲלֵהֶם לוֹט הַפֶּתַח וַהֲדִלַת סָגַר אַחֲרָיו וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-נָא אַחֵי תִרְעוּ</p> <p>הִנֵּה-נָא לִי שְׁתֵּי בָנוֹת אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יָדְעוּ אִישׁ אוֹצִיאָה־נָא אֹתָהֶן אֵלֵיכֶם וַעֲשׂוּ לָהֶן כַּטּוֹב בְּעֵינֵיכֶם וְרַק לְאֲנָשִׁים הָאֵל אֶל-תַּעֲשׂוּ דָבָר כִּי-עַל-כֵּן בָּאוּ בְצַל קִרְתִּי וַיֹּאמְרוּ גִשְׁת־הֲלָאָה וַיֹּאמְרוּ הָאֶחָד בְּאֶלְגֹּר וַיִּשְׁפֹּט שְׁפוֹט עֲתָה נִרְע לְךָ מֵהֵם</p>
<p><i>According to the second opinion here, what is the sefirotic quality that Sodom embodies, in its harshest, least healthy manifestation?</i></p>	
<p>Mishnah, Ethics of the Fathers 5:10</p> <p>Someone who says, “what is mine is mine, and what is yours is yours,” this is an average temperament. And there are some who say that is the temperament of Sodom.</p>	<p>משנה אבות הי</p> <p>האומר שלי שלי ושלך שלך זו מדה בינונית ויש אומרים זו מדת סדום</p>
<p><i>Our second story, from the end of the Book of Judges, is the tale of a Levite from the land of Ephraim, whose concubine had deserted him, for her father's house in Bet Lechem. He went to woo her, and left with her. On his subsequent travels with his concubine and servant, he refuses to stay in a non-Jewish city, but insists on continuing until he reaches the Benjamite city of Gibeah. But nobody from Gibeah takes the Levite into their house, until an old man, also from Ephraim, appears and invites them in...</i></p>	
<p>Judges 19:22-29</p> <p>While they were enjoying themselves, the men of the town, a worthless lot, had gathered about the house and were pounding on the door. They called to the aged owner of the house, “Bring out the man who has come into your house, so that we can know him.”</p> <p>The owner of the house went out and said to them, “Please, my brothers, do not commit such evil. Since this man has entered my house, do not perpetrate this outrage.</p>	<p>שופטים יט:כב-כט</p> <p>המָה מִיִּטְיָבִים אֶת-לִבָּם וְהִנֵּה אַנְשֵׁי הָעִיר אַנְשֵׁי בְנֵי-בְלִיעַל נִסְבּוּ אֶת-הַבַּיִת מִתְדַפְּקִים עַל-הַדָּלַת וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל-הָאִישׁ בְּעַל הַבַּיִת הַזֶּקֶן לֹאמֹר הוֹצֵא אֶת-הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר-בָּא אֶל-בֵּיתְךָ וְנִדְעֵנוּ</p> <p>וַיֹּצֵא אֲלֵיהֶם הָאִישׁ בְּעַל הַבַּיִת וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם אֶל-אַחֵי אֶל-תִּרְעוּ נָא אַחֲרַי אֲשֶׁר-בָּא הָאִישׁ הַזֶּה אֶל-בֵּיתִי אֶל-תַּעֲשׂוּ אֶת-הַנְּבִלָה הַזֹּאת</p>

<p>Look, here is my virgin daughter, and his concubine. Let me bring them out to you. Afflict them, do with them whatever is good in your eyes; but don't do this outrageous thing to this man.”</p>	<p>הַנְּהָ בְּתוּלָהּ וּפִילְגֶשֶׁהוּ אוֹצִיאָהָ נָא אוֹתָם וְעֲנֵנוּ אוֹתָם וְעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם הַטּוֹב בְּעֵינֵיכֶם וְלֹאִישׁ הַזֶּה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ דָבָר הַנְּבִלָה הַזֹּאת</p>
<p><i>The story continues with the brutal gang-rape and murder of the concubine, whom the text gives no voice. The Levite awakens in the morning, and, discovering her dead, carries her home. He then cuts her into twelve pieces and sends one to each tribe, explaining what happened. All of the tribes gather against the Benjamites and a massive civil war ensues, in which tens of thousands of Israelites die. The Prophet Samuel anointed the first two kings of Israel, Saul and David. According to the Talmud (Bava Batra 14b), he wrote the Book of Judges, his own book (Samuel I and II), which describes the establishment of the monarchy and its tumultuous early days, and Ruth, which describes the process of creating Malchut from a very specific perspective, as we will see. The above story is bracketed by the formula below, which is also the last verse of the Book of Judges.</i></p>	
<p>Judges 21:25 In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes.</p>	<p>שׁוֹפְטִים כֹּאֲכֹה בְּיָמִים הֵהֵם אִין מֶלֶךְ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל אִישׁ הַיָּשָׁר בְּעֵינָיו יַעֲשֶׂה</p>
<p><i>What does the opening of Ruth suggest about Chesed, Tiferet and Malchut on the individual, familial and national levels, and how does all this relate to our two back-stories?</i></p>	
<p>Ruth 1:1 And it came to pass in the days when the judges judged, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bet Lechem in Judah went to sojourn in the field of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons.</p>	<p>רוּת א:א וַיְהִי בַיָּמִים שִׁפְטֵי הַשְּׁפֹטִים וַיְהִי רָעַב בְּאֶרֶץ וַיֵּלֶךְ אִישׁ מִבֵּית לַחֵם יְהוּדָה לְגוּר בְּשָׂדֵי מוֹאָב הוּא וְאִשְׁתּוֹ וּשְׁנֵי בָנָיו</p>
<p><i>Like the books of Samuel I and II, the Tree of Life and the Omer, the book of Ruth is about a process of creating Malchut. Where do we begin, as always?</i></p>	
<p>Midrash Ruth Rabbah 2:14 R' Zeira taught: This scroll [of Ruth] teaches us nothing about ritual purity and impurity, or about what is forbidden and what is permitted. So why was it written? To teach how good is the reward of those who do acts of Loving-Oneness.</p>	<p>רוּת רבה ב:יד א"ר זעירא מגלה זו אין בה לא טומאה ולא טהרה ולא איסור ולא היתר ולמה נכתבה ללמדך כמה שכר טוב לגומלי חסדים</p>

Megillat Ruth takes us on a journey through the seven lower Sefirot, fixing them one by one – just like the period of the Omer, which the book is largely set within. The protagonist of Verse 1, Elimelech, dies in Verse 3, and after that his two sons marry Moabite women. After ten years, they too die, leaving Elimelech's widow, Naomi, to grieve her many severe losses (an experience of Gevurah).

Naomi decides to head for home, Bet Lechem, and she tells her two Moabite daughters-in-law to leave her, for she cannot offer them any future. One of them, Orpah, kisses her goodbye. The other one, Ruth, becomes an archetype of Tiferet and transforms Naomi's despair into hope. Her words become the blueprint – both spiritually and legally – for conversion to Judaism. What do they contain, and what do they omit?

Ruth 1:16-18

And Ruth said:
 'Don't ask me to leave you
 And to return from following after you
 For where you go,
 I will go and where you lodge,
 I will lodge your people shall be my people,
 and your G!d my G!d
 Where you die, will I die,
 And there will I be buried
 the Eternal do so to me, and more also, if anything
 but death separates you and me.'

רות א:טז-יח

וּתְאֹמַר רוּת
 אֶל־תִּפְגַּעֵי־בִי לְעִזְבְּךָ
 לָשׁוּב מֵאַחֲרָיִךְ
 כִּי אֶל־אֲשֶׁר תִּלְכִּי אֵלַיךְ
 וּבֵאֲשֶׁר תִּלְיִנִי אֶלְיוֹן
 עִמָּךְ עַמִּי
 וְאֶלְקֶיךָ אֱלֹקֵי
 בְּאֲשֶׁר תָּמוּתִי אָמוּת
 וְשָׁם אֶקָּבֵר
 כֹּה יַעֲשֶׂה יְקוּק לִי וְכֹה יִסְיֵף
 כִּי הַמָּוֶת יִפְרִיד בֵּינִי וּבֵינֶךָ

Ruth returns with Naomi to Bet Lechem and joins those poor people who glean the leftover barley during the harvest (See Lev. 23:22). She happens to glean in a field belonging to Boaz, a wealthy relative of Naomi. Boaz insists that Ruth continue to glean in his field, and guarantees her safety, success, and nourishment for the entire harvest. Ruth is overwhelmed with gratitude, which precipitates this exchange. From the story, and these words below, which of the Sefirot are manifesting, and being repaired, by Ruth and Boaz's behavior?

Ruth 2:10-13

Then she fell on her face, and bowed down to the ground, and said to him: 'Why have I found favor in your sight, that you should recognize me, seeing as I am a foreigner?'
 And Boaz answered and said to her: 'It's been entirely told to me, all that you have done for your mother in law since the death of your husband and how you left your father and your mother, and your homeland, and you've come to a people that you didn't know before.
 May the Eternal repay your work, and may your reward be completed, from the Eternal, the G!d of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.'

רות ב:יג

וּתִפֹּל עַל־פְּנֵיהָ וּתִשְׁתַּחוּ אַרְצָה
 וּתְאֹמַר אֵלָיו מְדוּעַ מָצָאתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ
 לְהַכִּירֵנִי וְאֲנֹכִי נֹכְרִיהָ
 וַיַּעַן בְּעֵז וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ
 הֲגַד הַגֵּד לִי
 כָּל אֲשֶׁר־עָשִׂיתְ אֶת־חַמּוֹתֶיךָ
 אַחֲרֵי מוֹת אִישֶׁךָ
 וּתַעֲזֹבִי אֲבִיךָ וְאִמֶּךָ וְאֶרֶץ מוֹלְדֹתֶךָ
 וּתִלְכִּי אֶל־עַם אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָדַעְתָּ
 תָּמוּל שְׁלֹשׁוֹם
 יִשְׁלַם יְקוּק פְּעֻלָּךְ
 וּתְהִי מִשְׁכַּרְתְּךָ שְׁלָמָה
 מֵעַם יְקוּק אֱלֹקֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
 אֲשֶׁר־בָּאת לְחַסּוֹת תַּחַת־כַּנְּפָיו

<p>Then she said: 'Let me find favor in your sight, my lord, because you have comforted me, and because you have spoken to the heart of your maidservant, even though I am not so much as one of your maidservants.'</p>	<p>וְתֹאמֶר אֲמָצְאֶחֶן בְּעֵינֶיךָ אֲדֹנָי כִּי נְחַמְתָּנִי וְכִי דִבַּרְתָּ עַל־לֵב שִׁפְחָתְךָ וְאֲנֹכִי לֹא אֶהְיֶה כְּאַחַת שִׁפְחֹתֶיךָ</p>
<p><i>Naomi tells Ruth to go to Boaz on the threshing floor one night and uncover his feet. He promises to become her redeemer and husband, on the condition that the one closer kinsman does not claim her first. He tells her to “stay for the night” (ליני הלילה – referencing back to Sodom) and she spends the night “at his feet” (מרגלותיו). What does R' Yochanan suggest is the significance of this moment, and why is it an essential aspect of the story?</i></p>	
<p>Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 19b R' Yochanan said: Joseph's strong [temptation] was but a petty trial to Boaz.</p>	<p>תלמוד בבלי – סנהדרין יטב: אמר רבי יוחנן תוקפו של יוסף ענוותנותו של בועז</p>
<p><i>The next morning, Boaz swiftly fulfills his promise. He redeems the property of Elimelech and Ruth by the rite of Levirite Marriage ('Yibum' – see Deut. 25:5-10), “so that the name of the deceased may not disappear from among his kinsmen and from the gate of his home town” (Boaz in Ruth 4:9). What is the significance of Boaz's words here and of the townspeople's blessing to Ruth, below?</i></p>	
<p>Ruth 4:11 May the Eternal make the woman who is coming into your house like Rachel and Leah, both of whom built up the House of Israel! Prosper in Ephrattah and perpetuate your name in Bet Lechem!</p>	<p>רות ד:יא יְתֹוּ יִקְוֶה אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה הַבָּאָה אֶל־בֵּיתְךָ כְּרַחֵל וְכִלְאָה אֲשֶׁר בָּנוּ שְׁתֵּיהֶם אֶת־בַּיִת יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעֲשֵׂה־חַיִל בְּאַפְרָתָה וּקְרָא־שֵׁם בְּבֵית לָחֶם</p>
<p>Ruth 4:16-17 And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse to it. And the women her neighbors gave it a name, saying: 'There is a son born to Naomi' and they called his name Obed he is the father of Jesse, the father of David.</p>	<p>רות ד:טז-יז וּתְקַח נְעָמִי אֶת הַיֶּלֶד וּתְשִׁתְּהוּ בְחִיקָה וְתִהְיֶה לוֹ לְאִמָּנָה וּתְקַרְאֶנָּה לוֹ הַשְּׂכֵנֹת שֵׁם לְאִמֹר יֶלֶד בֶּן לְנְעָמִי וּתְקַרְאֶנָּה שְׁמוֹ עֹבֵד הוּא אָבִי יֵשׁוּ אָבִי דָוִד</p>
<p><i>The Zohar (Splendor or Radiance) is the foundational work of Kabbalah or Jewish mysticism. The Zohar first appeared in Spain in the 13th century, and was published by R' Moses de Leon (1240 – 1305). De Leon ascribed the work to R' Shimon bar Yochai, an attribution which some take literally, others deny, and still others find to be partially true. Despite this controversy existing from its inception, the Zohar became extremely influential, even in matters of Halachah, and profoundly influenced the Chasidic movement.</i></p>	

<p>Zohar 1:168b</p> <p>[Malchut] has nothing of its own.</p>	<p>זוהר א קסח:ב</p> <p>דלית ליה מגרמיה כלום</p>
<p>Pri Tzadik on Parshat Chayei Sara</p> <p>Essentially, someone who recognizes that they have nothing of their own is made into a chariot for the quality of Malchut.</p>	<p>פרי צדיק על חיי שרה</p> <p>ועיקר מי שנעשה מרכבה למדת מלכות הוא על ידי שמכיר דלית ליה מגרמיה כלום</p>
<p><i>In conclusion, let's consider the sefirotic and psychological significance of the Chernobyler Rebbe's advice concerning our work in receiving the Torah...</i></p>	
<p>Me'or Einayim on Parshat Yitro</p> <p>Our blessed rabbis taught (Eiruvim 54a) that the Torah is given as a gift to someone who makes themselves like a wilderness, on which everyone tramples. And this is necessary to receive [the Torah] every Shavuot, to be like a wilderness and not to forget what one learns...And a person should request from the blessed G!d to “make my soul like dust to everyone” (Amidah).</p>	<p>מאור עינים על פרשת יתרו</p> <p>דרשו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה מי שמשים עצמו כמדבר שהכל דשין בו התורה ניתנה לו במתנה ודבר זה צריך לקבל בכל שבועות שיהיה כמדבר ולא ישכח התורה שלומד ... וצריך לבקש מהשי"ת ונפשי כעפר לכל תהיה</p>