**Chapter Four: The Intellectual Infrastructure of the *Pachad Yitzchak* Series as Reflected in its Sources**

Rabbi Hutner’s thought is not presented as a systematic monograph but rather emerges in the form of discourses written at different times. His ideas are scattered among his writings. In addition, his writing is often esoteric, written in a manner that requires the unveiling and reconstruction of his thought by developing arguments into conclusions beyond those that appear explicitly in the text and linking together arguments scattered in different places. This type of analysis is, by definition, hermeneutical and speculative and its validity rests upon the accumulation of sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the interpretation is reasonable. This is true, all the more so, in the case of hermeneutics informed by trends of thought and sources not revealed within the text but assumed to be reflected within it. The interpretation of Rabbi Hutner’s thought is dependent therefore on the implementation of a kind of code according to which his thought is deciphered.

The purpose of this chapter is to reconstruct what I call “the intellectual infrastructure” of Rabbi Hutner’s thought: its basic concepts, their interconnectivity, foundational ideas, and consequent focal points. By the term “intellectual infrastructure”, I mean a system of fundamental ideas that create an internal logic, coherence, and essential validation of both the composite whole and each of its individual components. This type of infrastructure is a key to understanding any system of thought. In the absence of one of its components, a significantly different system of thought will emerge and incomplete or incorrect interpretations of it will be created. In effect, the very existence of such an infrastructure should distinguish between systematic and un-systematic thought. In reconstructing the intellectual infrastructure of Rabbi Hutner’s thought, I intend to demonstrate that it is indeed systematic in its intellectual structure, even when its wording is not. We cannot properly assess the nature of the characteristics and subjects in Rabbi Hutner’s thought, in isolation, without first clarifying its focal points and the interconnectivity of its fundamental components, and thus, an understanding of the intellectual infrastructure supporting Rabbi Hutner’s thought is essential to any discussion of his work.[[1]](#footnote-1)

The framework of the general world-view reflected in the *Pachad Yitzhak* books can be formulated by means of the following list of propositions: (1) The universe has a purpose; (2) In this world, the purpose of creation is not realized fully or consistently, but rather conditionally and intermittingly; (3) The realization of purpose in this world is prevented by the prevailing rift between the two components of existence, which is dualistic in its nature: the higher spheres and the lower spheres; (5) The purpose of the world can nonetheless be realized conditionally by man who is a unique entity capable of bridging the rift between the higher and lower spheres; (6) The world exists in perpetual motion heading toward its ultimate realization, in which its purpose will be completely and consistently realized by the complete traversal of the dualistic rift in the world to come.

The framework of Rabbi Hutner’s thought comprises two principles: the teleological principle (propositions 1,2,5) and the dualistic principle (propositions 3,4). In this regard, and regarding many of the concepts and ideas which form the basis for his intellectual developments, Rabbi Hutner’s intellectual infrastructure is primarily influenced by two central thinkers: the Maharal of Prague, whose thought forms the basis of the version of the dualistic principle in the *Pachad Yitzchak* series, and Moshe Chaim Luzzatto, whose systematic writings are the source of the structure of the teleological principle in the *Pachad Yitzchak* books. However, both principles underwent important changes in the context of Rabbi Hutner’s thought, as a result of the way in which he interpreted, developed, and combined them. The analysis of the intellectual infrastructure in this chapter will be conducted by examining this framework. I will begin with an analysis of the teleological principle, in which context, I will present the purpose of the world and man in Rabbi Hutner’s thought against the backdrop of Luzzatto’s thought. Afterward, I will discuss the dualistic principle against the backdrop of Maharal’s thought, the understanding of reality and mankind in Rabbi Hutner’s thought, and the way man achieves the realization of purpose. I will conclude with a discussion of Rabbi Hutner’s eschatological viewpoint, which completes the framework and exemplifies both principles and the way they coalesce. In this context, I will present another important source of influence, Nachmanides, from whom he derived this outlook.

**4.1 The Teleological Principle: Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto (Ramchal) and Rabbi Hutner**

Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto (Ramchal, 1707 -- 1746), one of the most influential thinkers in the history of Jewish thought in the modern period, was a prolific author in a variety of genres. In addition to his philosophical works, he wrote pedagogical treatises, poetry, plays, and more. His philosophical works can be divided into Kabbalistic and non-Kabbalistic writings. The former include works written in Kabbalistic language and engaged in the summary, explication, and development of the Kabbalistic traditions that preceded him. The latter include his most famous work, the homiletical treatise, *Mesillat Yesharim*, as well as systematic theological treatises that set forth his theories on theological questions that are in effect a reformulation of his Kabbalistic thought in non-Kabbalistic language.

Ramchal is mentioned by name in the *Pachad Yitzchak* books altogether four times, three of which are in reference to *Mesillat Yesharim*.[[2]](#footnote-2) The fourth reference is to the work “Ma’amar Hageulah”. The reference to this work is unusual because it is a treatise replete with Kabbalistic terminology, the kind of work that Rabbi Hutner usually refrained from citing. In fact, this is the only case in which he referred to an explicitly Kabbalistic text, with the exception of *Nefesh HaChaim*, which holds a unique status in the Lithuanian-Orthodox canon.[[3]](#footnote-3) The Hutnerian apocrypha includes additional references to a wider variety of Ramchal’s writings, including *Derech Hashem*, *Five Hundred and Fifteen Prayers,* and *Adir Bamarom*. [[4]](#footnote-4)

Of the few cases in which Rabbi Hutner explicitly references Ramchal’s works, none involve a fundamental or significant philosophic argument based upon this source. Nonetheless, Ramchal’s influence on Rabbi Hutner’s thought is readily perceivable. As we will see, a significant number of the ideas constituting *Pachad Yitzhak*’s intellectual infrastructure are taken from Ramchal’s theology. These are expressed in non-Kabbalistic language, closest to the way they are formulated in the *Pachad Yitzchak* books, in Ramchal’s two systematic theological works: *Da’at Tevunot* and *Derech Hashem*. In addition to the parallel content, which we will examine shortly, there is significant historical evidence that Rabbi Hutner was acquainted with Ramchal’s works, including both *Derech Hashem* and *Da’at Tevunot*. I have noted that one of the few references to Ramchal in the *Pachad Yitzhak* series is to the essay “Ma’amar Hageulah”, which appears in the second discourse of the volume on Shavuot. During Rabbi Hutner’s lifetime, “Ma’amar Hageulah” existed in print only within the same volume as one of the aforementioned works, *Da’at Tevunot*, in the edition printed in Warsaw in 1889/1890, in wide circulation among those who studied the works of Ramchal in Lithuania. It was republished along with *Derech Hashem* and other small works in a volume entitled *Yalkut Yediot Ha’emet*, by Rabbi Yosef Begun in Warsaw in 1936.

Rabbi Hutner’s affinity for Ramchal’s thought is also revealed in his connections with the most prominent publishing projects of his works, founded in the last half of the twentieth century. In the 1970s, Rabbis Chaim Friedlander and Yosef Spinner began the project of editing, annotating, and publishing Ramchal’s Kabbalistic and systematic works. The first work that they published was *Da’at Tevunot*. Rabbi Friedlander was one of the most prominent architects of the Mussar movement in the Israeli yeshivot. I have been informed by members of this family that he, along with other prominent figures, belonged to a circle of Lithuanian thinkers that gathered around Rabbi Hutner during his final years in Israel. At the end of the introduction to the edition of *Da’at Tevunot*, Rabbi Friedlander wrote: “My many thanks and blessings to *HaRav Hagaon* [the eminent scholar] Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner *shlita* [long may he live], and the Rav Hagaon Rabbi Yoel Kluft *shlita,* and *Harav Hagaon* Shlomo Wolbe, *shlita,* for reading my annotations and making insightful and constructive comments and for supporting and strengthening me in this endeavor.”[[5]](#footnote-5) Rabbi Spinner also mentioned Rabbi Hutner in his forward to the edition of *Derech Hashem* that he published in 1996, regarding the way Ramchal’s thought should be studied.[[6]](#footnote-6) These works, *Da’at Tevunot* and *Derech Hashem* will be used for comparison with Rabbi Hutner’s thought.

Ramchal’s two systematic theological treatises, *Da’at Tevunot* and *Derech Hashem* open with the question of the purpose of creation, which is the underlying framework for his entire system. Like Rabbi Hutner, who followed in his footsteps, Ramchal discussed two types of purpose: anthropocentric, whose focal point is man, and theocentric, whose focal point is God.[[7]](#footnote-7) According to Garb, the question of the purpose of the world is “a question that does not appear in effect in the Bible and is rare even in Rabbinic literature”. In Ramchal’s discussion of this question, “there is great innovation not only on the level of details but also in the form of more innovative questions”. The innovative aspect is especially prominent with regard to the anthropocentric purpose, for although arguments similar to those comprising its intellectual components can be found in the work of previous Jewish thinkers, “the whole, greater than its parts, is not found in any work before Ramchal”. Ramchal’s detailed discussion of the question of purpose, according to Garb, is part of “Ramchal’s tendency to ask the big questions” from which “his influence on future generations is derived”. [[8]](#footnote-8) One of the thinkers who was influenced by him in this matter was Rabbi Isaac Hutner. We will begin our discussion with the anthropocentric purpose.

**4.1.1 The Anthropocentric Purpose in Ramchal’s Theological Writings**

Despite the accepted differentiation between the anthropocentric and theocentric purposes, in a way, it is correct to say that this distinction exists only in the second register. In the first register, both are at root theocentric because both purposes revolve around the idea that the universe is a kind of necessary precondition for the actualization of God’s essential qualities.[[9]](#footnote-9) The anthropocentric purpose approach maintains that because God is good, he does good. To do good there must be recipients of goodness. Reality was created so that God would be able to do good for the created beings. The actualization of this purpose is dependent upon man, a particular created being with a unique capacity -- freedom of will. In certain circumstances, the actualization is also dependent upon the existence of evil, so that man will be able to choose between good and evil because, for the benefit to be complete, it is not enough that the recipient receives it, but also that he earns it by his own abilities. For this reason, God created a type of recipient who is capable of “working” by means of choosing between good and evil and thus earning the beneficence that he thereby deserves.

In his early systematic treatise, *Da’at Tevunot*, Ramchal discusses beneficence in a manner that indicates that he is referring to the showering of man with goodness or *oneg* (pleasure). In this context, he explains that it is preferable for the receiver to earn the beneficence that he receives because of the disadvantage accompanying the receipt of a free gift, the “bread of shame”. When a person needs to receive something from charity there is an element of shame involved which detracts from the pleasure that he derives from receiving the benefit. Therefore, for the benefit to be complete, it must be received by right, not by charity.[[10]](#footnote-10)

In his later work, *Derech Hashem*, Ramchal expands on the importance of earning benefits, which he connects to the attainment of perfection. According to Ramchal, there is no greater benefit than attaining perfection. In this context, he explains that the recipient needs to earn the benefit that he receives because of self-perfection. When a person’s perfection is bestowed on him, it is not of his essence, but rather an incidental characteristic dependent upon an external factor. However, when a person acquires perfection, it is both truly his and closer to true perfection. Therefore, the benefit, which is perfection, must come to a person from his own efforts, not for free.[[11]](#footnote-11)

The difference between the two formulations must be noted. If we closely examine the idea of the “bread of shame”, it is clear that the receipt of something for nothing is neither negative itself nor intrinsically disadvantageous, but rather is accompanied by the negative feeling of shame. When the two sides of the experience are added up, the result is diminished pleasure. However, in the second explanation, perfection bestowed by an external force is deficient in and of itself because it negates the possibility of perfection in its true form.

**4.1.2 The Anthropocentric Purpose in the *Pachad Yitzhak* Books**

The anthropocentric purpose in Rabbi Hutner’s thought is identical in structure to that of Ramchal. Like Ramchal, Rabbi Hutner describes the dynamic in which God wants to benefit mankind. However, in place of “benefit”, Rabbi Hutner uses the term “*hessed*” (lovingkindness or charity). An examination of the concept of *hessed* as developed in the thought of Rabbi Hutner, based on the foundation laid by Ramchal, along with several other supplementary concepts including “*oneg*” (pleasure), “*emet*” (truth), and “imitatio Dei” (imitation of God) will help us to understand one of the most important currents in his thought.

The concept of “*hessed*” was developed in Rabbi Hutner’s thought primarily in the discourses on the Tishrei holidays, especially the first discourses appearing in the volume *Pachad Yitzchak* on Rosh Hashana. The first four discourses in this volume are called “The Essay on *Hessed*”. This is one of Rabbi Hutner’s earliest writings, published in 1951, in the framework of the limited and anonymous printings of his work.[[12]](#footnote-12) One of the methods most characteristic of Rabbi Hutner’s thought is the use of pairs of concepts to contrast or differentiate ideas.[[13]](#footnote-13) He used two concept pairs in the framework of his discussion of the concept “*hessed*”: the distinction between “*hessed*/*vittur* (yielding)” and “*hessed*/mishpat (law)” and the distinction between “*hessed*/*hithavut* (becoming)” and “*hessed*/hanhaga (administration)”. There is a basis for saying that the first pair constitutes the most significant axis in Rabbi Hutner’s thought because its meanings serve as a basis for many of the central philosophical arguments that he develops.

The *hessed/vittur* – *hessed/mishpat* concepts were first presented in the fourth discourse of *Pachad Yitzhak* on Rosh Hashana, one of Rabbi Hutner’s earliest discourses. However, they acquired a more mature formulation in a passage repeated often in various discourses, as a basis for philosophical arguments built upon it. Garb identified the connection between this concept pair and Ramchal’s thought and noted that “Ramchal’s influence is very prominent in Rabbi Hutner’s discussion about the shift from *hessed/vittur* to *hessed/mishpat* as the foundational moment in the creation of the nation of Israel and the giving of the Torah. The imprint of the first argument [the anthropocentric purpose] in the creation of the world is perceptible here.”[[14]](#footnote-14) Rabbi Hutner wrote:

הך שאמרו חכמים דעשרים וששה פעמים “כי לעולם חסדו”[[15]](#footnote-15) [...] “הם כנגד עשרים וששה דורות שברא הקב”ה בעולמו ולא נתן להם תורה, וזן אותם בחסדו”, שאין הכונה בזה כי במתן תורה נתקטן חסדו יתברך כביכול. כי בשום אופן לא ניתן להאמר שקודם מתן תורה ניזון העולם בחסדו יתברך, ואחר כך יש מיעוט במדת חסדו חלילה, אלא שהכונה היא דחסדו זה שלפני מתן תורה הוא חסד של ויתור. אפשר לו לראובן לפרנס את שמעון באחד משני אופנים: או בתתו לו הוצאותיו יום יום, או בסדרו לו עסק שיעשה בעצמו כדי פרנסתו. בשטחיות, האופן הראשון של נתינת כדי מחיתו הוא חסד יותר גדול, כי באופן השני מקבל הוא שמעון מה שהרויח בעצמו. אבל בפנימיות, הנותן לחברו מקום להרויח הוא מעמיק לו את חסדו. מובנו של החסד של עשרים וששה דורות לפני מתן תורה, הוא שעד מתן תורה לא הי' לו כביכול עסקים הנותנים מקום להרויח את קיום העולמות בדרך שכירות, ועל כן החסד של העשרים וששה דורות הללו הוא חסד של ויתור. ממתן תורה ואילך החסד מתעמק לאין ערוך. מכאן ואילך מרויחים קיום העולמות בדרך שכירות. אפשר לקבל משרה בעסקיו כביכול. עשרים וששה דורות ניזונים בחסד ויתור, ואחר כך מתגלה חסד משפט (פחד יצחק, שבועות ח/ד).[[16]](#footnote-16)

*Hessed/vittur* refers to the gift bestowed by the Creator, completely irrespective of the receiver, his identity, his behavior, and even the degree of his willingness or desire to receive the gift. The receiver in the paradigm of *hessed/vittur* is a passive agent. *Hessed/mishpat*, in contrast, refers to a bestowal based on reward. It is dependent on the behavior of the recipient and thus also on his distinct identity.[[17]](#footnote-17) In a manner that seems counter-intuitive, Rabbi Hutner argues that the *hessed* embedded within *hessed/mishpat* is more profound than that embedded within *hessed/vittur*, and this is because *hessed* is deepened with the granting of the possibility to earn it. In this context, we encounter a recurring rhetorical pattern in Rabbi Hutner’s writing: the presentation of what he claims is the initial, common, or superficial understanding of something, and afterward its rejection for the sake of a secondary, deeper, or more precise understanding.

What is the meaning of the deepening of *hessed* in the transition from *hessed/vittur* to *hessed/mishpat*? In the framework of the anthropocentric purpose in Ramchal’s thought, it is very clear that the additional element in the transition from a benefit bestowed freely to a benefit that a person receives as the result of his actions is an addition to the benefit itself. However, the quotation above from *Pachad Yitzchak* expresses something closer akin to the first of the eight degrees of charity as formulated by Maimonides, according to which the highest form of charity is not bestowing a benefit but rather freeing a person from dependence on others, by increasing his capacity to support himself.[[18]](#footnote-18) In other words, the deepening of *hessed* is the capacity to earn, not the earning itself. However, this is not altogether clear. The metaphor that Rabbi Hutner brings, about Reuven who supports Shimon, is appropriate to the idea embodied in the first of the eight levels of charity. However, it does not altogether correspond to that which it purports to represent. The aforesaid divine *hessed*, according to the end of the quotation, is the existence of the universe. In the beginning, *hessed* was the existence of the universe for free and after the transition to the deeper *hessed,* it became the existence of the universe in law (*mishpat*). Thus, it follows that the addition lies within the benefit itself, similar to the formulation of the true perfection in Ramchal’s thought: the existence of the universe that is earned has an intrinsic, qualitative, advantage over the existence of the universe that is free. The meaning of the deepening of *hessed* here is not entirely clear. Furthermore, it is also not altogether clear why *hessed/mishpat* is considered *hessed* and not simply *mishpat* if its meaning is that a person earns through strict justice that which he receives.

An examination of the various appearances of the concept of *hessed* in Rabbi Hutner’s thought, especially in its development in the second concept pair, will provide us with a hermeneutical approach to the meaning of this concept within his thought, which will shed light on these anomalies. Rabbi Hutner formulates a further differentiation between both types of *hessed*: one relates to the very essence of existence, in which the very creation and existence of a created being capable of receiving *hessed* is in itself *hessed*; the other relates to the types of *hessed* bestowed upon this being which already exists. In his words:

יש חסד ויש חסד. ולא הרי החסד ד”כי לעולם חסדו” כהרי החסד ד”עולם חסד יבנה”, דהחסד של “כי לעולם חסדו” היא השפעת הטובה של עמידת העולמות ופרנסתם גרידא; ואילו החסד של “עולם חסד יבנה” היא השפעת הטובה של אפשרות עמידת העולמות ופרנסתם בתור זכי'[ה] במשפט (פחד יצחק, ראש השנה, ד/ה).

In a later discourse first published in 1952 and appearing as the sixth discourse in *Pachad Yitzhak* on Rosh Hashana, Rabbi Hutner names these two forms of *hessed* “*hessed*-hit’havut (becoming)” and “*hessed*-hanhaga (administration)”. He wrote:

חסדי השם כוללים הם שני גווני חסדים: חסד התהוות וחסד הנהגה. חסד הנהגה פירושו הוא מכיון שישנו עולם הנזקק להנהגה וההנהגה היא על פי מדותיו יתברך הרי אחת ממדות הללו שעל פיהן מתנהג העולם היא מדת החסד. ואלו חסד של התהוות הוא אותו החסד אשר על פיו נתהווה עולם הזקוק להנהגה. רק לאחר גילוי פעולתו של חסד-התהוות יש לו לחסד-הנהגה על מה לחול (פחד יצחק, ראש השנה, ו/ד).

The distinction between *hessed-hit’havut* and *hessed-hanhaga* exemplifies a recurring pattern in Rabbi Hutner’s thought: the differentiation between a primary fundamental principle appearing in a certain place and its subsequent appearances, which are conditioned upon the first. Thus we find a parallel between the two concept pairs: the attribute of “his mercy (*hessed*) endures forever” combines *hessed-hanhaga*, referring to the provision of material support for the created world since the creation, and *hessed-vittur* referring to the unconditional provision for the created world. The attribute “forever lovingkindness is built” [Psalms 89:3] combines *hessed-hit’havut*, relating to the very existence of the world, and *hessed-mishpat* relating to the ability of created beings to earn the “אפשרות עמידת העולמות”. Both of these distinctions or concept pairs can be understood through the differentiation between “from His side” and “from our side”, between these phenomena as seen from the divine perspective and the human perspective.[[19]](#footnote-19) *Hessed-hit’havut* and *hessed-hanhaga* relate to *hessed* as it is influenced by God, whereas *hessed-vittur* and *hessed-mishpat* relate to *hessed* as it is received by created beings. It should be noted also that the order of appearance of the various aspects of *hessed* is inverse in relation to the creator and the created. In reference to the Creator, the order is: *hessed,* the essence of existence, that is *hessed-hithavut*, which appeared in the creation of the world, before *hessed* within existence, that is *hessed-hanhaga*, which has been implemented from that point onward. However, regarding the created, the order is: *hessed* within existence, that is *hessed-vittur*, in which framework they receive their subsistence as a free gift, implemented since the creation of the world, before *hessed*, the essence of existence, that is *hessed-mishpat,* the framework in which they earn their very existence, in force since the Exodus from Egypt and the giving of the Torah. The integration of these two perspectives forms a type of “a-b-b-a” pattern: from *hessed*, the essence of existence, to *hessed* within existence, and returning to *hessed* the essence of existence, which was the essential purpose from the beginning. Rabbi Hutner calls this pattern “the last thing created was the first to be thought of” which expresses the idea that there is an inverse relationship between the order of things appearing in thought and the order of things appearing in reality. In thought, the purpose, which is the most important aspect, appears first and afterward the means, while during an action the means must appear first and afterward the goal that it enables. Therefore, in the world of action, that which is later is best.[[20]](#footnote-20) The integration of the two distinctions yields the following interpretation: the most profound *hessed* that God extends to his creatures is the capacity to acquire an attribute of the Creator, to be a source of the *hessed-hithavut*, the essence of existence itself.

The weaving of contexts between the concept of *hessed* and several other concepts in Rabbi Hutner’s thought demonstrates that this interpretation is not only reasonable but also necessary. In his words:

בעוד שבדרך כלל, מדותיו יתברך מתגלות לנו רק באופני הנהגת הבריאה אחר התהוותה – הנה מידת חסדו יתברך מתגלה לנו בעצם העובדה של התהוות הבריאה. עולם חסד יבנה. עצם יציאת העולמות מן האין אל היש – היא מציאות חסד של יצירת מקור לעונג בלי גבול. האדם לא נברא אלא להתענג על ד'. ורק לאחר מכאן, לאחר שמדת החסד שמשה רקע לבניינו של עולם, רק אז מתחילות הן שאר המידות להתגלות בהנהגת העולם הבנוי מכבר; ונמצא כי בעוד שכל המדות שולטות בהנהגת העולמות, הנה מדת החסד שולטת בהתהוות העולמות. ומכאן שגם בעבודתנו אנו בהשתלמות עצמנו אשר תכונתה העיקרית היא דמיון הצורה ליוצרה מה הוא אף אתה, מתבדלת היא העבודה בהשתלמות מידת החסד לרשות פעולה מיוחדת. ובעוד שבשאר המדות הטובות והמעלות העליונות עבודתנו היא ההשתדלות לקנות ולהוות על פיהן את הליכות עולמנו – הנה בהתעלותנו במדת החסד יוצרים אנו את עולמנו. כי על ידי חנוך עצמנו בהלכות דעות של חסד, בחובות הלבבות של חסד, ובחובות האברים של חסד, הננו בוראים ומהווים את עולמנו הפנימי של אישיות – צלם-אלקים (פחד יצחק, ראש השנה, א/ד).

In this quotation, Rabbi Hutner connects the concept of *hessed* to a series of additional important concepts: *oneg* (pleasure), perfection, *imitatio Dei* (the obligation to imitate God), and the image of God, to which it is connected. In fact, at the end of the argument, it seems that the potential sting of the interpretation presented above has been removed. This in fact is an example of esoteric writing in the *Pachad Yitzhak* books: Rabbi Hutner retreats just before drawing a radical conclusion, in this case, the idea that man creates himself and is the source of his own existence and concludes with what is meant to be understood as a simple pedagogical message. However, the reader who interprets one chapter in light of another and continues the argument introduced in the “Essay on *Hessed*”, just as we will do now, will reveal the meaning alluded to within the text.

4.1.3 **Pleasure: to be an Independent Source**

“עצם יציאת העולמות מין האין אל היש” כותב הרב הוטנר, “היא מציאות חסד של יצירת מקור לעונג בלי גבול. האדם לא נברא אלא להתענג על ה'“ (לעיל). This sentence clearly alludes to the beginning of the first chapter of Ramchal’s *Mesillat Yesharim*: “והנה מה שהורונו חכמינו זכרונם לברכה, הוא שהאדם לא נברא אלא להתענג על ה' ולהנות מזיו שכינתו שזהו התענוג האמיתי והעדון הגדול מכל העדונים שיכולים להמצא.”. We will now examine the concept of *oneg* (pleasure) as it is expressed in Rabbi Hutner’s thought and the way it completes the discussion of the anthropocentric purpose.

We have seen that in Ramchal’s writings the disadvantage of pleasure that is not received as a reward, the “bread of shame” discussed above, is not an intrinsic deficiency, but a concomitant disadvantage that detracts from the enjoyment. In similarity to Ramchal’s idea of “true perfection”, Rabbi Hutner maintains that pleasure received for free or, to be more precise, *oneg* whose source is external to a person, is intrinsically lacking. In his words:

והנה מצינו בכתוב דתואר החיות מתיחס הוא בפרטיות אל התכונה של שנאת מתנות, “ושונא מתנות יחי'[ה]” [...] מהות החיות הוא החיבור של גוף ונפש. וענינו של חיבור זה הוא בכדי שעל ידי החיבור הזה תתענג הנפש על השם בתור קבלת שכר דוקא. כי הלא טבע הנפש ומהותה הוא התענוג על השם, אלא שהחיבור לגוף מהפך לה את צורת התענוג הזה מצורת קבלה גרידא לצורת קבלת שכר [...] וההרגשה הבהירה אשר תוכנו של חיבור גוף ונפש מחוור לה, סולדת ממתנת חנם דווקא מחמת אהבת החיים (פחד יצחק, שבועות, ז/ד).

The point at the beginning of this quotation is derived from the verse: “he that hateth gifts shall live” (Prov. 15:27).[[21]](#footnote-21) Here we encounter another recurring pattern of Rabbi Hutner: an interpretation that emerges from a literal reading of a text that appears to be poetical, metaphorical, or pedagogical and, in any case, not in need of interpretation. Rabbi Hutner reads this verse unambiguously: to be alive means to hate gifts. He afterward explains the connection between the hatred of gifts and vitality, which he defines as the connection between body and soul. This connection is significant because it provides the ability to receive pleasure as a reward, whereas the soul on its own is only able to receive it outright. In the concepts that he coined in the “Essay on *Hessed*”, the soul in itself is only capable of receiving *hessed-vittur*. *Hessed-mishpat* is possible only within the body-soul connection. Similarly, it is impossible to refer to the soul itself in terms of life because the soul is not alive. This is an affirmation of the superiority of an existence integrating the body and soul over a purely spiritual existence. A living person is a being capable of receiving pleasure as a reward and therefore, to be alive means to hate gifts.

Rabbi Hutner does not stop there. He goes on to explain deeper facets of the principle he is trying to prove and writes:

אבל ההרגשה החודרת למעמקים יותר גנוזים תופסת את החיות אשר בשנאת המתנות בנקודה יותר פנימית. כי על כן הקו הזה של שונא מתנות מבליט הוא ביותר את ה”דוגמא של מעלה”, בציור קומתו של אדם. שהרי בציור “הדבק במדותיו” אמרו מה הוא רחום אף אתה רחום, וברור הוא שתכונת השפעת טובה הנמצאת באדם אינה מעידה עדיין על המקוריות בתכונתו, שכן גם מים שאובים ניתנו להשפעה; **ורק שנאת המתנות היא המעמידה את האדם בתכונה של מקוריות** [...] וכן תופסת ההרגשה המעמיקה את נקודת החיות אשר בשנאת המתנות, כי שנאה זו היא גילוי תכונת המקור והמעין בנפשו של אדם. **ותכונה זו היא נקודת הגובה בהציור הכללי של דימוי הצורה ליוצרה, ואשר על כלליות הציור הזה נאמר ואתם הדבקים חיים כולכם היום** [...] וכאן הגענו למקומו של ענין החזקת טובה בהמערכה הכללית של עבודת השם. מקומה של החזקת טובה הוא בהסתירה הנמצאת בין ההכרח של האדם להזקק לקבלת טובה [...] ובין **שלמות צורתו של אדם להיות מקור המתברך מיני'[ה] ובי'[ה]**. החזקת הטובה מקילה את הסתירה הזאת בגבול האפשרי [...] ונמצינו למדים אפוא כי לפי ערך החיות הגנוזה בשנאת המתנות אשר בלבבו של אדם, ככה בערך זה תגדל החזקת הטובה וההשתעבדות למשפיע שלו (שם, ה. ההדגשות אינן במקור).

This passage demonstrates the way Rabbi Hutner understands the meaning of being alive: being “original” (*makor*) (literally a “source”), something that exists on its own, independent of anything else that sustains it. Hatred of gifts expresses man’s aspiration to be as alive as possible. Man is viable only by receiving the beneficence of God; at the very least he requires the initial benevolence of the creation. However, the true perfection of his nature is to be independent. He, therefore, aspires to be completely independent of divine beneficence and exist autonomously.

Rabbi Hutner establishes, in a way that seems paradoxical, that this aspiration to exist as an independent source, not only does not contradict the service of God but is in fact its highest point. The servant of God is commanded to imitate God. God is the ““מקור המתברך מיניה וביה”…”, something, in fact, the only thing, that exists independently of any external agency, for everything within Him derives from within Himself. The attempt to be independent of God is the fulfillment of the duty to attempt to imitate him. The only solution, according to Rabbi Hutner, that allows the reduction of the gap between the aspiration to originality, identical to the obligation to imitate God who is autonomous, and the fact that man is of necessity dependent upon God in one way or another, is to express gratitude and attempt to repay as much as possible to God who did for him *hessed*, and thus to free himself from his debt to God and become autonomous. Therefore, the more that man is subservient to God, he is less indebted to Him and more autonomous. The paradox of the paradox is that the apex of serving God is to become independent of Him – complete individuation. On the other hand, submission to God is the highest degree of recompense to God for the beneficence which is the essence of man’s existence and therefore, paradoxically, the highest level of independence and autonomy to which a person can aspire. The individual subserviates himself to God as an expression and a realization of his being independent of him, to the greatest possible extent. The servant is enslaved, but by his own choice, as an expression of gratitude, and in consequence, he becomes an autonomous entity.

To be alive means to earn *oneg* through the service of God and to be fully alive is to be an independent agent through the service of God. The pinnacle of *oneg*, therefore, means to be an agent – to have an autonomous existence. The highest *oneg* is existence itself. [[22]](#footnote-22) This idea is expressed in a fitting metaphor at the end of the fourth discourse of *Pachad Yitzhak* on Shavuot:

כל עצמה של החלוקה בין מותרות להכרח אינה נוהגת אלא בצרכי החיים ודרישותיהם, אבל בהגיענו לידי עצם מציאות החיים עצמם, הרי החלוקה בין מותרות והכרח בטילה מאילי'[ה]. כי חפץ הקיום מתרומם הוא במהותו מעל לכל הרצונות של הכרח ושל מותרות גם יחד. אדם הניצול מטביעה בנהר אין הצלתו נמדדת באמת המדה של הכרח ומותרות. כי היותו קרוב לאפיסתו מחדשת עליו את הרגשת העובדה של קיומו, וכל התענוגים שבעולם בטלים הם לגבי תענוג זה של זכי'[ה] חדשה בעצם הקיום (פחד יצחק, שבועות ד/י).

*Oneg*, in other words, existence, received for free from an external agent is not only accompanied by a negative feeling of shame but also damaged. Earning existence in the form of reward is possible only for a being comprised of body and soul; it is the closest approximation of an independent existence available to man and it is the most perfect *oneg* that can be actualized in the created world.

4.1.4. **Truth: To be Eternal**

In similarity to other concepts which we have encountered up to this point, the concept of “source (makor)” is used by Rabbi Hutner in different ways. An additional meaning of this concept appears in a discussion of the concept of “truth” which also illuminates the importance of Rabbi Hutner’s engagement with the essence of existence.

In two consecutive discourses in *Pachad Yitzchak* on Rosh Hashana (discourses 15 – 16) Rabbi Hutner develops two complementary aspects of the concept of truth, connected by the principle of *imitatio Dei*. The first meaning of the concept of truth is “fidelity to the original”. Here the “original” refers to a prototype that has replicates or copies that are derived from it. A copy that is not similar to the original is false. That which is more similar is truer. Because the “עיקר יחודו ועצמיותו של אדם” is that he was created in the image of God, the truth of man is the degree of his fidelity to the original – God. (*Pachad Yitzchak*, Rosh Hashana 15/3) In this respect, imitation of God is not a heteronomic imperative but rather an essential attribute of man.

In an adjacent discourse, in which he develops an additional concept of truth, Rabbi Hutner discusses the way man aspires to resemble God. The definition of truth as fidelity to the original allows us to discuss replicates as true or false. However, it follows from this that when we are talking about the original itself, there is no meaning to the concepts of truth and falsehood because the original is certainly faithful to itself. There is however another, “higher”, meaning of truth that can be related to the original: “הכונה היא לאותה הבחינה עליונה בתכונת האמת, שהיפוכה הוא נמנע-המציאות. ובאמרנו 'השם אלקים אמת', הרי נשמתנו מכוונת היא לקראת אותה בחינת האמת, שהיפוכה הוא נמנע המציאות” (פחד יצחק, ראש השנה, טז/ג).” In this manner, Rabbi Hutner concludes, we must distinguish between two types of existence. In his words:

כל מציאות בעלת הפסק וחדלון, הרי הוא מציאות כוזבת [...] ומכיון שידיעת ההפכים אחת, הרי מתוך הפירוש החדש במושג הכזב, למדים אנו פירוש חדש במושג האמת. ולפי הפירוש הזה מושג האמת קרוב מאוד למושג “קיים”. אלא שבכל זאת, בודאי שאפילו לפי הפירוש הזה כמושג האמת, אין ה”אמת” וה”קיים” שמות נרדפים. והבדל עמוק יש ביניהם. דבאמרנו “קיים” אין לנו חילוק ואין לנו ענין כלל בסיבתה של ה”קיימות”. דשפיר יתכן, שנמצאים כאן כחות מבחוץ הסומכים, ועל ידי סמיכתם, המציאות נעשית למציאות קיימת. אבל כשאנו מוסיפים לאיזו מציאות את התואר “אמת” במובן הקיימות, כי אז הכונה היא שיש בה במציאות זו עצמה ותוקף עד כדי יצירת בטחון במציאות זו (פחד יצחק, ראש השנה, טז/יא). [[23]](#footnote-23)

There are two aspects of existence: independent existence, which is true existence, and subordinate existence, which pauses and ceases and is false existence. If so, it is necessary to “cross the line” and put both aspects of the concept of truth together: the existence of God who is the original, in the sense of the prototype, is true, in the sense that it is eternal. The essence of man is to correspond to the original and from this it may be concluded that the meaning of *imitatio Dei* is that man will also become true, meaning that his existence will become eternal. Acquiring existence, therefore, means also acquiring eternity. [[24]](#footnote-24)

**4.1.5 Imitatio Dei: The Similarity Between God and Man**

Rabbi Hutner consistently “crossed the lines” and continued the logical train of thought of the principle of *imitatio Dei*, as well as the concept of “middah ke’neged middah” (“measure for measure”) which in his opinion it is derived from, to their limits. For example: the idea that just as God is one, a principle anchored in the verse “Shema Israel” (“Hear, O Israel” Deut. 6:4), so too man must be one (by serving God with both his inclinations – the good and the evil); the idea that just as man has the attribute of fear of God, so God too has his own attribute of fear (expressed in his self-constriction and retreat from the world in order that it may exist); and the idea that just as there is no possibility to repent for desecrating the name of God, so a person is not obligated to forgive someone who desecrated his name by slander.[[25]](#footnote-25) In general, he maintains that:

“אין לך שום תנועה בעבודת ה' שלא תמצא כנגדה תנועה מקבילה במדותיו של מקום כביכול. והדין נותן, הרי כל שייכותו של האדם לכל ענינה של עבודת אלקים, אינו רק מפאת היותו נברא בצלם אלקים ובדמותו. ואם כן כיצד יתכן שתמצא בנפש האדם תנועה של עבודת השם, אשר אין לה תנועה מקבילה בהנהגת הקב”ה את עולמו?” (Pachad Yitzchak: Pesach, 74/1) [[26]](#footnote-26)

Ramchal, at the end of his discussion on the anthropocentric purpose, connects it to the obligation to imitate God. The attainment of perfection is “called a slight imitation” of the Creator because the Creator’s perfection is self-perfection; man cannot attain self-perfection such as that of God because he is after all a created being and the essence of his ability to acquire perfection is bequeathed to him as a gift. However, as his perfection takes on a more intrinsic quality, he becomes more similar to the Creator.[[27]](#footnote-27) Rabbi Hutner also connects the anthropocentric purpose to imitating God, although not in an incidental way, like Ramchal. In his opinion, these are two sides to the coin, dependent on each other and deriving from each other. The imitation of God is an essential quality of man by virtue of his being created in God’s image. This is his truth in the sense of fidelity to the original. At the most extreme point of his development of the concept of imitation in his writings, Rabbi Hutner established that even the created being’s “desire for affinity” is a function of his similarity to the Creator. In other words, man’s desire to imitate God is the mirror image of God’s desire to imitate man. In his words:

כאן אנו מגיעים להבלטת קו-היסוד במצות הליכה בדרכיו של מקום. והיינו כי במצוה זו של הליכה בדרכיו מקום [...] עצם רצון הדימוי מכלל הדימוי הוא. וטעם הדבר כי מפני שגם חובת ההתדמות ליוצרנו וגם אפשרות ההתדמות ליוצרנו יונקות הן מתוך הנהגת הקב”ה להתדמות, כביכול, אלינו. כלליות זו של הקב”ה להתדמות אלינו, קרויה היא בשם ההנהגה של “מדה כנגד מדה”. כלומר, לעומת כל מדה של הנברא ישנה מדה של מעלה המקבילה אליה, והפועלת את פעולתה בהתאם לפעולתה של מדת הנברא. והרי הנהגה זו של “מדה כנגד מדה” הוא בסוד התדמותו כביכול אלינו. באופן כי גם עצם רצונה של הצורה להתדמות ליוצרה יש לו מקור בהתדמות היוצר אל הצורה (Pachad Yitzchak: Pesach, נו/ג).

God wants to imitate man. This is expressed in imitation of his behavior – man acts according to a certain characteristic, and God also acts according to the same characteristic. This is in fact the mirror image of the classic way in which the obligation to imitate God is explained in the Jewish tradition, as formulated by Maimonides (based on Rabbinic sayings):

“והמצוה השמינית היא שצונו להדמות בו יתעלה לפי יכלתנו [...] ובא בפירוש זה מה הקדוש ברוך הוא נקרא רחום אף אתה היה רחום מה הקב”ה נקרא חנון אף אתה היה חנון.”[[28]](#footnote-28)

Man imitates God, in the simple sense, by emulating his behavior, while God imitates man in the same manner. This, according to Rabbi Hutner, is the substance of the “measure for measure” principle, the idea that God repays man in his own coin. The accepted meaning of the concept of “measure for measure” is that this is a type of cosmic justice or karma.[[29]](#footnote-29) Rabbi Hutner attempts to pinpoint the reason why God chooses to operate in this reciprocal manner and concludes that it derives from his desire to imitate man. At this point, it is important to note how Rabbi Hutner’s idea of imitating God diverges from the formulation of the idea by the rabbis of the Talmudic period and the Middle Ages. The obligation to imitate God is classically formulated as the imperative to emulate his actions – “just as he…so you…” – and this is because of the unfeasibility of imitating God Himself. Rabbi Hutner’s approach refers to more substantial imitation: to exist the way that God exists. Moreover, in his opinion, imitation is not something that man is commanded to do but rather his nature. Man aspires from the essence of his being, from the image of God within him, to be like God.

After establishing this idea, Rabbi Hutner quotes the passage with which we began our discussion on the anthropocentric purpose (*Pachad Yitzchak*, Shavuot 8/4) on the transition from *hessed-vittur* to *hessed-mishpat*, and states that in order to allow the implementation of “measure for measure” there must be a transition to *hessed-mishpat*. In his words:

והנה ברור הוא ומובן, כי ההנהגה דמדה כנגד מדה אינה שייכת כלל בהנהגת חסד-ויתור, דרק כשההשפעה באה היא בדרך תשלומין כפי הכרעת המשפט (חסד משפט) יש מקום להגביל את התשלומין במהלך זה של “מדה כנגד מדה” [...] ונמצא, איפוא לפי זה דמצות דימוי הצורה ליוצרה מתחייבת היא מתוך התמורה בהנהגתו של מקום ממדת חסד-ויתור למדת חסד-משפט. ולמדנו מכאן כי בהנהגת חסד-ויתור אין מקום למצות [!] דימוי הצורה ליוצרה (Pachad Yitzchak: Pesach, נו/ו).

In the conclusion of his discussion of *imitatio Dei*, Rabbi Hutner abandons his innovative idea about God’s desire to imitate man and concludes that the commandment of *imitatio Dei* becomes obligatory in the transition to *hessed-mishpat*. However, the logical conclusion from this is different and much more innovative: the transition to *hessed-mishpat* was made necessary by the similarity of the Creator (God) to the creation (man). Rabbi Hutner’s version of the anthropocentric argument includes a surprising theocentric basis. God created man so that both could imitate each other; this reciprocity, on the part of both God and man, is dependent upon the existence of *hessed-mishpat*, which is man’s ability to earn that which is given to him, first and foremost, the very fact of his existence. We saw above how at the end of the discussion of *hessed-hit’havut* of man, Rabbi Hutner neutralizes the radical element of the argument by diverting the reader from the necessary conclusion that man creates himself, toward the conclusion that man creates his own personality. Now, after following the argument within the context of the relevant concepts, the conclusion that seemed radical or forced when the passage in question stood alone, is revealed to be the only logical conclusion.

True existence – when man, like God, is an independent and eternal original—is the highest possible *oneg*, the apex of human aspiration fulfilled through *imitatio Dei*, the zenith of divine service, rooted in the essence of man who is created in the divine image. The manner of existence available to man in this world that is closest to this true existence is made possible by virtue of *hessed-mishpat* -- the ability to earn existence. This is the anthropocentric purpose of reality: the existence of a created being that can live a true existence.

At the beginning of the examination of the theocentric purpose in the thought of Rabbi Hutner, two questions arouse regarding the concept of *hessed-mishpat*: What is the meaning of the deepening of *hessed* at the transition from *hessed-vittur* to *hessed-mishpat*? Why is *hessed-mishpat* considered *hessed* rather than simply *mishpat* (law)? What is the element of *hessed* in it? The answer is that this is a combination of *hessed* and *mishpat*. After all, man is not able to be the exclusive source of his existence. He cannot create *hessed-hit’havut*. However, he can, ex post facto, earn his creation and thereby upgrade his existence from a false existence to true existence, to the greatest possible extent. The deepening of *hessed* is thus twofold: on one hand, the ability to earn existence and, on the other hand, the attainment of greater *oneg* through the attainment of a truer existence.

The practical conclusion from the examination of the anthropocentric purpose is that voluntary self-subjugation to God is the highest degree of recompense to God for the very existence of man. Thus, paradoxically, it is the highest level of true existence, independence, and autonomy to which a person may aspire. How can we understand this conclusion? Is it a retreat from the idea of individuation? Is it a disingenuous reversal after spinning an argument that culminated in a radical conclusion? Is Rabbi Hutner leading us, for pedagogical aims, to a type of Orwellian conclusion according to which slavery is autonomy? Although this question will have to remain open at this stage, I will offer an answer below in light of the analysis in the coming chapters.[[30]](#footnote-30) For now, we will make do with the formal principle expressed within it: absolute, true existence is possible only for the original – God. The possibilities open to man are false existence, or an existence of self-subjugation to God, which is, in any case, true existence because it entails the earning of existence itself.

The anthropocentric purpose in Rabbi Hutner’s thought is identical in form to that of Ramchal. However, it receives a more sophisticated development and acquires a more specific nuance. All the elements are present: the perfect *hessed* as the ability to earn *hessed,* the acquisition of perfection, imitating God, attaining *oneg*. However, while these concepts are relatively general and vague in the framework of Ramchal’s formulation, in Rabbi Hutner’s hands they are clarified and imbued with specific content that revolves entirely around the essence of existence. The longed-for *oneg* that man receives from God is true existence; *hessed* is the ability to earn existence; imitating God means emulating the absolute quality of God’s existence; and perfection is the perfection of existence. In this Rabbi Hutner identified and realized the potential latent in the framework constructed by Ramchal.

**4.1.6 The Theocentric Purpose in Ramchal’s Theological Writings: The Unity Argument**

Ramchal discussed two purposes for which the world was created: the anthropocentric purpose, whose goal is benefitting the created beings and the theocentric purpose, which we will discuss now. From this perspective, the world was created to actualize, or, in Ramchal’s language, “discover”, the *yichud* [unity] of God. According to Ramchal:

“גילוי יחודו זה הוא מה שרצה בו הרצון העליון, ועל פי כוונה זאת חקק חוקות נבראיו; וכל המסיבות אשר גלגל וסבב, הם מה שצריך כדי לבא לתכלית הזה.” [[31]](#footnote-31)

God is singular. This means that there is no possibility that anything that is not in his control or outside his realm is capable of opposing him. However, as long as all things that could be described as opposing God are not negated, he is singular only in potential. By the creation of things that appear to oppose God and their negation, in a way that demonstrates ex post facto that they are all as nothing compared to him, the realization of God’s unity is made possible. This is the origin of evil. [[32]](#footnote-32)

Like the anthropocentric purpose, the theological purpose is dependent upon man for its realization. Man realizes the revelation of divine unity in two ways. First and foremost, for this unity to be revealed there must be an entity to whom it can be revealed. Man’s ability to recognize the unity and understand it is the instrument for its revelation. When man witnesses the negation of evil, divine unity is revealed. In other words, the result of the negation process occurs within man. One of the meanings of the unity argument is that as evil appears stronger, the power of the revelation of the divine unity increases retroactively. Ramchal leveraged this insight to create a message of comfort for the people of Israel: “הנה זה יתד חזק לאמונת בני ישראל, אשר לא ירך לבם לא מאורך הגלות ולא ממרירותו הקשה. כי אדרבה [...] כל שיותר שהקשה הרע את עול סבלו על הבריות, כן יותר יגלה כח יחודו ית'[ברך] וממשלתו העצומה אשר הוא כל יכול.”“…” [[33]](#footnote-33) The revelation of unity in practice, therefore, is always retroactive. Therefore, the theocentric purpose has a temporal, and in the final analysis, clearly historical, dimension. The full revelation of the divine unity will occur only at the end of time when evil will be fully negated and vanish from the world.

Man himself takes part in the process of negating evil when he relates to the evil revealed to him as a delusion of opposition to God and an instrument for the revelation of his unity. The revelation of unity is possible only retroactively, although recognition of unity is possible in real time, to the extent to which man reaches a state of self-persuasion that the evil before him is not in fact evil but, in essence, good.[[34]](#footnote-34) From this perspective, man’s first obligation is to establish in his heart the belief in divine unity and to reject the existence of evil as an independent agent. This is the aim and origin of the name of the book *Da’at Tevunot* written for the purpose of teaching and instilling belief in God’s unity. Another way in which man fulfills the theocentric purpose, like the anthropocentric purpose, is free choice. The principal appearance of evil is in man’s shortcomings and wickedness. When man rises above his evil inclination and chooses good, he negates the evil in his actions. Rabbi Hutner wrote:

מה נשתנה כח מעלת היחוד הזה מכל שאר המעלות אשר לשלמות – שזה הוא הנותן מקום להילוך הזה של חסרון ושלמות, עבודה וקיבול שכר [...] אם לא היה חסרון – לא היה מקום עבודה לאדם, ולא מקום שיקבל שכר. אך כשבחר שהמתגלה משלמותו יהיה יחודו ית'[ברך], אז נמשך מזה שיהיה חסרון בנבראיו, שהרי צריך להראות החסרון כדי להראות שלילתו.[[35]](#footnote-35)

In the concept of free will, the two purposes of creation overlap and, in fact, coalesce. Ramchal’s benefit argument can therefore be understood as a clause of the unity argument. God’s unity includes his quality of being entirely good, which in turn entails his doing good. His beneficence to living things is the way his unity is revealed. Thus, in practice, the revelation of his unity is the ultimate beneficence.[[36]](#footnote-36)

To conclude, according to Ramchal, the purpose of creation is the revelation of the unity of God. This unity is revealed by the appearance of evil and its negation, in a way that demonstrates that in the end, there is not and can never be any power that is not from God or that opposes Him. The appearance of evil in the world results in its appearance in man which in turn enables him to take part in the revelation of unity in that he chooses to oppose evil and reject it and thereby earns God’s beneficence.

**4.1.7 The Theocentric Purpose in the *Pachad Yitzhak* Books: The Honor Argument**

The theocentric purpose appears in the *Pachad Yitzhak* books in a format similar to that in Ramchal’s writings, although with significant differences, and as a platform for ideas that deviate from the original. First and foremost, the principle of divine unity, the cornerstone of Ramchal’s thought both as a concept and as a source of religious motivation, is almost entirely absent from Rabbi Hutner’s thought, and, in any case, from his discussion about the theocentric purpose where it is replaced with other concepts and motivations.

The theocentric purpose appears in the *Pachad Yitzchak* books in two versions. The first will be referred to here as “the *kavod* [honor] argument”. The declaration that “כל מה שברא [הקב”ה] לא ברא אלא לכבודו” (פחד יצחק, ראש השנה יב/ז) [[37]](#footnote-37) is repeated in several places in Rabbi Hutner’s discourses. As is characteristic of his style, he develops the concept of *kavod* by contrasting it to another concept – “ratzon” (desire or will). The difference between the two is that the fulfillment of desire is not influenced by the circumstances that preceded it. There is no difference between the act of fulfilling the will of God that is preceded by loyalty, and the fulfillment of the will of God preceded by rebellion. However, in the case of *kavod,* this difference is significant. If the submission to God follows rebellion or disbelief, the honor derived from it will be greater. It is, therefore, possible to fulfill God’s will without producing *kavod* at all or only to a limited degree. However, for there to be “a profusion of honor” it must be possible to negate God’s will. Moreover, the more that the will of God is breached from the outset, so the potential for honor deriving ex post facto from its existence increases. Rabbi Hutner wrote:

כך הוא טבעו של ענין הכבוד, אשר בהכנעתו של מי שהיה מסרב להכנע, יש עדיפות של כבוד, מאשר בהכנעתו של מי שהיה נכנע מעולם. המחלך של קיום רצון אינו מבחין בין קיום רצון על ידו של מי שמעולם לא עבר על הרצון, ובין קיום הרצון על ידו של מי שעבר פעם על הרצון, דבשני האופנים קיום הרצון אחד הוא [...] זה הוא טבעו של ענין ערך הכבוד. לפי ערך החריפות ההתנגדות של אתמול, כן לעומת זה, יגדל ערך הכבוד העולה מן ההכנעה של היום [...] ונמצא דלפי סדר המערכה של מהלך הכבוד, אפשר לה לנקודה של הצד הרע שתתהפך מכשיר-גורם לעדיפותו של הצד הטוב של ריבוי כבוד. אבל לפי סדר המערכה של מהלך הרצון, אין שום אפשרות לנקודה של רע שתשנה את מקומה להצטרף לצד הטוב של מילוי רצון. והבן (פחד יצחק, ראש השנה, יב/ד-ה).

This pattern is very similar to that which Ramchal developed regarding divine unity. It is demonstrable precisely by means of the negation of its opposite. The difference between the concept of unity and the concept of *kavod* is that in the case of unity, negation is the only possible means of revelation, whereas, regarding Rabbi Hutner’s concept of *kavod*, the difference between its revelation by positive means and its revelation by means of negation is a difference of degree. Revelation by negation produces the highest level of *kavod*, similar to the existing format in the framework of the anthropocentric purpose, expressed in the difference in degree between *hessed-vittur* and *hessed-mishpat*.

I will refer to the closing argument of the theocentric purpose in Rabbi Hutner’s thought as the “kingship [*melucha*] argument”. The concept of kingship is developed in contrast to the concept of government [*memshala*]. The difference between kingship and government is “שממשלה היא אפילו בכפייה ובעל כרחו של זה שמושלים עליו, אבל מלוכה היא דוקא כשהיא באה מרצונו ומדעתו של זה שמושלים עליו (פחד יצחק, ראש השנה, לא/י)” “…”. For a regime to be considered a kingship it must be constituted upon the agreement of the governed. A government, however, rules with or without the agreement of the ruled. To create a situation of “kingship” there must be a voluntary response that must be accompanied by a certain awareness or intention. Thus, along with the capacity to receive the kingship of God, the possibility of not recognizing it is also created. [[38]](#footnote-38)

The kingship argument is close to the unity argument in that kingship itself, not only its quality, is entirely contingent on the appearance of the opposing force -- the possibility of refusal. Nonetheless, the acceptance of kingship is an act of affirming the good more than negating the bad. The principle according to which evil serves good and enables it is preserved; however, the dynamic of negating evil as a necessary step in revealing the good – the primary innovation of Ramchal which distinguishes his thought from traditional theodicy -- is less significant to the theocentric purpose in Rabbi Hutner’s version.

While the “negation of evil” motif does not form the basis for the theocentric purpose in the *Pachad Yitzhak* writings, it nonetheless has great significance in Rabbi Hutner’s thought. It appears in three contexts in Ramchal’s thought: man’s choice to overcome evil and thus negate it; the community, at the point of retroactive revelation that evil has been negated and conquered by good; the recognition that the evil revealed in real time is really, in essence, good. All these elements are present in Rabbi Hutner’s thought.

The freedom of will motif, and the choice of good over evil, are very central to Rabbi Hutner’s thought, and will be discussed below. The idea of the retroactive revelation is developed in Rabbi Hutner’s writings in several places. The most prominent of these is the seventh discourse of *Pachad Yitzhak* on Chanukah which is devoted exclusively to this theme. Here Rabbi Hutner develops the concept pair “hod vehadar”, which appears in many places in the Bible. The two concepts, according to Rabbi Hutner, are synonyms for beauty, but they convey a specific type of beauty. Rabbi Hutner defines beauty as a derivative of the harmony created from the combination of opposing forces. In his words:

עניינו של כל יופי הוא בסוד הקצב בין תנועות מתחלפות, או בסוד ההתאמה בין יסודות מתחלפים, עד שהקצב וההתאמה הופכים את החילוף עצמו להיות חלק מן שלימות אחת. יפיה של המנגינה הוא בקצב תנועות הקול המתחלפות מן העוז אל הרוך, ומן הרפיון אל הקושי וכדומה. יפיה של התמונה הוא בהתאמה השולטת בין היסודות השונים של חלקיה, עד שדוקא השינוי שבהם נעשה גורמה [! = הגורם שלה] של אחדות התמונה וכדומה. ודעת לנבון נקל כי לעומת עומק החילוף והתמורה הנמצא בין יסודות ההרכבה, כן לעומתו יגדל היופי הבוקע ועולה מהתאמתם (פחד יצחק, חנוכה, ז/ד).

In this passage, Rabbi Hutner offers a definition of beauty very similar to the concept of beauty as unity suggested by the American philosopher Dewitt H. Parker. Parker argued that beauty appears as unity in one, or more, of three ways: as harmony between cooperating elements; as balance between contrasting or conflicting elements; and as the development or gradual evolution of a process toward an end or climax. Aesthetic balance, according to Parker, is the beauty hidden in something that can only appear as the result of the integration of contrasting or conflicting elements. Aesthetic development is the combination of elements that only together can lead to the end of a process. The difference between the first two types of beauty as unity – harmony and balance – and the third type, development, is the dimension of time. While harmony and balance are static, development is dynamic.[[39]](#footnote-39)

The pattern expressed in the theocentric purpose according to which the deeper the opposition, the greater the good that overcomes it, is clearly present in this concept of beauty as balance, as well as the concept of beauty as development, as we will see below. Rabbi Hutner continues in the same discourse to explain that the most radical appearance of the harmony between changing elements, and certainly the highest form of beauty, is the phenomenon in which something negates its own existence in the face of another force, but it is this very act of self-abrogation that in the end enables its victory over the force in the face of which it negated itself. He brings as an example the metaphor of what he calls the flexibility of the reed, which bends in the face of the winds that blow it and as a result survives any wind, however strong, and thus demonstrates its superiority over it. In contrast, the cedar, which does not bend in the wind, withstands most winds but will be uprooted by an especially strong gale (ibid). What is unique to this type of beauty, other than being its most radical expression, is the dimension of time. The harmony between the conflicting elements – being and self-negation – is apparent only retroactively because they do not appear as one but rather as one after the other. If so, this is a combination of two types of beauty as unity discussed by Parker – balance and development. This unique type of beauty is embodied in the pair that expresses its two characteristics: *hod vehadar*. *Hod* is the beauty that is derived from the ultimate contradiction – self-negation that is being – and *hadar* is the beauty produced by the experience in which something that appears to be lacking beauty is revealed retroactively as the most beautiful (ibid).

Rabbi Hutner goes on to list four systems which include a dynamic of *hod vehadar*: the soul of God’s servant, God, Torah, and “Knesset Yisrael” (the community of the people of Israel). For now, we will discuss only the first, which is relevant to the discussion in this chapter. *Hod vehadar* in the soul of God’s servant is”ההכרה כי דוקא ההתבטלות בפני קונו היא היא איתנות הישות שלו.” (פחד יצחק, חנוכה, ז/ה). Rabbi Hutner does not specify how self-negation before God constitutes the strength of man’s being. However, we saw above that this is the culmination of the anthropocentric purpose in his thought: voluntary self-subjugation to God is the highest degree of recompense to God for man’s existence and thus paradoxically is the highest level of independence and autonomy to which man can aspire. In the conclusion of the discourse, Rabbi Hutner concludes that there is no greater danger than the severance of the connection between *hod* and *hadar*. *Hod* without *hadar* “is nothing but self-negation” without victory. Extending this conclusion about *hod vehadar* in the servant of God’s soul produces the conclusion that self-negation before God that does not lead to the strengthening of the being is patently undesirable. This is another expression of the centrality of individuation in Rabbi Hutner’s thought.

The principle of the recognition in real time that evil is in essence good is also present in the *Pachad Yitzhak* books in a manner very similar to its expression in Ramchal’s writings. In one of his discourses, Rabbi Hutner develops this idea by interpreting the concept “*oneg* Shabbat” to mean the understanding that the world is very good, in that the ways of the world, as it is, are entirely good. In his words:

כך כתוב בתורה: וירא אלקים את כל אשר עשה והנה טוב מאוד, ויכולו וגומר וישבת וגומר ויקדש וגומר. הנה נתפרש לנו בכאן כי השביתה והקידוש של שבת באים הם בתור ראיה של “טוב-מאד” בכל הבריאה כולה [...] הענג שבת שלנו הוא דוגמת ראיה זו של “טוב-מאד” אשר בה הסתכל הקב”ה בעולמו בגמר מעשה בראשית. [...] המשמשת פתיחה לפרשת של קדושת שבת. **עד כמה שהאדם איננו נקי מהרגשה של תרעומת כלפי סדר הנהגת העולמות, בה במידה נעדרת ממנו הרגשת קדושת שבת** (Pachad Yitzchak: Pesach, נד/ה. ההדגשה אינה במקור).

Man must acknowledge that the world, as it is, is very good. According to Rabbi Hutner, this means to see the suffering of the righteous as a good thing. This declaration was made in reference to the interpretation of Psalm 92, which begins with the words: “מזמור שיר ליום השבת, טוב להודות לה'“: “מַה-גָּדְלוּ מַעֲשֶׂיךָ ה' מְאֹד עָמְקוּ מַחְשְׁבֹתֶֽיךָ: אִֽישׁ-בַּעַר לֹא יֵדָע וּכְסִיל לֹא-יָבִין אֶת-זֹֽאת: בִּפְרֹחַ רְשָׁעִים כְּמוֹ עֵשֶׂב וַיָּצִיצוּ כָּל-פֹּעֲלֵי אָוֶן לְהִשָּֽׁמְדָם עֲדֵי-עַֽד (תהלים צב/ו-ח).. The flourishing of the wicked, Rabbi Hutner explains, is for the sake of their future destruction. This is the depth of the divine thought that the ignorant and foolish cannot understand. In his words:

כל זמן שאין הבהירות והפשיטות של הבטחון בנשגביות [!] ההנהגה הנסתרה של צדיק ורע לו רשע וטוב לו, משתוות [!] לבהירות והפשיטות של הניחותא [הנחת] בהנהגה הנגלית של צדיק וטוב לו רשע ורע לו – עדיין אין הנפש מוכשרת להתענג על השבת (Pachad Yitzchak: Pesach, נד/ו-ז.).

This passage expresses the principle of the negation of evil by declaring that the wicked are now living peacefully in order that that may be destroyed in the future. In other words, the potential flourishing of evil is intended for the sake of its destruction. This is also true regarding the idea of recognition in real time. Man must recognize that the suffering of the righteous as well as their reward are ultimately equivalent in their essence and are therefore equivalent even now. The recognition of this in real time is also part of the meaning of accepting the kingship of God:

“קבלת עול מלכות שמים פירושה הוא ניקוי הלב מכל סוג של תרעומת כלפי הנהגת ההשגחה בכל האופנים” Pachad Yitzchak: Pesach (ס/יח). [[40]](#footnote-40)

The principle of negating evil in the sense of negating that it is evil – the principle upon which Ramchal’s *yichud* argument is based – also appears in a similar format in Rabbi Hutner’s writings and constitutes a stage in both arguments, *kavod* and kingship, that reveal the theocentric purpose in his thought. However, the central point, divine unity as the purpose of the world, for the sake of which the dynamic of the negation of evil exists in the first place, is almost entirely absent from the book. We must ask why this is so. What can explain the partial adoption of Ramchal’s theocentric purpose, in which divine unity and the negation of evil are replaced by *kavod* and kingship?

This question can be answered by examining the intellectual chasm between the two thinkers, which is revealed in the distinction made by Rabbi Hutner between two types of opposite sets that exist in the world of the servant of God: “good and evil” on one hand and “sacred and profane” on the other. The first system of opposites is at the core of Ramchal’s thought. The crux of Rabbi Hutner’s thought however is his engagement with the system of the opposites “sacred and profane”. He wrote:

מערכת-הפכים הזו של צדיק ורשע, איננה המערכת היחידה שאנו מצפים בה לנצחון. אלא שבצפיתנו, הננו מצפים עוד לנצחון הרבה יותר עמוק, במערכת-הפכים הרבה יותר עמוקה, מאשר מערכת הרע והטוב. **במעמקי הנפש, אין הנצחון הזה מעניק לנו את המרגוע העיקרי. שם במעמקים יש לנו כלות הנפש, אל נצחון הרבה יותר עמוק**. הערוגה [!] הפנימית זורמת היא אל הנצחון **במערכת-ההפכים של קודש וחול**. כי חזון הנצחון שלנו שלנו מתנשא הוא על גבי שני שלבים. השלב הראשון הוא נצחון הטוב על הרע, ואילו השלב השני הוא נצחון הקודש על החול. ואם נבוא להדגים את חזון הנצחון הזה בעבודת השם של כל יחיד ויחיד, כי אז עלינו לומר כך: עמידה בניסיון של פרישה מעבירה, או של עשיית מצוה, הרי הוא נצחון הטוב על הרע. ואילו העמידה בנסיון של עשיית **דברי הרשות לשם שמים**, הוא הוא נצחון הקודש על החול. **שכן דברי הרשות מצד עצמם, אינם לא טוב ולא רע, אלא שהם דברי חול** (Pachad Yitzchak: Pesach, סט/ב. ההדגשות אינם במקור).

The principal problem, because of which the soul has no peace, is the problem of the victory of the sacred over the profane. A victory of the name of heaven because it is neither good nor bad, but neutral. We will discuss the meaning of this aspiration and the way it is expressed in the context of the theocentric purpose of the creation by examining additional key concepts in Rabbi Hutner’s thought: *kavod* and *divrei reshut* [elective acts].

**4.1.8 Honor: To Acknowledge the Importance of Existence**

The concept of *kavod* in Rabbi Hutner’s thought is developed in the eighth discourse of *Pachad Yitzhak* on Shavuot. At the beginning of the discourse, Rabbi Hutner discusses Maharal’s interpretation of an obscure mishnah in the *Ethics of the Fathers*, in which he explains why the world was created by “ten utterances”[[41]](#footnote-41) rather than one utterance alone:

[מופיע במשנה:] בעשרה מאמרות נברא העולם [...] והלא במאמר אחד יכול להבראות? אלא להפרע מן הרשעים שמאבדין את העולם שנברא בעשרה מאמרות, וליתן שכר טוב לצדיקים שמקיימין את העולם שנברא בעשרה מאמרות. [...] וכמו שתמה על זה מהר”ל “דמה חילוק [הבדל] יש בין גונב דינר אחד לגונב עשרה דינרים”, סוף סוף החילוק הוא בכמות ולא באיכות. ובתשובה על זה כתב המהר”ל, דנהי [אמנם] דאין הפרש בין גונב דינר אחד לגונב עשרה דינרים, אבל בודאי דיש הפרש בין “גונב סלע לגונב כתר המלך”. רצונו של המהר”ל בזה דמכיון דהעולם נברא בעשרה מאמרות, לכן הרי זה גונב כתר המלך (פחד יצחק, שבועות, ח/ג).

According to Maharal’s interpretation, the difference between one utterance and ten utterances cannot be compared to the difference between one dinar (a type of coin) and ten dinars but rather to the difference between a sela (a different coin) and the king’s crown. Rabbi hunter does not explain why Maharal argues thus. In fact, this insight quoted here by Rabbi Hutner is part of a long commentary by Maharal that continues for several pages, examining this problem from several angles. The gist of Maharal’s explanation involves the number ten, which is connected to the emanation of the divine presence, and the meaning of the declaration that the world was created with ten utterances is that the Holy One did not create a world for no reason, but rather a world that has the supreme advantage of allowing within it the emanation of the divine presence. This is therefore a qualitative, not quantitative, advantage.[[42]](#footnote-42)

We will discuss below more extensively the place of Maharal’s thought in Rabbi Hutner’s thought. However, at this point, I will mention that this is a striking example of how Rabbi Hutner, sometimes considered to be nothing more than an exegete of Maharal, completely removes a principle pervasive in Maharal’s thought. Exegetical and philosophical arguments about typological numbers are very common in Maharal’s writings, while in Rabbi Hutner’s writings this hermeneutical pattern is completely absent.[[43]](#footnote-43) In the case at hand, neither the significance of the number ten nor the advantage of a world in which the divine presence can emanate are mentioned in Rabbi Hutner’s interpretation of this mishna. His interpretation, although presented ostensibly as that of Maharal, is in fact original. According to this interpretation, the difference between one utterance and ten utterances lies not only in the multiplicity but also in the possibility that the multiplicity creates, which is the existence of a hierarchy. The utterances represent a qualitative hierarchy in that each utterance signifies beings of a different status, the pinnacle of which is man and the Shabbat. He wrote:

כל עצמו של המושג “כבוד” הנמצא בהכרתנו נובע הוא מתוך הרגשת חילוקי המדרגות הנמצאות בעולם. כי מכיון שישנן מדרגות רמות זו למעלה מזו, ומדרגות נמוכות זו למטה מזו, המדרגה הנמוכה צריכה היא להרים עיני'[ה] בכדי להסתכל בזו למעלה הימנה. הרמת עינים זו קרוי'[ה] היא כבוד. מקורם של כל חילוקי המדרגות הנמצאים בעולם הוא בחילוקי הדרגות בהתהוות העולמות [...] על ידי עשרה המאמרות של מעשה בראשית [...] החילוק בין הרשע בעולם הנברא במאמר אחר, ובין הרשע בעולם הנברא בעשרה מאמרות, הוא ההבדל “בין גונב דינר אחד וגונב כתר המלך”. מפני שאף על פי שגם בעולם הנברא במאמר אחד ישנה אפשרות של עבירה על רצון השם, מכל מקום מרידה **בכבוד מלכות** אין כאן. שם בעולם הנברא במאמר אחד אין מקום לענין הכבוד כלל ועיקר. שאם אתה נוטל מן העולם את חילוק המדרגות, הרי אתה נוטל מתוכו בהכרח את ההרגשה בענין החשיבות כל עיקר. ובודאי שבלי הרגשת חשיבות אין מקום לכבוד [...] מכיון שקיום העולם תלוי הוא דוקא בענין הכבוד, שהכל ברא לכבודו [...] נעשה הוא הרשע לפוגע בכתרו של מלך הכבוד, ומילא הוא מאבד את העולם אשר קיומו הוא בסוד הכבוד (פחד יצחק, שבועות ח/ח. ההדגשה אינה במקור).

In this passage, we again see the contrast between *kavod* and will. Will can also exist in a world that has no divisions of rank, a completely egalitarian world, as long as it functions in a desirable way. However, fulfillment of the divine will accompanied by a profusion of *kavod* is only possible in a world that has a qualitative hierarchy. In this passage, he also connects *kavod* with kingship. Sin in the world of another utterance is a sin against the divine will but not a rebellion against the *kavod* of His kingship. To strike at *kavod* is to strike at the king’s crown. The difference between a world created in one utterance and a world created in ten utterances is qualitative, because a world created in ten utterances is a hierarchy expressing qualitative gaps between various appearances of reality, some of which are more important than others. Without this, the existence of *kavod*, which is the purpose of the creation of reality, would not be possible, because “בלי הרגשת חשיבות אין מקום לכבוד”.

The concept appearing at the end of the passage – *hashivut* [importance]—is cardinal to Rabbi Hutner’s thought. As he does with the concept of *hessed*, Rabbi Hutner brings the concept of *kavod* into sharper focus, and imbues it with very specific content, as can be seen in the following passage from a discourse in *Pachad Yitzhak* on Chanukkah:

איזהו מכובד, המכבד את הבריות. ולא מצינו דוגמת ענין זה בשאר מידות. לא מצינו שיאמר כי כל המעניק עשירות מתעשר וכדומה. המפתח להבנת מהלך זה, נמצא הוא בהחוק השולט בהשפעת השכל. “מתלמידי יותר מכולם.” כלומר, לא רק שהשכל אינו מתחסר על ידי השפעה לזולת, אלא שאדרבא השפעה זו מביאה לו תוספת כוח. מיוחד הוא חוק זה רק להשפעת החכמה [...] והלא **כל מהותו של כבוד אינה אלא הכרת ערך חשיבותו של ענין**. ועצם המושג של ערך חשיבות אינו אלא ציור הנתפס בשכל [...] ועל כן בה במידה שהכבוד הוא יליד השכל, בה במדה נוהג גם בכבוד אותו החוק הנוהג בשכל. כי השפעה של כבוד על הזולת, היא רכישת כבוד תוך כדי הענקת כבוד. ואיזהו מכובד, המכבד את הבריות. כי סוף גדרו של כבוד, אינו בקבלת חשיבות, אלא להשפיע חשיבות [...] **הכבוד, יליד השכל, מיועד הוא להענקת חשיבות** (פחד יצחק, חנוכה, יא/ח).

*Kavod*, according to Rabbi Hutner, means *hashivut*, more precisely, its recognition and attribution. Further examination of the concept of *hashivut* will help us understand with greater precision the connection between *kavod* and the system of opposites “sacred and profane” and how to understand it within the context of Rabbi Hutner’s thought. This will be accomplished by examining, by way of contrast, the worst thing imaginable in his opinion -- the negation of *hashivut* altogether.

In the first discourse of *Pachad Yitzhak* on Purim, Rabbi Hutner discusses the quality that distinguishes Amalek from the rest of the peoples of the world. All of them oppose the community of Israel, yet Amalek distinguishes itself as a uniquely negative force. Even at the end of days, when the other nations of the world will reform their ways, Amalek will not be reformed and will be completely annihilated. Rabbi Hutner explains why Amalek is the archenemy of God and the people of Israel by contrasting the concept of *hashivut* with that of *leitzanut* [cynicism]. According to Rabbi Hutner, a man is measured by the things to which he ascribes importance.[[44]](#footnote-44) Man has the ability to ascribe importance to good or bad things. The lowest depth of the use of the “power of *hashivut*” is idolatry – the attribution of *hashivut* to pagan gods. This is the evil in the world against which the people of Israel fought. Nonetheless, there is something even worse than ascribing *hashivut* to evil and that is negating the concept of *hashivut* altogether. In his words:

עלינו לדעת, שלכוח זה של הכרת החשיבות, נמצא בנפש התנגדות גדולה. יש בה בנפשו של אדם נטייה חריפה לזלזול. לעומת כח-הכרת-החשיבות, נצא הוא בנפש מהלך שאינו רוצה לסבול שום חשיבות, ובזילותא ניחא ליה. שמו של הכוח הזה, המתפרץ בחזקה, להפקיע את עצמו מידיה של החשיבות הוא: “ליצנות”. מדת הליצנות העצמית, כפי שהיא נמצאת בנפש בשרשה, ענינה הוא למצוא את הפרצה בכל בנין של חשיבות על מנת לסתור את כל הבנין, מתוכה של פרצה זו. זה לעומת זה. שאיפתו של כח ההילול, היא להרבות חשיבות בעולם, ולעומתו שאיפתו של כוח הליצנות היא להרבות זלזול בעולם (פחד יצחק, פורים א/ד).

The power of *leitzanut* has a positive side when it is directed against the attribution of *hashivut* to idolatry (and negative things in general). But this form of *leitzanut* is a product of the recognition of the *hashivut* of the good that opposes evil. Pure *leitzanut*, in contrast, is the assertion that there is nothing important in the world. Pure *leitzanut* is the essence of Amalek. Rabbi Hutner wrote:

עמלק אינו יכול לסבול חשיבות [...] עם לידתה של כנסת ישראל, בא לעולם כוח-הכרת-החשיבות. האמבטיא היתה רותחת.[[45]](#footnote-45) רתיחות זו, מתנגדת לעמלק במהותה. מפאת התנגדות זו קפץ לתוך האמבטיא וקיררה. פרץ פרצה בחשיבות זו ששמה כנסת ישראל. מתוך פרצה זו הוא רוצה להרוס את כל בנין החשיבות. זו היא שאיפתו של כוח הליצנות מאז ומעולם. כוח הליצנות אשר בנפש דוחף לקירורה של האמבטיא הרותחת (פחד יצחק, פורים א/ו).

There is nothing more objectionable than the negation of *hashivut* altogether. The attribution of *hashivut* to evil and doing evil are less severe than the claim that everything is pointless. This quality was essential to Amalek yet not unique to him. The power of *leitzanut* exists in the soul of every person and pushes him to deride the very existence of *hashivut*. He must fight against this impulse (Pachad Yitzhak Purim 1/5).[[46]](#footnote-46) Those who negate *hashivut* forfeit the world created in ten utterances, a world created to contain the possibility of *kavod* -- the acknowledgment of *hashivut* and its bestowal.

**4.1.9 Elective Acts: Granting Importance to the Neutral**

After examining the meaning of the concept of *kavod*, we will return and integrate it into our discussion of the theocentric purpose in Rabbi Hutner’s thought. The purpose of creation is the profusion of *kavod*. The most important way to achieve this is within the victorious battle of the sacred over the profane. According to Rabbi Hutner, *kavod* is the recognition of *hashivut* and its quintessential form is the granting of *hashivut*. This argument reaches its full maturation in the concept of “divrei reshut” [elective acts] as developed by Rabbi Hutner.

Rabbi Hutner develops the concept of *divrei reshut* by contrasting it to the observation of the commandments. He identifies the two sets of opposites with two channels of activity: on the one hand, the observance of the commandments and the abstention from sin belong to the domain of good and evil, and on the other hand, “the performance of elective acts for the sake of heaven” or the abstention from them, belong to the domain of the sacred and profane. At the basis of the concept “elective acts” lies the premise that:

“בחיי האדם אין שטח כזה אשר יאמר עליו כי אין הוא נוגע לרצון השם, וכי כביכול לא איכפת ליה לרצון השם מה שנעשה בשטח זה” (Pachad Yitzchak: Pesach מד/ב).

In situations and deeds that are not defined initially as commandments or transgressions, there is also an obligation to fulfill the will of God. The difference is that in the case of commandments the required action is determined from the outset. Regarding elective actions, however, a person is required to decide for himself how to act, so that only after the fact does it become clear if his deeds were for the sake of the divine *kavod* or not. The conclusion of this argument appears in the volume of Rabbi Hutner’s writings that he did not himself edit for publication, but was published posthumously by his students:

סדר העבודה מתחלק לשני מהלכים. א) מצוות ממש ב) דברי רשות. הראשון הוא שכבר מבורר שהוא רצון השם וכבוד שמים. השני הוא שעדיין תלוי ועומד, והאדם בעצמו צריך לבררו ולחשוב מחשבות איך למַצות ככל היותר כבוד שמים מתוך פעולותיו [...] מכל המצבים והענינים שניתנו לאדם להשתמש בהם לצרכו. כמו שאמרו “כל מעשיך יהיו לשם שמים” (מאמרי פחד יצחק, סוכות כז/ה).

The possibility of performing elective acts for the sake of heaven and the obligation to do so correspond to the paradoxical conclusion of the anthropocentric purpose, in which framework we saw that the degree of strength of man’s being, his autonomous independent existence, is determined by the extent to which he can repay the debt of benevolence he owes to God, in other words, the feasible level of subjugation to Him. Rabbi Hutner wrote:

מציאותו של שטח חלק כזה [שאין הוא נוגע לרצון ה'] היתה מכרזת ואומרת, כי אם אמנם משועבד הוא הנברא לעבודת יוצרו מכל מקום אין זה אלא בגדר שיעבוד, אשר מחוץ למילוי דרישתו של שיעבוד זה הרי המשועבד נמצא הוא ברשות עצמו [...] ולעומת זאת שלילת השטח הזה מכרזת ואומרת כי אין הנברא משועבד לעבודת יוצרו, אלא שהוא עבד ליוצרו, ומכיון שאין קנין לעבד בלא רבו הרי הוא מופקע לגמרי מכל המציאות של רשות עצמו (Pachad Yitzchak: Pesach מד/ב).

If the service of God was limited to commandments and transgressions, during many periods of time, perhaps most of a person’s temporal existence, man would be free of these obligations and exist autonomously. Service within the context of *divrei reshut* makes man obligated to God in totality, not only in the broken sequence of specific points in his daily life.

If I can project from the discussion in previous sections to the discussion in this section, we can say that just as the *hashivut* of reality in general is negated, the *hashivut* of *divrei reshut* is also negated, and meaninglessness is attributed to the “areas” of life that are not defined from the outset as belonging to the domain of the commandments, in other words, the mundane areas. The victory in the battle between the sacred and the profane is the entry of these areas into the domain of the sacred by the performance of *divrei reshut* for the sake of heaven, which is equivalent to granting them *hashivut*. The world appears as lacking *hashivut*, but anything can acquire it, through the cooperation between the source of *hashivut* – God-- and the bestower of *hashivut* -- man.

Just as the victory of the sacred over the profane is a deeper aspiration than the victory of good over evil, so the performance of *divrei reshut* for the sake of heaven is more fundamental to the service of God than the observance of the commandments. This is a very counter-intuitive declaration, to put it mildly, within the context of Jewish thought, and Rabbi Hutner is aware of this and admits it. In a discourse from *Pachad Yitzhak* on Pesach, he writes that “שגרת המחשבה המצויה” understands the commandments as paramount and the performance of *divrei reshut* for the sake of heaven as a residual obligation or specific embellishment, although --

“ניתן להבחין בזה הבחנה יותר עמוקה, המהפכת את סדר המדרגות” (Pachad Yitzchak: Pesach מד/א).

Rabbi Hutner explains this by examining the concept of the slave and the way in which the nation of Israel became slaves of God. The characteristic of the slave is that both he himself and his actions are completely under the authority of his master, in contrast to a connection based on certain specific obligations. When the relationship is one of slavery, the very act of acquiring the status of the slave – in other words, total subservience to the master -- precedes and takes precedence over the acceptance of a set of obligations and specific prohibitions relevant to the servitude. In his words:

בכדי שהעבד יעשה רצון רבו, בעל כרחו ששני דברים יוקדמו לה לעשייה זו. קניית האדון אותו לעבד, והודעת רצונו של האדון לעבדו.[[47]](#footnote-47) על ידי הקניה נכנס הוא העבד לרשות האדון, ועל ידי גילוי הרצון הוא יודע במה לעבדו. על ידי גאולת מצרים נעשו ישראל לעבדי השם, ועל ידי מתן תורה הם יודעים במה לעבדו. [...] נתבאר לנו, איפוא, כי בעצם התואר של עבדי השם זכינו קודם שידענו את החובות שעבדות זו מטילה עלינו [...] וכאן הגענו לידי הפיכת סדר המדרגות בכלליות הבנין של עבודת השם. כי בתוך מה שדברנו בזה סוקרים אנו את החובה של “בכל דרכיך דעהו” לא בתור עלייה הבנויה על גבי קומות קודמות לה, אלא בתור אבן-השתיה של כל הבנין של עבודת השם. [...] לפני שנכנסו בעול המצוות, נכנסנו בעול ההכרה כי אין דברי רשות בעולם (Pachad Yitzchak: Pesach מד/ד-ו).

The performance of *divrei reshut* for the sake of heaven is more significant for the service of God than the commandments; this is expressed in the way in which the community of Israel became the nation of God: first, they became God’s servants who performed all these actions for the sake of heaven, and only sometime later did they receive the commandments.

The purpose of existence is the profusion of the *kavod* of God in the world, which is founded upon the principle that there is a concept of *kavod* within reality, in other words, that there is something important, and that one must recognize its importance and devote oneself to it. The factor most contradictory to the realization of this objective is the negation of *hashivut* and the attribution of meaninglessness to everything. The negation of *hashivut* can both encompass everything and be personal, in the perception that there are mundane areas in a person’s life that are merely neutral and nothing more. The most important service of God is the bestowal of *hashivut* wherever it appears to be absent and the expropriation of the domains of the mundane and their inclusion into the holy, by performing *divrei reshut* for the sake of heaven. Here I must again point out Rabbi Hutner’s interpretation of the Rabbinic saying “Who is honored – he who honors others”, in which he declared that “השפעה של כבוד על הזולת, היא רכישת כבוד תוך כדי הענקת כבוד. ואיזהו מכובד, המכבד את הבריות.” (פחד יצחק, חנוכה, יא/ח).. The effect of the increase of the honor of the person who honors others is not a question of reciprocity – one who honors others, by virtue of this, receives honor from others. Rather, the effect is reflexive and simultaneous: when a person ascribes *hashivut* to something he thereby bestows *hashivut* upon himself.

At the end of the discussion of the anthropocentric purpose, we have discovered that it includes a theocentric element – the realization of God’s desire to imitate man. Here we find that the theocentric purpose also contains a distinct anthropocentric element – the profusion of God’s *kavod* is also the profusion of man’s *kavod*, and there is no *kavod* other than *hashivut*.

Ramchal’s theocentric purpose is focused on the opposites “good and bad” and the need to eradicate the latter in the face of the former for the sake of revealing the unity of God. In Rabbi Hutner’s version, the theocentric purpose is primarily centered around the opposites “sacred and profane” and the need to enlist the latter to the former, to increase God’s *kavod*. Ramchal is motivated to a large extent by theodicy: the desire to vindicate God and reality by explaining the existence of evil in the world. Rabbi Hutner is similarly motivated but with a different emphasis: while the traditional theodicy seeks to vindicate reality as good despite the evil within it, Rabbi Hutner aims to vindicate reality as possessing *hashivut*, such that it has value within it, contrary to the claim that it clearly lacks *hashivut* altogether.

In our discussion of the anthropocentric purpose, we have seen that though Rabbi Hutner’s formulation of this idea is structurally identical to that of Ramchal, it is developed with more sophistication and more specific nuance. In the case of the theocentric purpose, the changes are more significant. The structure is similar, and all its components are adopted, in one form or another, but its focus has shifted. The concept of God’s unity is omitted and not replaced by anything similar, while the dynamic of the negation of evil is downgraded from the focal point to a minor clause. Rabbi Hutner replaces this with another focal point: the aim of augmenting the *kavod* of God, which entails the bestowal of *hashivut* on the neutral, by performing *divrei reshut* for the sake of heaven.

**4.2. The Dualist Principle. The Background: Maharal of Prague’s Dualism**

According to Rabbi Hutner, the system of opposites good-bad and sacred-profane differ from each other, among other ways, in the nature of the relationship between their component parts. The contrast between good and bad is one of contradiction, while the contrast between holy and profane is that of existence as opposed to absence. Good and bad are a warring dualistic pair embroiled in mutual conflict, while the sacred and the profane are a neutral dualistic pair whose relationship moves between estrangement and indifference, on the one hand, and unity and harmony, on the other. This neutral dualism is the linchpin of Rabbi Hutner’s thought and the basis of his connection to the thinker who most influenced his writings, Maharal of Prague.

The centrality of Maharal of Prague, Rabbi Yehuda ben Bezalel Loew (1520 – 1609), to the thought of Rabbi Hutner does not require demonstration. Rabbi Hutner mentions him countless times in his writings, more than any other thinker, and even refers to him by the sobriquet “the light of our eyes, Maharal”. Rabbi Hutner’s connection to Maharal is clearly reflected in a passage that he wrote at the end of his life after visiting his grave:

כל זה משלך. משל הדיבורים שלך שהוצאת לאויר העולם בפיו של הקולמוס שלך. הקולמוס הזה היה בידך בזמן שנשמתך היתה מחוברת לגופך. עכשו נשמתך מתעדנת ומתפנקת מזיו השכינה. ואילו גופך נמצא עכשו מתחת לרגלי. והנה אותו חלק קטן מנשמתך הדבוק בנשמתי, אותו חלק מנשמתך נמצא עכשו סמוך מאד לגופך.[[48]](#footnote-48)

Maharal of Prague, like the Ramchal, is one of the most influential thinkers in the history of Jewish thought, especially Orthodox thought. His influence on a wide spectrum of Jewish thinkers in the late modern period is especially salient, to the point where completely contradictory outlooks are based upon his thought. These include the thought of Polish Hasidic rebbes such as Simcha Bunim of  Peshischa, Menachem Mendel of Kotzk, Tzadok of Lublin, Yehudah Aryeh Leib Alter (the “Sefat *Emet*” of Ger) and his followers, the Hungarian Rebbe Joel Teitelbaum of Satmar (one of the most prominent opponents of Zionism), Rabbi Avraham Yitzhak Hakohen Kook, the Chabad rebbes, as well as maskilim such as Professor André Neher and his students.[[49]](#footnote-49) Similarly, the research literature on the Maharal includes a wide range of interpretations of his thought, some of which are diametrically opposed to each other, including scholars who regard him as a proto-humanist anticipating Jewish movements that embraced modernity and those who saw him as the father of the separatist and anti-rationalist Jewish counter-culture.

The widespread influence of Maharal and the range of interpretations of his thought are connected to the nature of his thought. His prolific writings include many volumes of thought and exegesis, halachic works, and other fields. His writing is arcane, repetitive, and tortuous. His language is a mixture of elements from Rabbinic literature, medieval philosophy, pre-Lurianic kabbalah, and his own idiosyncratic terms, his use of which appears at times inconsistent.[[50]](#footnote-50) Because of these aspects, as well as its scope, Maharal’s oeuvre is fertile ground for a variety of interpretations and intellectual ramifications.

All the different interpretations of his thought are based on its most well-developed motif: the dualistic principle.[[51]](#footnote-51) The dualistic pattern has been a common motif in religious as well as philosophical thought for a long time, although it usually relates to man’s body-soul dualism or general dualism between physical and spiritual reality. Maharal’s contribution to Jewish thought was to develop and expand the dualistic concept and apply it to a very wide range of categories. This structural foundation was identified by the aforementioned thinkers and scholars, who nonetheless differ one from the other in the manner in which they interpret the series of categories he refers to and the relationships between them. In particular, and especially relevant to our subject, they differ from each other regarding the nature of the relationships between the components of Maharal’s dualistic system. Is this conflicting dualism, comprised of opposites that are not only opposed and exclusive in their natures, one good, the other bad, but also actually engaged in conflict? Or perhaps it is neutral dualism, in which two orders exist side by side, potentially even harmonious and capable of integration? From this question follow additional hermeneutical questions, such as Maharal’s approach to man, the body, science, and so forth. One hermeneutical approach to Maharal tends to interpret his dualistic system as neutral, while another approach tends to understand it as conflicting. Both schools of thought endeavor to resolve the contradictions or inconsistencies in his thought while attributing to Maharal a complex outlook that gives preference to one perspective while attempting to incorporate the other.

Two fundamental problems derive from the obscurity regarding the nature of the dualistic relationships in his system of thought. One is his cosmology. Two cosmological descriptions can be found in his writings, one dual and the other triple. The dual description portrays a reality consisting of two layers, an upper and a lower, between which lies a chasm, while the triple description portrays a reality consisting of three strata, an upper, a lower, and an intermediary stratum connecting them.[[52]](#footnote-52) The second problem is his anthropology. Echoing the ambiguity of his cosmology, he sometimes describes man as consisting of two layers, upper and lower, and sometimes as consisting of three layers, the soul, spirit, and body; sometimes he describes man’s purpose as to bridge the two strata of existence, and sometimes to perfect himself by overcoming his material side. Sometimes he describes the evil inclination as deriving from man’s possession of a physical body, and sometimes as a “separate” metaphysical force parallel to the good inclination, which is also a “separate” metaphysical force. The scholars and commentators of Maharal endeavor to mediate between these contradictory depictions.

The difficulty in understanding Maharal’s dualism and the questions deriving from it results from the premise that a single coherent system is under discussion. However, in my opinion, the various expressions of dualism in his thought cannot be regarded as complementary, but rather as parallel (and sometimes conflicting) in that they belong to two separate paradigms in his writings that can be distinguished one from the other. One of these is more conventional and similar to medieval Jewish thought. The other is unique to Maharal and constitutes the essence of his contribution to Jewish thought. I will call the first the “paradigm of deficiency”,[[53]](#footnote-53) and the second, the “paradigm of separation”.[[54]](#footnote-54)

The” paradigm of deficiency” is Maharal’s development of medieval dualism. In the context of this paradigm, he emphasized the negative quality of the lower, material world, deriving from the deficiency or insufficiency inherent to any material object. This deficiency refers to imperfection in general, as well as to the tendency of the material to atrophy and cease to exist. Deficiency is the source of evil in the world and man, and it stands in conflict with the upper worlds. Man’s purpose and aspiration is perfection, to which he strives by means of the Torah and the commandments, with whose help he overcomes the material and its intrinsic deficiency.

The “separation paradigm” is a dualistic system unique to Maharal. David Sorotzkin described it well as “the theology of separation”. In explanation of the motivation behind this wording Sorotzkin wrote:

Maharal’s philosophical endeavor was to create a dualistic, dichotomic understanding of reality, in which one dimension is the natural and familiar, and the second dimension – which he calls the “separate” (“nivdal”) – is metaphysical and much more valuable than the first. Thus, he systematically assigns to the realm of the “separate” (“nivdal”) all the components of the particularistic Jewish world, including the soul (“neshama”), Torah, miracles, and so forth. The role of this separatism is to create a bifurcated world order which keeps anything defined as the important categories of Jewish existence outside the framework of the “worlds”.[[55]](#footnote-55)

According to Sorotzkin, this intellectual endeavor derives from “explicitly Orthodox motivations and the understanding that the integration of the Jewish religion into the universal framework will end by making Judaism obsolete”. Maharal used the theology of the separate to confront the specific challenges of his time, but in doing so he succeeded in achieving another much more important goal: “the removal of nature”, which, according to Sorotzkin, “allowed him to reformulate the position of Judaism in a unique way that deflected any potential threat, in the present and future, from the ‘universal’ and ‘general’ frameworks”.[[56]](#footnote-56) For our immediate purposes, it is significant that Maharal’s approach enables a position that includes the natural order. As Sorotzkin wrote regarding the social context, Maharal “accepts the Christian rationale and the hermeneutical patterns on which it is based, yet he nonetheless rejects this rationale with regard to everything pertinent to the definitions of Jewish existence, which is presented as autonomous and beyond any rational, historical, or textual critique”.[[57]](#footnote-57) The natural order is not in itself bad. It is indifferent to the separate order, or at the most subject to it, but does not oppose it.

Sorotzkin’s focus on the question of motivation is very useful in that it helps to point out a certain difference between the two paradigms. The deficiency paradigm is expressed primarily in general dual categories: form and matter, mind and body, upper and lower worlds, and so forth, while the separation paradigm finds its most important expression specifically in Jewish dual categories: Torah and general knowledge, the Jewish people and the other nations, redemption, and exile, and so forth. Perhaps herein lies the key to unraveling the tangled dualistic web within Maharal’s works and understanding their real or apparent inconsistencies. However, the matter is not that simple, because at various opportunities Maharal combines the two categories and discusses general categories in the context of the separation paradigm or particularistic categories in the context of the “deficiency” paradigm; moreover, concepts used interchangeably appear in both paradigms.

Therefore, Maharal’s thought, on the one hand, contains conflicting dualistic baggage, but, on the other hand, also neutral dualistic baggage. After acknowledging this tension, we can understand more accurately what Rabbi Hutner internalized from his thought and how Maharal’s influence was expressed in the *Pachad Yitzchak* books. While Maharal’s approach to the material or lower worlds is open to discussion, Rabbi Hutner’s approach is clear: his attitude to the lower worlds, the body, and the material world is never negative. The dualistic structure in his writings is overtly neutral and harmonic. Rabbi Hutner took plenty from the separation paradigm and, even more than in the original, emphasized its neutral and harmonic potential while avoiding the deficiency paradigm. Thus, Rabbi Hutner, a thinker from the heart of Lithuanian Orthodoxy, appears to be in proximity to the humanist school of Maharal’s commentators and removed from the separatist school. This interpretation of Maharal’s thought and its enthusiastic adoption by Rabbi Hutner have become clear in the light of our examination of the theocentric purpose in his writings: this neutral- harmonic dualism is the theological, cosmological, and anthropological foundation that supports and justifies the formulation of the system of the sacred and the profane and its elevation in importance.

**4.2.1 The Dualistic Concept in the Pachad Yitzhak Books: Choice and Knowledge**

The basic defining terms of the layers of reality in the *Pachad Yitzchak* books, as in the works of Maharal and Ramchal, are upper and lower. Although the terminology is formulated in the plural, in practice there is no distinction in the framework of Rabbi Hutner’s thought between the various upper and lower strata. There is only a dualistic distinction between the upper and lower, in which the lower stratum is the material world and the upper is the spiritual world. With respect to the relationship between them, the lower strata are the platform upon which the upper strata are to be realized. In his words:

בששת ימי בראשית פעלו עשרה המאמרות. בכוחם של מאמרות אלו נאצלו, נבראו, נוצרו, ונעשו כל חוקי ההנהגה של עצם **טבע** כל העולמות. אבל בכל העשרה מאמרות של ששת ימי בראשית לא הוזכר עדיין ענין הקדושה כל עיקר. ורק עם הופעתה של שבת נזכרה בראשונה מציאות הקדושה. כלליות ענין הקדושה בכאן פירושה הוא, כי בעוד שעד עכשיו בששת ימי בראשית יצא לפועל **גופם** של העולמות, הנה עכשיו עם הופעתה של השבת יצאה מן ההעלם אל הגילוי **התכלית והמטרה** של קיום העולמות. “אם לא בריתי חוקות שמים וארץ לא שמתי”. הברית היא התכלית והמטרה של חוקות שמים וארץ. חוקות שמים וארץ – על ידם של עשרה מאמרות שבהם נברא העולם; ברית – על ידן של עשרת הדברות שבהן ניתנה תורה. עשרת הדברות הן הן פנימיותם של עשרת המאמרות (Pachad Yitzchak: Pesach, סד/ד).[[58]](#footnote-58)

This passage reveals the fusion of the teleological and dualistic principles in that Rabbi Hutner identifies the two strata of reality with the body-purpose duality. In another place he explains:

והנה רצון השם מתגלה לנו בשתי מערכות. מערכה אחת במעשה בראשית בעולם שנברא בעשרה מאמרות; ומערכה שניה, במעמד הר סיני בתורה שניתנה בעשרת הדברות. אידי ואידי [זה וזה] גילוי רצונו של מקום הן. אלא שיש הבדל פנימי באופן יציאתן מן הכוח אל הפועל. דרצון השם המתגלה במעשה בראשית אופן קיומו הוא בדרך הכרח. ואלו רצון השם המתגלה בתורה אופן קיומו הוא בדרך בחירה. “יהי אור” - זה הוא מאמר המתקיים בדרך חוק מציאות של הכרח. “לא תשתחוה” - זו היא דברה המתקיימת בדרך חרות-רצון של בחירה [...] פנימיות תוכנן של עשרת המאמרות הן עשרת הדברות. “אם לא בריתי יומם ולילה חוקות שמים וארץ לא שמתי”. כלומר לא נתגלה הקב”ה במתן הכרח, כי אם להמציא מקום להתגלות במתן החרות (פחד יצחק, חנוכה, ד/ד).

The will of God revealed in the act of creation, the body of the worlds, and the will of God revealed in the Torah, the purpose of the worlds, are not the same. The actualization of the purpose is conditioned upon a factor that has the potential to bridge the chasm and connect the upper and lower spheres, between the body of the world and its purpose. The arena in which this connection takes place is man, who is distinct from the rest of creation in that he bridges the layers of reality in a way that enables him to increase the honor of God and recognize his kingship, and as a result, to earn his lovingkindness and thus fulfill the purpose, both the theocentric and the anthropocentric, of creation. Man bridges the dualistic chasm by means of two of his essential attributes: the power of choice and the power of *da’at* (knowledge/intellect).

In contrast to other creatures, man is comprised of two integrated layers of reality. In Rabbi Hutner’s language, man consists of the “divine vital spirit” – from the upper layers of reality and the “natural vital spirit” -- from the lower levels of reality, in a way that integrates them despite the chasm that lies at the foundation of creation.[[59]](#footnote-59) This combination of the two strata of creation within man is the great wonder of creation. In his words:

וקשר זה [של הנפש האלוקית בנפש הטבעית] מתבטא הוא במילים הללו של ומפליא לעשות, מפני שמפליא הכונה היא שמקשר הגשמי ברוחני. כלומר מדת גדולתו של הקב”ה המתגלית בחבורם של הנפש האלוקית והנפש הטבעית להדדי, עולה היא בנוראותי'[ה] על מדת גדולתו המגלית בין בעניני'[ה] של הנפש הטבעית כשהיא לעצמה, בין בעניני'[ה] של הנפש האלוקית כשהיא לעצמה. נוראות זו של חיבור הגשמי לרוחני היא היא המהוה את דרגת הפלא (Pachad Yitzchak: Pesach טו/ד).”

The expression “He who does wonders” refers to the conclusion of the blessing   
“asher yatzar” (“He who made”), which praises God for the wonders of the body (the natural vital spirit), recited immediately before the blessing “elohai, neshama” “my Lord, the soul” which praises God for the wonders of the soul (the divine vital spirit). Therefore, the expression “who does wonders” occupies the middle ground between the natural and divine vital spirits. The source of this derasha (homily) is the commentary of Rabbi Moshe Isserles on the *Shulchan Aruch*, Orach Chaim, Siman 6/a: “It can also be explained that “he who does wonders” is that which protects man’s spirit within him and connects the spiritual to the physical.” In the book *Darchei Moshe* (Orach Chaim 6/b) this homily appears in a slightly longer version: “It appears to me that “he who does wonders” refers to the soul that he gave to man and it is a great wonderthat something spiritual, from the upper realm, exists within something physical, man’s body, that is of the lower realm.” However, Rabbi Hutner, as is his way, takes this one step further: the integration of the divine and natural vital spirits is not merely a wonder, but the greatest wonder in all of creation, more than the soul itself. The connection between the body of the worlds and their purpose, existing within man, expresses the greatness of God more than the worlds and their purpose themselves. This integration is the source of man’s power to choose. As Rabbi Hutner explains:

סגולת הבחירה צומחת היא על גבי עובדת הכפילות ביצירתו של האדם שנוצר בשני יודין, ונברא גם מן העליונים וגם מן התחתונים. באופן שסגולת החרות של כח הבחירה אינו נמצא בנפש האלוקית כשהיא לעצמה וגם לא בנפש הטבעית כשהיא לעצמה אלא שנמצא הוא דוקא במזיגתן (Pachad Yitzchak: Pesach טו/ה). [[60]](#footnote-60)

And in another place:

כל תכונות נפשו של אדם יש להן תכונות מקבילות בסדרי העולם. ואף תכונת הבחירה, שהיא המסמנת עיקר אופיו של אדם, יש לה שורש בסדרי העולם. ומכיון שסוד הבחירה של האדם גנוז הוא בכפילות-היצירה שלו, שנוצר גם מן העליונים וגם מן התחתונים; מפני כן פרשו לנו חכמים כי שורש הבחירה של האדם בסדרי העולם, נעוץ הוא בהבדלה זו של ידה נתחלקו המים לעליונים ותחתונים [...] נחמתם של המים התחתונים היא על ידי הכנסתם לסודה של מדת הכבוד. סודה של מדת הכבוד הוא, כי הכבוד העולה אליה מן הרחוקים, יוצר הוא לה התנשאות עמוקה לאין-ערוך, מאשר הכבוד העולה לה מן הקרובים. תכונה זו מיוחדת היא למדת הכבוד דווקא; לא מצינו דוגמתה בשאר מדות (ראש השנה, מאמר יג/א).

Man’s power to choose is rooted in his dual creation from both the upper and lower spheres. By his power of choice, man bridges the chasm between the strata of reality, connecting the lower and upper spheres and thereby inducting them into the “secret of the honor”. If we project onto this the concept of “kavod” (honor), as it is developed in Rabbi Hutner’s thought, it appears that man, in his choices, grants “hashivut” (importance) to the lower worlds by connecting them to the upper worlds.

The power of choice is not the only characteristic that distinguishes man from the other creatures. According to Rabbi Hutner, “הוויתו של אדם מיוחדת היא בזה, שנמצא בתוכה שלטון הדעת” (שבועות כה/יט). The source of the power of *da’at* within man is his creation in the image of God, and the similarity between him and the Creator. In his words:

עיקר יחודו ועצמיותו של אדם נאמר בתורה בלשון צלם ודמות [...] ובלשון חכמים קרוי הוא ענין זה בלשון דוגמה של מעלה [...] בכלליותו של האדם, המקום המיוחד לשאת בתוכו את הדמות ואת הצלם ואת הדוגמא של מעלה – הוא הוא כח הדעת שבאדם (פחד יצחק, ראש השנה טו/ג-ד).

This similarity between man and God, and the attribute of intellect that expresses it, enables the existence of kingship – one of the primary expressions of the theocentric purpose – as we have seen above. Rabbi Hutner explains:

ידועים הם דבריהם של חכמי הלשון, כי ההבדל בין מלוכה וממשלה הוא, כי ממשלה היא שלא ברצונו של מי שמושלים עליו, ומלוכה היא ברצונו של מי שמולכים עליו. בודאי שזה נכון. אבל אין זה אלא חיצוניות הדברים. בפנימיותם של דברים, גנוזה היא ההכרה העדינה, כי ה”אדם-שבאדם” אינו אלא הדעת שבו. ומכיון שהשם מלוכה לא יונח אלא על הדומה, שכן האריה נקרא מלך החיות מפני שגם הוא חיה, אבל אם האדם שליט על החיות, אינו אלא מושל ולא מלך, מפני שאין האדם מסוג הבעל חי, וממילא אם יש לאדם כח שליטה על הזולת, שלא מדעתו של הזולת, הרי כח שלטונו אינו מתפשט על כח הדעת של הזולת, ואפילו אם הוא שולט על כל כוחותיו של הזולת, כל שאינו שולט על כח הדעת שבו, הרי אין הוא שולט על האדם שבזולת, ואינו אלא כשולט על בעלי חיים, שלא ייתכן לקרותו מלך. וזה הוא מה שאמרנו, כי מה שמדת המלוכה דורשת דוקא שתהא מדעתו של זה שמולכים עליו, אינו אלא סימן חיצוני למדת המלוכה. פנימיותו של הסימן החיצוני, הוא, מפני שמדת המלוכה דורשת את ההשתייכות לסוג אחד, ובדרך מילא משתלשל מזה, שאין מדת המלכות נוהגת אלא בזמן שהמלוכה מתקיימת היא מדעתו של זה שמולכים עליו [...] כל עוד שלא נמצאה בריאה שיאמר עליה כי נעשית היא בצלם אלקים, אין זה אלא ממשלה, דלא תתכן מלוכה אלא כשיש צד של דמיון בין המלך ובין זה שמולכין עליו.” (פחד יצחק, ראש השנה, יא/טו-טז).

Here we encounter again the motif of the simple layer and the deep layer as a hermeneutical pattern of Rabbi Hutner. However, in this case, the deep layer is not intended to negate the simple understanding but add to it. It is not only that the kingship is the will of he who crowns the king; so that kingship by choice can exist, there must be a similarity between the king and he whom the king rules. This similarity is the image of God within man, his essence, whose substance is his *da’at*. There is an allusion here to Rabbi Hutner’s understanding of *imitatio Dei*, which he also connects to the image of God and the essence of man.

In discourse 64 of *Pachad Yitzchak* on Pesach (reprinted as discourse 1 in *Pachad Yitzchak* on Shabbat), Rabbi Hutner further develops the concept of “da’at”. We encountered this discourse above in the discussion of how Rabbi Hutner distinguishes between the creation of the body of the worlds and the creation of the purpose of the worlds. This discourse is an excellent example of how Rabbi Hutner integrates halacha and aggada (homiletical traditions) in his thought and develops conceptual arguments based on a halachic foundation. In this discourse, he presents a quote from the Vilna Gaon that discusses the saying that God renews the creation each day. In other words, in contrast to the idea that God created the world and from then on it exists on its own, in fact, the stable existence of the world is an illusion, because God actively and constantly maintains the world, and if he were to desist from doing so, the world would cease to exist. Thus, in effect, the entire existence of the world is a false existence, a latent existence, dependent on an outside source for its existence. According to the Vilna Gaon, on Shabbat, God ceases this constant renewal of creation, having prepared the renewal of the world on Shabbat, in advance on Friday.[[61]](#footnote-61) Rabbi Hutner attempts to explain this obscure statement. To this end, he presents a halacha from the laws of carrying from one domain to another on Shabbat, according to which “he who moves food of less than a measure, within a vessel, is exempt from punishment, despite the vessel.” According to the halacha, there is a minimal measurement of volume (that varies according to the type of the material or object) that is significant enough for its transfer from one domain to another to be considered a desecration of the Sabbath according to biblical law. Someone who transfers less than this amount, although he performed a forbidden act, is exempt from bringing a sin offering (assuming that he did it unwittingly). Surprisingly, the halacha determines that someone who transfers food that is less than the amount for which one is obligated to bring a sacrifice, within a vessel, which on its own may not be transferred on the Sabbath, is nonetheless exempt both for the food and for the vessel. The reason for this is that the vessel is considered secondary to the food: it is not significant in itself, but only as an instrument for the food, and therefore the vessel is not taken into consideration, only the amount of food.[[62]](#footnote-62) After this discussion, Rabbi Hutner continues:

זה הוא פירושו של “ויקדש” אחרי “ויכלו”. עם סיום פעולתם של עשרת המאמרות בששת ימי בראשית, הגיעה השעה להופעתו של אור תכלית-פועלה זו. בשבת בראשית הבהיק אורן של עשרת הדברות עד כדי כך שעשרת המאמרות נעשו לו לכלי ולנרתיק. וזו היא מה שאמרנו כי ענין עיקר וטפל מהוה הוא את המהלך הפנימי של שביתת שבת בראשית. כלומר, אין שביתה זו מחייבת את העדר פעולתם של עשרת המאמרות, אלא שעם הופעת אורן של עשרת הדברות מתגלה ממילא כי אין פעולת עשרת המאמרות רק בבחינת כלי למה שמתרומם עליה וגנוז בתוכה. ומעתה נידונית היא פעולת עשרת המאמרות לגבי אור עשרת הדברות – ככלי לגבי תוכן וכטפל לגבי עיקר. וממילא אין אנו צריכים להיעדר פעולתם של עשרת המאמרות בכדי שתחול עליהם תורת שביתה. שהרי זו היא מה ששנינו כי כל פעולה שתורת טפל עליה, אין היא סותרת כלל למהות השביתה [...] שביתת שבת איננה אלא שינוי-ערכין ולא העדר פעולה. אבל הרי על רביעות משקל הערכין של עיקר וטפל, אי אפשר לו שיעשה רק בכוחה של הדעת. רק הדעת היא השוקלת והמעריכה. מצד כל כוחות הגוף אין מקום כלל להבחנה בין עיקר וטפל. כי רק קביעות ערכו של איזה ענין יש בה העלאה למדרגת עיקר והורדת למדרגת טפל [...] עד שלא בא אדם, לא היתה בעולם בריה בעלת כח הדעת [...] בכוחה של הדעת להכיר גם את גופו של עולם וגם את אורו, ולקבוע את ערכם ההדדי כמו טפל לגבי עיקר [...] שביתת שבת נוצרת בכוח הדעת (Pachad Yitzchak: Pesach, סד/ד-ז).

Rabbi Hutner here describes the actualization of the purpose of the worlds as an act of assessing the body of these worlds – the lower realms – as secondary to the upper realms, which are primary. It is worth noting that in this passage Rabbi Hutner emphasizes that the lower realms do not contradict the higher realms, meaning that there is no contradiction between matter and spirit, and therefore “the action of the ten sayings does not need to be absent” for the act of Shabbat to be actualized. This is the meaning of the Vilna Gaon’s obscure statement: it is possible to cease to do something without canceling it when it is secondary to the act of ceasing and serves it. Man, endowed with the power of *da’at* enables the cessation from creation without halting the activity of the ten sayings because is capable of regarding them as subordinate to the act of cessation. To achieve the spiritual purpose, there is no need to negate the physical, but rather to harness it to the spiritual. This is further proof of the neutral dualistic understanding espoused by Rabbi Hutner. I would like to point out that Rabbi Hutner’s interpretation of this statement, that God does not have to desist from renewing the world on Shabbat because by virtue of man’s *da’at*, this activity is secondary and negated vis-à-vis the world’s purpose fulfilled in the Sabbath, is neither mentioned nor alluded to in the words of the Vilna Gaon.[[63]](#footnote-63)

We have seen that in Rabbi Hutner’s thought, as in that of Ramchal, *da’at* is involved in the dynamic of the negation of evil: the acknowledgment in real time, by means of *da’at*, that evil is in its essence good. However, the essence of *da’at*, like the power of choice, is discussed in the context of neutral dualism: the heart of the matter, according to Rabbi Hutner, is the capacity to understand reality correctly, as a system in which the lower worlds, insignificant in themselves, are imbued with meaning when they serve as a platform for the upper worlds.

Therefore, two primary qualities of man position him to bridge the dualistic chasm and thus enable the actualization of the two purposes of reality, the anthropocentric and the theocentric, which are the receipt of lovingkindness because of an abundance of honor and earning the essence of existence by attributing importance to reality. These qualities are man’s power to choose, his “principal quality”, with which he bridges the strata of reality by his choices, and the power of *da’at*, his essence, with which he bridges the strata of reality by identifying and assessing the hierarchy of reality. However, these qualities are not necessarily equal in their status. This inequality is reflected in the terms attesting to its superiority with which Rabbi Hutner describes *da’at*, in his very act of devoting energy to a philosophical endeavor, unusual in itself in the framework of the society and the elite cadre of Torah scholars within which he operated,[[64]](#footnote-64) and in the title he gave to his system of thought: “divrei torah behilchot deot vechovot halevavot” [words of Torah concerning the laws of beliefs and the duties of the heart].

In a short discourse appearing at the beginning of each of the volumes of *Pachad Yitzchak*, under the title, “A General Note”, Rabbi Hutner explains why there is a specific obligation to study the laws pertaining to beliefs and a benefit to learning Torah in the areas of opinions and beliefs. The reason he gives is that the guideline for Torah study, according to which its quality is assessed, is that the study will be for the sake of practice. Study must lead to the performance of the commandments. Therefore, it is possible to discern a hierarchy within “Torah subjects” in accordance with the level of connection between the study and the practice. He explains:

חובות הדעות מתקיימות בכוח ההכרה שבנפש, וחובות הלבבות מתקיימות בכוח התחושה שבהרגשה, וחובות האיברים מתקיימות בכוח העשייה של הגוף, ואילו עסק לימוד התורה מתקיים הוא בכוח ההשגה שבשכל. ונמצא שבעשה שאנו אומרים שהלימוד מביא לידי קיום, אנו מתכונים באמת לשפע בעל ברכה משולשת. דממקום ההשגה שבשכל, זורמת היא הברכה, למקום ההכרה שבנפש, ולמקום התחושה שבהרגשה, ולמקום העשיה שבגוף. וכאן עלינו לחלק בין שני הזרמים הראשונים ובין הזרם השלישי. חילוק זה יש לו משל ודוגמה בחוקי הטבע. הבדל תהומי הוא ההבדל בין מהירות התנועה של גלי האור, ובין מהירות התנועה של גלי הכוח השונים הפועלים בעולם [...] והוא הדין והוא המידה בחייה של אישיות-אדם. נר השם נשמת אדם. ומפני שחיי הנפש הפנימיים קרובים יותר את ההפשטה של אור הנשמה, מאשר חיי המעשה החיצוניים, לכן תנועתם של גלגלי החיות הפנימית, היא מהירה לעין ערוך, מתנועת גלגלי החיות החיצונית של כלי המעשה [...] כשאדם רוצה לקיים מצות אמונה על פי דעותיה של תורה, והוא לומד עיקר אחד מעיקרי האמונה וקולטו בהשגתו, - הרי השגה זו מעמידתו בתחום האמונה שהיא הקיום, באופן הרבה יותר תכוף מאשר השגה בהלכות סוכה מעמידתו בתחומה של עשיית הסוכה. [...] ואשר על כן בעסקנו בדברי תורה של הלכות דעות וחובות הלבבות - אפילו כשהננו עוסקים בהם דרך לימוד, הננו נמצאים בהכרח בתחום הקיום. ואם בכלליות הענין של תורה ומצוות קבלנו, כי “נר מצוה ותורה אור” - הרי האיחוד של האור ושל הנר, בולט הטא במיוחד במקצוע ה”הלכות דעות וחובות הלבבות” שבתורה. הרגשת בליטה זו, היא הגורמת לנו, שניחד את הדיבור ואת אופן הדיבור, את הלימוד ואת אופן הלימוד, באותו חלק השייך לחובות המצפון. ומי שלומד את ה”דברי תורה של הלכות דעות וחובות הלבבות”, ואפילו ריח של קיום אינו נכנס באפיו – ידע נאמנה כי לא לו נאמרו הדברים (פחד יצחק, הערה כללית).

Engagement with *da’at* is a higher level because in the sphere of *da’at* study and practice are coexistent. In this context, Rabbi Hutner’s non-conventional use of the expression “hilchot deot” must be noted. In the Jewish tradition, especially in medieval literature, the concept “deot” usually refers to ethical virtues, character attributes, and so forth, whereas Rabbi Hutner uses the term to mean something closer to outlooks or beliefs pertaining to the intellect, and gives preference to the engagement with beliefs over both the “duties of the heart” performed with the emotions and the “duties of the limbs” fulfilled through actions. In his distinction between these, Rabbi Hutner both ascribes a certain superiority to *da’at* over choice, but also to some extent blurs the distinction between the spheres of deed and awareness. The performance of commandments occurs not only by deed but also in thought, such as in the commandments relating to beliefs. There is a choice also in the sphere of *da’at*. Furthermore, the choice of *da’at* exists not only in the observance of commandments but also in *divrei reshut*. I demonstrated above how Rabbi Hutner, in a manner counter-intuitive from an Orthodox perspective, gave preference to the performance of *divrei reshut* for the sake of heaven over the observance of commandments. At the end of the discourse cited in that context, Rabbi Hutner continues to establish a hierarchy within the types of performance of *divrei reshut* for the sake of heaven:

עובדה זו של השתמשות בעניני רשות לשם שמים הרבה בחינות מתחלפות לה [...] דרגת הפשט של העבודה הזו היא בהנאת הגוף לשם הבראה וחיזוק הכחות לתורה ולמצוות. אמנם אחת ממדרגות-האצילות של עבודה זו, היא ההשתמשות בתורת משל. ובדרך דוגמה: אדם ניעור משנתו בבקר, ותיכף הוא מקדיש את כח-המנוחה שנתנה לו שינה זו לעמלה של תורה ומצוות. זו היא דרגת הפשט של כל מעשיך יהיו לשם שמים. אבל האל יודעים אנו שחכמים תקנו לנו בשחר ברכת מחזיר נשמות לפגרים מתים. ונמצא דבבחינה זו כל ענין היקיצה מתוך שינה אינה אלא משל לתחיית המתים, וכמו שפירשו לנו חכמים בהדיא. וכאן אנו אומרים שעובד השם אשר בלבבו קבועה היא האמונה בתחיית המים כיתד שלא תמוט, ואגב אמונתו בעצם תחיית המתים, חיה בו האמונה, כי תחיית המתים הוא הנמשל היחידי של ענין היקיצה. וכל יקיצה משמשת משל חדש לנמשל זה, - הרי אמונה זו מקבלת היא תוספת-חיות ועודף-חיזוק על ידי שהוא בא במגע עם עובדת היקיצה. שכן האדם הזה, מוצא לו בכל יום בבחינה ידועה, תפיסה-של-חוש באמונה מפשטת [! = מופשטת] זו. וזו היא דרגא אצילית בעבודה זו של השתמשות בעניני העולם לשם שמים (Pachad Yitzchak: Pesach, סט/ט).

Leveraging *divrei reshut* to increase the honor of heaven through one’s actions is the highest level in the service of God while leveraging *divrei reshut* for increasing the honor of heaven through belief is the highest level in the work of sanctifying *divrei reshut*. This is one side of the coin. The other side is that *da’at* enables the performance of *divrei reshut* for the sake of heaven also in deeds, for without *da’at* there is no possibility of determining which manner of doing will be for the honor of heaven. Therefore, in the framework of Rabbi Hutner’s thought, man connects the upper and lower spheres: first and foremost he uses the power of *da’at* within him to recognize his Creator and acknowledge his *hashivut,* and determine how it will be possible to use *divrei reshut* for the sake of heaven; afterward, he uses his power of choice to determine, through his deeds, the quality of the connection between his natural vital spirit and the divine vital spirit, as well as the quality of the connection between the lower and upper worlds.

In a paragraph from the discourse with which we opened our examination of the *Pachad* *Yitzhak* books in this chapter, Rabbi Hutner connects the four principal components in the intellectual infrastructure of his thought: the transition to *hessed-mishpat* which is the essence of the anthropocentric purpose, the multiplicity of *kavod* which is the essence of the theocentric purpose, and service by means of choice, on the one hand, and recognition of the power of *da’at,* on the other hand. He explains:

כל ענינה של התפארות היא לעורר אצל הזולת את ההתפעלות במעלת עצמו. והתפעלות זו אי אפשר לעורר בכחה של טובת המעלה לעצמה [...] דהרי אפילו אם יהי'[ה] האדם כליל המעלות, אם המעלות הללו אינן מוצאות חן בעיני אחרים, אין לו במה להתפאר [...] על כן נתחלפה המדה של חסד-ויתור לחסד-משפט, מפני שהכל ברא לכבודו, ואין כבוד אלא תורה, ועל ידי הכבוד של קבלת תורה העולם מתקיים במשפט, כי אז נתבררה תכנות ההתפארות של כל הבריאה כולה. לך השם התפארת זה מתן תורה. וישראל אשר בעבודת תורתם הם מצמיחים את הכבוד הזה, עליהם הכתוב אומר ישראל אשר בך אתפאר (פחד יצחק, שבועות ח/ו-ז).

In this passage, we encounter, within the thought of Rabbi Hutner, another agent contributing to bridging the upper and lower spheres: the Torah. This subject will be discussed in several aspects in this book. We will examine it now briefly in the context of the intellectual infrastructure, the subject of this chapter.

**4.2.2 Torah: The Agent Responsible for Overcoming the Dualistic Chasm**

Like every Lithuanian-Orthodox thinker, Rabbi Hutner places the Torah and its study at the center of his spiritual world and includes them in almost every intellectual argument that he develops in the framework of his thought, whether as a stage in the argumentation or its conclusion. One of the ways in which the centrality of the Torah and its study is expressed in his thought is in its role as a necessary component in bridging the dualistic chasm. Rabbi Hutner explains:

נמצא שורש דבר במאמר חכמים שאמרו על כלליות ענין מתן תורה, משל למלך שגזר על בני מדינת סוריא שלא יכלו למדינת רומי ובני מדינת רומי לא ילכו למדינת סוריא וגומר. כך עד מתן תורה לא עלה אדם למרום ולא ירדה שכינה למטה אבל בשעת מתן תורה וירד השם על הר סיני ומשה עלה אל האלקים. דעת לנבון נקל כי סילוק המחיצה בין עליונים ותחתונים שנתחדש בהר סיני הוא כלל גדול המקיף כמה חליפות ותמורות שחלו במציאות עם נתינתה של תורה. אחת התמורות הללו אשר תוכנה הפנימי הוא סילוק המחיצה הנ”ל היא כל הכרעתם של חכמי התורה בדיני התורה ובמצותם. כי הלא דיני התורה ומצוותיה הם גילוי רצון העליון יתברך, וכח ההכרעה בענינם הניתן לחכמי התורה, מכריז ואומר כי רצון העליון כביכול ניתן “על דעתם של חכמים” (לשונו של הרמב”ן). בודאי כי אין לך סילוק-מחיצה בין עליונים ותחתונים גדול מזה (פחד יצחק, שבועות, טו/י).

The Torah, therefore, to put it simply, guides man in his choices in everything connected to the observance of the commandments and thus bridges the chasm between the upper and lower spheres. This is the logical and intuitive conclusion from all that has been said above. However, as we have seen, in his discussion of *divrei reshut*, Rabbi Hutner identifies the essence of service with connecting the upper and lower spheres. Thus, also here, the Torah plays a cardinal role.

In discourse 36 in *Pachad Yitzchak* on Shavuot, Rabbi Hutner discusses the connection between the Torah and *divrei reshut*. He opens his discussion with the Ran’s (Rabbi Nissim Gerondi 1315 -- 1376) differentiation between the two governmental authorities of the Jewish nation. According to the Ran, the Jewish system of government is divided between two heads, each of whom controls a separate area. The Sanhedrin, which supervises the religious sphere, employs the method of judicial adjudication, that is the development of rules and laws that have universal and established validity; and the king, who controls secular affairs, governs by “executive orders”, ad hoc decisions with a temporary and local validity.[[65]](#footnote-65) Rabbi Hutner compares these two spheres of government to the two general frameworks of reality, holiness, and *divrei reshut*, and in consequence, adds an important observation relating to the Ran’s famous division of authority:

והיה נראה לכאורה, שיש כאן לפנינו, שני סוגים מחולקים של כח-הדעת. כח אחד השולט בסדר המערכה של גוף הקדושה. וכח שני השולט בהכנסת דברי-הרשות לתחום הקדושה. אבל כל זה הוא רק “לכאורה”, אלא שלקושטא דמילתא, בודאי שאין הדבר כן. ורואים אנו להדיא את ביטול החילוק בין שני כחות-הדעת הללו, באותה הלכה הקובעת, כי אין מעמידים מלך אלא על פי סנהדרין. כלומר בכלליותה של שלמות האומה, נובעת היא דעת-ההכרעה בדברי הרשות, מתוך דעת ההכרעה בגוף הקדושה של מערכת קיום מצוות (פחד יצחק, שבועות, לו/ב)

In this discourse in general and this passage in particular, Rabbi Hutner’s “ultra-orthodoxy” is expressed very blatantly. The entire discourse is devoted to the subject of “da’at hatorah” (the opinion of Torah scholars), a subject developed at great length within Orthodox Judaism in the twentieth century, the essence of which is the ability of the greatest Torah scholars of the generation to make decisions about all public matters up for discussion, halachic or not halachic alike, by virtue of their great Torah scholarship.[[66]](#footnote-66) The end of the discourse is dedicated to the principle of “ameilut batorah” (toiling in the study of Torah) another, complementary, concept at the heart of the ultra-Orthodox ideology, according to which the only way to acquire *da’at hatorah* is through intellectual toil, dedicating oneself to Torah. Many scholars who study Rabbi Hutner – including this author – tend to emphasize his unique aspects and describe him as an unconventional ultra-Orthodox thinker. In this respect, discourse 36 from *Pachad Yitzchak* on Shavuot is perhaps the “least subversive” discourse in Rabbi Hutner’s corpus, wherein he emerges as a completely normative ultra-Orthodox thinker. However, at the heart of this seemingly normative ultra-Orthodox discourse, lies a development that reveals it to be less conventional than it initially seems:

ואף על פי שבדרך כלל, משתמשים במשל מחיי הפרט, בכדי להסביר על ידו איזה מהלך בחיי-הכלל. מכל מקום, מצאנו לנכון, לצעוד כאן בדרך ההפוכה. והשתמשנו במהלך הלקוח מחיי האומה, להסביר על ידו את הקו המקביל לו בחיי היחיד. כי לקושטא דמילתא, גם בכל יחיד שני כחות-הדעת פועלים הם, בכיוונים שונים, כל סוג של דעת בשביל המיוחד לו. דבדעת המכריעה בשאלות הנולדות בקיום המצוות, יש לה הלכות קבועות לדון על פיהם. ואילו הדעת המכריעה בין סוגי ההנהגה בדברי-הרשות, שהיא הכרעה בין הצדדים, איזה צד עלול הוא ביותר להצמיח מתוכו ריבוי-כבוד-שמים [...] אין לה הלכות קבועות לדון על פיהם, והיא תלויה בעיקר בהרגשת מהותו של המצב בשעה הנידונה. וכאן הגענו לאותו השטח, אשר בו צריך כל יחיד ויחיד להכיר בהכרה ברורה, כי אין מעמידים מלך אלא על פי סנהדרין. יש כאן חובת-הכרה המוטלת על כל יחיד, לידע נאמנה, כי אין הדעת המכריעה במערכת דברי הרשות בעלת פרנסה ובעלת מזונות משלה. אדרבה, כל כחה של הדעת להכריע באופן הכנסתם של דברי-הרשות לתוך הקדושה, איננו מתקיים אלא מתוך שכוח זה של הדעת, סמוך הוא בהחלט על שולחנו של כח הדעת להכריע בגוף הקדושה של קיום מצוות (פחד יצחק, שבועות לו/ג-ד)

The discourse opens with the discussion of the capacity of great Torah scholars to determine the *divrei reshut* of the nation; it ends with a discussion of *ameilut batorah* as the way to acquire *da’at hatorah*; the center of the discourse is a discussion of how the subject of government is a metaphor for the life of the individual. The conclusion becomes clear: every individual is obligated to exert himself in learning Torah to acquire enough *da’at hatorah* to make decisions regarding *divrei reshut* in his personal life. An inversion is created here in which Rabbi Hutner appears less like a conventional ultra-Orthodox thinker; he introduces the concept of “da’at hatorah” to the sphere of the individual and obligates him to acquire it in order to decide for himself in every issue. Every individual, it would seem, must be a “gadol hador” (the outstanding Torah scholar of the generation) for himself, whose connection to the Torah renders him capable of deciding how to derive from his *divrei reshut* profuse honor for God.

This connection between the acquisition of *da’at hatorah* and the capacity to determine how *divrei reshut* increase the honor of heaven is not obvious. Just as the standard ultra-Orthodox ideology maintains that the Torah has unique properties that enable the great scholars to make decisions about matters that they seemingly have no expertise in, so too Rabbi Hutner explains that there is something wonderous in the study of Torah that facilitates appropriate decision-making regarding *divrei reshut*. In fact, he describes the connection between the *da’at torah* and *da’at reshut*, upon which the ability to make decisions regarding *divrei reshut* grows, in exactly the same way that he describes the wonderous connection between man’s divine vital spirit and the natural vital spirit, from which emerges the power of choice. In his words:

קשר זה בין שני סוגי הדעת הללו, אינו חק מחוקי הטבע. אלא שקשר זה הוא, קשר סגולי, המופיע כפלא, כמו שאר כחות-הפלא בסגולתה של תורה [...] כן אמרנו, כח-פלא. כי לאמתו של דבר, אותו החוש הנצרך ביחוד להוראת-שעה, ואותו החוש הנצרך ביחוד להוראת-נצח, הם בבחינת תרתי-דסתרי. והמכיר אנשים, יודע כי אדם המצטיין באחד מהם, אינו מסוגל להיות מצטיין בהשני. וכבר השריש בנו הרמ”א בפירושו למטבע הברכה של “ומפליא לעשות”, שהכונה בזה היא, שמקשר הרוחני בגשמי. ומשורש זה נובעת ההנחה, כי כל קשר בין שני דברים הסותרים את עצמם, עומד הוא בסוד הפלא. ופלא זה של קשר החושים של הוראת נצח “והוראה לשעתה”, הוא מכחות הפלא של סגולת התורה, אשר התורה מעניקה אותו למי שזכה בכתרה של תורה (פחד יצחק, שבועות לו/ה-ז)

Connecting the eternal with the temporary is the greatest wonder of creation. This is the connection between the eternal soul and the transitory body and between the eternal Torah and transitory *divrei reshut*.

The connection between the Torah and *divrei reshut* in Rabbi Hutner’s thought does not end there but almost reaches the level of equivalence, as two things that come together. The essential connection between Torah and *divrei reshut* is embodied in one of the meanings of another cardinal concept in Rabbi Hutner’s thought: “yichidut” [singularity], in the way in which this concept relates to Torah. “חכמתה של תורה,” wrote Rabbi Hutner “מציאותה היא מציאות של יחידות, ושלטונה הוא בבחינת 'אין עוד מלבדה'“ (פחד יצחק, שבועות, יח/ד). This sentence plays on the similarity between the roots of “yachid” [single] and “echad” [one] and its context is clearly the idea of the unity of God. According to the core principle of the monotheistic faith, as formulated by Maimonides, God is one, in the sense that he is the only God there is, but also in the sense that he constitutes a complete unity that has no component parts.[[67]](#footnote-67) In later traditions, Kabbalistic and Hasidic, the idea of God’s unity acquired a wide expression, represented by the phrase “there is none else beside Him” (Deut. 4:35). This phrase encompasses a spectrum of ideas, beginning with the concept that God is everywhere (“there is no place without Him”) and ending with acosmic ideas according to which nothing, in fact, exists except God, and all existence separate from God is nothing but an illusion. This was the subject of many polemics in the first generations of Hasidism, both between the Hasidim and their opponents and among themselves, as well as among the scholars of Hasidism who disagree among themselves regarding the correct interpretation of Hasidic theology.[[68]](#footnote-68) By a linguistic association, Rabbi Hutner applies this phrase to the Torah, which, just like God, has an aspect of “there is none else beside Him”. In other words, there is a certain aspect in which the Torah occupies all of reality and there is no sphere that it does not reach. In the continuation of the discourse, Rabbi Hutner develops this point. He begins by explaining the paradoxical saying that to negate the Torah is to observe it, which originated in a discussion about the halacha that the study of the Torah can be canceled to fulfill certain commandments in certain situations. In his words:

כשאנו שואלים, עד היכן מגיע גודל כחה של מדת היחידות, ובחינת ה”אין עוד מלבדה” של תורה? [...] לגבי ביטול תורה אמרינן שביטולה זו היא קיומה [...] ונפקא לן מדאמר לו הקב”ה למשה אשר שברת, יישר כחך ששברת [...] הנה בכל הדחיות שבתורה, הקיום הוא בדבר הדוחה, ולא בדבר הנדחה [...] ואם היתה ההלכה של מבטלים תורה מפני הכנסת-כלה דין של דחיה, בודאי שהחזקת הטובה היתה באה על הכנסת כלה ולא על ביטול תלמוד תורה. והוא הדין והוא המדה בשבירת הלוחות. דאם היתה שבירת הלוחות מעשה-של-דחיה, כי אז לא היה הישר כח בא על מעשה השבירה, כי אם על אותם הענינים אשר נתקיימו על ידי שבירה זו [... אלא] שאין כאן ענין של דחיה, אלא שאדרבה, כל עצמה של מעשה הדחייה אינה אלא קיומו ויסודו של הדבר הנדחה. וכל זה הוא מסוד סגולת היחידות של תורה [...] ממילא לא שייך אצלה שום הפסק, ושוב אם אנו מוצאים בה היכי-תמצי של הפסק, בעל כרחך שהפסק זה אינו אלא המשך. וזה שאנו אומרים אצל תלמוד תורה, ביטולו זה הוא קיומו ויסודו (פחד יצחק, שבועות, יח/טו).

This halacha concerning the situations in which the study of the Torah may be canceled because of some other factor is explained through the midrash (homily) that after Moses broke the tablets in reaction to the building of the Golden Calf, God gave him the blessing “yashar koach!” [“well done!”] for having broken them. He did so because the breaking of the tablets returned the people of Israel to the right path and thus from the breakage emerged repair.[[69]](#footnote-69) Rabbi Hutner reads the midrash closely and emphasizes that the “yashar koach” relates to the act of breaking rather than fixing. God did not say “yashar koach” to Moses for returning the people of Israel to the right path but rather for breaking the tablets. In the context of the moral, the words of encouragement are not for the act for which the Torah study was canceled (as in, “well done, for helping the bride to get married”), but for the act of cancelation itself. This is a strange position, because on the face of it, this halacha stating that Torah study is canceled under certain circumstances, indicates that these circumstances have a certain preferability over the Torah because it is pushed aside for their sake. In any case, the essence of the praise should have been for accomplishing the goal on behalf of which the study was canceled, and not for the act of the cancelation, which on the face of it is nothing more than an instrument to enable the act itself. However, Rabbi Hutner goes on to explain that the impression that the cancelation of Torah study is for the benefit of another goal, more important than Torah, is a mistaken impression. In his words:

המהלך של ביטולה זה הוא קיומה הנאמר בתלמודה של תורה, נובע הוא מכחה של תורה, שלא יתכן לומר בה תורת-דחייה, ובעל כרחך דהפסקה ממנה, היא היא המשכתה. וכמו שפירש רש”י במנחות דאם מבטל תלמוד-תורה מפני הכנסת כלה וכדומה, הרי הוא מקבל שכר על הביטול כמו העוסק בתורה מפני שיש בכחה של תורה להפוך את המעשה ללימוד [...] ואע”ג שהמעשה היא המטרה, מכל מקום מאחר שהלימוד הביא לידי מעשה, הרי הוא הולך **ומהפך את המעשה** **לתוכן של לימוד**, דביטולה הוא קיומה ויסודה; וממילא הלימוד גדול, דלעולם המהפך גדול מן המתהפך (פחד יצחק, שבועות, יח/יט. ההדגשה אינה במקור).

Torah study has a special quality because of which an act deriving from its study is considered the study itself. This is a reflection of “אין עוד מלבדה של תורה” (“’there is none other beside Him’” of Torah”): even when man does not learn Torah in the conventional sense, when the act that he performs derives from Torah study, it is also considered an extension and an expression of study. It is important to explain this thoroughly. Broad ideas that project the concept of Torah study onto areas that are not study in the simple sense, for example, waiting on Torah scholars, are widespread in Jewish thought. However, Rabbi Hutner constructs an exceptionally broad conception of Torah study, such that the observance of the commandments, as long as it is possible to regard it as deriving from the study itself, is an act of study. Rabbi Hutner’s language is quite explicit: it is not that the deed is equal to the study, but that the study leading to the deed “מהפך את המעשה לתוכן של לימוד”. [[70]](#footnote-70) This extension of Torah study to include actions does not apply only to commandments and halacha but also to *divrei reshut*. In another discourse from *Pachad Yitzchak* on Shavuot, he explains:

כחו של תלמוד-תורה להפוך את כל המכשירים ואת כל המשמשים לחלקי תורה ממש, שהרי כל המכשירים והמשמשים נעשים שותפים לתלמודה של תורה. כח-מהפך זה המיוחד אך ורק לתורה, מהוה ופועל התפשטות חיותו של לימוד-תורה על כמה שטחים העומדים מחוץ לגבולו של עצם הלימוד (פחד יצחק, שבועות, כב/ו).

Not only deeds deriving from Torah study but also any act enabling Torah study is included within the category “its cancelation is its fulfillment” -- in other words, Torah study has the power to turn them into the substance of the study. This idea is fully expressed in discourse 13 from *Pachad Yitzchak* on Shavuot which also discusses (like many discourses in that volume) the subject of cancelation as fulfillment. In this discourse, Rabbi Hutner discusses an additional difference between the Torah and the commandments. He determines that for assisting another person to study Torah one receives a reward equal to that of Torah study itself. Rabbi Hutner learns this from a discussion in the Talmud about the Sotah. According to biblical law, a man who suspects his wife of infidelity can bring her to the Tabernacle. There the priest gives her to drink a potion, called the “water of bitterness” consisting of water, dirt from the Tabernacle, and ink with which was written the name of God and then obliterated in the water. Afterward, he asks her to swear that she did not sin with another man. If she is guilty, the water harms her, and if she is innocent, she is rewarded by giving birth to a child. The Mishnah in Tractate Sotah explains that it is possible that the woman may be guilty and nonetheless survive drinking the “water of bitterness” if she has merit that protects her. The Gemara asks from where she will derive this merit because the merit from keeping the commandments cannot protect her to such an extent, while the merit of Torah, which can provide such protection, is not relevant, because a woman is not commanded to study Torah. The Gemara concludes that because she assisted her husband and children to study Torah the merit of Torah study does protect her. “וחזינן מזה” wrote Rabbi Hutner, “דזכות זו של הכנסת בניהם לבית המדרש נחשבת לזכות של תורה ממש” (פחד יצחק, שבועות, יג/ב).[[71]](#footnote-71)

However, “בשאר מצוות וכגון המסייע ביד חברו לקיים מצות כבוד אב ואם, אין השכר של אריכות ימים הנאמר בכבוד אב בפרטיות משתייך אל המסייע” (שם, ג). Rabbi Hutner deduces a fortiori that assisting others to study Torah is regarded as Torah study:

ומדחזינן [ומשראינו] דעל הכנסת כלה המטלת לימודה של תורה הוא נוטל שכר כאלו עוסק בתורה, ילפינן [אנו למדים] מזה דכחו של תלמוד תורה מתפשט הוא על כל העניינים המאפשרים אותו והמסייעים בידו לעמוד על צביונו ההגון לו [...] והלא הדברים קל וחומר, דמה ביטולה [של תורה] דדיינינן ביה [שאנו דנים לגביה] שהוא קיומה מפני שהביטול הזה קיום התנאי יש בו [של לימוד על מנת לעשות], סיוע ממש על אחת כמה וכמה דהוה קיומה ונוטל שכר כעוסק בתורה [...] ולעולם תלמוד תורה אינו נדחה מזולתו, אלא שהוא מתבטל מפני צרכי עצמו [קיום מצוות שאי אפשר לקיימן על ידי אחרים, שהרי תנאי של לימוד תורה הוא על מנת לעשות]. והוא הדין והיא המידה גם בעסקי דרך ארץ הנכללים בקרא דואספת דגנך, **דאדם חורש בשעת חרישה וזורע בשעת זריעה, דגם על עסקי דרך ארץ הללו קאי הך דביטולה זה הוא קיומה** (פחד יצחק, שבועות, יג/ו. ההדגשה אינה במקור).

Let us examine carefully the exegetical argument made here by Rabbi Hutner. The subject under discussion is things that enable Torah study. Rabbi Hutner compares and equates the things that enable Torah study with the cancelation of Torah for the sake of fulfilling the commandments. Indeed, the rule that one cancels Torah study to perform certain commandments in certain circumstances is justified because the fulfillment of the commandments is a condition of Torah study: man is commanded to learn in order to do. Therefore, the observance of the commandments enables this condition to be realized. In other words, the fulfillment of the condition to learn in order to do is a form of enabling, and, alternatively, enabling is a form of fulfilling the commandment of Torah study. This is not a necessary conclusion, but it is what Rabbi Hutner wants to conclude in order to argue that one must assess the doing of things that enable the study of Torah in the same way as we assess the commandments for whose sake we cancel Torah study, and to apply to the former that which he established regarding the latter – they are included in the category of Torah study and deemed, in his words, the “substance of Torah”.

The examples of “enabling factors” that Rabbi Hutner chooses to illustrate his point are fascinating choices. The source of the expression “man plows at the time of plowing and sows at the time of sowing” is the argument in the Talmud (Babylonian Talmud, Berachot, 35:2) about how to interpret the phrase “that thou mayest gather in thy corn” (Deut. 11:14). Rabbi Ishmael understands this as a statement neutralizing a verse in the book of Joshua (1:8): “’This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth.’ Can this be taken literally? The Torah teaches us “that thou mayest gather in thy corn”. Therefore, act according to the way of the world.” Rabbi Ishmael maintains that one cannot take literally the imperative to study Torah unceasingly, but rather a person should behave according to the way of the world, support himself, provide for his family, and study Torah within the framework of life’s constraints. In response to this, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai (Rashbi) protests: “If a man plows in the plowing season, and sows in the sowing season, and reaps in the reaping season, and threshes in the threshing season, and winnows when there is wind, what will become of the Torah? Rather, when the people of Israel do the will of God, their work is performed by others.” Rashbi objects to providing for life’s necessities at the expense of learning Torah and maintains that man must simply study Torah ceaselessly and as a result his work will be done by others and he will reap his corn without having worked to grow it. Rabbi Hutner takes the expression used by Rashbi to describe the archetype of cancelation of Torah study and uses it himself to illustrate the archetype of the idea that the cancelation of Torah study is its fulfillment. Moreover, both parties to the argument share a common agreed-upon position: engaging in the world’s activities means canceling Torah study. However, while Rabbi Ishmael reasons that it is legitimate to cancel Torah study for mundane activities, Rashbi believes that it is illegitimate to engage in any activity other than Torah study. Rabbi Hutner, using the very broad concept of Torah study that he has constructed, maintains both positions simultaneously while rejecting their mutual original premise: on the one hand, it is illegitimate to engage in any activity other than Torah study, while on the other hand, it is legitimate to engage in mundane activities because these activities, when they derive from Torah study, are included in the category of exclusive engagement in Torah study.

This argument is an excellent example of the importance of continuing Rabbi Hutner’s conceptual arguments beyond that which appears explicitly in the text and comparing his ideas one to the other. Acts that enable or support the fulfillment of the commandment of Torah study are the paradigmatic example of *divrei reshut* in the Jewish tradition. The cancelation of Torah study for the sake of fulfilling other commandments, when necessary, is the paradigmatic example of learning for the sake of doing. Rabbi Hutner combines them under the same category and determines that the fulfillment of the condition of learning for the sake of doing is within the category of things that enable. He also constructs an a fortiori relationship in the following manner: if the commandments, which are the paradigm of learning for the sake of doing, can be considered the gist of Torah study, then all the more so can *divrei reshut*, the paradigm of enabling acts, be considered the gist of Torah study. Rabbi Hutner even constructs a general hierarchy in which *divrei reshut* receive preference over the commandments. He expects the reader to complete the equation: if commandments enable, then the performance of *divrei reshut* for the sake of heaven, deriving from *da’at*, and acquired through Torah study may be deemed to fulfill the condition of learning for the sake of doing.

Torah and *divrei reshut* are interconnected. This connection is also formally expressed in Rabbi Hutner’s writing. Rabbi Hutner infers the status of *divrei reshut* as normative precursors of the commandments from their position as the chronological precursors of the commandments. The period of time between the Exodus from Egypt, at which point the people of Israel subjugated themselves to God, and the revelation on Mt. Sinai in which they received the Torah, is characterized as a stage in which the service of God was not carried out through the commandments, but rather through *divrei reshut* – each individual was required in this period to serve God from within his own life events, without explicit direction.[[72]](#footnote-72) Thus, according to Rabbi Hutner, *divrei reshut*, the sanctification of the mundane, are the foundational level. Rabbi Hutner makes an almost identical elaboration regarding Torah study, also by contrasting it to the commandments. He explains:

הנה מיוחד הוא לימוד התורה משאר המצוות בזה, שבעוד אשר עם שום קיום מצוה לא באו ישראל במגע לפני שנצטוו עליה, הנה למדו ישראל תורה לפני הציווי על לימוד-תורה. מעולם לא לבשו ישראל ציצית, ולא נטלו לולב, קודם הציווי על הציצית ועל הלולב. אבל לא כן הוא בלימוד-התורה. ישראל למדו תורה מפיו של המלמד תורה לעמו ישראל, לפני שנצטוו על לימוד-התורה [...] פשר דבר העובדא היסודית הזו הוא, כי כל המצוות הן קיומן של החובות אשר הברית בין ישראל לאביהם שבשמים מטילה עליהם, וממילא, אין מקום למציאות המצוות לפני שנכרתה הברית הזו. אבל אותם הדברי-תורה שלמדו ישראל מפיו של המלמד תורה לעמו ישראל, הרי על ידם נכרתה הברית הזו (פחד יצחק, שבועות, כה/ג).

Torah study was part of the connection between the people of Israel and God before the commandments were given. Moreover, this study formed the connection itself. In this respect, Torah study created a covenant in which the service of God required first and foremost the performance of *divrei reshut* for the sake of heaven. Divine service predicated upon the commandments appeared only afterward. Torah study, therefore, is a condition for making decisions about *divrei reshut* for the sake of heaven, which in turn themselves became the substance of the Torah study from which they derive. The Torah is therefore the agent upon which the closing of the dualistic chasm and the actualization of the purpose of reality depend.

**4.3 Rabbi Hutner’s Eschatological Conception: The Eradication of the Dualistic Chasm**

To complete the presentation of Rabbi Hutner’s intellectual infrastructure, we must examine the final remaining component of the schema presented at the beginning of the chapter: Rabbi Hutner’s eschatological conception, or in other words, his concept of the world to come.

Rabbi Hutner, in accordance with the central Orthodox line, holds an eschatological conception built upon the foundation of the model formulated by Nachmanides, while rejecting Maimonides’s model. Rabbi Hutner wrote explicitly in one of his letters: הנה בגוף המחלוקת בין הרמב”ן וסייעתו עם הר”מ [ר' משה, הרמב”ם], הרי אנו תלמידיו והולכים בעקבותיו של הרמב”ן.” [[73]](#footnote-73)

One of the significant points of controversy between Maimonides and Nachmanides relates to the very relevance of the world to come to the question of eschatology. In Maimonides’s conceptual framework, the world to come is a spiritual world, existing parallel to this world, where the souls of meritorious people dwell after their deaths and enjoy the radiance of the presence of God for eternity. The end of days, on the other hand, is an idyllic period that will begin with, and result from, the return of kingship to the people of Israel. The Maimonidean utopia extends only to an optimal political existence and broad age of enlightenment in which the “earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord” and the awareness of God is widespread. In this framework, there will be a one-time occurrence of the resurrection of the dead, in which a select group of righteous people will rise to life and play an important part in the realization of the utopia. At the end of days, people will continue to be born and to die, and even the righteous who rose to life will die again and merit returning to the world to come, which constitutes the pinnacle of human aspiration – eternal, spiritual life of the soul, alone, and free from physical bonds. Thus, for Maimonides, the end of days and the messianic era are one and they are the eschatological era, while the world to come and the resurrection of the dead are neither relevant to the end of days nor part of his eschatological outlook.

In contrast, in Nachmanides’ eschatological framework, the world to come is, as the name suggests, the world that will come after this world, a new world that will be formed after this world ends or after an apocalyptic change in the current world that will turn it into another world. The resurrection of the dead will occur at the moment of transition between this world and the world to come, at which point everyone with a portion in the world to come will return to live as a human being, body and soul, for eternity. The end of days is a new utopian world in which people live forever, just as Adam was intended to live before the sin of the tree of knowledge. In effect, in Nachmanides’ eschatological framework, the concepts of the resurrection of the dead, the end of days, and the world to come overlap. Therefore, in addition to these concepts, Nachmanides introduces an additional concept -- the world of souls (or “Gan Eden”). The world of souls is a spiritual world parallel to this world in which the souls of the righteous enjoy the radiance of God’s presence (similar in format to Maimonides’s world to come) until the time when the end of this world commences and the world to come arrives. At that time, the dead will come to life and will merit complete joy in the form of eternal life. For Nachmanides, the messianic era is the final period of this world, before the transition to the world to come, so in his conception, this is the only element that does not pertain to an eschatological outlook.[[74]](#footnote-74)

Following this perspective, Rabbi Hutner demonstrates, in one of his discourses about the Sabbath, how the idea of reward in the world to come promised to man is coherent only if it relates to human existence within a body. The soul on its own is not considered a person, and, therefore, the reward in the world of souls, while perhaps a fitting reward for a person’s soul, is not a reward for the person himself. In his words:

שכר מצוה בהאי עלמא ליכא. המצב של “האי עלמא” במשפט זה, בא להוציא מידי שני מצבים, אשר אע”פ שהם שונים זה מזה, מ”מ [מכל מקום] יוצאים הם מכללא דהאי עלמא לענין השכר מצוה. דשנים הם המצבים אשר בהם שכר מצוה איכא. האחד הוא בגן עדן אשר שם יושבים נשמותיהם של צדיקים ומתענגים מזיו השכינה. והשני הוא בעולם שלאחר התחיה, בזמן של ומלאה **הארץ** דעה. ההבדל העיקרי בין שני המצבים הללו הוא שבמצב הראשון אין קבלת התענוג נמשכת לידה של צורת אדם, שהרי רק הנשמות הן היושבות בג”ע [גן עדן]. ונשמה הניטלת מן הגוף אין עליה שם אדם. דאדם היינו דוקא חיבור גוף ונפש. ולעמת זאת, במצב השני בעולם התחיה, קבלת התענוג נמשכת לידה של צורת אדם, שהרי **הארץ** היא היא שנתמלאה דעת ולא נשמות שבג”ע [...] מושג **הענג** פירושו דוקא, שפע המגיע לידה של צורת אדם של חיבור גוף ונפש. דהיינו השכר-מצוה של עולם התחיה דכלל-אדם, ולא השכר מצוה של עידון הנשמות דפרט אדם, דיחיד ויחיד ומחר שלו. ועל כן, אין בטוב למעלה מענג ואין ברע למטה מנגע. נגע אמרו ולא מיתה. כי כשם שהנקודה העליונה שבטוב הקרויה ענג, מתכוונת היא דוקא לאותו שפע החיות הנמשך והמתקיים בתוך צורת אדם של חיבור גוף ונפש דוקא; כמו כן, הנקודה התחתונה של העדר החיות העומדת לעומתה של הנקודה העליונה של שפע החיות, מתכוונת היא דוקא להעדר החיות הנמשך והמתקיים בתוך צורת אדם של חיבור גוף ונפש דוקא. והנגע הרי הוא העדר החיות של מקום הנגע בתוך גופו של אדם, כמו שנאמר “אל נא תהי כמת”. ובכל כגון דא, נגע ולא מיתה. דלעולם אין מצב המות מתקיים בתוך צורת אדם של חיבור גוף ונפש. וכמו שבטוב הענג הוא לא לנשמות אלא לחיבור גוף ונפש כמו כן ברע אין הנקודה העומדת לעומת הטוב אלא לאותו רע שהוא העדר חיות **בתוך** החיבור של גוף ונפש. דהיינו נגע דוקא ולא מיתה. וזה שאמרו אין בטוב למעלה מענג ואין ברע למטה מנגע (פחד יצחק, שבת ד/ח. ההדגשות במקור).[[75]](#footnote-75)

A person who merits life in the world to come is guaranteed to enjoy it, and the meaning of *oneg* is a profusion of vitality coming to the human form consisting of body and vital spirit. This is learned from the fact that the opposite of *oneg* is affliction. Affliction can occur only in a human being comprised of a body and soul, and the same is true of *oneg*, which, as we have seen, is Rabbi Hutner’s code name for the joy over the essence of existence, the pleasure of eternal independent existence. The world to come provides man with the pinnacle of his aspiration. In this world, his existence is false, at best latent, and the best prospect available to him is the capacity to earn, to the greatest possible extent, his existence through *hessed-mishpat*. However, his existence in the world to come, after he has fully earned it, is true and eternal.

Lorberbaum observed about Nachmanides’ outlook that “the position of a thinker on the manner of existence in the eschatological era, like his outlook concerning his status in the “Genesis” era (of Adam before the fall), usually reflects his conception of the ideal human existence and it projects onto “man’s condition” in the intermittent time period.”[[76]](#footnote-76) These observations are certainly correct regarding Rabbi Hutner and, in this contest, the selective way in which he used Nachmanides’ viewpoint is very interesting, as we shall see below.

For our purpose, an important difference between the eschatologies of Maimonides and Nachmanides is the question of the apocalypse. Naturalistic messianic concepts maintain that the future redemption will occur within history, within the framework of this world, while apocalyptic conceptions maintain that the redemption will occur simultaneously with the end of history (a process that will be accompanied by a series of catastrophic events) when the current natural world will be replaced by a new world with a completely different set of laws.[[77]](#footnote-77) For Maimonides, who holds a naturalistic messianic outlook, “there is no difference between this world and the messianic era except subservience to the other nations.”[[78]](#footnote-78) The Maimonidean utopia is, as much as a utopia can be, terrestrial, and it is made possible and actualized in the framework of the current conditions of reality. Nachmanides’ utopian vision, however, is clearly apocalyptic and includes pervasive change in the ways of the world. Nachmanides, although determining that in the world to come man will consist of body and soul, adds that there will be an apocalyptic change in the human body – the “thick and dirty” material that makes up the world in general and man in particular in this world, which prevents him from absorbing the light of the divine presence, will be replaced with “clear and pure” material. Man will become different, more purified, and, as a result, capable of receiving the pleasure reserved for him in the world to come. Nachmanides holds this position because, according to his approach, matter is a barrier to the spiritual, a kind of sieve that blocks most of the divine influence.[[79]](#footnote-79) Rabbi Hutner, however, differs from his two major sources of influence, Maharal and Ramchal, in that he never expresses a negative attitude to matter, corporeality, or this world, in general, but rather holds a neutral dualistic outlook. Accordingly, we find that the explicit apocalyptic dimension that characterizes Nachmanides’ eschatology is entirely absent from the eschatological discussions in Rabbi Hutner’s writings.

In Rabbi Hutner’s thought, this world and the world to come appear to be two versions of the same reality. If the primary characteristic of this world is the chasm between the layers of reality upon which the actualization of the purpose of creation depends, this is also the difference between it and the world to come: in the world to come the chasm between the two layers of reality, the upper and lower, and its consequences, is negated. This world is a reality in which evil and good are mixed up together. The world to come is a reality in which there is only good. In this world, man is condemned to die; in the next world, man lives forever. These are apocalyptic changes that leave the world to come as a reality so foreign to the human perspective that it is difficult to even imagine. Nonetheless, and in contrast to Nachmanides, Rabbi Hutner does not hyperbolize about the next world with fantastic descriptions foreign to the human mind, and the few existing descriptions give the impression that the experience of existence in the world to come will be similar to its experience in this world, thus fulfilling the human yearning for the continuation of known existence. One exception to this, an aspect preserved from Nachmanides' conception of the world to come, is the “circumcision of the foreskin of the heart” – the idea that in the world to come, choice will be canceled, and man will of necessity choose good. In Rabbi Hutner’s words:

קיימת היא בידינו ההבטחה כי עומדים אנו לחיות בעולם של מילת-ערלת-הלב, וכפי פירושו של הרמב”ן, מזדהית היא מילת-ערלת-הלב עם סילוק-הבחירה [...] והלא רואים אנו שכל התורה המצויה עתה בידינו, כל-כולה, נארגת היא בתוך רקמת שלטונו של כח הבחירה. שכן כל חכמתה של תורה, אינה אלא בירור רצונו של מקום, באיזה דרך עלינו לאחזו בהליכות-הלכות של חיינו. ועצמיותו של בירור זה, אין לה שום מציאות מחוץ לגבולות הבחירה. ומכיון שזאת התורה לא תהיה מוחלפת, כיצד יתכן קיומה של תורה בעולם של מילת-ערלת-הלב וסילוק הבחירה. אלא שעל זה בא הוא מאחז”ל [מאמר חז”ל] במד' שמיני, על הכתוב “תורה חדשה מאתי תצא”, “תורה חדשה מאתי תצא, חידוש-תורה מאתי תצא”. כלומר, אותה **התורה עצמה** המצויה עתה בידינו, עתידה היא להתחדש **מתוכה** ולהתקיים כתורת-חיים בעולם העומד להתחדש ולהתקיים כשאין ערלת הלב מופיעה בו כל עיקר. אלא שכשם שאין לנו שום השגה במהותו של אותו עולם; כמו כן, אין לנו שום השגה במהותה של אותה תורה העומדת לשלוט בעולם זה, המופלא מאתנו תכלית ההפלאה ותכלית ההעלם (פחד יצחק, שבועות, מג/ד. ההדגשות במקור).

Neither reality nor the service of God, as we understand them, have any meaning without freedom of choice, yet in the world to come choice will be abolished. Rabbi Hutner recognizes this problem, and he can only admit that we will not be able to understand how this works out until the change itself has occurred. This is the only point in the *Pachad Yitzchak* books in which Rabbi Hutner clearly requires what I call the “apocalyptic escape” – to address a question regarding the eschatological future using the premise that the reality will change in such a way that something that seems now unbelievable will then be understood. In this, he acknowledges, in effect, that he is unable to provide a satisfactory answer to the question and that he is struggling with it (a subject that I will return to below).[[80]](#footnote-80) For our current purposes, it can be said that he adopts an apocalyptic minimalism when he treats the subject of eschatology: he posits apocalyptic change only when necessary and no more. I will summarize pithily: Maimonides constructs a Jewish eschaton that is the most realistic utopia imaginable. Nachmanides, his sparring partner, constructs an eschaton that is the most apocalyptic utopia imaginable. Whereas Rabbi Hutner constructs an eschaton that is the most realistic of all imaginable apocalyptic utopias.

For Rabbi Hutner therefore, the world to come is in essence this world, without the dualistic chasm. As he explained in one of his apocryphal discourses (which he wrote but did not prepare for publication), “כל ההבדלים בין 'היום הזה' ל'יום ההוא' בנויים הם על יסוד הפער אשר בין הדעת והחוש ביום הזה, וביטולו של זה הפער לעתיד לבוא” (מאמרי פחד יצחק, סוכות, מח/ז).

**4.3.1 The Sabbath and Man’s Purpose: to Live in This World as in the World to Come**

Rabbi Hutner explains his understanding of the world to come, and the similarity between it and this world most explicitly in his discourses on the Sabbath. There he distinguishes between the body of the worlds, created by the ten generative sayings, and the purpose of the worlds, represented by the ten commandments.[[81]](#footnote-81) This purpose was created on the first Shabbat. He explains:

כשם שבששת ימי בראשית נבראו כל החוקים השולטים בעולם בתקופת-הבחירה-והעבודה של “היום לעשותם”, כמו כן נבראו ביום השביעי כל החוקים השולטים בעולם בתקופת השכר והגמול של אחרית הימים [...] החוקים השולטים בתקופת הבחירה והעבודה של “היום לעשותם”, נתהוו על ידי עשרת המאמרות שנאמרו במשך ששת ימי בראשית; ולעומת זאת, החוקים השולטים בתקופת השכר והגמול של אחרית הימים, נתהוו על ידי **מעשה הקידוש** של היום השביעי שעליו אמרה תורה “ויקדש” [...] ומנוחת יום השביעי ושביתתו, היא היא הפרישה מהתעסקות בחוקים השולטים בעולם של יגיעה-עבודה-והשתדלות, להתעסקות בחוקים השולטים בעולם של שכר-וגמול-ותפנוקי עידונים (פחד יצחק, חנוכה, ח/י. ההדגשה אינה במקור).

The body of the world was created by the sayings. However, its purpose was created by the act of sanctification. This point needs to be examined closely. We saw above that Rabbi Hutner distinguishes between two systems: good versus evil and sacred versus profane, while giving preference to the latter. The apex of the service of God is the performance of *divrei reshut* for the sake of heaven, which is the act of taking something mundane and introducing it into the realm of the sacred, thereby granting it *hashivut*. This act of sanctification, transforming the neutral into the purposeful, created the laws that will govern the end of days.

One of Rabbi Hutner’s rhetorical hermeneutical devices is to take expressions from the sources and read them literally while stretching them to their logical limits. An example of this is the Rabbinic expression that the Sabbath is akin to the world to come: “בלי קדושתה של השבת, החלוקה בין עולם הזה ועולם הבא הרי היא גמורה ומוחלטת. או עולם הזה, או עולם הבא. קדושתה של שבת היא בריאת מהות חדשה של 'מעין-עולם-הבא'“ (פחד יצחק, שבת, ז/י). [[82]](#footnote-82) The expression “akin to the world to come” is not a metaphor for the excellence of Shabbat in giving man a modicum of tranquility; it means that Shabbat is actually similar to the world to come. If on the Sabbath after the creation, the laws governing the purpose of the worlds were created, it follows that the Sabbath, as it was given to the people of Israel, is a window in time in which these laws function in this world. In his words:

היום לעשותם ומחר לקבל שכרם [...] עולם המעשה הוא עולם עובר, שכן “לעשותם” אינו תופס אלא ה”היום”; ולעמת זה, עולם התענוג הוא עולם קיים. שכן השכר תופס הוא את ה”מחר”. וכל זה הוא כשאנו מדברים בדרך חלוקה מוחלטת בין העולם העובר ובין העולם הקיים. אבל לקושטא דמילתא, יש מקום לדיבורים הללו גם בדרך חלוקה יחסית. ובדרך חלוקה יחסית נאמר כך: כל מה שהנך מתקרב יותר לתחומו של הנצח הקיים, כך בערך זה, הנך נולך ומתקרב לרשותו של התענוג. דכללא הוא: עולם הנצח הוא עולם התענוג [...] והוא הדין והיא המדה בקדושתה של שבת. עיקר הרבותא של השבת הוא כי הוא ה”מעין” של ה”למחר” בעיצומו של “היום” (פחד יצחק, שבת, ח/ג-ד).

In its essence, the Sabbath is an approximation of the world to come. The commandment pertaining to the Sabbath is *oneg*, akin to the *oneg* promised in the world to come in the form of eternal life.[[83]](#footnote-83) The world to come is the reality in which the rule of “he who is good and does good” (the reward of the righteous) prevails alone, without the rule of “the true judge” (the suffering of the righteous). The Sabbath is connected in its essence to the recognition that the existence of evil is only for the sake of its negation and the retroactive revelation that it is also good, to the extent that –

עד כמה שהאדם איננו נקי מהרגשה של תרעומת כלפי סדר הנהגת העולמות, בה במידה נעדרת ממנו הרגשת קדושת שבת” (Pachad Yitzchak: Pesach, נד/ה). [[84]](#footnote-84) העולם הבא הוא עולם שבו “מלאה הארץ דעה”, ושבת היא הזמן בו “מתאדר כוח הדעת בכל הנשגביות שלו. שביתת שבת נוצרת בכוח הדעת” (Pachad Yitzchak: Pesach, נד/ז).[[85]](#footnote-85)

By the power of *da’at* man acknowledges God’s kingship; by the power of *da’at* man acknowledges the existence of *hashivut* in the world; by the power of *da’at* man decides how to sanctify the mundane and perform *divrei reshut* for the sake of heaven. The world to come is the reality in which everyone recognizes the kingship of heaven and lives according to “in all thy ways acknowledge Him”, performing *divrei reshut* for the sake of heaven.[[86]](#footnote-86) Rabbi Hutner explains: “בשבת, מוצאים אנו דרגא מיוחדת, שבה מרגיש העובד שאין בהנאת השבת דברי רשות. כל הנאותיו נכללות הן במצות עונג שבת. וזכינו בכאן לדוגמא נוספת בענינא דשבתא דקירוב הציור ביותר אל המצוייר, וליום שכולו שבת, שאין בו מציאות החול ודברי רשות. יום **שכולו** שבת” (פחד יצחק, שבת, קונטרס רשימות ב/יד. ההדגשה במקור). Because there is a commandment to take pleasure on the Sabbath, all *divrei reshut* that a person performs for himself personally are, in any case, for the sake of heaven, similar to the existence in the world to come. The Sabbath is akin to the world to come, the closest thing to the cancelation of the dualistic chasm in this world. The existence within it of every aspect of human life has *hashivut* in that it is connected to the honor of heaven which brings it as close as possible to eternity. This is Rabbi Hutner’s understanding of “*oneg* Shabbat” (the joy of the Sabbath).

Rabbi Hutner’s thought is organized around the Jewish holidays and the intellectual arguments developed in his discourses are presented as relevant to the specific holiday around which they are arranged. However, it is obvious that these discussions are not limited to the holiday under discussion; their sources and revelations are focused on the holiday, but their relevance to the life of the servant of God is continuous. From an examination of the purpose of reality and the purpose of man in Rabbi Hutner’s writings, and the fact that (to paraphrase Maimonides’ words) there is no difference between this world and the next world other than the dualistic chasm alone, it appears that the concept “akin to the world to come” is not limited to the Sabbath. According to the *Pachad Yitzchak* books, man is obligated to attempt to make every moment of his life “akin to the world to come” – a flicker of the connection between the worlds and the bridging of the dualistic chasm, through Torah, *da’at*, and free choice. Man must live, as much as possible, in this world, as if one was in the world to come. The last story told by Rabbi Hutner’s daughter in her biography of him, from his last days, when he was ill and on his death bed, poignantly illustrates this point: “לא בכדי היה שואל מדי פעם בפעם בשבועות האחרונים לבגדי שבת שלו [...] וכשהלבישוהו בשטריימל, נשתנה מאור פניו, והצהיר: גוט שבת יידן, גוט שבת יידן. ונפלא הדבר. היה רגיל להעיד על עצמו: 'איך בין בעצם אשבת'דיגער איד' [אני בעצם יהודי של שבת].” [[87]](#footnote-87)

**4.4 Summary: Existence and Importance as the Foundations of Rabbi Hutner’s Thought**

In this chapter, I have reconstructed and analyzed the intellectual infrastructure supporting Rabbi Hutner’s thought as it appears in the *Pachad Yitzchak* books, identified the primary thinkers who informed it, and examined what can be learned from it about Rabbi Hutner’s philosophical project.

The intellectual infrastructure in the *Pachad Yitzchak* books is the outgrowth of a fusion of two principles: the teleological and the dualistic. The teleological principle is built according to the model formulated by Ramchal in his theological writings: the world has two purposes, the anthropocentric and the theocentric. In the framework of the anthropocentric purpose, God, who is beneficent by nature, benefits man, by creating the conditions allowing him to receive the greatest possible amount of *oneg*. According to the way in which Rabbi Hutner develops these concepts, the highest level of *oneg* is true existence. True existence means that which is true to its source, God, and thus refers to independent and eternal existence. The aspiration to be like his source is planted within man’s essence by virtue of his being made in God’s image – *imitatio Dei*. This type of existence is not fully possible for man, but he can achieve the closest possible level by earning his existence. God’s greatest beneficence is expressed in his enabling man to earn his existence so that he can maintain himself – this is *hessed-mishpat.* The anthropocentric purpose is that man will truly exist.

In the framework of the theocentric purpose, the world is created for the honor of God, who creates the conditions allowing his honor to be revealed to the greatest extent possible. The meaning of *kavod* is recognition of *hashivut*, and to increase *kavod* means to grant *hashivut*. The fullest revelation of *kavod* occurs when it is voluntary, in situations in which it cannot be taken for granted. The essence of increasing the honor of God is by performing *divrei reshut* for the sake of heaven, through which man grants *hashivut* to reality. The theocentric purpose is that reality will have *hashivut.*

The dualistic principle is built on the intellectual framework developed by Maharal of Prague: the world is comprised of an upper spiritual layer and a lower physical layer between which lies a chasm that prevents the realization of the purpose of the worlds that requires their connection. Man, created from the combination of the upper and lower worlds, is capable through his power of choice and of *da’at,* dependent on the Torah, to bridge the dualistic chasm. After Ramchal’s teleological principle is combined with Maharal’s dualistic principle, the act of bridging the dualistic chasm is identified with granting *hashivut* to reality, displaying the realization of the theocentric purpose. By virtue of this, man earns his existence, thereby displaying the actualization of the anthropocentric purpose.

In the framework of this world, the realization of the purpose of the world is conditional, like the dependence on man’s choice. However, the ultimate purpose is complete actualization, unconditional and eternal. This actualization occurs in the world to come. The conception of the world to come in Rabbi Hutner’s thought, founded upon Nachmanides’ eschatological system, is a new reality created by an apocalyptic change in the existing reality, understood within Rabbi Hutner’s system as the negation of the dualistic chasm. In the world to come the dead will come to life, and then live forever, thereby fulfilling the anthropocentric purpose, and necessarily choose the holy and the good, thereby fulfilling the theocentric purpose.

Our examination of the way in which Rabbi Hutner formulates the two purposes of creation, the structure of reality, and, in light of them, the purpose of man and his essential characteristics, has revealed two focal points of his thought: existence and *hashivut*. The purpose of the world and the pinnacle of human aspiration is to achieve true existence and ascribe *hashivut* to reality. From the positive we can infer the negative: the issue that disturbed Rabbi Hutner, around which his thought coalesced, is the problem of false and meaningless existence. These foundations, which will be analyzed in the next chapter, and the meaning of the concepts woven around them, must form the backdrop of any discussion of Rabbi Hutner’s thought and the basis for its interpretation.

1. For a description of the method used to reconstruct the intellectual infrastructure of R. Hutner's thought, see intoriduction. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See *He'ara Klallit*; *Pachad Yitzchak: Rosh Hashana*, 8/2 and *Pachad Ytizhchak: Yom Hakkipurim,* 6/2 (the same discourse which appears in both volumes); *Pachad Yitzchak: Purim,* 1/5; *Pachad Yitzchak*, 2/19. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. On R. Hutner's attitude towards Kabbalah, see p. 206–216.

   [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. For example, *Ma'amarei Pachad Yitzchak: Pesach,* 73/3; *Ma'amarei Pachad Yitzchak: Succot,* 45/10; *Reshimot Lev,* Vol. 1, 106, 222, 287, 338; *Reshimot Lev*, Vol. 2, 175, 349. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Ramhal, *Daat Tevunot,*16. All references to *Daat Tevunot* are to Friedlander's edition; Ramhal, *Derech Hasehem,*7. All references to *Derech Hasehm* are to Spinner's edition. Another figure involved in the printing of Ramhal's works, R. Shalom Ulman, also expressed his thanks to R. Hutner for his help and encouragement, in the introduction to his edition of *Taktav Tefilot*. See Moshe Haim Luzzato, *Taktav Tefilot*, Bnei Brak: S. Ulman, 1979, 11. Based on its mention in the apocryphic writings, R. Hutner studied this work at least from as early as 1968. See also Garb, *Rmahal*, 333. On R. Hutner's attitude towards Ramhal's kabbalah, see p. 209–215. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Ramhal, *Derech Hasehem,*7. All references to *Derech Hasehm* are to Spinner's edition. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. See Garb, *Ramhal*, 165-209; Jacobson, "Torat hahanhaga"; Jacobson, "Tzadik vera lo". See also Yosef Avivi, "Kavanat Haberiah bekitvei Ramhal", *Hama'ayan,* 25, 4 (1985): 1-18. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Garb, *Ramhal,* 165-68, 192-94. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Garb, 197. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Ramhal, *Daat Tevunot,* 3-5. See also Garb, *Ramhal*, 192. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Ramhal, *Derech Hasehem*, 14-16. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. See p. 89 and Fn. **Error! Bookmark not defined.**. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. See Kaplan, "Implicit Theology, 105-6 and Fn 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Garb, *Ramhal*, 335-36. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. This refers to Psalms 136, where the phrase "ki le'olam hasdo" appears 26 times. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. This segment, which is a summary of an idea elaborated in *Pachad Yitzchak: Rosh Hashana,* 4, reappears in many discourses of Pachad Yitzchak. It is the most prevalent motif in his writings. See also Kaplan, "Implicit Theology", 105. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. See also *Pachad Yitzchak: Pesach,* 48. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Maimonides, *The Code of Maimonides*, Gifts for the Poor, 10/7. See also Kaplan, "Implicit Theology", 105. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. See R. Haim of Volozhin, *Nefesh HaHaim*, part 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. See for example, *Pachad Yitzchak: Pesach,* 74. See also Babylonian Talmud, *Berachot*, 55a. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. See also *Pachad Yitzchak: Rosh Hashana*, 3/1. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. See also *Ma'amarei Pachad Yitzchak: Succot,* 110/6: "seeing the **Being** of creation as opposed to its absence is what causes the delight in it" (emphasis is in the original). [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. See also *Ma'amarei Pachad Yitzchak: Succot,* 33/9. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. See p. 186–193. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. *Pachad Yitzchak: Shavuot,* 23; *Yom Hakkipurim,* 38; *Pesach*, 54. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. There are some exceptions, where R. Hutner states that *imitation dei* is suspended. See *Pachad Yitzchak: Shabbat*, 2; *Rosh Hashana,* 31. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. See p. 97. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Maimonides, *Sefer Hamitzvot*, 8th commandment. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. See *Mishnah, Sotah* 1/7. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. See p. 197. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Ramhal, *Daat Tevunot*, 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Ramhal, 20-21. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Ramhal, 26. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. See Jacobson, "Tzadik vera lo", 207. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Ramhal, *Daat Tevunot,* 23. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Jacobson, "Torat hahanhaga", 150. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Mishna: Avot, 6/11. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. See also *Pachad Yitzchak: Rosh Hashana*, 19/2. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Dewitt H. Parker, *The Principles of Aesthetics*, Boston: Silver, Burdett and Co, 1920, 87. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. The theme of the bad as ultimately good, when expressed by a 20th century Jewish Eastern-European thinker, immediately brings to mind the Holocaust. The question of R. Hutner's attitude towards the Holocaust has recieved quite some attention and has been anaylized in light of two texts. The first is a highly controversial piece published in 1977 in a popular journal – a rarity in itself – based on a discussion R. Hutner held with some students. In this piece he implied that Zionism held a degree of responsibility for Hitler's turn towards the final solution, a claim which sparked so much criticism within his own circels, that a student of his later penned a defence of his master, claiming misunderstanding. The second text is a discourse from *Pachad Yitzchak*, in which Lawrence Kaplan identified an implicit, far more complex theology of the Holocaust, albeit potentially just as controversial. Kaplan's analysis provides an excellent demonstration of the esoteric nature of R. Hutner's writings. See Hutner, "Holocaust"; Yaacov Feitmam, "Chazorah", The Jewish Observer, January 1978; Kaplan, "R. Hutner on the Holocaust"; Kaplan, "Implicit theology". See also Steven T. Katz, Shlomo Biderman and Gershon Greenberg, *Wrestling with God: Jewish Theological Responses During and After the Holocaus,* Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007, 556-64. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Mishna: Avot, 5/1. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Maharal, *Derech Haim*, 9-36, esp. 13-14. The part quoted by R. Hutner appears towards the end, p. 33. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. See also Elman, "Rav Isaac Hutner", 308-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. See p. 63. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. See Rashi, Deuteronomy, 25/18: "he [Amalek] made you cold and lukewarm after the boiling heat you had before. For all the nations were afraid to war against you and this one came and began to point out the way to others. A parable! It may be compared to a boiling hot bath into which no living creature could descend. A good-for-nothing came and sprang down into it; although he scalded himself, he made it appear cold to others." [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. In this R. Hutner understands Amalek not only as an historical figure, but as a typification of the basest evil inclination which resides in man. This kind of typological-metaphorical understanding of Amalek is typical of Modern Jewish thought. See Abraham Sagi, "The punishment of Amalek in Jewish tradition: coping with the moral problem", *Harvard Theological Review* 87,3 (1994): 323-346; Martin S. Jaffee, “The return of Amalek: the politics of apocalypse and contemporary Orthodox Jewry”, *Conservative Judaism*, 63,1 (2011): 43-68. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. This parable has several appearances in R. Hutner's writings. See *Pachad Yitzchak: Purim,* 2/2; *Pesach,* 21/3, 53/9. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. David, "Zikhronot", 63. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. For examples, see Brown, "Shnei minei ha'achdut"; Rosenak, "Achdut ha'haphachim"; Wygoda, "Ha'golem b'erezt ha'galim"; Sorotzkin, "R. Teitelbaum"; Gurfinkel, "Netzach Yisrael"; Cowen, "Maharal of Prague and Chabad Chassidim". [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Jacobson, "Tzelem Elohim", 45. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. For example, see Brown, "Shnei minei ha'achdut", 414-415 and Fn 11; Kariv, "Shitato shel Maharal". 17-23. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. See Shifrowitz, *Musag Ha'Hisaron*. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Sorotzkin, "Ha'teologia shel hanivdal"; Sorotzkin, *Orthodoxia U'mishtar Ha'Moderniut*. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Sorotzkin, *Orthodoxia*, 203. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Sorotzkin, *Orthodoxia,* 159. This motivation permeates R. Hutner's thought, as is a key feature of Maharal's influence on his ideas. This will be discussed in depth in relation to his attitude towards secular studies. See chapter 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Sorotzkin, *Orthodoxia*, 213. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Emphesis is in the original. Appears also in *Pachad Yitzchak: Shabbat,* 1/4. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. R. Hutner's usage of the pair "nefesh elokit" and "nefesh tiv'it" immediately raises associations to Chabad theology, for which this distinction is central. R. Hutner's relation to this school of thought will be discussed below, chapter 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. See also *Sefer Hazikaron*, 350: "הכל בידי שמים חוץ מיראת שמים. כלומר, בקביעות היחס בין נפש האלקית לנפש הטבעית עומד הוא האדם ברשות עצמו [...] בן חורין הוא האדם ביצירת היחסים בין נפשו האלקית ונפשו הטבעית." [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. *Pachad Yitzchak: Pesach,* 64/3. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Babylonian Talmud, *Shabbat*, 93b. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. See GRA, *Aderet Eliyahu*: *Bereshit*, 2/3. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. See p. 78–80. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. See Gerondi, *Derashot Ha'Ran*, 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. See Bacon, "Daat Torah"; Brown, "Daat Torah"; Kaplan, "Daat Torah". [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Maimonides, *The Code of Maimonides*, Foundations of the Torah, 1/7. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Koyfman, *Bechol Derachecha De'ehu*, part 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. See *Devarim Rabbah,* 5/13. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. See also *Pachad Yitzchak: Pesach,* 68/3-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. See Babylonian Talmud, *Sotah,* 20a. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. See p.? [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. *Pachad Yitzchak: Igrot Uketavim,* 51. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. See Lorberbaum, "Kabalat Ramban"; Novak, *The Theology of Nahmanides,* 125-134; Halbertal, "Mishnat Haramban". [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. See also *Pachad Yitzchak: Shavuot,* 25/13. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Lorberbaum, "Kabalat Ramban", 305. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. See Schwartz, *Ha'Raayon Ha'Meshichi*, 15-16. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Maimonides, *The Code of Maimonides*, Kings and Wars, 12/2. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. See Fn **Error! Bookmark not defined.**. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. See p. 160–161. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. See p. 122. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. See David, "Zikhronot", 97,365; Hutner, *Reshimot Lev*, vol. 1, 152. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. See *Ma'amarei Pachad Yitzchak: Pesach,* 37/3; Hutner, *Reshimot Lev*, vol. 2, 79. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. See p. 112. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. See p. 125. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. See *Pachad Yitzchak: Pesach,* 69/4. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. David, "Zikhronot", 65. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)