Chapter 4: Anatomy and Spirituality

Human Anatomy as a Guidebook for Life

In the beginning of the previous chapter, we argued that the structure of human anatomy follows that of the unconditional **spiritual** dimension, which comprises the depths of our personality, rather than the structure which we actively instilled in the surface of our personality, i.e. **our consciousness**.[[1]](#footnote-1) Therefore, the structure of our anatomy reflects principles of spiritual action whose actualization results in the perfection of our existence, our freedom. In any case, the ultimate function which physical form follows is not conscious, but spiritual. However, for these arguments to be meaningful, we must first define the basic concepts which they address. That is to say, we need to establish a demarcation between the non-spiritual natural character of consciousness and the supernatural spiritual character of its depths. Alternatively, we need to delineate the substantive transformation which we need to bring about in the structure of consciousness in order for it to be transformed from natural consciousness to spiritual consciousness.

It follows from what we said about this in the previous chapter, that the quality of the will, which includes its position in the personality structure at any given moment—that is, in the outer stratum, the conscious aspect of the personality—is what determines the nature of consciousness at that time. As we mentioned, the implication of the structure of consciousness or human personality being shaped under the influence of local causes is that it is fashioned in accordance with the causal principle, thereby defining it as natural. For example, a businessman who made a fortune in his investments, a politician who became president of the country or a scientist who won the Nobel Prize for his contribution to science are not ensconced at the forefront of society as people with supernatural spiritual powers. Why is that? It is because we know from personal experience that the mental faculties which help each of us overcome the obstacles standing in our way are nothing more than the response of our nature and innate skills to the causal influence of local factors. But in contrast to this developmental track, a person is able to utilize his free will to take the reins of his life into his hands and thereby cause his personality to acquire a structure whose **character is the opposite** of the character which it would have naturally assumed. By harnessing his specific **local** needs and the nature of his character, he can seize control of his behavior from the totality of its conditioning and transfer it to the actualization of the **universal** scale of values which comprise the depths of his existence. While it is true that like all of our abilities, the ability to choose this different track of development is an innate ability, actualizing it is not. At all times and in every circumstance, all of our conditioning, whether innate or acquired, is prepared to thwart any attempt at bringing about a change of values in our lives. It is clear upon inspection that this is axiomatic: **With the exception of the desire to be free rather than conditioned, all of our desires are conditioned desires, and are, therefore, natural preferences and nothing more.**

The will to act or react based exclusively on the Torah’s detailed instructions is the will to act **contrary** to the dictates of our conditioning. It should be emphasized in this regard that under all circumstances, without exception, the Torah’s detailed instructions are the opposite of our conditioning. Whereas the former are universal and, therefore, appear to ignore the needs of the individual and his welfare, the latter which are local are not at all concerned with the public’s welfare. Therefore, when the will to act in accordance with the Torah’s laws is actualized in everyday life, it cannot be classified as a natural will. This will acts contrary to one’s conditioning and is, therefore, supernatural and spiritual.

Transforming a person’s will from a natural will into a supernatural, spiritual one expresses itself in the transformation that takes place within both the **nature** of his personality and **its structure**. This fundamental transformation is expressed by the fact that the will’s release from its conditioning is actually the personality’s release from its conditioning, which renders it spiritual, as well. At the same time, the structural transformation is expressed by the fact that through its self-fulfillment as free will it is released from its inferior state as a force serving local causes contrary to its own nature which is all-inclusive, and now settles **at the top** of the structure of consciousness. This difference between its placement and that of all other aspects of consciousness expresses itself in additional structural differences, as we will see in subsequent chapters.

The yardstick for determining whether consciousness is natural or spiritual is the degree of freedom it possesses. **As more fragments of the personality are integrated into it from the totality of existence, whose essence is of that sort, it becomes correspondingly more spiritual.** Unlike the consciousness that represents the outer layer of the soul, whose behavior is always dictated by the causal principle entrenched within it, the unconscious dynamic at its core is not under its control. As we mentioned, we argue that this dynamic is guided by the laws of the Torah, which are universal, immutable values. The two poles of the mind are, therefore, governed by opposite principles. In the previous chapter, we saw that this recurs on a cosmic scale—in the macrocosm, in contrast to its external layer which obeys the local causal principle, its inner layer not under its control. The depths of our unconscious minds are therefore essentially spiritual in nature.[[2]](#footnote-2) In light of the understanding that consciousness only becomes spiritual when free will assumes the leadership position among the aspects of consciousness, it follows that **the depths of the mind are only spiritual by virtue of the fact that the abilities functioning in them are guided by the root of free will which leads them.**

The implication of our argument above, that the structure of our anatomy follows the structure of our inner scale of values rather than the structure which we actively instilled in our personality, is that only the presence of an inner form of organization, which is the opposite of the current form of organization of our personality, can account for our anatomical structure. These arguments will now be illustrated by well-defined phenomena.

Thus, for example, the fact that the human eye, which serves the will of its master, enabling him to interact directly with the sub-atomic, is situated above all of the other sense organs, can be best explained based on the supreme place that the root of free will occupies in the depths of the mind and not based on the inferior position of will in the structure of personality. The transformation which we need to bring about in the structure of personality for it to become spiritual is illustrated by this anatomical phenomenon. That is, the superior position of the eye in our facial structure is **a structural** **indication** of the corresponding superior place which its master’s will is meant to occupy in the structure of personality. Similarly, the fact that opening the eyes reveals polar contrasts in their components and colors is an indication that our uniqueness in possessing free will, which stems from our ability to be aware of the universal non-contingent values which are at the depths of our being (the retina and sclera), requires us to place them in opposition to our local conditioning (the cavity of the iris and its black appearance, the cornea and the lens). Furthermore, the structural and functional unity that exist between the components of the eye despite their polar contrasts indicate that we must live our lives **as a unification of opposites**. In other words, we must fulfill our local needs exclusively in accordance with the guidance of the universal values at the depth of our being.

Alongside these formal instructions, the eye also provides a tangible expression of **substantive instruction**. This organ is calibrated to the frequency of the one driving force in nature which is not subject to the causal principle—light. This fact confirms our thesis from another angle; its master’s will, which it spreads through the outside world and which is supposed to take its place at the top of the structure of consciousness, is not that which it shares with the other creatures, but rather his spiritual free will—which is rooted in the perfection of his being.

The system of visual perception furnishes yet another instance where understanding a particular datum provides a clear directive as to how we are to conduct ourselves in our daily lives, namely the fact that external reality is captured by the retina inverted both vertically and horizontally. At the beginning of the previous chapter, we inquired as to the rationale for such a system. What is the point of an object’s image being inversely captured on the retina only to be restored afterwards to its true direction *vis-à-vis* the observer? If external reality appears in our consciousness as it truly is—the sky above us and the earth below us, and not the opposite—what benefit does man derive from this inverted system? Indeed, we will see below that behind the inverted image of the retina there definitely lies a well-defined function which has a very significant role in shaping human personality—not a physical function, but rather a metaphysical one: It is to comprehend the placement of two components of existence—the physical, on the one hand, and the conscious/spiritual, on the other—in reverse.

Inverted Worlds

In the previous chapters, we saw that between man’s two components—the physical and the conscious—it is the conscious, rather than its opposite, the physical component, that should be labeled the primary one. As was mentioned, it is impossible to conceive of the existence of anything at all without the existence of consciousness to conceive of it. Ultimately, physicality is only grasped in the realm of consciousness, and it was already noted briefly that the latter cannot be reduced to the physical dimension. This is contrary to the materialistic approach in its various forms which sees consciousness, and certainly spirituality (if it exists at all from their perspective), as a secondary component, which is entirely dominated by the physical component.

These opposing worldviews are represented by the way in which reality is captured by our eyes on the one hand, and the way in which it is grasped by our consciousness on the other. For the inversion of vertical orientation concerning visual stimuli occurs in the eye, which represents the outer portion of the visual perception mechanism which is exposed to external reality, whereas its restoration to a state where the vertical orientation of the object being viewed corresponds to its true direction *vis-à-vis* the observer occurs in the visual cortex which is not exposed to it. Therefore, the external process of the visual sense, in which the visual stimuli are inverted in the retina, represents materialism’s backward understanding of the relative position of the components of existence. The heavens which are above us, which we associate with the lofty or spiritual, they place below, while the earth beneath us, which we associate with the physical aspect, they place above. What this means is that in order for this superficial and erroneous worldview to be possible—and more so, for it to be capable of proliferating and acquiring followers among thinkers and the masses —it must also be ingrained in our anatomical/physiological foundation.

As was mentioned, in contrast to the materialistic approach, there is the idealistic approach which views the consciousness and the deeper dimension, spirituality, as the primary component and physicality as the secondary component. In other words, it places the ‘heavens’ (=spirituality) above and the ‘earth’ (=physicality) below. This worldview matches the way that the vertical orientation of visual stimuli is restored in the inner and final segment of the system of perception—i.e. in the visual cortex or, more precisely, in the consciousness—such that it reflects the way that these opposing components of existence relate to each other. It is a fact that our consciousness perceives the external world with the heavens located above and the earth below.

Among the materialistic and dualistic worldviews, only the latter reflects reality. This is not only plainly evident in the decisive and final stage of the visual perception process; it is also evident in our anatomical structure. Our skull contains the brain which not only is capable of storing all of the contents of our personality and of human culture in general, it also serves as the repository for free will, which distinguishes us as human beings. Similarly, we saw in chapter two that the higher a sense organ is located in our head, the greater its connection to spirituality. Among the four sense organs, the mouth, which is responsible for the materialistic function of eating and drinking, is located at the bottom of the face, while the eyes, which are distinguished by their ability to capture energy in its pre-materialistic, spiritual, state are located above all the others. It follows that ‘above’ represents the spiritual dimension, whereas ‘below’ represents the physical dimension.

However, this raises a question: What is the purpose of our having any anatomical/physiological section in our bodies validating the materialistic approach, even if only apparently so? If our visual sense is finest of our senses, why does it start with such a distorted picture of reality? This question was already raised in the beginning of the previous chapter and will be revisited towards the end of this chapter.

Until now, we have only dealt with vertical direction. What about the horizontal axis? What mistaken worldview lurks behind the perception of left as right and right as left?

It turns out that, like our intuitive perception which translates vertical orientation into the relationship between the physical and the spiritual, we are inclined to view horizontal orientation as an expression of the relationship between good and evil. This is the underlying reason why, in every social encounter, we always use our right hand for handshakes, never the left. If we examine certain areas of religion, politics and mythology, we will see that there was always a tendency to ascribe a positive connotation to the right side and a negative to the left side. For thousands of years, the forces of evil and darkness have been associated in various ways with the left hand and that is how this side is depicted in art, as well. The practice of wearing wedding rings on the middle finger of the left hand originates with the Greeks and Romans who did this out of the belief that it shielded them from evil associated in some way with the left hand. The very common phrase, “do the right thing,” is a clear indication of our innate tendency to identify the ‘right thing’ with the right side.

Therefore, similar to the inverting of our picture of reality on the vertical level, its inversion on the horizontal level represents, in the peripheral or outer dimension of our body, superficial worldviews that judge that which is correct and appropriate to do (‘right’) as wrong (‘left’), while judging that which is inappropriate (‘left’) as appropriate (‘right’). A general example of this sort of judgement will be furnished after we prove that the relationship between ‘right’ and proper conduct and ‘left’ and improper conduct is not merely myth or folklore, but rather is also ingrained in the anatomical/physiological structure of one of the most vital organs in our body—the heart. Let’s look at the heart’s structure and its allocation of tasks to its right and left sides.

**Asymmetry Between the Two Halves of the Heart**

The heart is a hollow muscular organ that acts as a pump, whose role is to circulate blood to all of the body’s organs. This organ is divided into four chambers: Right and left ventricles and right and left atria. Its right side, which consists of the right ventricle and atrium, is commonly referred to as “the right heart,” while its left side, which consists of the left ventricle and atrium, is commonly referred to as “the left heart.” The right atrium receives blood low in oxygen and rich in carbon dioxide from the body’s tissues and transfers it to the right ventricle from which it flows to the lungs, where it emits carbon dioxide and absorbs oxygen. This blood, which is now oxygen-rich, is collected in the left atrium and then, after it is transferred to the left ventricle, circulates to all of the body’s tissues. Therefore, the left ventricle is the largest and strongest one in the heart. Its walls’ muscles are three times thicker than those of the right ventricle, as circulating approximately 4,300 liters of blood a day to all parts of the body requires extremely powerful contractions.

Based on this anatomical structure, one might have concluded that the dominant side of the heart is the left side, as opposed to the right side which serves as a passive receptacle for the oxygen-poor blood, but this is far from the case. Although the left ventricle is endowed with a thicker muscle than the right ventricle, without an energy source causing it to contract, it is unable to function.

The energy required for the heart to function is provided by an electrical system which also dictates the rhythm of its beats. This electrical system consists of several components, the main one being the sinoatrial node, located in the wall of the right atrium. This component is better known to us as the pacemaker and it consists of a collection of special muscle cells which produce on their own, and completely independently, the electrical impulses required for its contractions.

A deeper look at the functional asymmetry of the heart’s tissues leads to the conclusion that, contrary to the superficial perspective, the dominant side of the heart is, in fact, its right side and not its left. However, unlike the muscle tissues of the left ventricle which are distinguished by their thickness, and hence their function, there is nothing about the muscle tissues of the pacemaker to distinguish them or indicate their dominant role. The role of these muscle tissues in producing electrical activity was not always clear to scientists, and was only discovered in 1906.

The heart, as one of the most vital organs in the human body, affords us a very clear insight into the role of the right and left sides in the human body in particular, and therefore, in nature in general.[[3]](#footnote-3) That is to say, autonomous self-induced activity is identified with the ‘right’ whereas a mechanical/causal response to external stimuli is identified with the ‘left.’

Unfortunately, this is not the approach which most people adopt in their daily lives. The yardstick used in western culture to measure a person’s success is the extent of his contribution to society, whether on the cultural, economic, political or religious level. Those who devote their lives to attaining some measure of self-perfection, and therefore withdraw from society, are at best denigrated by it as being unproductive and at worst, as parasites living at the expense of others.

It is true that, in a sense, scientists, economic leaders, farmers and the like deserve the appreciation that is accorded to them because of their contribution to society. In the final analysis, they are the ones who contribute to improving the population’s standard of living on a pragmatic level. At the same time, beyond the practical contribution of each of them, the individual has a much more weighty and responsible duty—his self-actualization. In the end, the quality of human society is determined by the quality of its members. Therefore, as long as we do not adopt those universal norms found at the foundation of existence, including the foundation of our being, our behavior can only be determined by the principle of cause and effect, while justifying it by means of the magical motto, “Every man his own truth.” The problem lies in the fact that it is this pluralistic approach which caused human society’s loss of values that we witness today. It is this approach that has given human history its horrific character, as noted in the previous chapter.

Paradoxically, it is precisely these active people, in the absolute sense of the concept, who are disparaged by western society as being unproductive and sloths. Through their superhuman efforts to free themselves from the bonds of their conditioning and thereby actualize their uniqueness as human beings, they produce something which cannot be produced by any system imaginable: Beings whose actions are self-induced and stem from the perfection of their being and not from some local impulse or stimulus. Their active and autonomous nature is expressed, first and foremost, in their creating something infinitely more valuable than a scientific breakthrough, social revolution or an improvement in human society’s standard of living. It is expressed by transforming their conditioned personality into a free personality and, therefore, creating it. In the words of the Midrash, “If you observed the Torah’s commandments, I deem it as if you created yourselves.”[[4]](#footnote-4) The accomplishments of these rare individuals does not amount to merely this; when a person transforms his personality from a conditioned personality to a free personality, he thereby also transforms himself into the most productive type of person imaginable: Not only does all of humanity benefit from his self-perfection, the same is true of nature in general:

A. By means of his conduct which has become unblemished, he becomes a lighthouse which lights the way for the small handful of those who rally around him, who also yearn to taste the sweetness of self-perfection, and which will light the path for all of mankind in the Messianic Age. Only then will the ethical level of the entire human society be elevated through him to a level which is the polar opposite of what it currently is.

B. By actualizing the Torah’s laws which guide all of existence, a person develops his personality as a micro-cosmic version of the universe. His positive influence permeates not only his immediate vicinity, but even the expanse of the entire universe. As mentioned in the previous chapter, when a person totally neutralizes his inclination towards evil, his vision projects the unity which his personality acquired onto external reality. Although the positive impact of this projection of unity on natural phenomena is not evident at the present, it will become clear to all in the Messianic Age when it will be projected onto external reality even by those who will rally to his leadership. Only then will nature’s destructive tendency to slowly erode in terms of its order or organization (“the second law of thermodynamics”) cease entirely. Moreover, not only will this tendency cease completely, we will witness its reversal. That is to say, as a result of the gradual intensification of unity among human society, the level of unity and order in natural phenomena will also gradually intensify. The Talmud writes, for example, that obedience to the laws of the Torah will result in fruit, which normally rot as time goes on, instead improving with the passage of time.[[5]](#footnote-5)

C. In chapter twelve of this work, a fundamental Torah formula is presented, which parallels, down to the last detail, one of the most fundamental formulas in modern physics: *E=mc2*. This parallelism should demonstrate conclusively that the Torah’s laws are precisely those that guide all of existence, and therefore they are precisely the ones whose quantitative relationship appears in the scientific literature as the laws of physics and biology. Therefore, when a person channels all of his actions towards actualizing the Torah’s laws, he transforms his personality into the hierarchical transmission system through which they are directed to the world. By means of his self-actualization, a person bestows on the universe that which is most important for it—its laws. As the Zohar says, “The Holy One, blessed be He, looked in the Torah and created the world, man toils in Torah and sustains the world.”[[6]](#footnote-6)

Therefore, in complete contrast to the approach of western society, which is based on how things appear, the ultimate active, and as such also the most productive, person is not the one who places all of his effort into developing and improving the external world, but rather the one who withdraws from society and focuses on his self-actualization. First, because as a result of his superhuman efforts to shape his personality as a sovereign being not subject to any local influences, he shows anyone who is interested how a person who is created in the divine image should appear and how he should behave in each situation. Secondly, because by means of his self-perfection he sustains the entire world, including those who western society views as exemplary individuals, such as scientists, doctors, artists, athletes and the like. As was mentioned, this depiction of reality is clearly illustrated by the functional asymmetry of the two halves of the heart. The activity of the left side is undoubtedly very vital to our existence, yet its contribution to survival and, therefore, its ostensibly dominant character, are merely the result of the right side’s autonomous, invisible activity.

These two opposite types of life motivations are summed up in king Solomon’s seemingly puzzling statement, “A wise man’s heart tends toward his right, a fool’s toward his left.”[[7]](#footnote-7) Is it conceivable that a person, about whom it was said, “Solomon’s wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the inhabitants of the east…”[[8]](#footnote-8) was ignorant of that which every intelligent person knows, namely that a wise man’s anatomy is no different than that of a fool and vice versa, that the heart does not abandon its location on the left side of the body and gradually move to the right side of the body to the extent that its owner becomes wiser. Of course, he knew, but, by means of his sublime wisdom which explored the depths of the inner blueprint of the world—namely, the Torah—he knew that which would be revealed later to the Kabbalists, and therefore was familiar with the finest details of the heart’s innate structure and the principles of spiritual organization that fashioned it.[[9]](#footnote-9) The spiritual dimensions which extend beyond, and are parallel to, the visible structure of the heart were not foreign to him, nor was the difference between the roles of its two sides in sustaining life.

In stating, “A wise man’s heart tends toward his right, a fool’s toward his left,” King Solomon intended to illustrate the difference between the inner motivations driving each of them. This is in line with the Torah’s tendency to frequently apply the term ‘heart’ figuratively to innermost point in man, from which our will, thoughts or emotions emanate.[[10]](#footnote-10) In other words, what drives a wise man is his boundless yearning for self-actualization, i.e. the full realization of the potential inherent in his free will. To fulfill this yearning, he is not only willing to tolerate the disparaging attitude toward him on the part of a society that sees him as a parasite living at its expense, but also to sacrifice his life, if and when it is required. This yearning, which is fed by his deep longing for perfection and truth, is intensified by his aversion to the common lifestyle, which is based on the notion that in attaining his aspiration for wealth and universal recognition for his achievements and the like, a person also actualizes himself. Statements such as “I would give anything to be a Rothchild or an Einstein” are grating to his ears. He wonders: How does a person who thinks this way not realize that even if he achieves his life's ambition and his business encompasses the entire world or all mankind recognizes his achievements, he will still be as far from self-actualization as east from west? In his opinion, such a person’s error lies in the fact that the yearning for self-actualization which lies at the root of every person’s aspirations will never be fulfilled by realizing the same local capabilities which allowed him to excel in the academic and economic fields, and the like. It will only be realized in fulfilling the full potential inherent in the depths his being, as will be explained below. For just as it is inconceivable for someone to identify a car, for example, with one of its parts, such as the radiator, pistons, spark plug or the like, so too, it would be a fatal error for one to think that by merely utilizing a number of his capabilities he has thereby actualized himself.

This argument is further clarified if we utilize it to examine the idea, which we all share to some degree, that whenever a person exercises his will, he thereby actualizes himself. Is there anyone who does not feel that each of his actions is his own, i.e. that it derives from his ego? The fact is that when we wish to inform someone else what we wish to do, we start with the words, “I want” and then specify the object of our desire, such as our desire to read or to purchase a certain product. This form of expression reflects the universal feeling that it is the ego, which lies at the root of our personality, that wants to read or to purchase a certain product, and therefore, when one is able to do what he wants to do, he actualizes himself—that is to say, his ego—even if only partially. But is this true? In order to answer this question, we must first define what we mean when we say ‘I.’

If we were to ask those around us how they view the self, some would reply that when they say ‘I’ they are referring to their body, while others would identify it with their consciousness and yet others would respond that they use this term to refer to their personality. Nonetheless, when we examine the self that appears in our consciousness carefully, we see that it is not perceived as our consciousness or even as our personality. Rather, it is perceived as the source of all of our thoughts, feelings and moods and, therefore, as the static point which consistently lies at the root of their constant fluctuation. The fact is that, regardless of what we do, even if we repeatedly change the nature of our personality from one extreme to the other, we will still always find that same self at the root of all of these actions and personality changes. We perceive the ego as the innermost point in our personality, as that which preserves our identity as a consistent self throughout the course of our lives. This fixed and unchanging identity is what each of us means when he identifies himself as ‘I.’

Therefore, everything that a person was and did in the past and everything which he is capable of doing in the future, all of this and much more, is included in his self. Like an iceberg, where only the tip is visible and most of it is hidden beneath the surface of the water, the point of the ego represents the mere tip of the depths of the soul and therefore of their full potential. And like a transparent beam of light which disperses into all of the colors of the rainbow, so too, the self is the source from which the various mental capabilities or characteristics instantaneously split off and cross the threshold of consciousness and are experienced as different states of consciousness or desires.

Our shared sense that all of our desires emanate from our self is justified, but it is far from the notion that the self is behind them. If, for example, we examine a person’s desire to swim, we will find that it is primarily his athletic abilities which motivated him; abilities competing to be realized at the expense of his other abilities, such as his musical or literary abilities and the like, which he is unable to utilize at that same time. Therefore, one cannot say that it is his self that desires this activity. One of his abilities—yes; he himself—no. And as we know, the whole is more than the sum of its parts.

The insight that by its nature it is not the self, but rather some of its characteristics or abilities, that chooses what to accept or reject holds true even when a person’s life hangs in the balance; that is to say, even when it is his will to survive which motivates him to do something. For example, when a person’s will to survive drives him to eat so that he does not starve to death, it would seem that his desire to eat actually reflects the self’s independent will, since if he does not satisfy his hunger, he will cease to exist altogether. However, it can be shown that the perspective stated above applies in this case, as well. The fact is that people have starved themselves to death throughout history when they believed that it was necessary for their self-actualization and there were even those who committed suicide when they heartbreakingly discovered that the aspirations to which they dedicated their lives were worthless. Obviously, aside from the will to survive, which is common to all creatures, man possesses a more fundamental instinct or drive unique to him alone—the drive for self-actualization. This demonstrates that even when a person is motivated by his will to survive it is not a reflection of man’s unique will and that, therefore, it cannot be identified as the independent will of the self. The true impetus behind the statement, “I wish to satisfy my hunger” is not the human self, it is merely his will to survive. It is this inclination, which is inferior to the self, which wears the cloak of the self in this statement.

What desire can truly reflect the independent will of the self? Only the desire to be actualized as a sovereign, free being—that is, as a being whose actions are not contingent on anything outside of itself. In order to understand what is unique about this desire that justifies it alone being viewed as the independent will of the self and therefore, its actualization, it is necessary to add the missing characteristic in defining the self.

When we defined the ego as the central point in the personality whose identity as the self is static, as opposed to consciousness whose nature constantly fluctuates, we did not add its implication: That it expresses the mental dimension in man which transcends time. As the dimension which encompasses not only the depths of the individual unconscious (Freud) and the collective unconscious (Carl Gustav Jung 1875-1961), but also the laws governing the creation of the world (as we will see in chapter 12), the ego represents a mental dimension so all-encompassing that it lacks nothing. Being all-encompassing frees it from the need to improve⎯i.e. to change over time⎯and this potential perfection is what we perceive as the self which transcends time. Time consciousness is actually consciousness of the changes occurring in the field of consciousness and, therefore, the total absence of change is the same as the absence of time. The self therefore has a unique place among the elements and entities in nature as a sovereign entity which not only exists beyond space, but also beyond time and, therefore, above and beyond the control of the principle of causation.

But what is the purpose of this freedom, if it cannot be actualized? For this reason, the self constantly projects various characteristics and abilities contained within it onto the consciousness which lies beyond it. As a result of their dispersion when they are selectively projected, they are transformed into states of consciousness bound by time and even space, in a metaphysical sense, and therefore into states of consciousness which are subject to the principle of causation. This creates the arena where the self can realize its freedom, utilizing the very characteristic in the realm of consciousness which is endowed with the character needed to represent it⎯the ability to exercise free will. First, because the only difference between them is that the self is the potential for freedom whereas freewill is the ability to actually realize this freedom in the arena where its system of internal relationships constantly fluctuates and, therefore, in the arena where its system of internal relationships is subject to the principle of causality. Secondly, because like the self which incorporates all the depths of existence, free will applies equally to all human desires. As was mentioned in the previous chapter, the Torah⎯the sole vehicle of actualizing free will⎯views each and every one of man’s needs as a means for actualizing his humanity, his freedom. The Torah provides specific directions relating to every possible situation we may encounter so that we do not find ourselves in a situation in which our goals are chosen blindly based on our inclinations, needs and weaknesses.

If free choice is the garment in which the self clothes itself when it masquerades as one of its characteristics in the consciousness, then it is obvious that only the desire to be actualized as free will represents the independent will of the self. As we said, aside from the drive for self-actualization⎯i.e. the actualization of the self’s free will by means of free choice⎯there is not even one of our drives or desires which represents the independent will of the self.

So far so good, but there is a catch. If the ego’s perfection, and thus its freedom, stem from the very fact that it simultaneously encompasses all states of being, then it is unclear how it could be actualized when all of a person’s desires focus on performing the Torah’s commandments. It was already noted that the fulfillment of each of a person’s goals inherently precludes the possibility of simultaneously realizing his abilities or characteristics contained in his self. This is true of a specific desire at a given moment and it is even true of the fulfillment of any lifetime goal. Given this, how is it possible to argue that it is a person’s self, per se, that is behind the desire to perform one of the Torah’s commandments, if this fulfilment inherently precludes the possibility of simultaneously performing the rest of the commandments? If the self is characterized by the fact that it contains all of the depths of existence, how can one argue that all of these are realized when one performs an individual commandment? The claim that this is in fact the case seems like a nuclear aircraft carrier captain claiming that the vast energy produced by its nuclear reactor is designed to allow him to spend his entire life in pursuit of schools of sardines! At first glance, how different is the individualistic nature of each one of the Torah’s commandments from the individualistic nature of all other goals? The difference lies in the fact that, like the ego which contains within it all of the depths of existence despite its individualistic nature, each of the Torah’s commandments contains within it all of the Torah’s commandments, as will be explained below.

Commenting on the Torah’s preface to the Decalogue, “God spoke all these words, saying,”[[11]](#footnote-11) the Midrash states: “This teaches that the Creator said all ten statements of the Decalogue simultaneously.”[[12]](#footnote-12) R. Meir Ibn Gabbai (1480-1540) explains:

By stating that they were all stated simultaneously, they indicated that there is no distinction between them, and the entirety and its individual components are one and the same and the entirety contains nothing which is not in the individual components and the individual components contain nothing which is not in the entirety… and they were all stated simultaneously in order to equate them.[[13]](#footnote-13)

This applies not only to the Decalogue but also to all of the 613 commandments of the Torah, as R. Yehudah Aryeh Leib Alter of Gur writes:

All of the 613 commandments are interdependent and are one unit. Therefore, the Sages stated that they were all said simultaneously. And all 613 commandments are included in the Decalogue, hence they were all said simultaneously. It follows that if someone performs one of the commandments, he has a connection with all of them.[[14]](#footnote-14)

Upon examination we will see that this characteristic, unique to the Torah’s commandments, is self-evident. It is axiomatic that the unfathomable quantity of components in nature⎯from its hundreds of billions of galaxies to particles estimated at 1087⎯are one unit in the Creator’s infinite and indivisible wisdom. That is to say, within infinity, even components which we perceive as limited, finite, are actually infinite. We find echoes of this in the big bang theory, which represents the essence of modern cosmology. According to this theory, the laws of nature, dimensions of time-space, sizes or physical components that make up the universe all emerged and developed from a single point, known as a “gravitational singularity.” All the components of the universe were thus consolidated in one indivisible unit in this singularity. If this is true of components scattered throughout time-space, it is certainly true of the Torah’s commandments, that is to say the eternal divine values, as well. Therefore, the indivisible wisdom of the supreme legislator which encompasses all in its infiniteness must be contained not only in all of the Torah’s commandments as a whole, but also in each one individually, as R. Yaakov Yosef of Pollonye (1695- 1782) wrote:

Whatever edge or part of the oneness I seize and hold on to, I am grasping all of it. Since the Torah and its commandments derive from His essence which is the true oneness, when one performs one of the commandments properly and with love, which is cleaving to Him, and by means of this commandment seizes a part of the oneness, he thereby possesses all of it as if he performed all of the commandments which reflect the totality of His oneness.[[15]](#footnote-15)

Therefore, Maimonides writes:

One of the fundamentals of faith in the Torah is that when one preforms one of the 613 commandments properly without any mundane ulterior motives of any sort but only for its own sake out of love… he thereby merits a share in the World to Come.[[16]](#footnote-16)

This claim is, to the best of my knowledge, unique to the Torah. And therefore, when a person’s will is focused on fulfilling one of the commandments at a particular instant, he is not focused on achieving some goal which is dwarfed relative to the all-encompassing perfection of his self and turns out to be a goal devoid of any innate value, but rather towards the fulfillment of the divine will, which contains within it all of existence. As a result, the ego and all it contains are expressed when one performs one of the Torah’s commandments. When a person performs a particular commandment, his state of consciousness at the time of its fulfillment represents the tip of the iceberg of all of the potential states of existence inherent in the ego. All of the depths of existence contained in the ego do not, therefore, go to waste when they stand behind the desire to fulfill the Creator’s will; they all play an active role in the process of choice and, therefore, they all are fully realized.

This characteristic must be integrated with another which was noted above. Like the laws of nature which direct all of existence, the Torah’s commandments which direct the depths of a person’s being do not originate externally, as is commonly assumed, but rather from within his being, as it states, “For they are our life and the length of our days, and we will study them day and night.” Therefore, one realizes his ego and all of the depths of being contained therein by fulfilling even one commandment at any given time.

When one performs a particular commandment, the required action may be very different than the action to be taken in fulfilling a different commandment, yet they share a common purpose⎯ they equally represent the will of God. The telos behind the fulfillment of each commandment transcends its local result; it must be done for the sake of fulfilling God’s will, which is the essence of that commandment.

When a person honors his parents, prays or gives to the poor in accordance with the Oral Law’s uncompromising instructions, he accomplishes the same thing⎯he allows the divine will to dictate his actions, thereby freeing his will from any local influence. It is true that the performance of one commandment precludes the possibility of simultaneously performing other commandments, but since all commandments are fundamentally one commandment, they are all realized through the particular commandment which the person performs. Moreover, the performance of this one will never be at the expense of the other, because it is precisely the Torah itself - the totality of the commandments - that demands that this commandment, and not another, be fulfilled at that precise time and place.

In sum: The aspect of divine will contained in each of the Torah’s commandments encompasses all of existence. When a particular decision is determined by a commandment, that specific decision encompasses all of existence, as well. Self-transcendence through adopting the Torah’s commandments as a way of life is the only way in which free will, and thus the self, can be realized.

The one goal which can truly be said to stem from a person’s inner desire, from his “I,” is not the aspiration for something local, but rather for a way of life which allows him to realize his potential through every one of his actions. This is the only way that he can realize his uniqueness as a person and individual. Only then will he fully live his life through his every action; his personality will then be fashioned exclusively by actions which stem from within himself.

This brings us back to king Solomon’s statement, “A wise man’s heart tends toward his right.” Meaning, the wise man’s way of life is equivalent to the function of “the right heart.” Just as the pacemaker acts independently and not in response to any outside stimulus, the wise man is one who chooses a way of life which is a framework within which he acts rather than reacts. Rather than his actions reflecting mechanistic/causal responses to local impulses and stimuli, they emanate from within him; from the perfection of his being fashioned by the Torah’s laws. Moreover, like the pacemaker which regulates the rate and intensity of the contractions of the heart’s muscles, self-actualization raises man to the level of a ‘leader’ who instructs himself and those who rally around him how to act at any given moment and in any situation.

The fool’s way of life, by contrast, is equivalent to the function of the “left heart.” Just as its function is not autonomous but rather reflects a mechanistic response to external stimuli⎯in this case, coming from the right side of the heart⎯the same is true of the way of life of a person who directs all of his energy towards the improvement of external reality. Such a person is not motivated from within, from the perfection of his being; rather, his actions are the result of external impulses and stimuli. Such existence was defined by existentialist philosophers as “an existential void,” in the terminology of Viktor Frankl (1905-1997), “the absurdity of existence,” in the terminology of Jean Paul Sartre (1905-1980) and Albert Camus (1913-1960), and “cessation of existence” in our terminology.

Thus, like the inversion of the image of reality on the vertical ("up-and-down") level, its transformation on the horizontal (left-right) level represents in the superficial or outer layer of our anatomy the superficial worldview prevalent in western society. It disparages the way of life which leads to man’s self-actualization, to the transformation of the face of human society, to the stabilization and intensification of the level of organization in nature and even to the justification of its very existence (‘right’) as being idleness and even parasitism (‘left’); while it deems the way of life which improves the population’s quality of life in the short run but also undermines the natural ecological balance, erodes the level of organization in nature, and completely misses the destiny of the individual (‘left’) to be the way of life which is worthy of incentives and admiration (‘right’).

This functional asymmetry is also evidenced in the two cortical halves of the brain. However, due to the abstract nature of the mental aspects processed in them, the contrast is not as stark and clear as the one which we find in the more mechanistic functions of the two sides of the heart.

1. This argument becomes self-evident as soon as we recognize the absurdity latent in the prevailing position among biologists that the organizing principles (“the function”) guiding the way in which the human body develops (“the form”) are encoded in the structure of the DNA; that is to say on an epistemological level (this position is refuted in chapter five based on the findings of biology itself). Therefore, these principles could only be found in the unconscious depths of our being, since, to the best of our knowledge, no ontological alternative exists in our store of knowledge. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The self-destructive impulse (Thanatos, to use Freud’s term)—that is, the tendency towards behavior that is contrary to universal, pure reason—is also rooted in the depths of being, but only in those layers closest to the threshold of consciousness. The depths of our being consist of an infinite number of layers. Only the outermost layers consist of those destructive forces, each of which strives to be actualized at the expense of the others. It is for this reason that the first considerations to be heard in each of our ethical deliberations are local and egocentric, rather than universal. These latter ones are rooted in deeper layers. It can be stated as a rule that the deeper the depths of the soul, the greater the degree of interconnection between their constituent forces. Thus, in the deepest layers of the mind, they exist in absolute unity, that is a unity in which all of the contrasts between them are nullified. A simple and tangible example of this is the phenomenon of the colors of the rainbow which are all contained in a ray of clear light, despite the fact that neither they nor the contrasts between them are manifested in it, as Newton demonstrated. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. If man is created from nature, then the functional asymmetry of the heart tissues must exist in one way or another in nature itself. Otherwise, how and from where did this phenomenon appear in man? [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Vayikra Rabba 35, 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. BT Bava Batra 91b. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Zohar II, p. 161b. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Kohelet 10:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. I Melachim 5:10. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. The writings of the Kabbalists document the tip of the iceberg of this organization: R. Isaac Luria, *Sha’ar Hahakdamot*, 74b, §12; *Eitz Chaim*, 5,7; *Sha’ar Ha-Kelalim*, chapter 3. Vilna Gaon, *Tikunei Zohar*, 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Rambam, Guide I:39. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Shemot 20:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Midrash Rabbah, Bamidbar 11:7. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. *Avodat Hakodesh* IV:33. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. *Sefat Emet*, Yitro, 5751. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. *Toledot Yaakov Yosef*, Yitro, 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Maimonides, Commentary on the Mishnah, Makot III:16. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)