

Sulam HaHakbalot – Ladder of Correspondences

14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
ברכת המזון	שמע	שחרית	כל צמא		פרצופים	ספירות	עולמות	נשמה	דיבור	תורה	מצוה	מילוי	הויה
40 יום ו- 40 לילה	שמע	קריאת התורה \ הלל \ תחנון	אורות	א י ן	עתיק יומין \ אריך אנפין	כתר	אדם קדמון	יחידה	דממה	רזין סתימין	רעותא דליבא	י ה ו ה	קוץ י'
הזן את הבל	ברוך שם	שמונה עשרה	מוחין		אבא	חכמה	אצילות	חיה	טעמים	סוד	כח מחשבה	יוד הי ויו הי	י
על הארץ ועל המזון	ואהבת	קריאת שמע	צלמים		אמא	בינה	בריאה	נשמה	נקודות	דרוש	כוונה	יוד הי ואו הי	ה
בונה ירושלים	והיה	פסוקי דזמרא	לבושים		זעיר אנפין	חג"ת נה"י	יצירה	רוח	תגין	רמז	קול \ דיבור \ רגש	יוד הא ואו הא	ו
הטוב והמטיב	ויאמר	ברכות השחר \ קרבנות	כלים	א נ י	נוקבא	מלכות	עשיה	נפש	אותיות	פשט	מעשה	יוד הה וו הה	ה

This chart moves from **right-to-left**. Each additional correspondence sheds light on the inner dynamics of the others and thereby deepens our understanding of how they all reflect one single idea through each particular lens. The main idea is that, although we live our lives on the “lowest level” at the “bottom” of each set, we can nevertheless rise up meditatively to the top to draw its inner essence down into our lives.

1. **The 5 Levels of YKVK:** The highest level is the apex of *Yod*, which contains all 4 Letters of the *Havayah* in implicate potential, before they manifest as “separate” modes. The 4 letters themselves represent a step-down process through which Hashem diminishes the power of His light so as to create a lower dimension in which human beings can have free will (either to serve Him without coercion, or to foolishly rebel against Him).

2. **The 5 Expansions of YKVK:** The highest level is one simple *Havayah*, followed by the four main “expansions” of the Name: A”B = 72 (the *Havayah* of *Yods*) is obtained by expanding or spelling out all the letters following the initial *Yod* with *yods*. SaG = 63 is obtained by spelling out each letter *Heh* with *yods*, but spelling the *Vav* with an *aleph*. [SaG corresponds to *Imma/Binah*. The *Vav* of SaG is thus the womb of *Imma*; the *aleph* that it contains is the embryo of the next level, *MaH*, the *Havayah* of *alephs*.] MaH = 45 is obtained by spelling out all the letters following the initial *Yod* with *alephs*. The fourth expansion, BeN = 52, is obtained by simply doubling the *Hehs* and the *Vav*.

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3. **The 5 Levels of Mitzvah Observance:** *Reuta d'Liba* (Deepest Will or Yearning of the Heart), *Koach HaMachshavah* (Power or Source of Thought), *Kavanah* (Focused Intention), *Kol / Dibur / Regesh* (Voice, Speech, as well as Feeling), *Maaseh* (Action). The “action” level of every *mitzvah* is preceded by a blessing that we say, which should be done with focused intention, which connects to the highest conception we have of our service in this world, which connects with the deepest level of our will, the very reason we are alive. When we bring that “will” all the way down into our action, it is like loading it with atomic energy. Disconnected from the higher levels of will, thought, intention, feeling and speech, we are like a lamp that won't light up. Why won't it light? We forget to plug it in to the power source!

4. **The 5 Levels of Torah Exegesis:** *Razin Setimin* (Concealed Secrets), *Sod* (Mystery), *Drush* (Allegory), *Remez* (Allusion), and *Pshat* (Simple Meaning). The GRA (Gaon of Vilna) wrote, “When one understands the *Sod* [deeper meaning of the Torah and of Life] clearly, he will then understand everything else clearly, namely, the *Pshat* [simple meaning], the *Remez* [allusions], the *Drash* [allegory] and the *Sod* [secret] aspects of the Torah. Conversely, as long as one does not understand the *Sod*, he will not be able to understand even the *Pshat*” (GRA on Proverbs 2:9). “When you understand the *Sod*, you will then see how exact the *Pshat* is as well” (on Proverbs 5:18).

According to the Lubavitcher Rebbe, the importance of *Pshat* is embodied in the expression, “*Ein mikra yotzei midei peshuto*—a verse is not to be taken out of its plain context” (*Shabbat* 63a). On the contrary, it is through studying the plain intent that the essence of the Torah is revealed. For the plain intent relates to the world of *Asiyah* (*Rehovot HaNahar*, end), **the world in which the divine intent of having a dwelling place in the lowest realms is fulfilled**. We may also say that this is the inner reason why the Torah studied of school-children, *sh'hevel pihem beli chet* (the breath of whose mouths is un sullied by sin) concerns specifically or primarily the plain meaning of the Torah (Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, *Maamar Tziyon BaMishpat Tipadeh, Kuntres Shabbat Chazon* 5748, *Sefer HaMaamarim Meluket* 2, p. 317ff. Translated in *Anticipating the Redemption*, Sichos in English, 1994, p. 14).

5. **The 5 Levels of Singing the Torah:** *Demamah* is Silence. *Taamim* are the cantillation points that tell us how to sing the Torah. *Nekudot* are the vowel points. *Tagin* are the crownlets atop some of the letters. *Otiot* are the letters. One of the deep lessons of this system is **that the highest and lowest levels are the main thing**, while the other levels in between are there to allow the upper level to enter the lower level without damaging it, so to speak, and thereby allow the lower level to become more and more refined and thereby more capable of receiving, embodying and channeling the higher level in its fullness. Here, for instance, we want to connect our letters (speech) not only to the deep music of Hashem's word, but to the awesome Silence that is behind each word and from which each word issues forth.

6. **The 5 Levels of the Soul:** *Yechidah*, *Chayah*, *Neshamah*, *Ruach*, *Nefesh*. We want to go from mundane *nefesh*-consciousness (which is distinguished by its need to survive and assert itself), all the way up to *yechidah*-consciousness (which is distinguished by its awareness that there is nothing but Hashem). Only then do we then try to bring that higher awareness down INTO our lowest parts.

7. **The 5 Universes/Dimensions of Reality:** *Adam Kadmon*, *Atzilut*, *Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*. Sometimes they are depicted as a five-story building, with the highest level being atop all of them. At other times, they are depicted as “clothed” or “ensconced” one within the other, such that the innermost level is the highest. Actually, only the lowest extremity of the higher level enters into and becomes clothed within the lower level. In this way, we can uphold both of these depictions, simultaneously.

8. **The 10 Sefirot.** 9. **The 10 Sefirot divided into 5 Partzufim.** 10. **Ayin and Ani.**

11. **Kol Tzamei** (“All who are thirsty”): Here, from the top down, *Orot* (the lights of Divinity) become clothed in *Mochin* (the upper stratospheres of our consciousness), which become clothed in *Tzelamim* (the innate character traits and personality makeup we receive from our father), which become clothed in *Levushim* (our inner “garments,” i.e., emotional makeup we inherit from our mother), which become clothed in *Kelim* (our physical vessels, i.e. bodies). *Kol Tzamei* is an acrostic based on a verse in Isaiah: “Ho, *kol tzamei*—all who are thirsty—come to the water! Those who have no money, come, take [food] and eat! Come and take wine and milk without paying, without charge!” (Isaiah 55:1). It signifies, as we have seen, that the true desire of the lowest level (*kelim*-vessels) is nothing less than to receive the “water” of the highest level.

As a meditation, this set thus reads: “Rise up from your lowest extremity (*kelim*-vessels) to the Upper Root of your soul (*orot*-lights). Do not fear. Rather, yearn to lose your separate identity and existence there – in order to be reborn and to bring great sustenance down step-by-step into every aspect of your life. In essence, there is only you and Gd. You are the *kli* (vessel) and His is the *Ohr* (Light). The intermediate levels exist only in order to allow His *Ohr* (Light) to illuminate your *kelim* (vessels), so that your vessels can become refined enough to receive more of His Light, ad infinitum.”

12. **The 5 Levels of Shachrit.** 13. **The 5 Levels of the Shma.** 14. **The 5 Levels of Birkat HaMazon.**