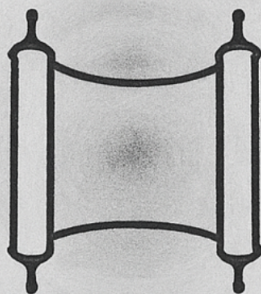


בס"ד

The Mitteler Rebbe



Kuntres HaHishtatchus
The Tract on Prostration
[at Gravesites]

Mitteler Rebbe

Kuntres HaHishtachus

The Tract on Prostration [at Gravesites]

To understand the concept of prostrating oneself at the graves of *tzaddikim*: There are several levels and ways of appreciating the concept of prostrating oneself at a grave. In general, there are five rationales given:

a) As stated in the *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim, Hilchos Tishah Be'Av*,¹ it is customary to visit graves in order to arouse feelings of mourning, to humble the *yetzer hora*, and [to be inspired to] turn to G-d in *teshuvah*. This reflects our Sages' statement² that to humble the *yetzer hora*, one should remind it of the day of death. And it is written:³ "It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of rejoicing..., [so that] the living take it to heart." For this will surely make one's heart contrite.

b) As mentioned in the *Shulchan Aruch, Hilchos Rosh HaShanah*,⁴ [on the day before [Rosh HaShanah](#),] it is customary to go to the cemetery and make manifold supplications. The rationale is given there⁵ that "the cemetery is the resting place of the *tzaddikim*. As such, it is a holy and pure place, and a prayer recited there will be more acceptable. [A person] should ask G-d for mercy in the merit of the *tzaddikim* who rest in the dust."

In particular, two reasons are given: 1) the place is holy and pure, and this will cause the person's prayers to be accepted, 2) surely, the person will pray there with a desirable intent as a result of being aroused to *teshuvah*, because "the living take it to heart." This will cause his prayers to be desirable and acceptable.

c) [For reasons similar to those] for which one visits the resting place of one's father, one's only son, or the like which arouses grieving and lament, opening one's heart entirely, just as when one's dead is actually lying before one, at which time one's heart is truly broken, because of the sorrow which penetrates to the depths of one's heart, causing one to cry bitterly.

Rabbi Yochanan would carry [a portion of] a bone of his son's [body] with him, and would tell others, "This is a bone from my tenth son,"⁶ i.e., he would carry the bone with him to arouse sorrow, so that he would not forget his son who died, and as a result, his heart would always be contrite. Similarly, Yaakov our Patriarch "mourned for his son for many days."⁷ He would grieve bitterly over his son's passing, because it was something which he could not forget at all.

Similarly, when a person goes to the grave [of a *tzaddik*], although [the *tzaddik's* passing] was forgotten for a long time, the person will remember, [and take it to heart] to the extent that he will cry very bitterly. This will cause his heart to open entirely, enabling him to cry over his sins, until his heart is utterly contrite and crushed, [leading] to excessive tears.

This experience can bring a person to complete *teshuvah*, as is well known. For *teshuvah* is held back because of a person's coarseness and haughtiness of heart. When, however, a person's heart is thoroughly and truly broken, for whatever reason, he has the potential to be aroused to complete *teshuvah*.

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This reflects the type of hardship referred to as⁸ “the hardship of love” which afflict a person with regard to his children, his health, and his livelihood. The person is crushed in order to motivate him to complete *teshuvah*, “from [the] person’s inner dimensions, and the depths of his heart.”⁹ This is evidenced by Rabbi Yochanan who would say, “This is a bone from my tenth son.” In Rabbi Yochanan’s instance, these were surely “the hardship of love.”

d) The fourth rationale relates to those who visit the graves of the *tzaddikim* whom they knew and related to during their lifetime [and comes as consequence] of the strength of the bond of faith with which the person believed in [the *tzaddik*] during his lifetime. As a result of the fact that [the *tzaddik*] was a G-dly man whom [all] would describe as holy,¹⁰ when the person would enter [the *tzaddik*’s] presence he would lose all self-concern and [feel] overwhelming shame and contriteness. He would be embarrassed and would shrink in the presence of the *tzaddik*, becoming lifeless, like a stone, without the ability to speak. This is a genuine reflection of self-negation, [as explained in *Chassidus*,¹¹ with regard to prefacing our prayers with the verse:]¹² “G-d, open my lips, and let my mouth speak Your praise.”

Similarly, when a person goes to [the *tzaddik*’s] holy resting place, he should lose all self-concern in an even more powerful manner. For “the righteous are greater after their death than in their lifetime.”¹³ [These feelings stem from] the great faith with which the person believes in the holiness and purity of [the *tzaddik*’s] soul which ascended to place in the most sublime [spiritual realms], and from the residual influence of the soul which remains associated with the body in the grave, as [the *AriZal*] explains in *Likkutei Torah*, . *Taamei HaMitzvos*, *Parshas Vayechi*. commenting on the verse:¹⁴ “His soul will mourn over him.” Moreover, even the encompassing [powers] of [the *tzaddik*’s] soul establish a connection with [the portion of] the soul [that remains associated with the body in the grave]. This is one of the reasons for erecting a gravestone over the grave, creating a seat for [the soul’s] encompassing [powers] as explained in [Likkutei Torah](#).¹⁴

Thus surely when one comes to the holy resting place of a *tzaddik* and pictures the image of his holy and pure countenance, he will be overwhelmed with fear and awe more than he was in his lifetime. For then, the soul of the *tzaddik* was [contained] in a physical body, but now it is its pure spiritual state. This enables a person to come to a complete state of self-negation, and *yirah ilaah*, a sublime state of fear. As explained in the *Siddur*, in the note to the section on *Tikkun Chatzos*,¹⁵ *yirah ilaah* is the inner dimension of fear, fear coupled with shame. Just as a person feels embarrassed in the presence of a great and righteous man because of his own humble stature, and this causes him to lose self concern totally, to the extent that he feels like nothing, so too, with regard to *yirah ilaah*, he feels shame because of G-d’s greatness. For G-d’s greatness is

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without limit,¹⁶ for the *Or Ein Sof*, G-d's infinite light, "extends upward without any bounds, and downward without any end."¹⁷

[This level of fear is alluded to in] our Sages' statement:¹⁸ "If there is no wisdom, there is no fear." For the sublime wisdom is the power of nothingness, the attribute of self-negation, and this leads to *yirah ilaah* as explained there at length.

Similarly, when a person goes to the grave of a holy *tzaddik*, he can feel great shame and lose all sense of self concern, because he feels great embarrassment over all his deeds and thoughts which he performed until the present day, for they are all revealed before [the *tzaddik*]. For even in his lifetime, a *tzaddik* is aware of another person's thoughts and designs, as is well known. Surely, this applies after the *tzaddik's* passing, for then [his existence] is spiritual.

The self-negation and shame [which a person feels] is also a result of the *Or Ein Sof* which actually gives life to the soul of this *tzaddik*. For [the *tzaddik's*] soul is "an actual part of G-d,"¹⁹ totally subordinated to the [Or Ein Sof](#), as explained in other sources.

In this manner, a person can arouse abundant mercies on the G-dly spark within his soul when becoming conscious of his own low level. This reflects the rung of *teshuvah ilaah*, sublime *teshuvah*, as explained in other sources. For the self-abnegation with which he subordinates himself to a Torah sage is in fact, a negation of oneself to G-d, as our Sages said: "Is it possible to cling to the Divine Presence? Instead, he who clings to a [Torah](#) sage [is considered as if he clings to the Divine Presence],"²⁰ as explained in *Tanya*.²¹ (As explained in the *Talmud*,²² a similar concept applies with regard to the appointment of a Jewish king. [His sovereignty is an extension of — and a medium to enable people to relate to — G-d's sovereignty.]

This represents *teshuvah*
ilaah, a far higher level of *teshuvah* than that discussed with regard to the third level described above.

Moreover, the powerful bond of faith tying the soul of the *tzaddik* to the inner core of the person's heart, [as amplified by] the power of imagery [that enables him] to conceive of [the *tzaddik's*] likeness in a spiritual sense and the tremendous experience of self-abnegation, makes it possible for the person's soul to cling to a particular dimension of the soul of the *tzaddik* resting there. This resembles the level of the spirit clinging to the spirit which is mentioned with regard to the *tzaddikim*, as will be explained in connection with the fifth rationale.

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This will also enable the prayers one recites there to ascend to the higher planes as the soul of the *tzaddik* ascends. And his prayer can bear fruit which will be evident in both the spiritual and material realms.

This is [the power of] the faith in the *tzaddikim*, [and the reason why] people visit their graves even when they do not comprehend [these spiritual concepts] at all, as will be explained.

e) The fifth rationale [for visiting the grave of a *tzaddik*] relates to a very high [spiritual] rung, a level which indeed is not surpassed by any. This is the prostration at the graves of the *tzaddikim* which is described in *Sefer Chassidim*.²³ This is such a high level that it enables a person to comprehend concepts [on the spiritual plane].

[To explain this point:] The person is able to cause his soul to ascend to the level at which the soul of the *tzaddik* is attached to the limbs of *Adam*, the first man, who possessed a comprehensive soul.²⁴ This serves as a stimulus, as their souls ascend in this mystic process, generating an arousal from below.. More precisely, the Aramaic term used is *mayin nukvin*, literally, “female waters,” employing an analogy from our sexual potential. This enables the soul [of the *tzaddik*] to descend to the bodies [of those who seek to cling to him] and speak to them, thus bringing about an actual clinging of the spirit to the spirit. And this enables [a person visiting the grave of a *tzaddik*] to comprehend lofty concepts with regard to the secrets of the Torah, and to become encompassed in *yichuda ilaah*, the sublime unity, as mentioned in the text *Emek HaMelech*.²⁵ There it is explained that the [AriZal](#) would teach his students mystic secrets to recite [at the graves of] the great *tzaddikim*, and in this manner, comprehend sublime concepts. Indeed, this was the greatness of the *AriZal*, that the sublime souls would reveal the secrets of the Torah to him.

This rung is

extremely exalted, surpassing [the experience of] the revelation of Eliyahu or [of being granted] *ruach hakodesh* (the holy spirit), as stated in *Shaar HaKedushah* of R. Chayim Vital.. See Vol. III, *Shaar 5* and *77*. See also *Maamarei Admor HaEmtza'i, Devarim*, Vol. II, p. 491. And as explained in the text *Emek HaMelech*,²⁶ [R. Chayim Vital](#)'s [greatness stemmed from the fact] that the soul of Benayahu ben Yehoyada enclothed itself within him, and shined inwardly within him. This was achieved through these mystic secrets [which he repeated] at his grave on numerous occasions. For the [souls of two] shared a connection to each other, as explained there.

With regard to this rung,

there are surely extensive levels. [The common factor shared by] all is that these are relevant to men of stature whose souls have not been blemished at all, but rather are pure and pristine, and whose *nefesh*, *ruach*, and *neshamah* shine forth. Or at least, the levels of *ruach* and *nefesh* have not been blemished at all.

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This level is far more exalted and lofty than the fourth level described above. [For the individuals who visit the graves of the *tzaddikim* because of the fourth rationale] do not have any conscious appreciation of [process of] revelation [involved]. On this [fifth] level, by contrast, even lowly individuals can grasp [sublime] concepts and enter into [sublime experiences of spiritual] unity according to the [spiritual] rung of the *nefesh* [of the *tzaddik* whose grave they are visiting]. This is sufficient for a person of understanding.²⁷

This reflects one spirit actually clinging to another, i.e., the person joins and cleaves his spirit²⁸ to the spirit of the *tzaddik*, and the two ascend in the mystic process which generates an arousal from below.²⁶ As explained in *Mishnas Chassidim*, ch. 1, with regard to the mystic secret of spiritual unity, *mishnah* 3, “If he merits, his *nefesh*, *ruach*, and *neshamah* will be fused to the *nefesh*, *ruach*, and [neshamah](#) of these *tzaddikim* when they ascend....” See the extensive explanation there. This is sufficient for a person of understanding

All of the above can be understood with greater clarity based on the explanation in *Iggeres HaKodesh*²⁹ (of the [Alter] Rebbe) of the statement of the holy *Zohar*³⁰ that a *tzaddik* who departs from the world is present in all the worlds more than during his lifetime. The fundamental point of these statements is based on our Sages’ description of death:³¹ “he has left life unto all the living.”

For the life of a *tzaddik* is spiritual, [consisting of] faith, love, and fear [of G-d].... While the *tzaddik* was alive on earth, these three attributes were contained in their vessel and garment..., i.e., the *nefesh*³² which is attached to the body. And all of [the *tzaddik*’s] students would receive merely a glimmer of these attributes and a ray which shined beyond this vessel, [the *tzaddik*’s *nefesh* that is enclothed in his body] by means of his holy words and thoughts...

After his passing, as the *nefesh* which remains in the grave becomes separate from the *ruach*, [which ascends to] *Gan Eden*,³³ [and which is expressed] in these three attributes, [faith, love and fear of G-d].

[These three attributes parallel the qualities of] *Chesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tiferes* which are identified with the *ruach*. For faith is identified with the attribute of *daas*, the middle vector, which is [expressed in] the attribute of [Tiferes](#),³⁴ [and love and fear are identified with [Chesed](#) and [Gevurah](#)].

[Because the *ruach* has been freed of the limitations of the *nefesh*,] each one of [the *tzaddik*’s] students and all those who are close to him can receive a portion of his *ruach* which is in *Gan*

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Eden. For it is no longer material, nor is it contained within a vessel. (And for this reason, this ray can diffuse in the surroundings, because it is spiritual and it is not enclothed in a material vessel.) In contrast, during the lifetime of the *tzaddik*, when his *ruach* is enclothed in his soul, and his soul attached to his body, his students and the Jewish people as a whole can only receive [his influence] through his holy words and thoughts. When, however, the *ruach* is separated from the *nefesh*, [the *ruach*] can shine forth to every one of his students according to his individual level.

As support for this concept, [*Iggeres HaKodesh* cites] the story of Yaakov our Patriarch, of whom it is said:³⁵ *Gan Eden* entered with him.” And as stated in the text *Asarah Maamaros*,³⁶ the atmosphere of *Gan Eden* radiates around every person. In this aura,³⁷ are ingrained all one’s holy thoughts and words in Torah study and in Divine service. This is definite proof that spiritual influence can radiate in all places.

Therefore, [after the *tzaddik*’s passing,] it is very easy for his students to receive their portion of the essence of the *ruach* of their master and his love, fear, and faith which he achieved, and not merely a glimmer of these attributes. (For [they receive] his *ruach*, i.e., his attributes of *Chesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tiferes*, as explained above, and not merely the level of *nefesh*.)

The essential *ruach* [of the *tzaddik*] ascends to very high peaks, and is absorbed in the *neshamah*, in the sublime *Gan Eden*, and other lofty [spiritual] worlds. [Nevertheless,] it is known³⁸ that all holy entities are never entirely detached from their initial level, even after they have ascended to far higher rungs. Their initial level remains in its place in the lowly realms, [and yet receives influences from the higher rungs to which the potential ascends]. And this initial level radiates within [the *tzaddik*’s] students, each one according to the extent of the connection and closeness he shared with him, with abundant love, as explained [in [Tanya](#)]. To receive the entire spiritual [influence of the *tzaddik*,] however, is possible only through a great arousal of abundant love, and awesome submission. [This enables] the spirit of the will of one’s heart, to draw down a spirit from above. Note [the full explanation] in that source.

From the above, it can be understood that any one of [the *tzaddik*’s] students can receive their portion and their teachings from the *ruach* of their master in any place via the aura of *Gan Eden* which radiates around each individual. Accordingly, it [would appear] not to be necessary to travel to his holy resting place at all and prostrate oneself at his grave.

When, however, would the above apply? When the bond of connection and abundant love for one’s master has not been severed, and it remains the same as it was when his master was alive,

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and he continues to conduct his Divine service with love, fear, and faith as his master instructed him. This enables him to receive his portion of his master's spirit as explained in that source.

If, however, ח"ו, the thick cords of love have been severed, because of the travails of the times, and [the person's involvement] with worldly concerns and material affairs, which cause the light of [the *tzaddik's*] Torah and the love and the fear which he radiated to [his students] during his lifetime to almost become quenched. [Indeed,] with the passage of time, [this light] could be extinguished and forgotten entirely as is well known.

For this reason, even when [the *tzaddik*] was alive, it was necessary to visit him frequently, and hear "the words of the living G-d" from his mouth. For even if his words are recorded, hearing from a distance cannot at all be compared to seeing his face³⁹. For the radiance of his countenance far surpasses the concepts received from him. For both of these influences [— the experience of seeing one's master and the study of his teachings —] are together beneficial, and bring about a powerful bond of abundant love, [empowered by] a marvelous desire.

This is what is meant by our Sages' statement,²¹ "All those who cling to a Torah sage are considered as if they cling to the Divine Presence." By clinging and connecting [to the *tzaddik*], [a student] can receive [influence] from the radiance (of [the *tzaddik's*] *ruach* through his holy thoughts and speech, via the aura of [the *tzaddik's*] Torah and Divine service. This influence can be received and internalized within [the student's] mind and heart). The radiance of [the *tzaddik's*] love and fear can be acquired, as can be inferred from our Rabbis' statement:⁴⁰ "Words which emanate from the heart penetrate to the heart."

This is the point of our Sages' statement:⁴¹ "A person is obligated to encounter his master during [each of] the festivals." For at that time, [the person] receives an increased aura from the spirit of his master which shines within him with greater power and intensity. [This additional influence] endows him with the strength and the power to continue to advance in his Divine service with love and fear after parting from his master, according to [the influence] he received from him. All of this is generated by the power of the radiance of [his master's] countenance.

This is evidenced by the fact that if he remains separate from his master for a prolonged period, even during [his master's] lifetime, the cords of connection with abundant love are severed and [the person] slides from his level of abundant love in his Divine service. Indeed, this has happened with regard to several individuals.

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This is the real reason why [chassidim] always travel to hear “the words of the living G-d” from their master personally, although they have previously heard teachings, and have seen and possess transcripts. They, nevertheless, travel to visit their master, and receive an increased light from his “shining and welcoming countenance,”⁴² through which is revealed to them the light of the Torah of truth.

Through this, their souls receive light [which inspires] their Divine service with love and fear, for through their bond of love and fear their souls become bonded to the soul of the *tzaddik*, as can be inferred from the verse:⁴³ “His soul is tied to his soul.” Although seemingly there is no comparison between [the student] and the soul of the master, there must be some point of connection, for the student binds himself to him and believes in him. [Indeed, there is surely a point of connection.] And through [this connection] he can receive his portion from the *ruach* of his master as explained above.

[The relevance of] the above, can be understood, and indeed even more poignantly so, in a situation when [the master] “has left life unto all the living.” Although [the *tzaddik*’s] life, i.e., his faith, his love, and his fear exist on all planes of existence, and his students can receive their portion, nevertheless, over the passage of time, because of many immediate problems and financial pressures and tension, the light of [a *tzaddik*’s] teaching and Divine service may be dimmed entirely for his students. Therefore, it is necessary to travel to his resting place, and prostrate oneself at his grave to arouse the love within “[the] person’s inner dimensions, and the depths of his heart.”

For surely this love has not ceased entirely, and traces still remain. In this vein, we find the expression:⁴⁴ “his spirit which he imparted within her.” ([This is mentioned in regard to our Sages’ statement:]⁴⁵ “A woman does not establish a covenant with anyone except the one who made [her a vessel,” i.e., her first husband]. For this reason, even if she parts from him, his spirit still resonates within her, and she cannot receive [another man’s influence]. For this reason, the [*Zohar*](#)⁴⁶ emphatically counsels against marrying a widow.)

Indeed, [these traces of love are what motivates] the person’s desire to travel to the resting place of the *tzaddik* to arouse his love. For if the love had ceased entirely, he would not have a desire for this [journey]. Thus this “spirit which he imparted within” has the potential to arouse the *ruach* of his master anew, with abundant love, awesome submission, and great effort. [It is possible again] to receive the three attributes of faith, love, and fear, as above, according to the path which his master instructed him.

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There are two reasons why it is necessary to travel to [a *tzaddik's*] holy resting place to arouse the love [for him]: a) Simply put, the journey [to the resting place] with great desire reflects the generation of an arousal from below. Afterwards, when [the person] reaches [his destination], his great power of faith will cause him to negate his personal existence entirely. And he will prepare himself to approach G-d with a truly contrite spirit, giving over his soul, and pouring out his words before G-d from the depths of his heart, [feeling remorse over] the utter distance.

This will cause G-d to have a spirit from above rest upon him, and the spirit of his master in which he shares a portion which will invigorate his soul with the light of the teachings and the Divine service of his master.

b) The second rationale relates to the mystic secret of burying a corpse and the laws of mourning as revealed in *Likkutei Torah* by the *AriZal*.⁴⁷ To summarize the fundamental points of his statements: There are two dimensions to a person's soul, those which are internalized and those which are of an encompassing nature. This relates to the צלם ("image") of *za'er anpin*. The צלם reflects the soul powers which are internalized, while the ל and the מ relate to the soul's encompassing powers. The ל relates to three encompassing powers and the מ, four.⁴⁸ While a person is alive, he is vitalized by all these seven powers. Thirty days before his death, however, these encompassing powers, "the image above his head," depart from him. This is alluded to by the *Zohar's* interpretation⁴⁹ of the verse,⁵⁰ "Before the day cools, and the shadows depart." (The "shadows" [refer to these encompassing powers].)

They all, however, return to the person at the time of his death, so that they will also experience the pain of death as punishment, as it is written:⁵¹ "You take away their spirit, and they die."

(As is well known, each of the five levels of *nefesh*, *ruach*, *neshamah*, *chayah*, and *yechidah*, have their own צלם, [i.e., their own array of internal and encompassing powers].) At the time of a person's death, the *neshamah* and the *ruach* with their encompassing powers depart to the place which is fit for them. [This does not apply with regard to] the *nefesh*, and its seven encompassing powers, the shadow (צל) of the צלם.

[To explain:] The צלם of the *nefesh* divides into its internal powers and its encompassing powers. The internalized powers, the shadow (צל) of the צלם accompanies the body to the grave, as it is written:⁵² "His soul will mourn over him." The seven encompassing powers, i.e., the ל and the מ of the צלם of the *nefesh* remain in the house of the mourner. It is not so easy for them to depart [from this place], because this is where he died and departed. This is the inner meaning of our

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Rabbis' statement⁵³ that during all the seven days of mourning, the departed soul returns to his home. This is the mystic pattern followed by the encompassing powers of the *nefesh*.

Nevertheless, these powers come and depart for although they desire to be in the house in which he died, they also desire to be joined to the internal powers of the soul. Therefore, they go to the grave, and then return to the house [of mourning].

Nevertheless, on each of the seven days of mourning, one of the encompassing powers departs from the body and remains clinging with the *nefesh*. This pattern is continued until the conclusion of the seven days of mourning, at which time all of them have completed their withdrawal and they become tied to the *nefesh* in the grave. This is the rationale for the seven days of mourning when the soul of the departed still remains in the house of mourning.

While the encompassing powers [of the *nefesh*] are still in the house of mourning, the forces of *kelipah* become strongly attached to the *nefesh* of the deceased, for they cannot attach themselves to the encompassing powers.⁵⁴ Each day, the power of *kelipah* wanes until the conclusion of the seven days, at which there remains only [a minimal influence], what is necessary to remain while the flesh of the corpse continues to exist.

The order in which the encompassing powers [of the *nefesh*] begin to go to the grave commences with ל of the צלם. On the first day, the power of *daas* goes, on the second day, *binah*, and on the third day, *chochmah*. This is the fundamental time of the judgment of the corpse in the grave as is well known. From this time onward, when the influence of the מ of the צלם begins to be introduced, the judgment becomes lighter.

For this reason, it is customary in the Ashkenazic community not to build a *tziyon*⁵⁵ at a grave until after the seven days of mourning have passed. For the building of a *tziyon* is intended to empower the encompassing powers of the soul to rest there. But if the *tziyon* was built before [the encompassing powers come there, the *tziyon*] enables the power of impurity which is attached to the corpse to remain and not to withdraw. To cite a parallel, building a home without mentioning G-d's name, in which instance, the spirit of impurity dwells there. After the conclusion of the seven days [of mourning], however, when the encompassing powers of the soul come [to the grave], it is a *mitzvah* to erect a *tziyon*, preparing a seat for the encompassing powers. This concludes [the passage from] *Likkutei Torah* [by the *AriZal*].

From the above, it can be understood that the inner powers, i.e., the צ of the צלם, of a *tzaddik* dwell at his resting place, and at the *tziyon* erected there rest the encompassing powers, i.e., the

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ל of the צלם [of the *tzaddik*], as at explained at length in that text. Surely this is a holy place, at which it is possible to stir the soul of the *tzaddik* through the power aroused by [a visitor] through his love and fear. By concentrating his power of connection, [a visitor] will be able to stir the *nefesh* of the holy *tzaddik*. And it is likely that he will be able to cause his soul to cling to the soul of the *tzaddik*, and be stirred to [spiritual] arousal. [This, however, applies] only when he will truly concentrate on [the *tzaddik*] with a full heart, and will first turn to G-d in complete repentance, and genuinely desire to draw down a spirit from the *ruach* of his master as explained above.

Through the strength of his faith and connection to the soul of the *tzaddik* and through his power of imagery which conceives of [the *tzaddik's*] likeness in a spiritual sense — for the inner dimensions of [the *tzaddik's*] soul and the encompassing dimensions which are called the צלם are present there — this enables [a visitor] to experience something of a parallel to [the experience of] “a spirit clinging to a spirit” described above.

This will enable him to draw down a portion of his master's spirit which grant him new life from the light of his Torah and Divine service as would occur when they were bound in a bond of faith during his lifetime when he would see the radiance of his [master's] countenance.

Indeed, the influence will even surpass what was experienced during his [master's] lifetime, for then [the influence he received] came through the garments of thought and speech, and at present, he receives from the essential spirit of his master.

Similarly, prayers which he will recite there are surely more likely to be accepted. For, as explained above in the name of *Asarah Maamaros*, the aura of *Gan Eden* is diffused around each one of the *tzaddikim*, for they always proceed with the aura of *Gan Eden*, as manifest in the instance of Yaakov our Patriarch. In contrast, there is an aura of *Gehinom* which is diffused around simple people as explained in that text.

When, however, a person comes to the resting place of a *tzaddik* and prays at his grave, his prayer is surely recited with desirable and whole-hearted feeling, from the inner dimension of his being. As such, when he places his head over the *tziyon* where the encompassing powers of the *tzaddik's nefesh* rest, every single letter of his words and thoughts will be engulfed in the aura of *Gan Eden* which is present there. (For the *ruach* is called the aura of *Gan Eden*; this also applies with regard to the *nefesh*.)

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And then, when the *nefesh* of the *tzaddik* ascends upward, [the visitor's] prayer will also ascend to the higher realms in the sublime *Gan Eden* where it will bear fruit on both the spiritual and material planes. For as is well known, all prayers must ascend to the spiritual realms through the entrance to *Gan Eden* in this world. For this reason, prayers recited at the Cave of Machpelah are very desirous and acceptable,⁵⁶ because, as tradition maintains, the entrance to *Gan Eden* is there.⁵⁷ In contrast, prayers which we recite in other places become funneled through the impure atmosphere of the gentile lands, and it is possible that prayers recited for many years in those places will not ascend at all as the Baal Shem Tov taught.⁵⁸

[In this vein,] all of the graves of the *tzaddikim* resemble the [Cave of Machpelah](#). The prayers which we recite there can speedily ascend to the spiritual realms at the time when the *nefesh* of the *tzaddik* ascends. For the letters of this prayer become etched within the soul of the *tzaddik*. Moreover, if [the visitor] merits, [the *tzaddik*] will intercede positively on his behalf, and can bring about that his request will be drawn down to this material plane. This is sufficient for a person of understanding.

This concept, that a prayer which is recited [at the grave of a *tzaddik*] is accepted there, is a fundamental principle which can be understood by all those who seek G-d. They journey to [a *tzaddik's* grave] and pray there with great concentration from the depths of their hearts; they may be assured that there, their prayer will be accepted rapidly. For the holiness of the place brings about two factors: a) that [the visitor] be able to concentrate his heart in prayer. For the strong power of faith [which he has in the *tzaddik*] will generate feelings of awe and fear, as above.

b) That he can be assured that his prayer will be accepted there.

This applies with regard to any Jew, even one who was not a student of [the *tzaddik*] for the reasons described above. Surely, this applies with regard to a student who is connected to the light of his Torah.

It is even relevant to those who did not know him or relate to him during his lifetime, but merely studied the texts which he left, and appreciate the light and radiation of his Torah, and are reinforced by them in their Divine service to proceed in G-d's paths. They are also definitely considered as his students, for they also share a connection to him, for they believe in the *tzaddik* and receive the light of his Torah.

[The fact that they believe in the *tzaddik* shows they share a connection with him.] For a person who has no connection to the *tzaddik* does not believe in him at all. (As explained in other

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places, in every generation, there are individuals who do not believe in [the *tzaddik* of that generation at all,] nor do they desire to receive his influence. On the contrary, their desire is the direct opposite. This is because they do not share any connection to him at all.)

[This relates to the fundamental concept of faith.] *Emunah*, Hebrew for faith, relates to the Hebrew word [*Oman*, “foster-father”] as in the verse,⁵⁹ “And he served as a foster-father for Hadassah...,” i.e., [faith reflects how an entity] is drawn to its source. Therefore, the Jews are described as believers.⁶⁰ For [the soul of every Jew] is “an actual part of G-d,”⁶¹ and thus they are drawn to their source.

Similar concepts apply with regard to faith in *tzaddikim*. [This faith exists,] because the *tzaddikim* serve as “roots,” and the branches, [i.e., other souls,] are drawn to [these roots,] their source, as explained in other texts.⁶²

[Based on these concepts,] it can be stated with definity that those who study the holy works [of the *tzaddikim*] and follow the paths of G-d which he taught, and who delight and derive great pleasure from the light of his Torah, are surely considered as his students. And they can cling to him with their souls in powerful bonds of connection as was possible during his lifetime.

Support for the above can be derived from an incident related in the [*Talmud*](#).⁶³ A Torah scholar saw the carriage of Rabbi Chiyah [in *Gan Eden*] and became blinded because of the great light. On the following day, he prostrated himself at the grave of Rabbi Chiyah [and prayed to be healed. As part of his supplication,] he said: “I study the teachings of the master.”⁶⁴ [As a result,] he was healed.

Thus the fact that [the scholar] had studied Rabbi Chiyah’s teachings served as merit for him, entitling him to gaze at [Rabbi Chiyah], and he was healed for this reason. [This explanation is necessary,] for the scholar’s vision of the carriage of Rabbi Chiyah as he ascended to the heavenly academy was surely a spiritual vision, not something that was actually seen. This is possible through one soul clinging to another soul, transcending [the boundaries of] material existence. This is sufficient for a person of understanding.

There is also another concept explained [in the epistle] from *Iggeres HaKodesh* cited previously:⁶⁵ that there is another ray [from a *tzaddik*] disseminated to the students, but, unlike the first, it cannot be en clothed within their minds.⁶⁶ Instead, it shines upon them from above.

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[This light] is generated from the ascent of the *ruach* and *neshamah* [of the *tzaddik*] to the source from which it was hewn, i.e., to the *chakal tapuchin kadishin*.⁶⁷ [This ascent] brings about an arousal from below,²⁶ [brought about] all of his deeds, statements, thoughts, his Torah study, and his Divine service which he performed throughout his lifetime. [As a result,] in the *chakal tapuchin kadishin* are sown sublime lights (i.e., the spiritual correspondents of his Torah study and Divine service, for “the reward of a [mitzvah](#) is the *mitzvah*.”)⁶⁸ These sublime lights shine to all his students who were motivated to become servants of G-d through his teachings and Divine service. This ray instills in their hearts thoughts of *teshuvah* and good deeds, which are called “fruits of the second degree.”

This ray, however, is concealed, [to cite an analogy,] like the sun which shines forth to the stars from below the earth. As the *Tikkunei [Zohar]* states⁶⁹ with regard to Moshe *Rabbeinu*, after his passing, his radiance extends in every generation [to the six hundred thousand souls,⁷⁰ like the sun which radiates to the six hundred thousand stars from below the earth]. This concludes the passage from *Iggeres HaKodesh*. This ray extends to all of [the *tzaddik*’s] students equally, including even those who did not know him personally, but merely studied [his] holy texts and delight in the radiance of his holy Torah and Divine service. Moreover, they serve G-d according to his path of conduct.

[That this ray relates to the latter category of students] is evident from the wording used there: “All his students who became servants of G-d through his teachings and Divine service.” Similarly, this concept is apparent from the citation of] the instance of Moshe *Rabbeinu* whose Torah ([perhaps the intent is,] “whose radiation,” [as is in fact stated in *Iggeres HaKodesh*, as cited above]) extends in every generation to six hundred thousand souls of the Jewish people as explained, i.e., those who learn the Torah of Moshe. [This relates to the concept cited previously,] “I study the teachings of the master.” For when his ray shines upon him, he is entitled to gaze upon him.

All of the above relates to the fourth rationale [given for visiting the graves of the *tzaddikim*]. The fifth rationale is the ultimate expression of prostrating oneself on the grave of a *tzaddik*, involving the consummation of sublime states of unity and the comprehension of lofty ideas, as intimated by the statement:⁷¹ “You shall see your [future] world in your lifetime.” This implies that the person actually tastes a portion of *Gan Eden* in his lifetime.

This is possible when he elevates his *nefesh*, *ruach*, and *neshamah* to a higher plane to be fused to the *nefesh*, *ruach*, and *neshamah* of the *tzaddik* who is in *Gan Eden* and delighting in the radiance of the Divine Presence, actually comprehending G-dines as alluded to in the verse,⁷²

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“Those who sit in the gardens, friends listen to your voice.” This is interpreted to mean that the angels listen to the voice of the souls which sit in *Gan Eden*.

Similarly, when *tzaddikim* reveal secrets of the Torah while they are alive in a physical body, the angels come to hear Torah from their mouths. This is reflected in the *Talmud's* narrative⁷³ which relates that the ministering angels came [to listen to Rabbi Yehoshua's discourse as people come to watch] the celebrations performed before a bride and a groom. And as stated in the *Zohar*:⁷⁴ “[The angels] all listened to their voices and words.” This is sufficient for a person of understanding.

The above reflects a revelation of the level of [*yechidah*](#), i.e., the revelation of the essential light of the soul, as it exists in the spiritual realms, cleaving to the living G-d. And as a natural consequence, one will merit the revelation of Eliyahu *HaNavi* and the spirit of prophecy, as explained in the writings of the *AriZal*.⁷⁵ This is sufficient for a person of understanding.