

INTRODUCTION

Mordechai Lainer of Izbica is my chosen lineage master. My prayer is that I have honored him with a correct and proper understanding of his transmission and teaching. I believe that I have. Though this personal introduction is not meant to fully outline his teachings, a few remarks may orient the general reader and guide the initiate.

An Esoteric Transmission

First of all, this book is both an academic study and a transmission of an esoteric doctrine. Part of the disguise of this work is its presentation as a piece of academic scholarship.

Of course, on one level it *is* precisely that, for which I have to thank Professor Moshe Idel. At some point in 2001 or so, Professor Idel told me off-handedly that I needed to do an academic doctorate at a good university in order to insure that my non-academic writing and teaching be taken seriously. He very kindly accepted my request that he act as my co-advisor at Oxford University. I am in his debt for his gracious, insightful and often penetratingly brilliant remarks, which guided the unfolding of this work in an academic context.

Having said that, the academic framework is just that, a framework—and something of a fig leaf—for the deeper teaching of Lainer, which I have humbly and perhaps audaciously tried to unfold in this volume.

When I was thirty-one, living in Israel near Tel Aviv, Prof. Moshe Halamish suggested that I study and write about this great master. I had barely heard of Mordechai Joseph Lainer, and was wholly unfamiliar with his writings collected in two volumes under the title *Mei Hashiloah* (MH). Halamish's prompt was the beginning of my relationship with Lainer, which deepened and shifted again many times over the years. At the time, thanks to Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach, who was deeply connected to Lainer's teaching, the Torah of Izbica was just beginning to gain currency in certain neo-Hasidic circles in Israel and the United States. At some point,

I realized that I felt a soul root connection with his teaching, and began to teach his Torah to my own circles of students.

This period of teaching *Mei Hashiloah* lasted about ten years. Some five years into this teaching period, I spent one year of 16 hour days in the library at Oxford in an intense, in-depth encounter with Mordechai Lainer.

In approaching the master and his text during that year, I followed the three-stage path of textual reading taught by the Baal Shem Tov. First, in a state of what the Baal Shem calls *hahna'ah*, reverential submission to what one is learning, I read every passage again and again, praying that I might realize Lainer's deeper intention and receive his transmission. Second, I moved from submission to what the Baal Shem calls *havdalah*, separation. In this stage of *havdalah*, I deployed a method of analysis which involved two basic steps. As I read, I made a list of key topics, words and texts in Lainer. I subsequently gathered every reference to that text, theme or image, searching for the underlying pattern. At the same time I learned, together with my friend Avraham Leader, many of the original Zoharic sources that would have influenced *Mei Hashiloah*, to get a sense of how he was reading the tradition, what he changed in his interpretation, and why.

Eventually, stage two yielded to stage three, which the Baal Shem Tov calls *hamtakah*, sweetening. *Hamtakah* involves an erotic 'nondual' merger with the text, which occurs when the reader and that which is read become one. It is at this stage that the deeper intention of the Lainer's Torah became startlingly lucid, delightful, and beautiful, and the entire teaching opened up with radical clarity and joy.

As I continued my teaching in the world, I sought, as every authentic student does, to both teach and evolve this Torah. One expression of this process was the book *Soul Prints* (Simon and Schuster 2001) and the *Soul Prints Workshop*, (Sounds True 2004) which I published during the years 2001–2003. Another is the book you have before you. This academic work of mystical hermeneutics is complimented by the *Journal of Integral Theory and Practice* 6:1 (Suny Press 2011) and *Your Unique Self: The Radical Path to Personal Enlightenment*, (Integral Publishing 2012).

Love and Teaching

I am in love with these teachings, awed by their subtlety and profundity, moved by their commitment and depth and enchanted by their possibility. In the book before you, however, I have remained faithful to the academy in deploying the tools of scholarship, seeking to uncover Lainer's teaching exclusively, without entangling it, explicitly or subtly, with my own. Nonetheless, the initiated reader must remember that this is an esoteric work, one which, in understated tones, intends to lay down a revolutionary and evolutionary set of spiritual principles which will be recognized as such by those with a pure heart and a clarified self.

The implications of Lainer's Torah are radical, dramatic and stunningly beautiful, especially in the marriage of a profound ethos and an equally profound eros. This teaching demands intense work, practice, and radical dedication. Such intense, consistent and dedicated engagement may well yield the fierce grace of a fully enlightened and liberated human being who lives as one with the Source, whose every casual word is Torah, spoken from the mouth of the living God, and whose every action is tied to liberation.

How the Book is Ordered

Some of the most important esoteric content found in this book does not emerge until volume 2, entitled *The Wisdom of Solomon*, and volume 3, in which texts of the *Zohar*, Luria, and other kabbalists and Hasidic masters are adduced and explained.

The main part of this book, volume 1, begins in Part One by discussing four key ideas: unique self, unique shadow, unique Torah, and unique *tikun*. Every person has a unique self that creates his unique obligation. Every person has a unique shadow that arises when they do not access and live their unique self. The unique shadow is, paradoxically, the door to one's unique self.

In Part Two, I delve into the intellectual history of the lineage teaching about unique self. In this section, some critical esoteric teachings on prophecy are laid down, and the line of transmission between Lainer and Isaac Luria, the 'Lion of Safed', is made clear.

Part Three begins to unfold the core essence of it all, what I call nondual or acosmic humanism. In Part Four, particularly in the sections on God, Torah and Israel, on *Shekhinah*, on the unification of names, and elsewhere, the full power of Lainer's teaching begins to appear. Then, in volumes 2 and 3, everything moves to a different level of consciousness, so to speak, as we unpack the hidden trope of the Wisdom of Solomon in Lainer and in his line of transmission.

All of these teachings, in Lainer's understanding, form the core of the esoteric wisdom known as the Wisdom of Solomon. Lainer's intention is to transmit nothing less than the teachings of King Solomon that lead to liberation and enlightenment. These teachings evolved through generations of great esoteric masters of the Kabbalah, and were ultimately received and transmitted by Lainer.

Paradoxically, as Lainer teaches, if one is not at the level of consciousness required to realize these teachings, then one will feel compelled to vociferously oppose them as dangerous. Indeed, it is true that they are dangerous—and the student must listen 'dangerously'.

Nondual Humanism and the Democratization of Enlightenment

The goal of Lainer's teaching is no less than the full democratization of enlightenment. He implicitly identifies and distinguishes between two forms of enlightened consciousness. The first is what we might call the instrumental level. At this stage of realization, the person is an instrument, like a flute or shofar, played by the divine. Images describing this stage of illumination were replete in the Hasidic teachings and writings which constituted Lainer's intellectual framework. This is the level of utter surrender to the divine.

As one internalizes this level and transcends it, one comes to another level, which Lainer associates with Temple energy and the Judah archetype. At this level, God does not move through the person as an external force animating and filling the person's voice, but rather God is incarnate within the person, who achieves a radical identity with the divine. Lainer makes clear that this enlightenment is a possibility for every member of the community. Every human being has the potential of Moses.

The Voice of Moses:

Individuation beyond ego

It is in this sense that we can begin to understand Lainer's provocative idea that the Torah was given by a Moses who is merged with God—not in the voice of God, but in the voice of Moses. Because this idea exemplifies so much of Lainer's spiritual project, we will explore it briefly here.

Lainer uses the Zoharic phrase "The *Shekhinah* speaks through the voice of Moses" as a foundation for his position. This Zoharic phrase, describing the authorship of Deuteronomy, was understood in two very different ways. The theocentric understanding, reflected in most Hasidic works, is that Moses was so completely effaced that he became a kind of channel for the divine voice. For Lainer this is only the first instrumental level of enlightenment. The second possible understanding of the phrase 'the *Shekhinah* speaks through the voice of Moses', corresponding to the higher level of enlightenment in Lainer's teaching, is almost the opposite: Moses is not effaced, but is rather so completely present that his voice and the voice of the *Shekhinah* become one. Moses' unique persona, his unique perspective, his voice and personality, incarnate the *Shekhinah*; through radical uniqueness, he participates in ontic unity with God. We will explore the history of this phrase in the body of this book, but a cursory synopsis drawn from volume 1 may illuminate what exactly was Lainer's spiritual project.

In the first stage of Hasidic thought, Moses' 'saying' the book of Deuteronomy was generalized to include the *tzadik's* (righteous master's) 'saying Torah'. Then in the second stage, the *tzadik* saying Torah was expanded to include all the words of the *tzadik*. Finally, in *Mei Hashiloah*, the concept of 'the *Shekhinah* speaks through his throat' was expanded from the *tzadik* to include the Judah archetype, which in theory could be accessed by any person. This last expansion by Lainer is radically different: in *Mei Hashiloah*, the *Shekhinah* speaking comes through the *intensification of individuality*, rather than through its effacement.

Because the human is a part of God, the principle of acosmism does not negate but rather empowers the individual. The divine voice finds expression in the voice of the unique soul, modeled by the prophet who manifests

God's voice through the clear prism of his unique individuality. This is the core of Lainer's nondual humanism.

As we will return to again and again throughout the book, Lainer argues, both explicitly and implicitly, that the unique individual is the portal through which comes the revelation of the unmediated divine will, the new Torah that can override the law of Sinai. In effect every person incarnates the individualized mind of God. In various writings I have called this pivot in Lainer's thought 'sacred autobiography', 'soul print' or 'unique self'. In later writing I distinguished *Soul Print* from *Unique Self*. Soul print is understood to be the eternal unique quality of the individual soul which is in some sense part of God, and unique self is understood to be an enlightened quality of being in which the separate self is entirely transcended as one realizes true self. True Self then realizes that it sees through a unique perspective, a unique set of eyes. It is this level of consciousness which is the fullest flowering of what I term Unique Self realization. In Lainer's corpus however the distinction between soul print and unique self is blurred, often within the same passage. I will use the terms interchangeably in this work in the same manner as Lainer.

Levels of Consciousness

The consciousness which comes with realizing the potential of one's soul print is the goal of Lainer's theology. In contrast with this, the classical Hasidic model of enlightenment as effacement of self, or *bitul*, is only a first stage of consciousness on the path of enlightenment in *Mei Hashiloah*. The recognition that there are different stages of developmental consciousness being alluded to in *Mei Hashiloah* is the hermeneutic key I deployed to unlock many of the contradictions in Lainer's teaching. While levels of consciousness are almost never referred to explicitly as such, they form a core underlying matrix of Lainer's spiritual teaching. The levels nearly always come in threes.

In one trinity, for example, there is the pre-personal level, where one is not able to exercise genuine free choice. "Then there is the level of the personal, where one is able to make real individual choices. Finally, one attains the enlightened transpersonal level, where there is the choicelessness of one who is merged in the divine will.

In another trinity, operating on a different axis, there is the first level, in which human action appears to be real and necessary, and the illusion of the

separate self reigns. Through committed spiritual work and dedicated practice which is both nomian and anominan—that is, through *mitzvot*, prayer and the different forms of contemplative clarification and introspection which Lainer calls *berur*—one ascends to the second level, which Lainer associates with *shabbat* and which I therefore call ‘*shabbat-consciousness*’. At this level, one realizes that all human action is meaningless because there is no choice. Finally, one ascends to ‘*Temple-consciousness*’, the third level, which transcends and includes the previous two. At this level, human action is lionized as ontologically identical with divine action. Man realizes his full splendor as the language of the divine, becoming God’s verb, noun and adjective.

Lainer’s nondual humanism is profoundly activist. Human action is essential to the evolving Godhead. Lainer sets up human freedom and evolutionary human activism as the central defining characteristic of his religious anthropology.

The Hands of Heaven and the Humanist Agenda

One text which defines Lainer’s approach to human activism is the well-known rabbinic dictum, ‘All is in the hands of heaven except for the fear of heaven’. Lainer stands this saying on its head so that it means, ‘All is in the hands of heaven, *even* the fear of heaven’. This would appear to conform to an extremely theocentric understanding, in which the human individual has no capacity for action on even the most internal level. However, Lainer’s true position is that ‘the hands of heaven’ are identical with ‘the hands of the human’, that is, the human is an expression of the evolving Godhead.

These three interpretations of ‘All is in the hands of heaven’ correspond to the three levels of consciousness above. The first level is the illusion of a sphere of human independence beyond the reach of ‘the hands of heaven’, even if this sphere is limited to the fear of heaven. The second level of consciousness is the theocentric level where a person understands that human choice and autonomy are illusions because ‘all is in the hands of heaven’. At the third level of consciousness, nondual acosmic humanism, ‘the hands of heaven’ and ‘the hands of man’ are realized as sharing one identity.

In the midst of this very realization, the human-divine being exerts fierce, courageous evolutionary effort to heal and repair the world. This is the realized stage where a person recognizes and acts as ‘God’s verb’.

The Judah Archetype

This core esoteric teaching in *MHs* is characterized by the Judah archetype, which is embodied not only by Judah but also by Moses, as I mentioned above, and by other figures like David, and most importantly, by Solomon, as we will see in volume 2.

Judah is original, powerful, divine, sensuous, profound and ethical in small as well as large ways. It is Judah—who acts with *tekufot*, boldness or holy *chutzpah*—who holds the nondual realization of genuine enlightenment, and it is Judah who will ultimately usher in a new order in which eros and ethics are manifestly one, an era in which the original unique face of every human being will be recognized, honored and exalted. This is the messianic era, in which all human beings will realize that they were always, and are forever, nothing less than perfect expressions of divine consciousness, and that exile (whether from Eden or from Jerusalem) is an illusion. The key for Lainer is that this level of consciousness—‘Judah-consciousness’—is already available when we are fully inside the present moment and have evolved our consciousness to be able to recognize the interior face of the cosmos living in us, as us and through us.

Judah and Joseph: Conventional and Post-Conventional

Lainer’s Torah is grounded throughout in the classical opposition between Judah and Joseph, between messianic consciousness and normative consciousness. The latter ‘Joseph-consciousness’ is conventional, classical, dedicated to the social order and the rules which support it, committed to both the law and to the ethics it represents, in all of their beauty. The Joseph level approximates what developmental theorist Clare Graves calls the Blue meme or conventional level of consciousness. The Joseph people never understand the Judah people. They think them heretical and dangerous at best, and do everything in their power to oppose them.

Judah-consciousness, on the other hand, is post-conventional, ecstatic, spontaneous, seeking to give birth to the unmediated divine revelation pregnant in every evolved moment of time. The Judah personae is also often lonely, isolated from a community which distorts his actions, interpreting them through a conventional prism even as they mock his suggestion that it might be otherwise. The Judah level corresponds to what Graves terms Second Tier consciousness. In Spiral Dynamics developmental

theory, these levels begin at what is called Yellow and are more fully crystallized at Turquoise, in Integral theory at Teal and Indigo and in other developmental theories (Suzanne Cook-Greuter), as construct aware and then unitive consciousness.

While the Joseph persona speaks to God and even feels God animating his interior, the Judah persona acts *as* God. Joseph loves and Judah lives *as* love. While the Joseph persona is in communion with the divine, the Judah persona achieves a radical *transformation of identity* in which he realizes his ontological identity with the divine. In this identity, his will becomes identical with God's will, which then becomes the locus of his power, ethics and spiritual audacity.

The advent of Judah-consciousness, however, does not exhaust the value of Joseph-consciousness. Rather, the Joseph moment lives in creative dialectical tension with the Judah moment. It is this which creates the tension that runs through Lainer's teaching. One cannot resolve this tension simply by taking sides, by locating oneself in either camp, for the dialectic of Judah and Joseph lives in heart and soul of every authentic servant of God.

***Berur* and the Pre/Trans Fallacy**

What allows one to move from the conventional to the post-conventional is *berur*. *Berur* is the rigorous clarification of desire, motive and inner psychology which enables one to move beyond the ego-ic level of separate self—which, of necessity, must be governed and regulated by Joseph-consciousness—to the enlightened stage animated by Judah-consciousness, Unique Self. In *berur*, according to Lainer, one deconstructs the false self, learning to distinguish between motivations that well up from the emptiness of the false self and motivations that arise from the fullness of the unique self which is identical to the divine. One achieves *berur* by delving deeply into one's unique shadow, *hisaron*, the lack or deficiency that both defines one's uniqueness and becomes the portal to the divine. At that point, one can begin to live and act in the world from the place of enlightened Judah-consciousness.

This process of *berur* is meant to avoid the self-deception that mistakes a pre-rational or pre-moral state for a transpersonal state that confuses the ethically questionable actions and attitudes of pre-*berur* consciousness for the spontaneity of post-*berur* enlightenment. This confusion between levels of consciousness is what I called in *Mystery of Love* (2002) a level

one/level three confusion and what Integral philosopher Ken Wilber has termed the pre/trans fallacy, in this case pre-*berur* and post-*berur*.

Embracing, Merging with the *Shekhinah*

For Lainer, one who has become fully clarified becomes both the source of revelation and the incarnation of the *Shekhinah*. *Shekhinah* is identified with the name of God, while in a post-*berur* state, all action, and even the *Shekhinah* herself, become identified with the name of man. Name is one of the core symbols in Lainer's mystical teaching; when something is 'called by the name of man,' this indicates that its meaning is real and everlasting. The unification of the names of God and man means that the human being merges with and incarnates *Shekhinah*. The highest expression of personal name in Lainer's writing is virtually synonymous with Unique Self.

In this light, we understand that Lainer's idea of the *Shekhinah* speaking through the human differs from conceptions that preceded him. In *Mei Hashiloah* (MH), the *divrei hulin*, the casual words, of the Judah archetype are 'the words of the living God'. Unlike most of the earlier sources, the kabbalist is not an empty vessel channeling the divine. Rather, the unique consciousness of the purified person, and even their unique unconscious, is divine. This implies that the *Shekhinah* that is one's essence speaks *naturally* from within the enlightened individual. For Lainer, the self of the mystic becomes so conscious as to become transparent to his divine self. Erotic merger with the *Shekhinah* yields not only the hermeneutics of sacred text, but the hermeneutics of sacred autobiography. In this way, Lainer extends the erotic motif beyond traditional hermeneutics and applies it to reading the 'text' of the person's soul print.

This allows the individual to recover the personal revelation of divine will which is addressed uniquely to him. This revelation comes through the unmediated embrace of the *Shekhinah*, which is antinomian in a way in that is clearly different than any previous sources. Lainer's incarnational *Shekhinah* theology is both empowering and limned with humanistic undertones.

The Human Being as Revelation's Source

In all of this, Lainer makes a crucial leap beyond previous Kabbalists and Hasidic masters. In the pre-Lainer sources, no matter how bold the reach of human creativity, engagement with the sacred text was always the

locus of creativity, and the text always mediated between the human being and God. Lainer's momentous leap is to remove the sacred text of revelation and law from standing between human and God. The human being becomes the source of revelation. More than this, the human being *is* a text of revelation. Lainer argues that the human Torah of the unmediated divine will is capable of overriding—and at times must override—the old revelation. This is because God's will is always revealing itself originally and freshly in the present moment, and the old Torah is yesterday's revelation, not today's.

Eros and the Wisdom of Solomon

The hidden framework or matrix underlying Lainer's religious theology of nondual humanism is *hokhmat Shelomoh* 'The Wisdom of Solomon'. Volume 2 uncovers this teaching in *Mei Hashiloah*, while volume 3 reveals a distinctive Zoharic genre on the Wisdom of Solomon, which served as the direct source for Lainer. In fact, the term *hokhmat Shelomoh* is one of the Zohar's expressions for *Shekhinah*.

Lainer understands his own thought to be a continuation and an unfolding of the Wisdom of Solomon, which includes all the principles that fall under the rubric of nondual acosmic humanism. As we have touched on above and will see in the main volume of this book, these principles include the ability to gain unmediated access to the divine will, and to access, on occasion, a truth higher than the law, as well as the expansion of consciousness, called *hitpashtut*, that allows this transcendence to take place; the idea that every person has a unique personal pathology, their *hisaron* or shadow, which is the paradoxical gate to the spiritual journey that makes a person whole; the radical individualism embodied in the Judah archetype, which is found in potential in everyone; the theological significance of *teshukah* desire and the essentially erotic quality of merging with the *Shekhinah*; and the ontic identity of the human and divine names. All of these principles are tied in to the primary focus of Solomon's wisdom, which is the drive to embrace the *Shekhinah*, the erotic feminine manifestation of the divine, in a direct and unmediated fashion. For Lainer the Wisdom of Solomon is the human incarnation of eros in the form of the irreducible Unique Self.

Dionysian Ecstasy in Service of the Law:

Erotic motifs appear throughout the Wisdom of Solomon passages in *Mei Hashiloah*—*teshukah* 'passion', *tei'uvta denukva* 'the desire of the feminine',

moon, and various pagan motifs all appear here limned with eros. One might well characterize Lainer's entire Wisdom of Solomon project as an impassioned desire for full erotic abandon in the lap of the Goddess. One desires to be overpowered, *menutzah*, by the Goddess, and in that experience to realize the fullness of *teshukah*, the realization of sacred desire. This, however, is not for Lainer an erotic impulse that expresses itself in sexual engagement, except on the extremely rare occasions where the post-*berur*, post-conventional context creates a vessel to hold such explosive light. Rather the erotic passion for the Goddess that so defines Solomon is directed in a gorgeous manner towards the ethics of the law.

This passion is transmuted by Lainer into the passion for justice and for deep integrity in resolving disputes between conflicting parties, which Lainer terms the desire for *emet le'amoto*, the deepest truth. This truth which is beyond legal precedent and evidentiary rules, discloses the essence of a situation beyond the level of the letter of the law and the discernment that the courts can reach. In truth, the word transmutes is not quite accurate. Ethical sensitivity to justice and to meta-justice is for Lainer the heart of the sensual goddess herself. The ethical sensitivity and the raw ethical beauty of Lainer in these texts has more than once moved me to tears.

Lainer thus imbues this struggle with and for the law with all of the erotic energy of paganism, the Goddess, and the moon. Even if for Lainer the value of the law is sometimes found in its transcendence, engagement with the law is primary. Lainer's quest is to break out of the idolatries of law and to touch *retzon Hashem*, God's immediate will, which is the same as touching the Goddess, the *Shekhinah*, without her *levushim*, her clothing. The methods are various, whether sacred individuality, or ecstasy, or the higher intuition of *rei'ah* that can allow one to judge *emet le'amoto*. All, however, are realized through embracing one's unique self story, the primary gate through which one accesses *retzon Hashem*, the unmediated *Shekhinah*.

One More Word about the Goddess:

There are two primary source lineages for the living mystical goddess energies of the divine feminine incarnate in the world today. One is Hindu, expressed in part in the yoga traditions, and the other is kabbalistic, expressed in part in the Hasidic traditions. A particularly radical form of the Hebrew goddess tradition is expressed in the words and between the lines of the radical Kabbalah of Mordechai Lainer. For Lainer, it is

precisely in this transcending and including of the conventional within post-conventional contexts that the eros of the goddess, the *Shekhinah*, is incarnate. For Lainer, the entire eros of the goddess is poured into assuring the correct verdict in what appears to be a petty case in small claims court. It is in the precision and caring of justice—in the details of justice—that the eros of the goddess lives. Certainly when issues of even greater import are at hand, with crucial implications for the lives of individuals and entire communities, the genuine eros of *Shekhinah* demands careful fact checking; revealing of complex motivations at play; appropriate deliberation; and appropriate mechanisms to assure fairness, decency, and healing. In the Hebrew goddess, eros and ethos merge as one in the great Yichud, Unification. The failure to put such mechanisms of fairness and integrity in place, because of fear and the seduction of the pseudo-goddesses of political correctness and community acceptance, is exactly the kind of violation of the goddess for which many post-conventional contexts, whether of the developmental or new age variety, are culpable.

Lainer's teaching on *berur*, the need to clarify the post-conventional, stems from his knowing that high states and stages of spiritual realization all too often do not result in the good, the true, or the beautiful. The attention to justice and kindness for Lainer—and the goddess-drunk kabbalists from which he emerges—must always take center stage. There is great danger to the goddess in both the New Age idolization of state experiences and the excessive premium that much of the developmental community places on complex levels of cognition. By “developmental community,” we mean many people who understand that spiritual development unfolds along developmental lines and who position their own level of consciousness somewhere near the top of the spiral. As I have pointed out many times, higher levels of cognitive complexity do not a better human being make. It is not by accident that we rarely see posts in the blogs of higher development about kindness. Developmental theorists can talk for hours about people at blue, green, or yellow; first-tier and second-tier; Diplomat, Achiever, Individualist. But where is the Developmental love behind it all? Kindness is a value that all too often is relegated to the lower levels of amber or blue consciousness in the Developmental and Spiral Dynamics models of development. It rarely appears as a value in many developmental books, conferences, and websites. Or worse still, it is given lip service even as it is ignored in practice when the real gods of cognition and power are worshipped.

In New Age contexts, love is a post-conventional slogan which often means very little. The more practical and actionable forms of day-to-day kindness get very little play. The most powerful mechanism to assure day-to-day sustainable kindness is fairness, a conventional value of law and integrity. For the goddess, however, fairness applied conventionally is not sufficiently fair or just. For Lainer, the eros of the goddess seeks to amplify fairness and justice in the most prosaic and banal contexts as well as in the larger meta contexts. The goddess is incarnate by boundary breaking, seeking after radical justice and fairness. The erotic goddess is for Lainer, not only antinomian, but as Kabbalah scholar Eliot Wolfson might say, hypernomian. All this is to say that Lainer is not satisfied by the law. He wants to transcend the law, antinomian, and he wants to enact more law, hypernomian. Lainer's sense of the law is obviously Hebraic and not Pauline in nature. For him, law is the pouring out of the infinite into the finite. He wants to either break through the law of yesterday—yesterday's revelation symbolized as garments—and kiss the naked *Shekhinah*, or to enact more and more just law, which is, from Lainer's perspective, but another way of enacting more and more *Shekhinah*. This, for Lainer, is the highest and most erotic expression of the post-conventional. It is post-conventional in that it will not be contained by the more general parameters of the law. Principles and precedent, the core of conventional law, is insufficient to feed or incarnate the goddess of radical situational justice, which is subjective, not in the sense of being relative, but in the sense of being always an ultimate subject, not subject to objectification. Her eros is specific and precise and presents itself afresh in every new moment. The eros of the goddess is revealed in the specific and personal interstices of the unique self and the unique moment.

Unique Self/Soul Print Realization

What I have termed, inspired by Lainer, sacred autobiography, when purified of the superficial through the process of *berur*, is itself a sacred text. It is the book of life. This is Lainer's implicit reading of the old Kabbalistic teaching from Safed that every person has their own 'letter in the Torah.' Sacred autobiography both interacts with and, occasionally, even trumps sacred text, superseding one's obligation to the written canon. The initiate will understand that, far from giving easy license to one's desires, this post-conventional path requires extraordinary discipline.

According to Lainer, one can only access this revelation through the identification and embrace of one's uniqueness. Lainer makes a strong distinction between the sense of specialness or uniqueness at an ego-ic level, which needs to be purified, and uniqueness at the enlightened level of Judah-consciousness, which is both the expression of and the path to full realization. This level of enlightenment may be achieved consistently or even just for a time in an individual's life.

It is through the depths of one's unique individuality, one's soul print, rather than in the transcendence of individuality, that one hears the voice of the infinite God in the *lebishah*, the whisper of personal revelation. It is, however, commitment to the canon of law and to rigorous practice that allows one to discern those moments accurately and to respond to the call of one's soul print, and thus to achieve the liberation of the Judah archetype.

For Lainer, in contrast with many other enlightenment teachings, uniqueness or specialness is not something to be jettisoned or transcended. Rather, it may be compared to the puzzle piece that fits uniquely into the whole. The unique shape of the individual puzzle piece is what connects one seamlessly to the 'uni-verse', the great text of divine names that is reality.

Soul print is the prism of unmediated revelation of the divine. The portal to enlightenment and its highest expression is the unique self. The path and the destination are the same.

From Soul Print to Unique Self

I have been privileged to teach the Torah of soul prints for the last twenty years. The term 'soul print' first came down to me in a talk given to some five hundred senior citizens at Kol Emet Synagogue in Del Ray Beach, Florida in 1989. Soul print meant for me then, as it still does now in part, the unique expression of divinity manifest in every human being. That expression of uniqueness is the source of human dignity, meaning, joy and obligation.

A key passage in the book, *Soul Prints*, which I wrote some ten years later, introduces the term 'unique self': 'The address of the divine commands us each to realize our highest Unique Self. In my written communications with Ken Wilber in 2003 (republished in the footnotes to *The Evolutionary Emergent of Unique Self*, *A New Chapter in Integral Theory*, JITP 6:1

2011, Suny Press) I articulated Unique Self as the unique perspective of the God-realized person—who has achieved the supreme identity with the godhead—on the text. This emergent consciousness wells from the esoteric texts of the Kabbalah in which I live. When the human being transcends separate self into true self he or she becomes a unique letter in the Torah. New Torah, which from the kabbalistic perspective means New God, is literally created. The human being effects a *Tikkun*, best translated as an evolutionary unfolding of God. The essential task of Unique Self is thus according to Lainer to participate in the evolution of God. Which for Lainer is no less than the evolution of love. And love is in the details. Hence for Lainer the eros of the *Shekhinah* expresses itself in the intimate details of caring and justice that emerge from a proper judgement, beyond the letter of the law, even in the narrowest legal arena, as he characterizes for example in a teaching about small claims court. Like any great lover, true eros lives in the particulars.

One's unique letter in the Torah is the Unique Self rooted in the unique ontological perspective of the individual. This backdrop gave birth to the post metaphysical formula of Unique Self in Integral theory: True Self + Perspective = Unique Self.

In 2005, I gave a presentation on soul prints at the Integral Spiritual Center, a gathering of lineage holders brought together from several major traditions by philosopher Ken Wilber. Later, as the idea of soul print began to move from the Jewish teaching world into a wider community in the evolved form of Unique Self—as a direct result of this gathering—Wilber wisely suggested using my term 'unique self' instead of 'soul print'. This, he correctly asserted, would make the teaching equally available to all lineages, whether theistic and non-theistic. Unique Self evolved the soul print insight by soaking itself in the developmental insights of post modernity. As a result of all of these conversations, Diane Musho Hamilton and Genpo Roshi began, in the Zen-based Big Mind Process, to use the realization of unique self to characterize an emergent voice arising from the ground of Big Mind. Genpo Roshi also included a section on unique self in his book *Big Mind, Big Heart*, which he was kind to attribute to the Unique Self teaching he received (personal communication). At that time, my discussions with Ken, and later with Diane, Genpo Roshi, Sally Kempton and others, enriched the nuances of the unique self teaching. Inspired by this teaching, Terry Patten, Marco Morelli and Adam Leonard added a final chapter on unique self to their *Integral Life Practice* book,

written under the supervision and guidance of Ken Wilber. I initiated with Diane Hamilton, Ken Wilber and Robb Smith, the Integral Spiritual Experience which in 2009 devoted five days with five hundred people to an exploration and transmission of the Unique Self teaching. Many who were present or who listened to the recordings adopted some version of Unique Self or Unique Gift teaching, implicitly or explicitly, into their consciousness and transmission, always enriched and mediated through their own rich lineages and unique selves. Joanne Hunt and her masterful school, Integral Coaching Canada ran a weekend for their coaches on Unique Self teaching. Sally Kempton integrated the teaching as a way of re-understanding a core teaching in her lineage, "God appears in you as you". Another teacher who has opposed Unique Self teaching on principled grounds, began to talk about his teaching being emergent from his "Unique Perspective". Articles were written comparing Unique Self and Authentic Self teaching (Zak Stein and Chris Dierkes). Important public dialogues took place with Andrew Cohen on the implications of Unique Self vs. Authentic Self. Dialogues were held with Don Beck and Suzanne Cook Greuter on the developmental arc of Unique Self. Discussion of Unique We, (which is based on Unique Self, see Volume 1 and see Dustin Dierperna on Unique Self and Unique We, 2011) in relation to Unique Self began to emerge. Leading Yoga teachers began to understand Asana, yogic poses and dharma in light of Unique Self. One leading Yoga master, John Friend, wrote that Unique Self was the clearest articulation of Tantric teaching he had encountered and Michael Murphy of Esalen wrote that this teaching of Unique Self "changes the game". There are many other examples. All of this is testament neither to my ability to teach nor to the depth of my realization, but to the power of the Unique Self recognition itself which clearly wanted to emerge at this time.

In my conversations with Ken, we clarified that the notion of unique self could only find its penultimate expression after one has evolved beyond exclusive identification with separate self-ego. This is a crucial discernment, since without it, the idea of soul print can all too easily be hijacked and understood as another reification of the ego. Here again, I would like to reiterate this important truth: First, one must nullify the *ani*, the 'I', to *ayin*, nothingness (as in the Buddhist concept of *sunyata* 'emptiness'). Only from the ground of *ayin* does the *ani* re-emerge as the unique self, the Judah archetype of Lainer.

Your Unique Self

As the soul print idea has grown in me over the last two decades, I have understood it more and more not so much as a conceptual frame but as an urgent, desperate, passionate realization. It is the realization that every human being is endowed with infinite adequacy and worth, and therefore dignity, that every human being has a story worth living, worth sharing and worth being received. Fully living our stories and having them received is the fundamental right of every person. Having one's authentic Unique Self story taken seriously is the essential dignity of a human being.

In fact, it is not only a right, it is an obligation. To realize that you have a soul print, expressed in the unique perspective of your unique self, creates radical obligation, meaning that you have something to do for yourself, for your community, and for God, that no other being that was, is, or will be, can do except you. There is a gift to be given by you alone, a healing which can be effected by you alone, a way of living, laughing, loving, being and becoming in the world that is yours alone to live. In this gift one finds radical meaning and radical joy.

Your uniqueness creates the obligation of the part which is uniquely you towards the larger whole. Your uniqueness is also the portal for you to move from your separate self into the larger Whole.

All of these teaching are implicit or explicit in the radical kabbalah of my teacher Mordechai Lainer of Izbica. The purpose of this work is not to present these teachings in popular form. Rather the intention is to, in a highly rigorous act of ecstatic scholarship, transmit to you dear reader, the lineage teaching and transmission of the sacred texts themselves, that serves as part of the basis for the Unique Self teaching and the Enlightenment of Fullness teachings (see *Essays on the Enlightenment of Fullness*, forthcoming ed. Dr. Heather Fester) that lay at the heart of World Spirituality. (see *World Spirituality Based on Integral Principles*, Ken Wilber and Marc Gafni, forthcoming). The core of this work was written in 2001 and 2002 before meeting Ken Wilber and Integral theory. Other than an occasional change and David's excellent editing I have left the formulations as they were originally written and have not re-written them to formally incorporate integral developmental theory. I prefer to let the original writing stand in the original integrity of the lineage.

May the blessing and grace of liberation, transmitted by a liberated being,
Mordechai Lainer, animate your heart, mind and body as you study his text
and incarnate its truth in the holy and humble audacity of your unique self.

