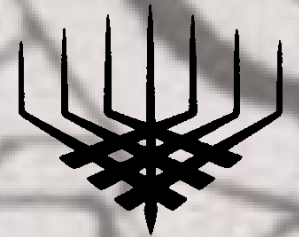




Looking inside the lessons of the Piazcensko Rebbe



Cantor Paul Heller
Belsize Square Synagogue





RABBI KALONYMUS KALMAN SHAPIRA

the Piaseczno Rebbe (1889–1943)

Rabbi Kalonymus was a prominent Hasidic leader in Poland. He served as the rabbi of Piaseczno

During the Holocaust, he was confined to the Warsaw Ghetto, where he secretly led his community and delivered sermons addressing their suffering. These sermons were later compiled into the book **Esh Kodesh** ("Holy Fire").

He developed the Hashkata meditation practice as a means to cultivate inner tranquility and spiritual growth. The term "Hashkata" translates to "quieting," reflecting the practice's focus on calming the mind to connect with one's true self and divine attributes, as described by a disciple at the end of the work *"Derech a Hamelech"*

Derekh HaMelekh (The Way of the King) is a collection of dated sermons on the weekly Torah portion and on holidays that were delivered by the Piaseczno rebbe, Rabbi Kalonymus Kalman Shapira. These sermons were delivered between the World Wars, in the 1920s and 1930s, and were published from copies made by the rebbe's students. They were printed alongside other documents, including letters, portions of a planned work called Chovat HaAvreichim, and a description of Rabbi Shapira's mind-quieting ("hashkata") technique aimed at calming one's thoughts in order to connect with God. Like Rabbi Shapira's other writings, the work expresses emotional and psychological insights and seeks to offer spiritual guidance

“BNEI MACHSHAVA TOVA”

R. Kalonymus established the chavura, which he called “bnei machshava tova,” Its principles were written c.1917 – c.1923 in an essay by Rabbi Kalonymus Kalman Shapira in which the author promotes the establishment of a “conscious community” aimed at attaining spiritual growth.

He established a group of his select disciples; young men who were outstanding in their Torah [knowledge] and their service of God, who were completely under his influence in terms of their thoughts, speech and actions... These were the most exemplary of the chassidim of Piaseczno.

This is not a typical chasidic work. Its uniqueness lies in its esoteric writing, directed at the members of a closed society. In contrast to other works in which R. Kalonymus discusses the subject of the chavura as part of his discussion of other topics, Bnei Machshava Tova is devoted and directed in its entirety to the members of the chavura.

Bnei Machshava Tova, Principles and Advice 4:1

But why indeed does a man not possess a strong mind? Isn't thought an intellect that is said to lack a brain, single-mindedness, and not sophistries and investigations? Rather, what we seek now is a simple faith in God. However, his faith should not be hidden within him, but rather in the manner of "And he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness" – he should think about his faith with a broad mindset that fills the entire body, as will be further explained, God willing, later. And why should an Israelite, who is from the sons of prophets, lack such imagination and thought? It is obvious that it is because he did not properly use and work with it. Similarly, the nature of every physical ability is such that if it is not used and worked with, it will weaken. Moreover, when he works and acts with his body and senses, but does not do the same with his spiritual thoughts, which are above the imagery of his body, then his physical actions deny his thought. And in such cases, doctors also use this for nerve weakness, which has been damaged and dimmed by his thought, advising him to only use his physical strength without thought, and then his physical thought also denies and dulls it. And since this is the case, when we want to take this significant step from physical lowliness to the work of thought, we simply need to bring out and reveal in us a strong new thought and accustom it to its work, just as we bring out the power of walking in a child by habituating him to walk. And our reward in this will be twofold, for not only will a sublime thought that we had not previously felt be revealed in us, but also the senses of the body will weaken through the merit of the thought and its strengthening, just as the work of the body weakens the thought, as mentioned above. And they too will be transformed into senses of thought.

אָבֵל לָמָּה בְּאַמֶּת אֵין לוֹ לְאִישׁ מַחְשְׁבָה חֲזָקָה, הֲלֹא מַחְשְׁבָה אֵינְנָה שְׂכָל שְׁנֵאמַר עָלָיו וְשֵׁאִין לוֹ מוֹחַ וְשְׂכָל חֵד וְלֹא פְּלִפּוּלִים וְחֻקֵּירוֹת אֲדַרְבָּא רַק אֲמוּנָה פְּשׁוּטָה בְּד' אָנוּ דוֹרְשִׁים עִתָּהּ, אֲלֵא שְׁלֵא תְּהֵא אֲמוּנָתוֹ נִעְלָמָה בּוֹ, רַק בְּחִינַת "וְהֶאֱמִין בַּה' וַיַּחְשְׁבֶהָ" שִׁיְהִיָּה חוֹשֵׁב בְּאַמוּנָתוֹ בְּמַחְשְׁבָה רַחְבָּה שְׁמַמְלָאָה אֶת כָּל הַגּוּף, וְכִמּוֹ שְׁנֵאמַר עוֹד מְזָה אִי"ה לְקַמֵּן. וְלָמָּה תַּעֲדַר לוֹ לְאִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁהוּא מִבְּנֵי גְבִיאִים מִיַּן דְּמִיּוֹן זֶה וּמַחְשְׁבָה זֶה, פְּשׁוּט הוּא מִפְּנֵי שְׁלֵא הִנְשַׁתְּמַשׁ וְעַבַּד בּוֹ כְּרֵאוּי, כֵּן גַּם טְבָעוּ וְשָׁל כָּל כּוֹחַ הַגּוּף שְׁבָאֵם אֵינָם מְשַׁתְּמָשִׁים וְעוֹבְדִים עִמּוֹ יַחְלֵשׁ, וְלֹא עוֹד אֲלֵא כִּיּוֹן שְׁבָגוּפוֹ וְחוּשָׁיו הוּא עוֹבֵד וְעוֹשֶׂה אֶת צְרָכָיו, וְעַם מַחְשְׁבָתוֹ הִרְוַחְנִית וְשְׁלַמְעֵלָה מְצִיּוּרֵי גוּפוֹ אֵינּוּ עוֹשֶׂה וְעוֹבֵד, אַז עֲבוּדַת גוּפוֹ מַכְחֶשֶׁת אֶת מַחְשְׁבָתוֹ. וּבְדַבָּר כְּזֶה מְשַׁתְּמָשִׁים גַּם הָרוֹפְאִים לְחֻלוּשׁ הָעֲצָבִים שְׁנִתְקַלְקְלָה וְנִתְפָּגְלָה מַחְשְׁבָתוֹ, מִיַּעֲצִים אוֹתוֹ לְשַׁמֵּשׁ רַק בְּכַח גוּפוֹ בְּלֹא מַחְשְׁבָה וְאַז גַּם מַחְשְׁבָתוֹ הַגּוּפְנִית מַכְחִישָׁה וּמְטַמְטֶמֶת. וְכִיּוֹן שְׁכִיּוֹן כְּשֶׁרוֹצִים אָנוּ לְפִסְעַ פְּסִיעָה גְּסָה זֶה מִן גְּמִיכוֹת הַגּוּף אֶל עֲבוּדַת הַמַּחְשְׁבָה צְרִיכִים פְּשׁוּט לְהוֹצִיא וּלְגַלּוֹת בְּנוֹ מַחְשְׁבָה חֲזָקָה מַחְדָּשׁ וּלְהַרְגִילָהּ בְּעֲבוּדַתָּהּ כְּמוֹ שְׁמוֹצִיאִים כַּחַ הַהֲלִיכָה בְּהִילָד עַל יַד הַהֲרָגָל שְׁמַרְגִילִים אוֹתוֹ לְלַכֵּת, וְהִיָּה שְׁכַרְיָנוּ בְּזֶה כְּפוּל, כִּי לֹא דִי שֶׁהִתְגַּלָּה בְּנוֹ מַחְשְׁבָה עֲלֵאִית שְׁלֵא הִרְגִישְׁנוּהָ מְקַדָּם, אֲלֵא שְׁגַם אֲרִסִי חוּשֵׁי הַגּוּף יַחְלֵשׁוּ עַל יַד זְכוּת הַמַּחְשְׁבָה וְחֻזְקָהּ כְּמוֹ שְׁעֲבוּדַת הַגּוּף מַחְלֶשֶׁת אֶת הַמַּחְשְׁבָה כִּנ"ל וְגַם הֵם לְחוּשֵׁי הַמַּחְשְׁבָה יִתְהַפְּכוּ.

Meditation practices

The uses of various meditation techniques are also pondered as far back in time as Ancient Egypt, and in different parts of Asia centuries before the time of the Ari or during his times in China, Judea, India, Tibet, and Japan. Relevant for our goals is the teaching found in Tsefat regarding the kavvanah function of Hitbodedut, but especially the state from which one can direct a particular kavannah to the hitbodedut. The ability is produced by the suspension of inner monologues, the silence found within.

Here are some references and sources that I have read and use which could provide further information about the historical and conceptual development of meditation within Jewish mysticism, the Kabbalistic traditions of Gerona, Safed, and the Zohar:

Works by Kabbalists like Nahmanides (Ramban), are key to understanding the early articulation of meditation.

Gershom Scholem: - Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism: Offers a comprehensive overview of Kabbalistic movements, including the early Spanish Kabbalists and Safed mystics, and discusses meditative practices*

- Origins of the Kabbalah: Explores the emergence of the Kabbalah in the 12th and 13th centuries, with detailed analysis of the Gerona circle.*

Aryeh Kaplan: Jewish Meditation and -Meditation and Kabbalah: A detailed account of Jewish meditative practices

*Rabba Mira Neshama is a meditation expert , here is a link to her webpage:
<https://www.miraneshama.com/>*



UNDERSTANDING HASHKATA

The term Hashkata is commonly translated as stillness. As such, it serves as a mechanism that transports us away from the external realm and induces a shift towards introspection

When properly established, stillness facilitates a physical transition from the outside world to the inner self.

It promotes the realignment of cognitive and emotional systems, such as the soul and the intellect

APPENDIX I

THE TECHNIQUE OF QUIETING


Reb Kalonymus was clearly an expert on meditation and self-observation. A collection of his writings entitled *Sefer Derech Hamelech*¹ (*The Book of the Royal Path*) contains the following letter from the study partner of a close associate of Rabbi Shapira:

The Technique of Quieting

From our holy teacher, the great master; may his memory be a shield for us; may God avenge his blood.


In the year 5696 or 5697 (1932–1933), I was a study partner of a close and prized advanced student of Reb Kalonymus, a Mr.


Issachar Nachman Zeev (may God avenge his blood) and during the Ten Days of Repentance² I was privileged to be called to a private meeting with the holy master, because of my association with the aforementioned student. It appears that the master was very pleased with our association, so that when this young man was summoned, I too was called. He immediately began to instruct us about this matter of “quieting.” Unfortunately, I do not remember the whole of it, but what I do recall is written herein.



Our holy master (may his memory be a shield to us) began with a teaching from the sages: A dream is one sixtieth of prophecy (Talmud *Berakhot* 57b). The master continued with his well-known thesis that the ego constitutes a barrier to the heavenly influx. Thus, if one's thoughts and intellect are active, it is difficult for the heavenly flow to penetrate. However, when one sleeps, his mind and thoughts are quiet, and at such times he has no self-directed thoughts and it is possible for the heavenly influence to reach him. This is the reason that a dream is a sixtieth of prophecy. It is also well known from the teachings of our master that we are

more sensitive [to heavenly influences] during prayer than we are during Torah study, because when we learn Torah, we tend to utilize our sense of self: "I learn . . . , I think that . . ." In prayer, just the opposite! The whole point is self-abnegation. Now when one sleeps, it is impossible for him to desire anything for himself, since he is unconscious. Thus our goal is to come to a sleep-consciousness while we are awake. That is to say, we wish to stem the flow of thoughts and impulses that is endemic to the working of the mind. This flow of thoughts is highly associative, and it is very difficult for a man to extricate^[No Title] himself from it. (On another occasion I heard our holy master explain that if we could observe the stream of thoughts within for even one day, it would be obvious that very little distinguishes us from madmen. It is just that the insane actually act upon their thoughts, but the thoughts themselves are quite indistinguishable.) He then gave us concrete advice about this quieting.





He said first that one simply watches for a set period of time, observing his thoughts. He eventually will notice that the mind is emptying, his thoughts are slowing a bit from

other than God. All the world and all that is is just an instance of His light.” One repeats this several times, but not forcefully. The whole point here is to quiet the self. Speaking with a great forcefulness is liable to arouse the ego; one utters the phrase with a great gentleness. I also was able to hear his teaching on arousing love. These were his holy words: “I wish so much to be close to His blessed Essence. My deepest desire is to feel that I am forever growing nearer to the mighty Creator.” He said that it is possible to use quieting to correct any negative trait, but that it is done in a positive way, by emphasizing the opposite of the negative characteristic.

their habitual flow. He then must repeat a single verse or phrase, such as “God is truly God,” in order to insert a thought of holiness into his now open mind. After these steps, he can articulate a need for help in any one of the areas of character development which he needs to work on, be it faith or love or awe. On this occasion, I was privileged to hear his suggestions for work on strengthening faith. He spoke these³ holy words: “I believe with a complete faith that God is the only existence in the universe. There is no reality

So, for example, if someone is plagued with the quality of laziness, he will not speak about moving away from laziness, but rather he will say that he moves toward enthusiastic action. He explained this by referring to a child who is crying; the more he is told not to cry, the more he continues to cry. He taught meditation practices that it is also possible to quiet by watching the small hand of a watch, which barely moves at all, for a set period of time. This, too, has the effect of curbing the impulses and thoughts. After this quieting, which has the effect of bringing in a divine influx, he instructed us to say the verse, “Show me, God, Your path,” using his special tune. It

was so wonderful and so amazing to see him and hear him, as I did, due to the merit of my friend. Our teacher was very emphatic about this matter; he assured us that it would be very helpful. He said that, for example, with the quality of faith, if we would use this technique for a matter of a few weeks, that when we recite, “This is my God, I will praise him . . .”⁴ it will be as if we are pointing to Him, as is stated in the Midrash.⁵ At first, we were unable to grasp the full intent of our master’s thinking, but after some

time, Providence again allowed us to hear these very teachings from our master's holy mouth, as well as additional comments and explanations. He encouraged us most insistently to embark on this exercise.

1. *Sefer Derech Hamelech* (Tel Aviv: Vaad Hasidei Piacezno, 1991), pp. 306–307.

2. The ten-day period between the New Year, Rosh Hashanah, and Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. It is a period of heightened self-reflection and spiritual critique.

3. Both of the intentions are given in Yiddish in the original.

4. Exodus 15:2, recited in the paragraphs prior to the *Amidah* prayer. The verse is used to indicate the intense nearness to God that the Israelites felt as they crossed the sea.

5. Midrash Rabbah on Exodus (23:19).

Lectures, Articles
and Epistles,
Mind Quieting
Advice



Derech
Hamelech

In the year 5696 or 5697 (1936 or 1937), during the time I had the privilege of studying with my dear friend, the young and esteemed scholar, Rabbi Yissachar Nachman Ze'ev, may his memory be a blessing, we were granted, during the Ten Days of Repentance, the honor of entering the sacred chambers of the Rebbe, thanks to the merits of my friend. It appeared that the Rebbe approved greatly of our companionship. Whenever he summoned my friend, I too was called. It was during this time that I first heard about the concept of Hashkata (stilling of the mind). Unfortunately, I can no longer recall everything I heard then, but I will write down what I do remember for posterity.

The Rebbe began by quoting the Talmudic teaching (Berachot 57b): "A dream is one-sixtieth of prophecy." As was the Rebbe's way in his writings, he explained that the yeshut (sense of self) of a person is what opposes divine inspiration from above. When a person's mind and thoughts are active and restless, it is difficult for divine inspiration to rest upon them. However, when a person is asleep, and their mind and thoughts are stilled, it is precisely because they have no active self-awareness at that moment that divine inspiration may come upon them. This, he explained, is the meaning of the teaching: "A dream is one-sixtieth of prophecy."

The Rebbe also shared his teaching on why people are often more spiritually stirred during prayer than during Torah study. In Torah study, he said, the ego is more involved—focusing on refining one's intellect, clarifying concepts, and sharpening understanding. Prayer, on the other hand, is about self-nullification (bitul). During sleep, a person is unable to actively desire anything since they are unconscious. Therefore, the goal is to attain a waking state where one can actively choose to emulate the stillness of sleep—stilling one's racing thoughts and boundless desires, which naturally entangle themselves endlessly.

The Rebbe emphasized that a person's thoughts often resemble those of a madman—thoughts that flow ceaselessly and chaotically. The difference, he said, is that while a madman acts upon their thoughts, most people do not. Nonetheless, a person's internal thought process can appear just as disordered. To address this, the Rebbe provided practical advice for quieting one's thoughts.

ענין השקטה מכ"ק מרן אדמו"ר זצלה"ה הי"ד

בשנת תרצ"ו או צ"ז בעת שהייתי בחברותא אחת עם ידידי האברך היקר כמר יששכר נחמן זאב הי"ד זכינו בעשי"ת להקרא אל הקודש פנימה בזכותו של האברך הנ"ל כי כנראה היה אדמו"ר מאוד מסכים לחברותנו. ובעת שהיה קורא אותו גם אני נקראתי. בפעם הראשונה שמעתי אז את הענין השקטה. אבל חבל על דאבדין שאיני זוכר כל הענין רק מה שאזכור הנני כותב למזכרת.

אדמו"ר זצלה"ה התחיל אז בהמאמר חז"ל (ברכות נז:): חלום אחד מששים בנבואה. כנודע דרכו של אדמו"ר בספריו כי הישות של האדם הוא המתנגד להשראה ממרום. ואם דעתו ומחשבותיו ערים או קשה שתשרה עליו השראה ממרום, ובעת שהאדם ישן ודעתו ומחשבותיו שוקטים אז דוקא כיון שאין לו אז דעת לעצמו אפשר שתשרה עליו השראה ממרום, וזה הענין חלום אחד וכו'. כנודע גם מאמרו של אדמו"ר על מה שיותר מתעוררים בתפלה מאשר בתורה כי בתורה משתמשים יותר עם האנוכיות היינו איך לעדין, איך קלער, אבל בתפלה להיפך העיקר הוא הביטול בה. אבל בעת שהאיש ישן אז אי אפשר לו לרצות דבר מה כי הלא ישן הוא, ובכך העיקר לבוא בהקיץ בעת שאפשר לו לרצות למצב של שינה, היינו בהשקטת מחשבותיו ורצונותיו השוטפים באדם לבלי קץ כי כך דרכה של המחשבה שמסתבכת זו בזו וקשה לו להאדם לפרוש מהן (כמו שזכיתי פעם לשמוע מכ"ק מרן אדמו"ר שליט"א [זצ"ל] שבאם יסתכל איש על מחשבותיו הנובעות אף של יום אחד אז יראה שכמעט אין חילוק בינו לבין משוגע רק בזה שהמשוגע עושה ומביא מחשבותיו לפועל אבל מחשבותיו לעצמו הם אצלו ממש כמו אצל משוגע) ונתן בזה עצות ממשיות איך להשקיט מחשבותיו.

Practical Guidance for Hashkata

The Rebbe instructed that a person should begin by observing their thoughts for a short while—just a few moments—asking themselves, “What am I thinking right now?” By doing so, one gradually notices a sense of emptiness in the mind, and the usual flood of thoughts slows down. Once this state is achieved, the individual should recite a verse, such as “The Lord God is Truth” (Adonai Elohim Emet), to redirect their now-stilled mind toward a single holy thought.

After this initial focus, one may begin to articulate personal needs or aspirations, whether strengthening faith, love, or reverence for God. The Rebbe elaborated on the method for strengthening faith, explaining in his holy words: “I believe with complete faith that the Creator is the sole existence in the world. There is no other reality apart from Him. Everything that exists is but a reflection of His light.” He instructed that this should be repeated a few times but in a gentle manner, without force or intensity, as forcefulness can reawaken the ego. Rather, the words should be spoken softly, with humility.

Applications of Hashkata

The Rebbe also shared insights about cultivating love for God, expressing his longing to feel close to the Creator, saying, “I want to be so near to the Holy Creator. I want to feel a connection to the Great Creator.” He explained that Hashkata could be used to refine negative traits, but not by focusing directly on eradicating them. Instead, one should cultivate their positive opposites. For example, someone struggling with laziness should not dwell on overcoming laziness but rather on fostering zeal and alacrity.

To illustrate this principle, the Rebbe pointed out that when a crying child is told to stop crying, the more they are told, the more they cry. Similarly, a person's focus on negating a negative trait can reinforce it. Instead, positive focus leads to transformation.

The Rebbe also suggested practical tools for Hashkata , such as watching the second hand of a clock for a while. Since the hand moves so slowly, this practice can calm one's desires and thoughts.

Derech
Hamelech

Lectures,
Articles and
Epistles, Mind
Quieting
Advice

ודיבר אז שיתחיל האיש להביט על מחשבותיו שעה קלה לערך איזה רגעים היינו מה אני ואז יתחיל, אז ירגיש לאט לאט שראשו מתרוקן ומחשבותיו עמדו משטפן הרגיל, חושב אלקים אמת כדי לקשר עכשיו ראשו החלל משאר מחשבות 'לאמר פסוק אחד כגון ד ואחר כך כבר יכול הוא לבקש צרכיו באיזה מדה שהוא צריך. למחשבה אחת של קדושה זכיתי לשמוע אז ממנו אופן השקטה בחיזוק, להתנתקן בחיזוק אמונה או אהבה ויראה איך בין מאמין באמונה שלימה אז דא אייבערשטער איז דער 'ואמר בלשונו הק. אמונה אין אז עם איז נישט דא קיי שום מציאות חוץ דער, איינציגער נמצא אויף דער וועלט (אני), 'אין אלץ וואס עם איז דא אי איר איז נאד הארת ד, אייבערשטין אין די גאנצע וועלט וכל, מאמין באמונה שלימה שהבורא הוא הנמצא היחידי בעולם ואין שום מציאות זולתו וכך שינן איזה פעמים אבל לא שיאמר זאת, ('הם רק הארת אור ד, העולם וכל אשר בו בחזקה כי כל הענין הוא רק להשקיט מחשבותיו ובאמירת בתוקף יכול הוא רק לעורר את גם זכיתי לשמוע בענין אהבה וזה היה לשיני. האנוכיות שלו רק אדרבה באופן קל מאוד איך וואלט גוואלט פילען, איך וואלט געוואלט זיין אזוי נאהנט צונ הייליגען באשעפער 'הק הייתי מאוד, רצייתי מאוד להיות קרוב להשם יתברך) התקרבות צום גרויסען באשעפער ואמר אז שיכולים זאת ההשקטה לשמש לכל. (רוצה להרגיש התקרבות להבורא הגדול כגון, תיקוני המדות גרועות אבל לא באופן שלילי רק באופן חיובי באופן היפך המדה רעה מי שנלקה במדת העצלות לא ידבר בענין הרחקת העצלות רק בענין קניית הזריזות והסביר זאת בזה שרואים בחוש אצל תינוק שבאם בוכה ואומרים לו שלא יבכה כל מה גם אפשר להשתמש להשקטה בהבטה על שעון על, שמוסיפים לדבר לו הוא יותר בוכה לאחר, כי גם זה משקיט רצונו ומחשבותיו. המחוג הקטן שכמעט אינו זז משך איזה זמן דרכיך 'השקטה שזה צריך להביא לאיזה מין השראה ממרום צוה לאמר הפסוק הורני ד כמה נעים ונורא ביחד היה אז המחזה אשר זכיתי לראות. ר"בניגונו המיוחד של אדמו ר אז בענין הזה ואמר כי בטוח לו "מאוד הפליג אדמו. ל"ולשמוע בזכות חברי ידידי הנ ודיבר כגון לענין אמונה לאחר ההשתמשות איזה שבועות בהשקטה אז, שיועיל הרבה בפעם. בחינת מראין באצבע כמו שאיתא כל זה במדרש 'כשיאמר זה א-לי ואנוה יהי ה ואחר איזה משך זמן "ר זצלה" הראשונה לא זכינו לעמוד על תחילת דעתו של אדמו זיכנו השם שנית לשמוע מפי קדשו הדברים בתוספת ביאור ומאוד הזהיר לנו לעשות זה הענין.

Lectures, Articles
and Epistles, Mind
Quieting Advice

Derech
Hamelech

■ The Ultimate Goal of Hashkata

► After achieving a state of quiet, which should lead to some form of divine inspiration, the Rebbe advised reciting the verse “Teach me Your way, O Lord” (Horeini Hashem Darkecha), using the Rebbe’s unique melody. The experience of hearing and seeing this practice from the Rebbe was both uplifting and awe-inspiring, a vision and sound that has remained with me thanks to my dear friend’s influence.

► The Rebbe spoke with great enthusiasm about the importance of Hashkata , confident in its transformative potential. He noted that after practicing Hashkata consistently for several weeks, one could reach a state where saying the verse “This is my God, and I will glorify Him” (Zeh Eli v’Anvehu) would evoke a profound experience, as described in the Midrash: a state of direct and tangible connection to God.

► The Rebbe later revisited these teachings, offering additional explanations and strongly encouraging their practice. His repeated emphasis reflected his belief in the efficacy of Hashkata as a pathway to spiritual elevation and divine connection.



THE HASHKATA MEDITATION COMPRISES FOUR STAGES

- **1: Observing Thoughts:** Begin by sitting in silence, attentively observing your thoughts to naturally quiet the mind.
- **Verse Contemplation:** Recite a biblical verse that resonates with the divine quality you wish to embody, such as "Hashem Elokim Emet" ("God, the Divine, is truth").
- **Word Repetition:** Focus on a positive attribute you aim to cultivate (e.g., compassion or generosity) and repeat affirming phrases in your native language to internalize this quality.
- **Chanting a Nigun:** Conclude by singing a nigun (melody) based on Psalm 86:11, reinforcing your intention to walk in truth and cultivate an undivided heart in reverence for the divine

The background of the slide is a composite image. The top half shows a dark, moody sky with a sunset or sunrise, featuring soft orange and pink light breaking through dark, heavy clouds. Silhouettes of trees are visible against the horizon. The bottom half of the image shows a waterfall cascading down, with water splashing and creating a misty spray. The overall color palette is dark and atmospheric, with deep blues, greys, and muted oranges.

Session on Hashkata

Thank you

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