Or ha-Hayyim: Creativity, Tradition and Mysticism in the Torah Commentary of R. Hayyim ibn Attar

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Or ha-Hayyim: Creativity, Tradition and Mysticism in the Torah Commentary of R. Hayyim ibn Attar

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God's Torah lay written before me; it awakened me and gave me expression. It illuminated my soul in the sweetest of lights, and my soul felt as if she had seen its secrets. She will eat and become sated of its savory delights, though many remain yet untasted; in the light of the countenance of the living King.

- R. Hayyim ibn Attar, *Hakdamat ha-Rav ha-Mehaber*

A few years ago a friend of mine spent the weekend in a Hasidic enclave in upstate New York. When he entered the *beit midrash* early Shabbat morning, he noticed a young Hasid poring over the *Or ha-Hayyim* commentary on the Torah with obvious fervor and reverence. My friend walked over and asked why he had chosen to learn a Sephardic Torah commentary at this time, since many Hasidim have the custom of studying Hasidic books of mystical thought before the morning prayers. With surprise and horror, the lad looked up and immediately replied: *Neyn! Vos zogstu?! Dos iz a khasidishe seyfer!* [No! What do you mean?! This *is* a Hasidic book!]

This story is indicative of the great affection felt for R. Hayyim ben Moshe ibn Attar (1696-1743) even outside of the immediate Sephardic world.[ii] This scion of the Moroccan Jewish community penned important works in both *halakha* and *aggada*, but the commentary on the Torah entitled *Or ha-Hayyim*

is undoubtedly his most influential book.[iii] It was originally published in 1742, alongside the traditional triad of biblical text, Rashi, and Onkelos' translation, and within a few decades had captured a relatively large readership among among European Jewish communities. *Or ha-Hayyim* rose from popular to canonical status when it became the most recent commentary to be included in many standard printings of the *Mikra'ot Gedolot*, some of which have since replaced the works of classical *Rishonim* with additional supercommentaries to *Or ha-Hayyim* itself.

R. Hayyim's commentary is a demanding but extremely rewarding study. His explanations are conceptually complicated, stylistically perplexing, and often more verbose than any of the other commentaries on the page. Yet there is a depth and profundity in his words that emerges from amidst their difficulty. As I hope to demonstrate, at the core of R. Hayyim's commentary stands a beautiful double helix of two seamlessly integrated approaches to interpreting the Torah: the search for the verses' plain-sense on one hand, and the quest for their deeper mystical significance on the other. R. Hayyim has outspoken affection for *peshat* and often explains verses according to their plain-sense, contextual and literal meaning. However, his commentary is also a tremendous repository of creative mystical thought, informed by the kabbalistic tradition but not bound to the teachings of any particular school. While for some exegetes these goals have proven mutually exclusive, R. Hayyim maintained that both a verse's *peshat* and its mystical significance are equally important and true. The primary goal of this study is to bring into sharper focus several of the most important mystical themes of his commentary, and to offer a few remarks on their potential relevance to contemporary Jewish conversations.[iv]

R. Hayyim ibn Attar was born in 1696 in Salé, Morocco, into an illustrious family descended from Spanish exiles.[v] The young R. Hayyim was educated in the traditional manner by his grandfather, but his early years were peripatetic and he was often forced to move from city to city on family business or to escape persecution. After marrying into a wealthy family that was distantly related, R. Hayyim devoted himself entirely to his studies for a number of years. Yet difficult times returned with the death of his father-in-law in the early 1720s. Without patronage, the combined hardships of economic crises, plagues and famines forced R. Hayyim into a series of relocations that eventually led him to Jerusalem.

R. Hayyim moved first to Fes, followed by a brief stay in Algiers, and then settled in Leghorn, where he once again found monetary support and made his home for several years. There R. Hayyim began to teach Torah publicly and served as a communal leader, but by 1740 he and a small number of his

close friends and students had resolved to immigrate to Israel in order to establish a new yeshiva. They disembarked in Acre in 1741, where they spent a full year before the epidemics in central *Eretz Yisrael* abated. After moving to Jerusalem the group founded the yeshiva *Kenesset Yisrael*, whose students included the renowned polymath R. Hayyim Yosef David Azulai (the *Hida*, 1724-1806). R. Hayyim ibn Attar died in 1743, and was subsequently interred on the Mount of Olives. The synagogue named for him in the Old City of Jerusalem is still an active place of worship, and to this day R. Hayyim's literary legacy remains quite influential in many religious circles.

Creativity, Tradition, and the Nature of Torah

Before embarking on our exploration of the mystical aspects of *Or ha-Hayyim*, briefly examining two related issues will help us clarify a more fundamental question: how R. Hayyim understood the role and limits of biblical interpretation. First, examining his attitude toward the classical commentators will demonstrate to what extent he felt himself at creative liberty to offer interpretations, both mystical and plain-sense, that contrast those adduced by earlier sages. Second, illustrating R. Hayyim's conception of the nature of the Torah itself will reveal the underlying principles upon which his interpretive approach is based. These two questions were first analyzed in an enlightening book in Hebrew by the late Professor Elazar Touitou, yet since to my knowledge his important findings have never been made available in English, nor have they been subsequently challenged or developed, it will surely be of worth to present and expand upon them here.

R. Hayyim was a latecomer to the stage of Jewish biblical interpretation. By the early eighteenth century the "golden age" of exegesis by Western European *Rishonim* had long since ended. R. Hayyim is counted amongst the Sephardic *Aharonim*, whose literary works represent a vastly different stage of Jewish history. They wrote in a time after the major centers of learning in Spain had been destroyed and their leaders exiled to Christian Europe, North Africa, and *Eretz Yisrael*, forever transforming the intellectual centers of gravity of the Jewish world. Kabbalah, specifically the Zohar and later the works of R. Isaac Luria (d. 1572), had overtaken philosophy as the only other primary focus of Jewish study in the Sephardic Diaspora other than the Talmud itself, thus ending a centuries-long debate over the merits and demerits of rationalism and mysticism. The second half of the seventeenth century witnessed the dramatic rise and fall of the false messiah Shabbatai Tzevi, whose conversion to Islam left much world Jewry in shambles. *Aharonim* are generally thought of as far less daring than their

early medieval counterparts, and this deferential shift in attitude is often attributed to the political and geographic turbulence. However, as we shall see, R. Hayyim's commentary is bold and innovative in a manner largely uncharacteristic of this period. He was unafraid of disputing the interpretations of authorities that predated him, even those articulated by the revered Talmudic sages themselves.

R. Hayyim notes that *Hazal* frequently offer homiletical (*derash*) interpretations of verses, which often come at the expense of the plain-sense meaning of the text. In some instances he agrees with their *derashot* and comments upon the verse in accord with their reading.[vi] However, in many cases R. Hayyim insists that the verse must be understood according to its *peshat* despite the Sages' homiletical interpretation; though he does not deny the legitimacy of their *derashot*, he presents an alternative reading that conforms to the plain-sense of the passage.[vii] R. Hayyim was fiercely committed to rabbinic legal norms, and in one case writes that he is unwilling to offer an otherwise valid interpretation that conflicted with *halakha*.[viii] Yet he reminds his reader that even *Hazal* agreed that the Torah would be interpreted in many different ways in the future,[ix] and as long as the law remains unchanged, students of biblical exegesis have nearly unlimited freedom.[x]

R. Hayyim's stance toward the classical medieval commentators is similarly complex. Despite having been deeply influenced by Rashi's commentary, R. Hayyim gently disagrees with him on linguistic grounds, for misunderstanding statements of Hazal, and for giving original interpretations not in line with the *peshat*.[xi] In some cases R. Hayyim agrees with Abraham Ibn Ezra, while elsewhere challenging his reading of a verse; at times R. Hayyim Ibn Ezra's opinion altogether.[xii] The same is true of his attitude toward Ramban, even though the latter's commentary includes a combination of *peshat* and Kabbalah not dissimilar to R. Hayyim's own style.[xiii] However, perhaps most striking of all is the relative infrequency of his engagement with the works of the *Rishonim*. Hoping to avoid plagiarism of any kind, he claims to have closed their books before sitting down to write his independent commentary, selectively citing earlier authorities from memory.[xiv] Only later did he compare his text to theirs, occasionally using their words to support his interpretation or contrasting earlier traditions with his own understanding of the verse.[xv]

We might thus characterize R. Hayyim ibn Attar's attitude toward earlier interpreters as one of intermittent contradiction, or to be more precise, respectful contradistinction. While he repudiates their remarks when he deems them insufficient or not in keeping with the plain-sense of the verse, he does not deny the validity of their interpretations, nor does he attack them with any of the invectives

wielded by the *Rishonim* against one another. R. Hayyim's commentary itself offers a prepossessing blend of different homiletic styles, and it is immediately clear that he believes in no single correct explanation of a verse to which all readers must be obeisant. He often offers multiple interpretations of a single passage, occasionally deriving several dozen possible and *correct* meanings. This alone sets him apart from many of the earlier medieval commentators, with Ramban's commentary the possible exception.

R. Hayyim asserts that the Torah has myriad layers of meaning, and careful study of its polysemous words can yield any number of valid interpretations.[xvi] R. Hayyim invokes the adage commonly found in mystical literature and explains that each of the four primary modes of interpreting the Torah *(peshat, remez, derash, sod*) corresponds to one of the kabbalistic worlds *(asiya, beriya, yetzira, atzilut).*[xvii] Elsewhere he writes that the Torah itself has an outer, plain-sense meaning, which surrounds and embodies its deeper mystical dimension (*penimiyut*).[xviii] This description does not simply proscribe how a reader should interpret the biblical text, but describes the very nature of the Torah itself. Furthermore, many intricacies of *halakha* were passed down as oral traditions, connected to the biblical text but found nowhere explicitly in its words, and the same is true of its kabbalistic significance. The Torah alludes to deeper mysteries that cannot be captured in writing and must be transmitted from student to teacher. Some of these are outside of the boundaries of language and are comprehensible through experience alone.[xix] In sum, while other exegetes have assumed that *peshat* and *penimiyut* are mutually exclusive ends of a spectrum, R. Hayyim's belief that the Torah is multi-faceted and thus able to yield many coterminous explanations is the bedrock of his mystical approach to interpreting the biblical text.[xx]

Mysticism and Kabbalah

R. Hayyim's North African community retained much of the *peshat* sensibility beloved by the Andalusian *Rishonim*.[xxi] By the early eighteenth century this intellectual milieu was steeped in Kabbalah as well, and by R. Hayyim's time mystical approaches to interpreting the Torah coexisted alongside the quest for its plain-sense meaning. It is thus unsurprising that in addition to establishing *peshat, Or ha-Hayyim's* other raison d'être is to explain the mystical significance of the Torah's words. As noted above, R. Hayyim does not see his mystical interpretations as necessarily contradicting the biblical text's plain-sense meaning, but rather amplifying and often complementing it.[xxii] He often

refers to this dimension of his exegesis as *remez* (allusion) or *sod* (secret), but from his commentary it is immediately apparent that R. Hayyim did not feel constrained to the symbols of one theosophical system alone. Instead, he synthesized different threads of earlier kabbalistic traditions and wove them together into a tapestry of mystical interpretation not beholden to any single tradition; this is a departure from the rather structured Kabbalah included in the commentaries of Ibn Ezra, Ramban, and Menahem Recanati (d. 1310). Indeed, though mystical ideas permeate nearly every page of his commentary, much of its depth is accessible to those with even an elementary background in Kabbalah.

R. Hayyim seems to have drawn the majority of his kabbalistic inspiration from the Zohar, which he assumes dates back to the early centuries CE. Sometimes he cites its passages as teachings of *Hazal,* others as words of the holy *Tanna* Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai,[xxiii] and quotes the Zohar by name in several dozens of passages.[xxiv] By contrast, R. Hayyim refers directly to the teachings of R. Isaac Luria a handful of times,[xxv] and only occasionally cites an oral or written tradition received in the great kabbalist's name.[xxvi] While R. Hayyim refers to Lurianic ideas more subtly in other places, he never employs such specific keywords as *tzimtzum* or *partzufim*, and it is reasonably clear that his kabbalistic framework was primarily non-Lurianic. This is rather surprising given that Luria's was the dominant mystical voice in seventeenth and eighteenth century Jewish mystical discourse. Perhaps this trepidation reflects fears of association with the Sabbatian heresy based on a dangerous yet creative rereading of Lurianic Kabbalah. In a few allusive comments R. Hayyim expressed apprehension about revealing too much; he steadied his pen and refrained from writing down secrets that he felt could not be revealed to a popular audience.[xxvii] However, it is also possible R. Hayyim had limited primary-source exposure to the more theoretical complexities of Lurianic Kabbalah while writing the majority of his commentary.

While the precise origins of his mystical thought require further clarification, it is indisputable that R. Hayyim's cosmology was deeply influenced by medieval Kabbalah. In his description the spiritual plane and the physical world are not entirely distinct realms, and while there is a perceptible boundary between the human and divine spheres, a bifurcated division between "spiritual" and "corporeal" is anathema to his worldview. R. Hayyim understood the physical world as an intertwined composite of material and spiritual. All corporeal phenomena are animated by a core of divine energy; each aspect of existence is infused with an essential element of divinity, from the highest spiritual

worlds to objects that which we perceive as fundamentally inanimate, .[xxviii] Mankind's sins only have the capacity to lessen the flow of this divine energy, but they can never truly obstruct it. Without exception, all reality is sustained by God's effluence.[xxix]

This theme of divine immanence is developed throughout *Or ha-Hayyim*, but R. Hayyim treats it most fully in his comments on the creation narrative. To explain the seeming banality of the verse, "The heavens and the earth were completed in all their array" (Gen. 2:1), he writes:

We were at a loss as to what this verse is supposed to teach us, but its intention seems in accord with what the Sages taught, "God is the place of the world" (*Bereshit Rabbah*, 68:9). We find mentioned [in Scripture] that He also permeates the world, as it says, "the world is full of His glory" (Is. 6:3). Hence, the light of the blessed One both surrounds the world and is its inner essence.

We must understand, why did God do things in this way? I received an oral tradition from the elder scholars of Torah that God created the world as a sphere so that it could continue to exist, since His powers are equally distributed. This should be explained as follows: Know that no yearning could be sweeter, dearer, more precious, beloved or desired amongst the created beings, especially their inner spiritual elements that recognize and know the light of God, than cleaving to the blessed One's illumination. The vital core [of all creation] pines for Him, striving to apprehend the radiance of His light in some small way, craning to catch a glimpse of God's pleasantness.

Know also that God imbued an element of illuminated wisdom and discernment in every aspect of creation, each according to its nature. Creatures that can speak and animals that cannot, as well as plants and minerals, all have the capacity to know their Maker in their own way….

… His sweet and yearned for light surrounds the spheres of the world uniformly, and each and every spot in the world's rotation ignites the burning desire to draw close to the Tree of Longing equally…

… For this reason the world exists within the light of the Creator; His light fills the physical and surrounds it as well. The world continues to endure because of its great longing for God. [The word for "completion" used in] "The heavens and the earth were *completed* (*va-yekhulu*) in all their array" should be understood along the lines of "my soul longs and *desires*" (*kaleta*, Ps. 84:3). This is what truly completed and sustains creation.[xxx]

For R. Hayyim, this verse alludes to several important spiritual truths. First, God's simultaneous immanence and transcendence may seem paradoxical, but it is precisely this tension that grants the physical world its perpetuation. The generative longing of creation for a transcendent God is made possible by their innate divine quality, the indwelling of a divine spark that sustains the world. Second, R. Hayyim believes in the capacity of all finite created beings to know God, albeit to varying degrees. The Divine remains beyond the absolute grasp of any of His creations, but the inner spiritual quality hidden within the physical means that everything has an unseverable capacity for connecting to the Divine.

R. Hayyim demonstrates remarkable creativity and sensitivity in his ability to find mystical significance in the biblical text. In many cases these deeper messages actually represent his understanding of the plain-sense meaning of a verse, and do not come at the exclusion of the *peshat* he so values. For example, R. Hayyim connects the notion of a world infused with divine energy with the initial Shabbat of the creation story:

> God created the soul (*nefesh*) of the world on the Sabbath day. This is the deeper meaning of the verse: "And on the seventh day He rested (*shavat*) and infused (*va-yinafash*)" (Ex. 31:17). From this the Sages' taught that the additional soul mourns when the Sabbath departs (b. Beitza 16a), but theirs is only a homiletical interpretation… the plain-sense of the verse is that… "and infused" refers to God's vital effluence pouring into all created beings, since before Shabbat everything lacked a soul.[xxxi]

R. Hayyim does not read *va-yinafash* as a reflexive description of God desisting from formative work, as it is often understood. Instead, his believes that its plain-sense meaning is an active verb demonstrating that God instilled a necessary current of metaphysical energy into the world through the creation of Shabbat.

R. Hayyim adds that the deep yearning and love felt for God by His creations is entirely mutual. Identifying an interesting parallel between the words *va-yekhulu* in Gen. 2:1 and *va-yekhal* ("and God finished") in the following verse, he comments:

> Just above I translated the word *va-yekhulu* as referring to longing and desire, and we should translate the present [phrase] *va-yekhal Elokim* along the same lines, in accord with the verse, "You will long for the works of Your hands" (Job 14:15)… The Lord yearned for and desired His world, and thus through the Seventh Day the world is sustained…[xxxii]

The love between God and the physical world is thus reciprocal, cementing the bond between the created world and the Divine. However, R. Hayyim often focuses on an expression of God's love that is more particularistic: His exceptional affection for the Jewish people. It was this love for Israel and His burning desire to wed them to the Torah that led to their redemption from Egypt. The delay of three months before reaching Mt. Sinai gave the Jews time to prepare themselves, as a bridegroom must during the period of his engagement. From God's perspective, the ideal would have been to deliver them to the wedding canopy immediately.[xxxiii]

Another prominent mystical theme found in *Or ha-Hayyim* is the mandate to redeem the "sparks of holiness" trapped within the physical world. This idea is closely related to God's sustaining of physical existence by the reinfusion the world with divine energy. However, the relationship between the sparks and corporeal realm differs in one important respect: the sparks also reflect the

inherent brokenness of the world and its partial disunity from God. This condition began with the edenic sin and has only been exacerbated by mankind's subsequent iniquity. The "husks" of physical reality that surround the sparks are described in distinctly negative terms:

Because of our abundant sins, many sparks of holiness are now bound within the husks, and … evil and good are all mixed together. For this reason one must separate the good from the bad, and the light from the darkness in which it has become entangled. However, it is known that the husks derive their vitality from holiness itself, and without this they would have no life force. Therefore, when God separates the light, which is the holiness, the discarded evil is left it without any place from which receive sustenance and will be nullified all on its own… this is similar to chopping down a tree and removing it from the very roots which give it life; it will become dried out and wither.[xxxiv]

Only a few decades later Hasidism would employ the vocabulary of the sparks to articulate an optimistic view of engaging with physical world, and as we have seen, in many cases R. Hayyim displays a similarly positive outlook. However, in others R. Hayyim tends more toward the dualism commonly found in the medieval kabbalistic tradition, which opposes coarse physicality with sublime spirit. Even the most impure corporeal matter is sustained by the holy sparks, but it cannot endure once we achieve the goal of returning them to their Source.[xxxv]

The sparks of holiness were originally scattered because of mankind's sin, and R. Hayyim maintains that it is the task of the Jewish people to gather the sparks and remove them from the husks that surround them. He writes:

Primordial Adam was the tree upon which all holy souls were affixed, including all that had entered the world from its inception and all that ever will. When Adam sinned, [the side of] evil became much stronger and took countless [souls] captive. Since becoming a nation God's [chosen] people have constantly striven to separate and remove them from whence they were swallowed up. They do this by means of the font of holiness that God planted in our midst: the Torah and mitzvoth.[xxxvi]

Mankind's sin plunged the physical world into a state of fracture. The holy aspects within it, referred to alternatively as sparks, souls, and even aspects of God Himself, are now concealed behind veils of impurity.[xxxvii] However, the picture is not so bleak and all is not lost. Israel is charged with redeeming the trapped sparks and "returning them to a state of complete unity" through immersion in Torah study and performing their religious obligations with fervor and intensity.[xxxviii] This capacity is what defines Jewish people as a "nation of priests."[xxxix] Even their most mundane actions are also reframed as spiritual activities; that we could have been created without the need for physical sustenance proves that eating and drinking must serve the higher purpose of uplifting the sparks trapped within the food.[xl] It was in order to fulfill this very responsibility that the Jewish people were dispersed across the world. Israel was thrust into exile in part because of their sins, but more

importantly, they were they enjoined with task of uplifting the scattered sparks and freeing them from their corporeal prisons.[xli]

R. Hayyim devotes very little space to the complicated and often obscure symbolism that characterized earlier Jewish mystical thought. He rarely refers to the *sefirot* by name, and I was able to find only one instance in which the term "*sefira*" itself appears in *Or ha-Hayyim*.[xlii] However, leaving the technical vocabulary of Lurianic Kabbalah and the Zohar does not mean that R. Hayyim shies away from a mystical conception of God. He discusses the Divine indwelling in the physical world (*shekhina*) at great length. For R. Hayyim, the *shekhina* is not the hypostatic entity conceived of in medieval Kabbalah, nor is it simply an abstract attribute of the Godhead. Instead, he describes the *shekhina* as a finite (if incorporeal) instantiation of God, fully united with Him but within the ken of physical beings and their limited faculties.[xliii] Israel met the *shekhina* on Mt. Sinai,[xliv] and it is with this the aspect of God that the angels can interact.[xlv] He notes that there are an infinite number of gradations of the indwelling of the *shekhina*. One particularly intense manifestation the can only be revealed to the fullest assembly of 600,000 people,[xlvi] but to a lesser degree God's immanent presence may be found in the synagogue, the study hall, and with all who learn Torah together.[xlvii] Indeed, each Jewish individual can be transformed into a dwelling for the *shekhina* through performing the mitzvoth and cultivating a sense of awe of the Divine [xlviii]

It should come as no surprise, then, that R. Hayyim sees mankind as the pinnacle and purpose of creation.[xlix] The unique qualities of the human soul connect them to the Divine in a manner that far exceeds the fundamental ability of all creations to recognize God mentioned above. Before entering the world, the human soul is a part of God that is incorporated into the supernal and sublime divine Light. [l] The soul maintains its permanent connection with the Divine even after being fused with a physical body; this bond allows the soul its lasting vitality even after the body has died.[li] The human soul also serves as a channel for divine energy into the physical realm. R. Hayyim describes it as the nexus that links upper spiritual worlds to the four elements, thus allowing corporeal matter to be infused with God's effluence.[lii] The human soul is the ladder of Jacob's dream, bridging between heaven and earth and uniting the two realms. The angels "ascending and descending upon it" are the mitzvoth; they are actions with the capacity to uplift the "supernal lights" (an allusion to kabbalistic theurgy) and bring down a "cascade of brilliant illumination" into the physical.[liii] Indeed, in observing the commandments the righteous throw open the heavenly conduits through which divine energy enters

the world.[liv]

R. Hayyim's understanding of the nature of the soul is not democratic, and he clearly believes that non-Jews have a different metaphysical structure.[lv] Spiritual facility remains a spectrum even amongst the Jewish people. The soul is an innately holy spark that is given as a divine gift, but it must be continuously refined and polished in order to increase its capacity for illumination.[lvi] A soul is able to apprehend holiness and becomes a prism for refracting divine effluence into the world only to the degree that it has been consciously prepared for this task.[lvii] Prophecy is similarly a function of spiritual refinement.[lviii] The mitzvoth are beacons along this journey, since performing a mitzvah cloaks one in the light of the *shekhina* and banishes negative desires and cravings.[lix] It is the quest for *devekut* that gives the spirit within a person the strength to rule over the matter of the body, thereby willfully turning a heart full of earthly passions into an extension of the soul. This transformation is always possible, even for individuals who have become totally sunken in corporeality, since their soul is an expression of the divine light of the *shekhina*.[lx]

Mankind has a singular pneumatic capacity, yet one is only able to perceive God's *light* while still a part of the physical realm. True divine essence remains forever beyond the threshold of human perception.[lxi] This might seem to incline one toward longing for death at the expense of valuing this world, and in some passages R. Hayyim does express a yearning for God that borders on asceticism.[lxii] When the Divine spoke directly to Israel's souls on Mt. Sinai, they were so overwhelmed with love that they fled from their bodies in order to reunite with their Source.[lxiii] This intense longing for communion with the Divine even at the expense of one's own life is best illustrated by R. Hayyim's explanation of the fate of Aaron's sons in Lev. 10:1-7:

> Their death was the result of having come too close to God. With great love they approached the supernal Light, and in doing so they expired; this is the "kiss" with which the righteous die. It is the same for all righteous individuals, though while the kiss comes to some of them, others go forth and pursue it… even the feeling of their death drawing near cannot hold them back from the dearest and most pleasant *devekut*, beloved intimacy and sweetest affection, until their very souls expire.
>
> The nature of this [experience] cannot be grasped. It lies beyond intellectual comprehension and cannot be expressed in words either spoken or written. It cannot even be imagined. In order understand it even to some small degree, one must remove the Evil Inclination that is holding him back. [Growing spiritual awareness] will allow one to see the signs of the accursed Inclination, and he can then nullify it and prevent it from getting in his way… as this ability increases within him, his soul will despise his flesh and will depart back to the house of its Father.[lxiv]

R. Hayyim's warning about the dangers of intimacy with the Divine is quite powerful, but the continuation of this passage one of the most remarkable and untranslatable descriptions of mystical

experience that I have ever seen. He repeats words built from the same linguistic root of *s.k.l.* over twenty times in quick succession, forging an assonantal matrix of expressions that simultaneously connote intellectual, spiritual and experiential illumination. This literary panzer-thrust must be meant to shatter the reader's assumptions about the boundaries of human consciousness; mystical communion with God is indeed possible without being entirely eclipsed within His infinitude, but it cannot be described with words as they are ordinarily used. Put differently, R. Hayyim employs language in a non-rational way to refer to an ineffable but experienceable degree of mystical attunement that lies outside the frontiers of expression.[lxv]

The rapture of *devekut* is too powerful a siren's call for some to resist, and they surrender themselves to death's divine kiss. However, R. Hayyim's overall understanding of mortality is a bit more complicated. His remarkable interpretation of the plain-sense of Deuteronomy 14:1 will help clarify this point:

"You are children of the Lord your God; do not gash yourselves nor shave the front of your head on account of the dead." It seems to teach us that it is no great tragedy when a person dies. This may be likened to a person who sends his son to another city on business. After a time the father sends for his son, and the son loses nothing when he leaves the place to which he was sent. On the contrary, it is a boon for him to return to his Father, who is the Source of all Life. Therefore, the verse teaches us not to rend our flesh [in a display of excessive mourning].[lxvi]

The second half of the verse reiterates that death is certainly no occasion for rejoicing, but remembering that the soul is simply returning to its natural unity with God should temper the grief we experience. Elsewhere, he likens the departure of the righteous to a precious jewel being lifted from its case and affixed to the crown of the King.[lxvii]

Given this understanding of departure from the physical world as a blessing, is there anything positive to the soul's brief sojourn on earth? In accord with a major current of the rabbinic tradition, R. Hayyim reminds us that death must always be bittersweet, for it is only this world that we are able to perform mitzvoth:

"If the servant declares, I have loved my Master and my wife and children and do not wish to go free… he will be his servant forever" (Ex. 21:5). This verse refers to a Jewish servant who burns with fiery passion to serve his Maker. Even after his physical powers have dwindled, he still longs and yearns to serve his Master. This is the meaning of "I have loved Master and my wife and children," which are the soul and the mitzvoth that he performs in this world. He has no wish to leave the world, becoming free of obligation like the dead. This teaches us about his desire and longing for his Master. God promises such a person that he will be called a servant of the Lord and his deepest desire will be fulfilled, but not now. At the moment he has no further connection to the world. "And he will be a servant forever" means that God will chose him from amongst the angels to be His faithful servant in

the world to come.[lxviii]

There is an element of sadness that accompanies the release of death. The soul is conflicted by its desire to remain in the physical world where it can serve God through observing the commandments, to the extent that God must promise it that it will be able to do so once more, presumably referring to the time of bodily resurrection. Furthermore, the brief marriage between body and spirit is mutually fructifying. On one hand, the soul is itself refined by the time spent in a physical body. On the other, the spiritual energies with which it imbues our performance of mitzvoth enable us to leave a positive impression upon the physical world around us that extends far beyond our own death.[lxix]

In keeping with his beliefs in the cosmic centrality of man and the eternal relevance the Torah's narrative, R. Hayyim often interprets biblical passages as sustained metaphors that shed light on the dynamics of the spiritual life and the power of the mitzvoth.[lxx] Indeed, his understanding of the relationship between the physical world, biblical text, and human consciousness dovetails with the ideal of mankind as *summum bonnum* of creation:

> Know that all physical existence is but an analogue (*dugma*) for the spiritual. Just as earth needs to be worked, requiring seeding and rainfall in order to bring forth food, so must a person guard himself from anything damaging and negative that prevents him from blossoming. Today the ground of the soul, rather than the corporeal body, has taken the place of the Garden of Eden. It requires work and protection of a type befitting its spiritual nature. The rainfall [it needs] is the study of Torah… and the seeds are the mitzvoth that one performs.[lxxi]

The physical world takes on an added layer of symbolic meaning when reframed as a source of inspiration for spiritual growth. The corporeal realm has limitations, but since it is the only plane on which the mitzvoth can be performed, humans can attain a level of divine awareness beyond the reach of even such purely spiritual beings as angels.[lxxii]

R. Hayyim frequently describes the general mystical significance of the commandments, but devotes little time to outlining their specific kabbalistic undergirding.[lxxiii] As we noted above, the *shekhina* literally dwells upon one who is performing a mitzvah. Paraphrasing of a teaching in the *Tikkunei ha-Zohar*, R. Hayyim adds that the very word "*mitzvah*" is a permutation of the ineffable name of God; observing a commandment is thus a way of tapping into the spiritual energy held within the holiest of divine names.[lxxiv] Physical actions like bringing sacrifices return the sparks of holiness, tiny fragments of the Divine splintered by Adam's sin and trapped in physical world.[lxxv] Following God's will by performing the mitzvoth can even bring one to the state of *devekut*, or intense communion with the Divine.[lxxvi] In one of his slightly veiled allusions to the *sefirot*, R. Hayyim

notes that “performing the mitzvoth opens up the pathways of effluence and unites the supernal *midot*,” drawing on the popular kabbalistic tradition that the commandments affect the upper realms as well. [lxxvii]

Though total immersion in Torah study receives special accolades,[lxxviii] R. Hayyim writes that all mitzvoth have deep mystical significance.[lxxix] This includes those mandated by logic (such as refraining from murder), or given explicit justification in the Torah (keeping the Sabbath). Hence, once cannot be selective in their observance.[lxxx] These reasons were revealed to Moses and his generation, but since then have been discerned only by rarefied individuals.[lxxxi] Ordinary people must endeavor to comprehend the secrets according to their ability, yet R. Hayyim says explicitly that the mitzvoth are spiritually efficacious even when performed with the simple intention of doing what is commanded.[lxxxii]

Concluding Remarks

R. Hayyim ibn Attar calls to mind Whitman’s famous quip, “I contain multitudes.” As an interpreter of Torah he was simultaneously bold and conservative, innovative and traditional. He was unwilling to entertain any deviation from rabbinic norms of *halakha*, but believed in absolute freedom of interpretation in the realm of theology and *parshanut*. R. Hayyim was a self-proclaimed *pashtan* concerned with explaining the biblical text according to its plain-sense, yet at the same time he believed that the Torah contains infinite layers of mystical significance awaiting discovery. For R. Hayyim, the banks of the biblical text hold an endless river of possible of interpretations, or in metaphor employed by the author himself, the Torah is a veritable garden of divine words ready to be sown and harvested.[lxxxiii] He saw no contradiction between these two different exegetical modalities, and felt comfortable harnessing them alongside one another under the yoke of his pen. With these interesting points in mind, let us ask how R. Hayyim’s Torah commentary may be a significant contribution to modern Jewish intellectual life and a remedy for the rote ritual observance all to common in contemporary religious communities.

First and foremost, R. Hayyim’s approach teaches us a balanced posture navigating between tradition and innovation. He was legally conservative and humble in his reticence to declare earlier commentators on the Torah incorrect, but at the same time R. Hayyim knew that the text could and

should be reinterpreted in new ways. R. Hayyim's understanding of the nature of Torah and the flexibility of its interpretation will serve as a useful model when asking our students to read and comment upon the Torah. Creativity is an indispensable asset that we should be cultivating, one that is often occluded by offering classes on pre-digested "*hashkafa*" instead of teaching our students to think nimbly and critically about our tradition. R. Hayyim's model will foster pluralism of interpretation, without for a moment forgetting that interpretations of the text running counter to our established legal norms ultimately cannot be maintained.

Second, educators must balance another set of important goals when teaching students how to interpret the Torah and other Jewish texts: we ask our students how to plumb their words for spiritual significance while remaining ever cognizant of their plain-sense meaning. Establishing the *peshat* of a passage is necessary for determining its literal and contextual explanation, as well as understanding its halakhic reverberations. This is an essential prerequisite for seeking a verse's deeper meaning. However, lest one object that abstract Kabbalah lies beyond the intellectual palette of our students, the next stage of looking for spiritual significance need not involve recourse to opaque theosophy. As we have seen, R. Hayyim's creative style of mystical interpretation employs the language of our kabbalistic heritage but goes beyond its complicated symbols, and his explanations are compelling precisely because they bring spiritual meaning into the realm of human experience. Concentrating exclusively on either the *peshat* or mystical at the expense of the other will be far less likely to hold the intellectual and spiritual commitments of our students than a judicious combination of the two.

Studying R. Hayyim's commentary is a particularly useful way of sparking classroom discussions of important spiritual issues that are grounded in close textual readings. When teaching *parshanut* it can be tempting to gloss over Ramban's terse kabbalistic references when we happen upon the words "*al derekh ha-emet*;" one will still learn much from Ramban's commentary even while ignoring over his Kabbalah, though a subtle and fundamental dimension of his *perush* will be lost. However, exploring the spiritual and mystical dimensions of the Torah are an integral part of *Or ha-Hayyim* and cannot be skipped. Some of these ideas will be a freeing corrective to the skeptical and sterile hyper-rationalism found in many Modern Orthodox communities. Grappling with other mystical themes will be difficult, but ultimately rewarding. For example, the essentialist understanding of the Jewish people, our inherent division from the nations of the world, and the negative picture of gentiles offends many of our modern ethical sensibilities.[lxxxiv] It contradicts the more universalistic elements in our tradition,

but is a voice that has been a part of the Jewish conversation for nearly a millennium and must be confronted. The same is true of gender imbalance found in the kabbalistic symbolism.[lxxxv] Nothing will be gained by avoiding these issues, and we have everything to lose by either sweeping them under the rug or accepting them without refusing to acknowledge their difficulties.

Students approaching the end of their high school education, whether about to go off to college or a year of learning in Israel, should first be confronted by fundamental questions such as the following: What does it mean, both practically and theoretically, to transform yourself into a dwelling for the *shekhinah*? What is the Torah, and what else does it contain besides the words of its text? Given the freedom we have in interpreting the Torah, how do you know when you cross the line? What is the nature and origin of evil? Where does reincarnation fit into our tradition? What does our tradition say about life after death and the World to Come? What is the status of miracles? What is the nature of our relationship to God, and what does it mean to cleave and connect ourselves to Him? How can performing mitzvoth be an intensely spiritual and meaningful experience? As they develop, our students will be confronted by questions of this type whether or not we have prepared them to think about such issues in an intelligent manner. Therefore, exploring them should be a primary goal of our educational system from the moment our students begin to think more abstractly and maturely about their religious praxis. They need a vocabulary with which to discuss matters of existential and spiritual import, and they deserve to know that it can very easily be found in the Jewish tradition.

There are several possible options for teaching R. Hayyim's work. *Or ha-Hayyim* can be included as one important voice amongst the concert of biblical interpretation on the page of the *Mikra'ot Gedolot*. This integrated approach has the advantage of allowing students to see R. Hayyim as part of an intergenerational dialogue focusing on Torah commentary and spiritual exploration. However, many schools assign the *Torat Hayyim* edition of *Mikra'ot Gedolot*, whose publishers focused only on the works of the *Rishonim* and thus excluded R. Hayyim's commentary. The inclusion of important neglected commentaries like that of R. Saadya Gaon and the careful deployment of manuscripts make *Torat Hayyim* a phenomenal tool for studying *humash*, but educators should be aware that using it precludes *Or ha-Hayyim* from having a place in their curriculum.

R. Hayyim's commentary may also be taught as a stand-alone work, perhaps as an optional *habura* to students interested in spending time getting to know his *parshanut* in greater depth. Dr. Aryeh Strikovsky assembled an excellent compendium of Hebrew language texts about and by R. Hayyim as

a part of the Israeli Ministry of Education's series on culture and Torah, but to my knowledge there is not yet a North American equivalent of this valuable resource.[lxxxvi] When focusing on *Or ha-Hayyim* exclusively, some recourse to the supercommentaries composed to elucidate his text will doubtless be quite helpful; R. Isaac Meir Hazenfratz's *Or Yakar* has proven a particularly accessible and helpful guide in my own studies.[lxxxvii]

Finally, as a parting word, we would do well to remember that our relationship with God is the very heart of our encounter with the Torah. This is true of the written text of the five books of Moses, and it should be equally true of our study of *Torah She'Be-Al Pe.* Dry sophistry and polemics should never be substituted for an honest and passionate engagement with the Torah and the search to know its Author, to the best of our ability. In R. Hayyim's words:

I trained my heart and my mind's eye on the Light of Life… and began with a prayer before the Source of all Wisdom… I titled this book "Light of the Life" because the Torah itself is called a light, as in the verse "the commandment is a lamp and the Torah is a light" (Prov. 6:23). Since light is associated with many things, such as a candle, the sun, the moon and the stars, I called it the "Light of the Life," which can only refer to the Creator of the world…[lxxxviii]

Let us remind our students, and ourselves, that the goal of our conversations must be the quest to gaze upon the *Or ha-Hayyim*, the true Source of all Illumination and Life.

[i] [NOTE: The following is an early version of a longer academic study devoted to mysticism and Kabbalah in R. Hayyim ibn Attar's commentary. Comments, suggestions, addenda, and criticism will be most welcome. A. E. M.]

[ii] R. Hayyim ibn Attar is especially beloved in the Hasidic world. See: David Assaf, "'A Heretic who has no Faith in the Great Ones of the Age': The Clash Over the Honor of the *Or Ha-Hayyim*," *Modern Judaism* 29:2 (2009), 194-225.

[iii] R. Hayyim's other published works include: *Hefetz Hashem*, on the Talmud (Amsterdam, 1742); *Peri To'ar*, on *Yore Dea* (Amsterdam, 1742); and *Rishon le-Tziyyon*, a posthumous collection of his teachings in *Eretz Yira'el* (Constantinople, 1750).

[iv] To this end, all footnotes of this article are intended to help the reader locate some of the relevant passages in *Or ha-Hayyim* as printed in the standard *Mikra'ot Gedolot ha-Ma'or* (Jerusalem, 1990), and are meant to be exemplary rather than exhaustive.

[v] The following summary is based on the remarks of Prof. Elazar Touitou, *Rabbi Hayyim ibn Attar u-Ferusho "Or ha-Hayyim" al ha-Torah* (Jerusalem, 1997), 13-15, paraphrased and translated here for the English reader. For a much fuller account of R. Hayyim ibn Attar's biography, see: Reuven Margoliyot, *Toledot ha-Or ha-Hayyim ha-Kadosh*, as

included in *Sefer Yad Or ha-Hayyim,* ed. Eliyahu Hayyim Carlebach (Hillside, 1981). An excellent précis of his life and times in English may be found in the eponymous Encyclopdia Judaica entry.

[vi] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Num. 24:6.

[vii] For example, see: *Or ha-Hayyim*, Gen. 1:9, *ahar she-katavti*; 6:3; 44:18; Ex. 21:1, *asher tasim*; Lev. 25:14, *ve-nire*; Num. 13:19.

[viii] Touitou, 60; *Or ha-Hayyim*, Lev. 19:3, *ve-kashe*.

[ix] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Lev. 26:3, #5.

[x] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Gen. 46:8, *u-khedei*.

[xi] Touitou, 161-71. *Or ha-Hayyim*, Gen. 7:5; Lev. 26:40; Deut. 2:20.

[xii] Touitou, 171-79. Gen. 38:1; 38:2; Ex. 12:3, *hine ba-sof*; Num. 20:8

[xiii] Touitou, 179-85. *Or ha-Hayyim*, Gen. 15:14-7; Gen. 25:19, *od nitkaven*; Ex. 25:9, *ve-ra'iti*; Ex. 39:24. For a possible instance of R. Hayyim engaging with Ramban's Kabbalah, see the end of his comments on Ex. 3:14.

[xiv] *Or ha-Hayyim*, hakdama, *ve-kidamti*.

[xv] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Ex. 19:9, *o yirtze*.

[xvi] Touitou, 52, 63-68. *Or ha-Hayyim*, Gen. 3:11.

[xvii] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Ex. 32:6, *od yire li.*

[xviii] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Gen. 18:4, *od yirmoz*.

[xix] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Ex. 39:1, *od nire lefi*.

[xx] Touitou, 236-37.

[xxi] Touitou, 43.

[xxii] Cf. *Or ha-Hayyim*, Ex. 23:19.

[xxiii] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Lev. 18:4, *od yirtze ma she-amar*.

[xxiv] For only an indicitave smattering of such citations from his commentary to Genesis alone, see: *Or ha-Hayyim*, Gen. 2:3; 3:1, #3; 18:1, *od yirtze lomar*; 37:35; 46:4, *od yirtze*; 49:1; 49:3, *ha-nakhon;* 49:9, *ve-hu sod*.

[xxv] Gen. 28:5, *va-aharei*; Gen. 47:29, *akhen;* Lev. 14:9, *u'va-derekh remez*, Lev: 19:9, *ve-amar*; Deut. 26:5, *ve-omro.* The discerning reader should remember the difference between sources cited by the author himself and those inserted by editors at a later point.

[xxvi] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Lev. 18:2, *od ulai*; Lev. 19:13, *od yirmoz*; Lev. 26:3, #33.

[xxvii] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Ex. 24:11, *ve-ulai*; Ex. 26:1, end.

[xxviii] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Gen 1:21; Lev. 22:12, *od yesh lekha… ki kol*; Num. 20:8, *ve'ha-maskil.*

[xxix] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Lev. 17:14, *ve-ra'iti*; Deut. 26:15.

[xxx] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Gen. 2:1.

[xxxi] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Gen. 2:2, *u-nire*.

[xxxii] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Gen. 2:2, *u'le-ma*.

[xxxiii] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Ex. 19:1.

[xxxiv] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Gen. 1:1, #22.

[xxxv] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Num. 23:10, *od lefi ma she-pirashti.*

[xxxvi] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Gen. 49:9, *akhen yitba'eru.*

[xxxvii] Or ha-Hayyim, Gen. 1:1, #22; Gen. 47:29, *akhen ha-kavanot*; Lev. 7:37, *le-hatat*; Num. 28:2, esp. *od nitkaven* .

[xxxviii] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Lev. 7:37, *ve-kodem*.

[xxxix] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Ex. 19:6, *od yirmoz*.

[xl] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Num 14:9, *ki lakhmenu*.

[xli] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Gen. 28:5, *ve-aharei*; Num. 28:2, *od nitkaven*.

[xlii] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Ex. 26:15, *remez*. For a few examples of R. Hayyim clearly invoking the *sefirot* by name, see: *Or ha-Hayyim*, Ex 25:23; Ex. 26:1; Lev. 7:37, *u'ye-pasuk*. In the occasions R. Hayyim refers to the concept of the *sefirot*, he more often uses the term *mida* (measure); see, inter alia: *Or ha-Hayyim*, Deut. 28:12.

[xliii] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Ex. 6:3, *od yitba'er*; Ex. 23:20.

[xliv] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Ex. 19:20, *od yirtze lehodia.*

[xlv] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Ex. 33:14.

[xlvi] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Deut. 33:2, *akhen yitba'er*

[xlvii] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Gen. 46:4, *akhen askilekha*; Ex. 25:9, *u'ye-derekh*.

[xlviii] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Gen. 1:1, #8; Deut. 21:11, *ve-hine*.

[xlix] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Gen 1:31, *od yirmoz*.

[l] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Ex. 20:2, *od yirtze, anokhi*.

[li] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Deut. 32:8, *ve'ha-kavvana*; Lev. 17:10, *ve-nire*.

[lii] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Lev. 22:12.

[liii] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Gen. 28:14.

[liv] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Deut. 28:12.

[lv] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Gen. 1:27. In a number of places R. Hayyim describes the spiritual capabilities of non-Jews in quite disparaging terms. I have attempted to highlight briefly the pedagogical difficulties and educational opportunities presented by this unsettling notion in the conclusion of this article.

[lvi] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Ex. 21:4, *ve-omro im ba'al*.

[lvii] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Ex. 33:11.

[lviii] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Num. 12:6, *hashem ba-mara*.

[lix] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Deut. 21:11, *ve-hine kevar*.

[lx] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Lev. 18:2, from *u'ye-ze navo*.

[lxi] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Ex. 33:23.

[lxii] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Deut. 6:5, ve-hine ha-maskil.

[lxiii] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Ex. 20:2, *od yirtze ledaber*.

[lxiv] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Lev. 16:1, *o yomar*.

[lxv] Cf. Touitou, 233-4.

[lxvi] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Deut. 14:1. My thanks to Prof. Bernard Septimus for drawing my attention to this passage.

[lxvii] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Num. 20: 1, *ve-nire*.

[lxviii] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Ex. 21:5.

[lxix] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Gen. 23:2, *va-tamat*.

[lxx] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Gen. 1:1, #8, 20.

[lxxi] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Gen. 2:15, *akhen*.

[lxxii] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Ex. 19:6, *o yirtze lomar*.

[lxxiii] The mitzvoth of *tzitzit*, *gid ha-nashe*, and a few passages describing the *mishkan* are notable exceptions to this rule. See, respectively: *Or ha-Hayyim*, Num. 15:39, *ve-tzviva*; Gen. 32:33; Ex. 25:23; 26:1; 26:15.

[lxxiv] According to the kabbalistic system of alphabet letter combination "*at-bash*," the first letter of the alphabet corresponds to the final letter, the second letter to the penultimate, and so on. In this case, the first two letters, *mem* and *tzadi* of *MiTzVaH* correspond to *yod* and *heh*, and when combined together they spell Y-H-V-H. See: Tikkunei Zohar, tikkun 29; *Or ha-Hayyim*, Ex. 12:3, *va-yikehu*; Lev. 18:4, *od yirtze… ma she-amar*; Lev. 19:2, *u'le-tzad*)

[lxxv] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Num. 28:2, *od nitkaven*.

[lxxvi] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Deut. 30:20.

[lxxvii] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Deut. 28:12.

[lxxviii] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Lev. 26:3.

[lxxix] Or ha-Hayyim, Ex. 39:1, *od nire*.

[lxxx] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Ex: 20:1; Ex 23:13.

[lxxxi] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Num 19:2, *asher tziva*.

[lxxxii] *Or ha-Hayyim*, Lev. 26:3, #33; Num. 19:2, *gam nityashev*; Deut. 12:28, *od yirtze*.

[lxxxiii] *Or ha-Hayyim*, hakdama, *u-lifamim*.

[lxxxiv] For example, see: *Or ha-Hayyim*, Gen. 28:5; Ex. 21:4, *od nire*; Ex. 31:16, od yitba'er; Num. 29:13.

[lxxxv] See: *Or ha-Hayyim*, Gen. 49:11, *oserei la-gefen*; Lev. 12:2, *u'le-ze*.

[lxxxvi] *Daf le-Tarbut Yehudit: R. Hayyim ibn Attar: Or ha-Hayyim ha-Kadosh*, ed. Aryeh Strikovsky (Jerusalem: *Misra ha-Hinukh*, 2008).

[lxxxvii] *Or ha-Hayyim im Biur Or Yakar* (Benei Brak, 2009).

[lxxxviii] *Or ha-Hayyim*, hakdama.