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EREV RAV TODAY ([ערב רב 200 ערב רב בארץ ישראל]) היום) In Shemoneh Esrei we ask Hashem, "And gather our dispersed, and rescue us from our land."

Many of the Jewish people have already returned to the Land of Israel. We have not merited the full redemption yet, but there are still many Jews who have returned to Israel, who were previously dispersed among the other nations.

In everything in the world, there is a mixture of good and evil. We must see the good - and evil - in everything. If something is evil, it must have good in it, and if something is good, we must see how some evil is also contained in it. Nothing is totally good or totally evil. Everything is a mix.

For example, even in learning Torah, which is the ultimate good, there is always some evil involved, because a person always learns with a little bit of shelo lishmah (ulterior motivations, not for the sake of Torah). So even good has some evil in it.

The fact that Jews have returned to the Land of Israel thus has in it good and evil as well. It is good that Jews have returned, but there is evil in it too: the Erev Rav (the "Mixed Multitude", souls of non-Jews who left Egypt together with the Jewish people and have repeatedly been the source of bad influence throughout the generations), has returned with them.

The fact that Jews have returned to the Land of Israel is obviously a good thing. Is it a beginning of the redemption, or is it all work of the Satan? This is an issue that has long been the source of much debate. It definitely is a spark of the redemption, but with it has come much evil - the jurisdiction of the Erev Rav on us, who are in "the fiftieth gate of impurity." The heads of the Erev Rav are ruling us.

There is so much good and evil going on here that it is incredible how mixed up everything has become. The fact that the Erev Rav is with us shows how deep our exile is - although we have begun a spark of the redemption, so much evil has come with it. It is a whole new depth to our exile we are in.

This present exile is the exile of the Erev Ray. There was the Egyptian exile, the Babylonian exile, the Persian exile, the Greek Exile, the Roman Exile, the Arab Exile and the Exile of the Erev Rav. The exile of the Erev Rav is very different from other exiles in that it is a great mix of good and evil. There was never an exile like this before! Yes, there is a spark of good contained here, because we are on the way to redemption. But this spark has been captured by evil - the Erev Rav.

Erev Rav has the same letters as the word areivus - which means "mixed." They are mixed with us, and this causes all the problems. It can also mean "sweetness". Their terrible desires have mixed with us and make us connected with them, causing us to think that it is they who have "sweetness."

The Chofetz Chaim did say that the Jews returning to Israel is the beginning of the redemption. That was true then, but now, much evil is coming along with this.

Someone who doesn't know the depth of our exile has no idea what is going on today.

We cannot mix with them without being affected by them. Their mixture with us causes areivus - evil sweetness. It makes people think that they have discovered "sweetness" in the evil desires of the Erev Rav. That is the depth of the "areivus." They are not just "mixed" with us - they make us believe that what they have is "sweet."

We are so mixed with them that we don't even realize how mixed we are with them and how much they affect us. That is the depth of their evil. They are so mixed with us that they go unnoticed. Frum Jews that want to deal with them are obviously so captured by this evil that they don't even realize.

This is the depth of our exile – that the Erev Rav appears so "sweet" to us. We ask Hashem to redeem us from exile, but we are really asking that He return us to the true way that the land of Israel is supposed to look. We must connect ourselves to the Creator in spite of the great doubts that the Erev Rav cause - evil souls who rebel against Hashem. This is what we ask Hashem that He redeem us from exile.

The Holiness of the Jewish Nation: Apart From The Other Nations וקדושים בכל יום יהללוך סלה "And the holy ones praise You every say, selah."

The Jewish people are called kedoshim, "holy ones." We are an am kadosh, a holy nation. We stood at Har Sinai, where we were made to be apart from the nations of the world. Holiness is in our entire makeup, in all our actions.

All Mixed Up As the generations continue and we are further from Har Sinai, our separation from the nations of the world is less apparent. We become more and more mixed with the nations, and our holiness weakens with this. It is hard to tell these days how a Jew is that different from a non-Jew. It seems as if a Jew's holiness is a long forgotten thing of the past.

We don't know when the redemption will come. We aren't allowed to know the end. Our Rabbis gave us some signs, but we cannot know the exact time. We also don't know the depths of their words, so we don't even know with clarity if the signs are showing. But one thing we know for sure. The further we are from Har Sinai, the more mixed we are with the nations.

Chazal say that at Har Sinai, hatred for the Jews entered the non-Jewish nations, because they realized that we are apart from them. It was clear then that we were apart from them. These days, when we are so mixed with the nations, it doesn't seem to appear to us that Jews are really apart from the nations as they are meant to be.

'Erev Rav': The Great Confusion That Has Entered Our Generation The members of "Erev Rav" ("Mixed Multitude") were also at Har Sinai, but the Ramban says that they were standing apart from the Jewish people. By the Golden Calf, the Erev Rav joined us, but at Har Sinai, they were standing in a different corner, away from us. As the generations go on, we are further from the level of Har Sinai – in other words, although the Erev Rav wasn't mixed with us at Har Sinai, now when we are so 'far' from the level of standing at Har Sinai, they are mixed with us. Their souls are very mixed with us.

Some say that the word "rav", which means "teacher", implies that the evil souls of Erev Rav have become like a "teacher" to us in our times, in that people are so influenced by them. Others even say that the word "rav", "most", implies that most of the 'Jewish people' now are really souls of the Erev Rav [as they become more and mixed with us, which is the situation of the final days].[1] There are very few true Jewish souls, in comparison to the many souls of the Erev Rav, who are the majority. (On a more subtle note, there is also the rule of "becoming nullified as a "sixtieth"...) It is not clear today who is really Jewish and who is from Erev Rav.

Searching For Truth If someone searches for the truth, this shows he stood at Har Sinai to accept the Torah [thus he is really Jewish]. If someone doesn't search for truth, it shows that he did not want the Torah at Har Sinai [which was the Erev Rav].

This does not just mean to search for Torah, tefillah, and mitzvos. It is to search for a truthful kind of Torah, a Toras Emes, which Moshe Rabbeinu gave us, who is the paradigm of emes\ truth.

L'ONTUSING LIMES As the generations increase, our struggles increase. We have struggles with our yetzer hora (Evil inclination) and with our middos. But in the later generations – especially in the last couple of years – we have entered a new kind of struggle: We do not know anymore what is true and what is false.

People are searching and they aren't finding what they search for. The generation in which Moshiach will come will be a generation which is very confused, Chazal say. There is tremendous confusion going on today. If someone lives with even a little bit of feeling, with even a drop of purity, he can see this clearly, that there is little truth to be found these days.

We are confused from all that we see. We see and hear about things going on in the world outside Torah, and this confuses us. We are confused as well by those who keep Torah and mitzvos, because we do not see enough pure and genuine Torah going on.

If someone doesn't care about truth, than he feels fine as long as he learns Gemara, but if he searches for truth, he won't be satisfied with being superficial, and it bothers him greatly that there is a lack of truth going on.

People have a hard time knowing what the truth is as they try to raise their children in the right way. People want to know what truth is, what way to go in, but they are very confused; they don't know what is good and what is not good, what is true and what is false.

This is really all because the Erev Rav has mixed up the world so much that we can't tell apart truth from falsity. In our generation, the Erev Rav is stuck to us 'like a dog licking its food'. They are so embedded in us that it is very hard for us to sift out good from evil, even for those who try to gain clarity in their life.

The amount of confusion and lack of clarity going on in the world today bothers any person who searches for truth. So what should we do? Chazal say to have a Rebbi, and that will save us from doubts. But what do you do if you're still even doubt even after that?

People don't even know what to do anymore, what to ask about; they don't feel like they have the heads to try to understand what's going on behind a

MIXED UP WITH THE MIXED MULTITUDE

problem, and therefore they don't even know what to ask about. They figure that matters should just be left to Rabbonim to be solved, as we do not have the heads to think properly. Even after asking, people have a hard time understanding what Rabbis are saying today. By the time he hears what the Rabbi said, so many different versions of what the Rabbi said have already mixed him up that he doesn't understand what the Rabbi is really saying.

People are saying today that they don't feel what holiness is, or what purity is. The breaches in modesty today are appalling and it dulls a person's mind when he sees it. All kinds of foods today have a hecsher (Kosher certification), technology has a hecsher...but that doesn't make it really kosher.

The 'Erev Rav' wants to uproot the little Torah that we do have. But we should know that the main war is not taking place in the outside world. The main war is taking place within the world of Torah - that we have become confused, and we don't know what the truth is.

The Only Hope This world we live in today is like walking "in the shadow of the valley of death". To anyone who lives a truthful life and who isn't satisfied with superficiality, this world feels like walking through death's valley. We have only one solution: even as we walk through death's valley, the possuk finishes by saying, "I do not fear evil, for You are with me".

Hashem is always with us. Chazal state that Hashem saw that there would be few tzaddikim so He has spread out the tzaddikim throughout the generations. If we reflect deeply, we can realize that we have nothing to do with this world. Deep in our soul, the main "mikveh" we have to immerse ourselves in, is to realize that we are not part of this world. We are like strangers here. (If anyone in this generation has yearnings for Hashem, he's basically a tzaddik in this generation...)

The city that you live in, the community you live in – you should feel like a stranger towards it. It is not your real place. Your neshamah came from above, from Heaven; it is a piece of Hashem. Realize that you have nothing whatsoever to do with this world! The "tzibbur" (congregation) today is not either your real place.

So if we are connected to this world, to where are we connected to? Our connection exists with Hashem, to His Torah, to His mitzvos, and to love others Jews – but in a true way.

What Bothers Us? We are living in very, very hard times. I am not referring to the wars that go on in the world today. I am talking about the indifference to spirituality that is going on. All connection to spirituality is being cooled off today; it is being uprooted.

What do people yearn for these days as they experience some moments of holiness? Does a person have yearnings for Hashem? Does he talk to Hashem and cry to him when he's alone? Or does he wonder who he is, like if he's of Yemenite descent or if he's just plain different, because he's so confused about who he really is...?

Returning To The Ways of Old The simple feeling we need to feel, first of all, is to feel all the time that we are 'strangers' to this generation. You are a stranger to the place you live in. We need to return somewhat to the life which our Avos lived – each person on his own level, as much as he can do.

We must disconnect ourselves from this lifestyle, even from things that have "hechsherim." We must search for those individuals who are truthful. We must daven for Moshiach and believe that he will come, but in the time being, before he comes, we have to feel like we are strangers to this world – even if we live in Eretz Yisrael.

Avraham Avinu also said he's a stranger to this world. As long as we live in a world in which our holiness is concealed from us, we need to feel like we are a stranger to this world, [and thus it applies to Eretz Yisrael as well, in which Erev Rav tries to uproot all holiness].

In our generation, anyone who truly searches for Hashem is like a rare individual. Not everything that has a hechsher do we need to have. It doesn't matter which community we are from – we all need to separate from the lifestyle of this generation.

Making This Practical: The Daily Hisbudedus To actually do this, and you connect to an inner kind of life in which you feel solitude in your soul, apart from this world – every day, make a deep hisbodedus (meditation) and connect yourself deeply to Hashem, to His Torah, and to His mitzvos.

In **Conclusion** We do not know what will be. But it is clear that we are living in a time of darkness. May we merit to see the light of Hashem, the light of Torah, the light of our neshamah – and may we all merit to see the coming of Moshiach, speedily in our days.

[1] See the words of the Vilna Gaon in sefer Even Shelaimah, 11: 6-8. The Rov has mentioned the Erev Rav a number of times in Tefillah #085-Erev Rav Today, Chanukah #048-Greek Exile Today, and Tefillah #76-Protection From Illness.

תפילה 048 וקדושים בכל יום

PROTECTION FROM ILLNESS OF THE EREV RAV

Unique Healing To The Jewish People

The blessing of Refoeinu concludes with, "רופא", "(Blessed are you, Hashem), Who heals the sick of His nation Yisrael."

We emphasize here the fact that Hashem heals the Jewish people from their sicknesses; this implies to us that even though Hashem heals the entire world, He heals the Jewish people with a special kind of healing. He gives special healing to "His" nation, Yisrael.

A non-Jew is healed in a different way than a Jew is healed. A non-Jew is at the mercy of doctors – as Chazal say, "Permission is given to the doctor to heal." The Chasam Sofer[1] stated that we cannot bring any medical proof from a non-Jew's body to how we heal a Jew's body, because since a Jew has a higher soul than a non-Jew, the healing is not the same.

The Chasam Sofer revealed to us a very novel concept – not only is a Jew's soul vastly different than a non-Jew's soul, but even their physical bodies are different.

Meriting Hashem's Healing

Even more so, if a Jew would never be influenced by a non-Jew, he would never even get sick! Yaakov Avinu only got sick when he came to Egypt. This was not a coincidence. As soon as he entered the impure surroundings of Egypt, he was able to get sick.

Hashem says, "I will separate you from the nations." This is the key we need in order to merit the promise that Hashem made to us: "Any illness which I placed upon Egypt, I will not place upon you, for I am Hashem, your healer." That is how we are truly healed – when we are separated from the nations. But when we are influenced by the nations, we are susceptible to their various sicknesses which Hashem brings upon them.

The more a person reveals his "Yisrael" from within – the more he identifies himself as being of the Jewish nation - the more he is of "His nation, Yisrael", and he gains special healing from Hashem.

Egypt was the root of all the exiles. When we left Egypt, Hashem said, "Any illness which I placed upon Egypt, I will not place upon you." The meaning of this is, as much as you leave Egypt's influences – to that extent, I will not place any sicknesses on you that the other nations have.

When the Jewish people were in the desert, they complained, and they wished to return to Egypt. They missed certain foods they used to have there. What happened? There was a plague, and they got sick. Because they reconnected themselves to Egypt, they became susceptible to sickness.

We were all in Egypt; our souls were there. When we were in Egypt, although we were mixed with them, we did not change our style of dress, speech and names. This shows us that we have the power to remain uninfluenced by the nations even as we are mixed among them.

Every day we make а beracha, "Shelo goy"; asani we thank Hashem that He did not make non-Jew. us а

Exile Outside & Inside Eretz Yisrael

However, sometimes it can happen that a Jew wishes to return to 'Egypt'. This is due to the influence of the "Erev Rav" in our nation. But either way, it is possible for a Jew to yearn to return to his root exile - Egypt.

It appears in the physical sense that we have left the exiles of Egypt, Bavel, Persia-Media, and Edom. But there are other exiles which we

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are still in. The Greek exile did not really end; it continues even as we are in Eretz Yisrael, in which we are in the exile of Edom and Yishmael. [2] Right now we are in the deepest kind of exile, and it contains elements of all the exiles.

One kind of exile affects those who don't live in Eretz Yisrael. These are the Jews who live in countries outside of Eretz Yisrael, and they live a very enjoyable kind of life. It seems to them that everything is fine, even though they are mixed with other nations and influenced by them. That's one kind of exile – the fact that they are not in Eretz Yisrael, and exiled among the nations instead.

Although Jews in other countries are influenced by their non-Jewish neighbors, at least they are somewhat aware that they are in exile, though.

But there is another kind of exile going on, and it takes place in Eretz Yisrael. It is no less of an exile than the exile to Jews in other countries. It is the exile of the Erev Rav – the fact that we are exiled among people who wish to uproot religion and Torah. It is not as obvious, because Jews here think that we are not found together with non-Jews, while in reality, we are.

The Exile In Eretz Yisrael

Most people in Israel are not even Jews – simply speaking. Most of Israel are people from other nations who have come here, and they claim to be Jews, but they are not, from a purely Halachic perspective. In addition, there even people who are Halachically Jews, but they are really not, because they are from the Erev Rav. These are "Jews" who get worse and worse, bringing down others with them in their influences. How many Jews are there really in Eretz Yisrael? In reality, very few. If a Jew lives in another country, like if he lives in Africa, it's clear to him that he's living in exile. But if a Jew lives in Eretz Yisrael and he thinks that he lives among Jews, he is mistaken, because most of Eretz Yisrael is not Jews. Most of the "Jews" here are souls from the Erev Rav! That is the depth of the exile in Eretz Yisrael, and it is caused by the Erev Rav themselves. The Erev Rav are so mixed with us that it is hard for a Jew to think that he is really mixed with them.

Most of the Jews in Eretz Yisrael are not even Jews in the Halachic sense; they are people from other nations who have come to live here and mix with us. And even those who are "Jews" here are mostly from Erev Rav.

This is yet only the outer layer to our exile – the fact that there aren't even so many Jews in Israel.

But there is a deeper aspect to the exile here. A Jew who lives outside Eretz Yisrael is clearly in exile. A Jew who lives in Israel is also in exile, but in a more subtle and deeper way. The exile of the Erev Rav in Eretz Yisrael is a subtle kind of exile, because it's harder to notice. It's an exile within an exile within an exile – and this is due to the influences that keep creeping into Torah society.

The Food We Eat

For example, as soon as something new comes out in the non-Jewish world, there is immediately a thought amongst Jews: How can we manufacture this in a kosher way to the Jewish world? There are new foods that come out all the time in the world, and immediately there are Jews who seek to introduce it to the Jewish world – with a hechsher of course, and finding Rabbonim to back them. When people seek to make non-Jewish foods kosher, what is the intention? Giving in to physical

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desires, making money from it, and to get honored for introducing them to our society...

The Clothing We Wear

New styles of clothing that become acceptable in frum society are being introduced by non-Jews. Most of the clothing we have today is designed by a non-Jew – that is their source.

The Books We Read

Even sefarim today that come out are authored by many people who borrow non-Jewish ideas. And they even get Rabbonim to give them approbations. The whole spirit of the author is often taken from a non-Jew's ideas about life.

Reflecting

If a person is truthful, he sees that the exile surrounds us from every possible angle.

We are very influenced by them – sometimes willingly, and sometimes it is because there is nothing we can do about it, but either way, we are still influenced by them, and we must be aware of this. A Jew needs to ask himself each morning if he truly feels grateful to Hashem that he was not made a non-Jew, "Shelo asani goy."

If anyone reflects, he will discover that most of the things we make use of are coming from non-Jews. We are not only exiled in a place in which there are non-Jews. The main part of our exile is that we ourselves have been influenced by them. We are influenced by them in so many aspects – in our food, in our clothing, in our vacations, and in many other areas.

One should first become aware of this, at least intellectually, and then he should proceed to feel this in his heart: We are among non-Jewish influences, and we are very affected by them. We must yearn to separate from all of the influences that are upon us (knowingly and unknowingly), because we are supposed to be separate from the nations.

In Conclusion

There are all kinds of illnesses going around the world today. There are many reasons, but one of the reasons for this is because when a Jew doesn't wish to be of Yisrael and he would rather connect to non-Jewish influences, he separates himself from the nation of Yisrael, and then he does not gain the special healing which Hashem gives to the Jewish people, as we say in the Refoeinu blessing.

Hashem said, "Any of the illnesses I placed on Egypt, I will not place upon you, for I am Hashem, Your healer." In order for us to have healing coming from our true Doctor, Hashem – we need to separate ourselves from "Egypt", from non-Jewish influences of the exile.

In everything we come across, we must trace its source. Is it coming from holiness, from the Torah – or is it coming from a non-Jewish source...?

We can't change the world. There is no single Jew who can come and change the world. But, what we can do, is that each of us can separate ourselves, on a personal level, from the non-Jewish influences – and instead identify ourselves as being of Hashem's people, Yisael. Whereupon we can then merit to gain special protection from Hashem from sicknesses – to merit the exclusive healing of what we say in the end of the Refoeinu blessing: "The Healer of His nation, Yisrael."

[1] Chiddushei Chasam Sofer, Shabbos 86b

[2] See the shiur of Chanukah #048 (and Tefillah #0103), "Greek Influence Today".

תפילה 076 חולי עמו ישראל

Seeing How Parts Of The Soul Are Interconnected

If a person only learns about each part but doesn't connect them together, he has a disparate view. He won't see how all the parts connect into one unit [as explained in previous chapter]. When studying his soul, he won't learn it as the "story" that it really tells. In order for one to properly learn about his soul, he will need the first three stages mentioned and he will also need to view this as a preparation for the fourth stage – seeing how the parts of the soul intersect and interconnect with each other. As for the final stage (seeing the full picture of the soul), it is clear that if a person doesn't see the connection between the different parts of the soul, he won't be able to view all the parts of the soul as one unit.

We shall explain about this topic a bit here (though it is not really the place to discuss it). First we will bring some examples from the physical body.

The nose and mouth are two separate parts of the body, but they are interconnected. That is why a person can inhale through the nose and exhale through the mouth, and vice versa. The nose, ears, and throat are each separate from the other, and each of them has a different role. The nose breathes and smells air, the ears hear outer stimuli, and the throat produces speech and swallows food. But in spite of their distinct roles, they are each interconnected with each other. An issue in one of these parts will affect the other parts. Even in the medical world, the nose, ears, and throat are regarded as one area divided into three parts.

Another very important example is the digestive process. When a person is eating, many parts of the body are involved in assisting this process, though each body part stands on its own. The eyes see the food, the hands lift it into the mouth, the teeth grind the food, the tongue guides it towards the throat, and eventually the food finds its way to the digestive system. The internal organs responsible for digesting the food – the intestines, liver, spleen, and bladder, will then take over. The food becomes split into different parts. Some of the food gets sent to the blood, other parts get turned into fat, and the other parts are expelled from the body. All of the body's parts work together jointly, for the purpose of keeping a person nutritious.

It is the same with the soul. Though each faculty of the soul stands on its own, there are relationships between all the soul-faculties. For example, a person has the power to think and an ability to love. These abilities are independent from each other, because a person can think about something he doesn't love, or he can love something even without thinking about it. Yet, these abilities can also influence each other. A person's thoughts can bring him to love someone very much, and so can a person's love for someone cause him to think a lot about the one he loves.

Here's another example. A person has the ability of emunah (to believe and trust in something) and also the ability of speech, which are two separate abilities that don't depend on each other. A person can believe in something yet he won't speak about what he believes in, and he can speak words that aren't connected with his faculty of emunah. Yet these two abilities can combine together and influence each other. One's emunah can cause him to speak about his emunah and thereby strengthen what he believes in: "I believed, for I spoke." ¹

And, besides for these two examples about soul-abilities that can connect with each other, there is also a relationship between the soul and



the body in general, where the body and soul each influence each other, either working together or harming the other. For example, when one does things with his hands or walks with his feet, these movements do not originate in the body, but in the soul, which has a system of its own that influences the body. A person wants a certain thing, then he thinks about it, and then he does something with his body to try to do it or get it. When a person is very happy, he gets up and dances. The joy originates in his soul and then spreads to his body, which expresses the soul's joy through the physical act of dancing. The body also influences the soul. When a person gets a physical blow, and it hurts very much, he feels sad from this. When one eats something that isn't healthy, this influences his mood.²

From all of the above, it is apparent that when we are approaching the study of the book that is called "man", we need to learn about each part of the soul and where its place is in the general structure – to know how each part of the soul is contributing to the personal "story" that each soul tells. We need to see also how each part of the soul joins with other parts of the soul and influences them.³

2 Certainly, the relationship between the body and the soul is a separate study of its own, and here is not the place to delve into it. But as a general note, to the degree that one is more connected with his body – meaning that he identifies himself primarily as a guf (body) and less as a soul – to that extent will the body's state affect the state of the soul, and so will issues in the soul will also be of negative influence to the body's health. This is one of the main reasons why there are so many soul [emotional] issues and physical ailments today in our generation. In contrast, if one identifies himself mainly as a soul, and he views his guf as merely a garment that serves the soul (as explained in sefer Da Es Atzmecha, "Getting To Know Your Self"), the negative effects of the body on the soul will be minimized, and so will the effects of the soul on the body be minimized.

3 This current chapter is explaining the need to learn about

How Can We Remember So Many Details?

In order to reach the stage of learning about where each part of our soul belongs in the general picture or story of our soul, and to understand the relationship between all our different parts, we need a lot of patience. We first have to learn about each part separately. Really, though, each stage of this learning process hinges on another stage. On one hand, the ability to understand the relationship between all the soul-faculties depends on understanding each part separately. At the same time, the ability to remember all of these parts of our soul depends on understanding the relationship between them.

Naturally, there is a difficulty with remembering so many details (the parts of the soul we need to learn about). But when we learn the role of each part and where it belongs in the general picture – or rather the complete "story" of our own personal soul – then we will see each detail as being part of a general system, and it will then become easier to remember those details and absorb them.

When one delves into self-recognition in this way, he is absorbing the information in his soul, not just in his intellect, so he will remember the details much better. To say it even more precisely, the true place in ourselves where we can remember and absorb information is not in our intellect, but in our soul itself – in the depth within depth that there is in our souls.

NEXT WEEK: CONTEMPLATING OUR EXPERIENCES (CH. 7)

the parts of our soul, but in the practical sense after we have learned about it intellectually, we then need to learn how to recognize these matters with our soul. That will be explained in the coming chapters.