



THE LIVED RELIGION

Book 3

SOUL

¹ Today, men seek to gather where they have not planted, they desire the increase, but disdain the effort,

² they seek to benefit through the toil of others, unproductive tongues move vigorously, while skilled hands are idle,

³ men must learn that no more can be taken from the storehouse than was placed in there;

⁴ where are the men of self-assurance? the men of straight tongue and of constant speech? that were known of yore?

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⁵ today, if an ass were king men would bray,

⁶ this is the day when fine speech flourishes, but it lacks substance, it falls from the tongue and is lost on the wind,

⁷ the words of the night are soaked in honey, but as day dawns, they melt away with the dews of morning,

⁸ even the words of lovers are sweet for but a time, tomorrow they turn to bitterness and gall,

⁹ O for the days that were, the joyous days now past, when words were things of substance with but one meaning!

¹⁰ now, my days are without object, they are spent in stringing and unstringing my lyre, while the song I wish to sing remains mute in my heart,

¹¹ I do not look for the overthrow of evil, I do not bewail the existence of wickedness, these will always be while man remains mortal,

¹² wickedness will flourish even in the House of Elohim, for has He not ordained in the Torah to permit a poisonous weed to grow among healing herbs?

¹³ neither do I seek for any undue reward, nor do I consider my goodness deserves it, yet, I would enjoy some pleasure undiluted with sorrow,

¹⁴ for now, even at the bottom of the rare cup of joy, lies the dregs of bitterness and sorrow;

¹⁵ because my tongue did not turn around corners and twist back on itself, because the words I spoke came from my heart,

¹⁶ undiluted with any malicious thought,

¹⁷ because I chided the rich for their selfishness and inconsideration, their wasteful living and meaningless activities, they became my enemies,

¹⁸ because I called upon the powerful to live according to the Torot they professed to uphold, and the Words declared to be Kodesh, I was seized and imprisoned,

¹⁹ when I protested the injustice to the ears of the people, I was beaten with rods, I was branded as "One who seeks to destroy the stability of the land,"

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²⁰ I, who tried to set an example of goodness, to lead a life dedicated to my Elohim, to convert the wicked to righteousness, am myself declared wicked by the workers of evil!

²¹ why is this, O my Adon? have I, to my sorrow and undoing, weighed the values of Your Torah wrongly?

²² I, who was once a man of estate, am now poor, I have been deprived of all I possess,

²³ I supported the oppressed against the powerful and lent my arm to the lowly,

²⁴ I threw my own riches into the balances, to counter the injustices of the rich,

²⁵ and what has been my reward from those to whom I gave aid and succour? do they not mock me and hold me in contempt?

²⁶ am I not called a fool even by them?

²⁷ I am thrown crusts of bread in pity, but no man calls me friend,

²⁸ I speak to men, but they become restless and remember things which call them away,

²⁹ the sight of me causes men to quicken their steps and change the direction of their journey,

³⁰ has goodness, then, become a plague in the land?

³¹ I have sought but to turn others from wickedness, and to replace their misdeeds with deeds of goodness!

³² I have sought to revalue virtue! so that it becomes honoured among men, not merely a plaything of words, but a treasure held in the heart,

³³ yet, men mock me, they say, "These are things in which we too believe, but no man can wholly live by them,

³⁴ they are not the substance of life, and none but a fool discards the substance for the shadow!"

³⁵ where is my dwelling? is it not occupied by one who wrings tears from widows and steals the food of orphans?

³⁶ the wicked one sleeps on a bed of comfort, the righteous one lays his head upon a stone;

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³⁷ the wicked one contemplates his end with contentment, a fine burial and earthly honour awaits him,

³⁸ the righteous one will mingle his bones with those of dogs and cattle;

³⁹ where are my servants? do they not toil for one who deals with them harshly? who rejoices at the sweat that pours down on their labours?

⁴⁰ the wicked one sits on the seats of comfort, he wallows in an over-abundance of good things,

⁴¹ while the righteous one squats in the burning sun, he is grateful for a few crumbs and a little water;

⁴² the wicked one never lacks the delights and services of women, the righteous one lacks even a smile of compassion, a hand to touch his head;

⁴³ where are my children, the comfort and consolation of an old man? do they not labour with bitterness of heart?

⁴⁴ bearing the scorn poured upon the grey head of their father with unrewarding fortitude?

⁴⁵ the wicked ones display their riches and mock my children,

⁴⁶ saying, "All this is ours to enjoy, or give others at our pleasure! where then is your reward?"

⁴⁷ the righteous one cannot give even a piece of rag to patch the garments of his offspring, or a morsel of food to ease their hunger;

⁴⁸ where are my riches? where my estate? are they not enjoyed by the avaricious and haughty? the sly man and the cunning man? the hypocrite and deceiver?

⁴⁹ the wicked ones have no thought of righteousness and virtue, they are clad in comfort and filled to fullness,

⁵⁰ while the righteous one has half a garment, and his next meal is unseen;

⁵¹ O Supreme Elohim! is Earth the heritage of the wicked? or the heritage of the good?

⁵² if goodness is to be won for Earth by example, then what must I do?

⁵³ if by words, what more can I say? if by weapons, can an unarmed man fight a multitude?

⁵⁴ where have I failed? I do not know, I have no answer, I believe, I hope,

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⁵⁵ I am an old man bowed down with the cares of an old man, the fires of youth are burned out, leaving just the grey comfortless ashes,

⁵⁶ when men ask, I answer, "I do not know," can any man answer more truthfully?

⁵⁷ hear this! this man's success was in his failure, in trying to change others, he changed himself!

⁵⁸ each effort was a shaping stroke to glory!

⁵⁹ Earth is as it should be, it cannot be changed, but if a man would change himself to his own benefit, he must ever strive and seek to change the Earth,

⁶⁰ the message of this writing is not one of futility, but one of hope, no man could have better shaped his future.

2 Awful is the Great Day of Judgment at its dawning in the Netherworld!

² the soul stands naked in the Hall of Judgment, nothing can now be hidden, hypocrisy is no avail,

³ to maintain goodness when the soul reveals its own repulsiveness is futile,

⁴ to mumble empty ritual is foolishness,

⁵ to call upon elohim who have no existence is a waste of time,

⁶ behold, in the Great Hall every man is judged! on that Day and henceforth, his qualities shall form his food,

⁷ his soul, soft as clay upon Earth, is hardened and set into shape at death, according to its moulding during life!

⁸ the balances are adjusted; Truth is the assessor; one arrives:

⁹ Shall he dwell among beauty as an elohim-ling? or be given captive to the Keeper of Horrors, to dwell among vile things under a merciful mantle of darkness?

¹⁰ one arrives: The twisted body and the ugly face have gone, discarded at the portal,

¹¹ he strides through the Hall in radiance! to pass into the Place of Everlasting Beauty!

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¹² one arrives: Now no earthly body shields the horror which is the true likeness of the evildoer upon Earth,

¹³ he runs from the light, which he cannot tolerate, and hides himself in the shadows near the Place of Terror,

¹⁴ soon he will be drawn to his compatible place among Dismal Company!

¹⁵ one arrives: He has been upright and a just one, his failings and weaknesses were of little account,

¹⁶ this upright man fears nothing, for he is welcomed among the Bright Ones, and shall go unhampered among the Everlasting Adonai!

¹⁷ one arrives: He trembles before the Unseen Judge, he is lost, he knows nothing, earthly knowledge and confidence are left behind,

¹⁸ the balance drops, he sees his soul and recognises his true self, he rushes into the merciful darkness,

¹⁹ it enfolds him, and dark arms embrace him, drawing him into the terrible gloom, into the Place of Dark Secret Horrors!

²⁰ one arrives: She graced the court with beauty where men sang of her loveliness and grace, now, as when a mantle is removed, all is discarded, it is the Time of Unveiling!

²¹ who can describe the lustful thoughts and secret unclean deeds which fashioned the horror coming through the portal? there is a hush among the compassionate!

²² one arrives: On Earth she was pitied by the compassionate and scorned by the hard-hearted,

²³ there, her lot was degradation and servitude, privation and sacrifice, few and meagre were the gifts from life, yet she triumphed!

²⁴ now, she comes forward surrounded by brilliance, even the Shining Ones are dazzled by her beauty!

²⁵ one arrives: The twisted face and pain-wracked body of the cripple have been left behind, a kind and loving soul dwelt imprisoned within its confines,

²⁶ now, the relieved ruach steps forward into the Great Hall, unencumbered and free, glorious to behold!

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²⁷ one arrives: The splendid body which graced Earth remains there, an empty, decaying thing,

²⁸ the naked soul enters the Everlasting Halls, it is a deformed, misshapen thing fit only to dwell in the merciful gloom of the place with which it has compatible affinity!

²⁹ read, O children of the unborn years, and absorb the wisdom of the past, which is your heritage,

³⁰ the enlightening words from a past, which is to you in days so far away, and yet in truth, so near!

3 The Earth is not for the pleasure of man, but it is a place of instruction for his soul,

² does a man not more readily feel the stirrings of his ruach in the face of disaster, than in the lap of luxury?

³ the tuition of the soul is a long and arduous course, of instruction, discipline, and training!

⁴ Heaven: Where perfection visualised on Earth may be realised, and desires and ideals materialised, where hard-striven-for aspirations are attained,

⁵ it is the place where all the properly developed ruach-ual potential latent in man reaches maturity and fulfilment!

⁶ Earth: The place of training, development, and preparation, the testing ground,

⁷ the battlefield, where men discover their true natures when confronted by life's challenges, contests, and contentions,

⁸ where competition and controversy are the rule,

⁹ it is here that aims and objectives are conceived and thought out for realisation later in the proper place,

¹⁰ it is a starting point, the beginning of the journey, it is here that the proper road must be wisely chosen!

¹¹ when death calls for you, let him not find you ill-equipped and unprepared,

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¹² in the final hour, which must surely come, there will be no opportunity for fine speech and nought can delay his command,

¹³ then all the possessions you have cherished and stored will be as nought, and all you will be able to take with you will be that which you have fashioned within;

¹⁴ do not be numbered among the foolish, who say, "Time enough, for I am yet young,"

¹⁵ death claims the breast-child as well as the aged, and on this you should ponder,

¹⁶ consider well your future estate!

¹⁷ here, you are the architect of your future abode,

¹⁸ Earth is the place of sowing, Heaven is the place of reaping,

¹⁹ here, you are the sculptor who chisels the statue, the potter who fashions the pot, the woodworker who carves the pillar,

²⁰ what is there on Earth more deserving of your care and attention, than your own future form, appearance, and destination?

4 You ask for words to guide, and I answer thus:

² Be still, be quiet, shabbat in silence with tranquillity of heart,

³ calm the restless surges of unbidden thoughts, the oppressions of uncontrolled desires,

⁴ there, in the stillness and silence, you will be a shining, motionless, unflickering light, like a flame of a candle on a windless night,

⁵ that is the pure flame of self! the light that guides towards Divinity,

⁶ it is the small light of Eternal wisdom, lit from the Infinite Flame of Truth;

⁷ the path of shalom is not always the path of progress,

⁸ the path of pleasure is pleasant, while the path of progress is beset with pain and strife,

⁹ but let your ruach be at shalom, for things happen as they will, it is the grain being winnowed from the chaff;

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¹⁰ only the good vessel is worthy of the fire, it is burnt, that its shape may be set and its design endure,

¹¹ so be aware, it is always easier for men to follow the ways of the flesh than the ways of the Ruach,

¹² there is a ladder which rises before you:

¹³ Its two supports are experience in the body and experience in the ruach, the rungs are your daily deeds, and your thoughts and fantasies of your earthly life,

¹⁴ now is the test, will your daily deeds and secret thoughts support your ascent? or, are they incapable of bearing you upward?

5 We are taught that we live forever, and this is true, selah; but it is equally true that no moment of life must be wasted,

² for each hour and day on Earth is a shaping for the future!

³ we are the inheritors of a portion of time, we can dissipate it on futile things, or utilise it to our everlasting benefit,

⁴ the span of man's life is neither long nor short, but sufficient for its purpose,

⁵ whatever benefits a man wishes to attain for his soul may be attained in his lifetime,

⁶ a lifetime is sufficient to fashion the soul to ultimate glory or to ultimate horror!

⁷ what end would a longer life serve? to the wicked, an opportunity for more evil,

⁸ to the selfish, more time to hurt others, and to the miserly more time to lay up worthless things,

⁹ the slothful ones would rejoice, for there would be more time for their idleness!

¹⁰ each man's life should leave its impress on Earth, and each man should depart a better man for having lived!

¹¹ every sorrowful blow that falls upon the soul is a tempering stroke, the metal that suffers the fires of the furnace longest is the finest in quality,

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¹² sorrow, suffering, and the afflictions which beset men are not sent wilfully,

¹³ they are necessities for existence, without which the slumbering soul could not awaken, they are needful for its development,

¹⁴ therefore is it not a vain hope and foolishness to expect miracles to protect you? and prevent you from deriving the benefit of these experiences?

¹⁵ is it reasonable to expect exemption from the things you were born to experience?

¹⁶ therefore, accept with good grace that which life bestows on you,

¹⁷ is it not better to endure manfully the things which are unavoidable?

¹⁸ the scales are never wholly unbalanced: A loss is recorded to adversity, and a gain is recorded to experience,

¹⁹ joy is taken from the body, and strength is added to the soul,

²⁰ but even enter the habitation of joy with caution, for a heady brew is served therein, which can call forth the demons of mischief and madness!

²¹ the Torah is fixed, unchangeable, not so your soul, for here you alone are responsible for its appearance,

²² remember that every thought and deed is a thread in the pattern of the fabric, so think well, will the tapestry be a thing of beauty? or of ugliness?

²³ the soul can be whatever it wills itself to be, it is the fashioner of its own form and destiny.

6 As the great sycamore resides in a tiny seed, so does your soul occupy your body,

² and as the dark soil wherein the seed is planted to the sunlit splendour above, so is this life to the life beyond the tomb!

³ as health is to the body, so is conscience to the soul,

⁴ that man is a soul residing within a body is the most obvious of truths, though seek not to understand it too perfectly,

⁵ for understanding is a quality of the soul itself, and this has to be awakened;

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⁶ your soul came into the body as a new turn of the scroll, the sheet is clean, ready for use, but what you write thereon is recorded forever!

⁷ your soul is as a newly cut block of marble, upon which every thought and deed strikes a blow,

⁸ it is as fresh clay cast upon the potter's wheel, you alone are the craftsman for the fashioning of your soul, you alone are the artist of the design,

⁹ is it a bright thing of joyous beauty formed by goodness? or is it a dark corrupt horror deformed by vice and wickedness?

¹⁰ ask these things of your ruach, for only it knows what lies hidden within;

¹¹ to nourish and groom the body is by no means undesirable, but take care that you neglect not the soul,

¹² the body comes, it grows and decays, the soul remains forever, therefore cherish the everlasting soul, for it is your own true self,

¹³ glorify your body! cherish it, keep it well, for it is the dwelling place of the soul,

¹⁴ and is not such a master worthy of a well kept habitation?

¹⁵ to revile or mortify the body is a wickedness, for thus, you desecrate the most glorious temple on Earth!

¹⁶ as ground must be prepared for the barley, and clay kneaded for the wheel, so has your body to be prepared for the fulfilling of its purpose,

¹⁷ therefore let the soul rule your body unchallenged! for if there be revolt, then you are torn asunder;

¹⁸ health is the reflection of harmony between soul and body,

¹⁹ with what do you smell? with your nose? is not the nose intact on a corpse?

²⁰ and the eye? does it see when the ruach departs?

²¹ like an oar without an oarsman, like a sail without a wind, like a bow without a bowman, like a dwelling without an inhabitant, such is the body without the soul;

²² my ruach departs to its abode, beyond the power of sharp sword, beyond the reach of thrusting spear, beyond the range of swift arrow,

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²³ face to face with what must be and cannot be altered, face to face with the ultimatum of destiny, cease from sorrow.

7 What is this passing thing called life? this fragile flower so tenderly cherished, seen in its true frailty, here on the field of blood? does it have any real meaning?

² here on the field of blood the dead sleep to awake to glory!

³ but to the victorious ones remaining alive there is glory on Earth, so, do not dally here with the dying,

⁴ arise, go to your proper reward and lay me down to mine; fear not for me, already I see the welcoming light beyond the veil! we shall meet again!

⁵ now, the years of earthly instruction are left behind,

⁶ the last lesson is read, the pupil has departed to take up his appointed task,

⁷ he has been born to life! and death has been left behind! there are no dead, just the departed living,

⁸ death alone occupies the tomb; death is a selah at the beginning of life, a hesitation before the light of a greater day!

⁹ death is a deceiver, a non-existent thing of the shadows,

¹⁰ from the creeping caterpillar comes the light-loving butterfly, and from the hard grain, the full blooming barley,

¹¹ who, looking at the date stone, can see therein the tree to be? search the seed, and the plant is nowhere to be found, even so, is it with man and his ruach,

¹² to live, man must believe in his soul,

¹³ and this belief comes not from outside teaching, but from listening to its whispers, unbelief comes from stopping the ears to its murmurs,

¹⁴ read the Kodesh Writings diligently, and hear the voice of the Instructing Ruach with receptive heart!

¹⁵ so you may furnish your soul with nourishment, and it shall not wither from any lack of sustenance!

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¹⁶ the future destiny and circumstances of the soul are shaped in the earthly body,

¹⁷ when in the hour of its release the soul takes flight, freed from its earthly container of flesh, it assumes the form moulded by its desires,

¹⁸ in that awesome Day of Reckoning, the wicked shall be revealed in hideous shape, but the upright shall step forward in splendour!

¹⁹ neither life nor love ends at the Grim Portal, the strength of the invisible bond between two souls binds them even after death,

²⁰ that which binds strongest of all is love, love which is sincere, true, and constant! such love endures through tribulations and trials,

²¹ if one you love has departed through the gates into the Great Halls of Eternity, then be comforted by these words of Truth:

²² The Guardian at the Grim Portal is no fearsome being,

²³ but a compassionate attendant, who tends you gently while asleep, until the morning of a more glorious day!

²⁴ then, you will be awakened to journey through a greater adventure with the companions of former times,

²⁵ but, if your companion did not cherish their soul on earth, your meeting will be one of lament!

8 What became of the loveliness which once clothed you on Earth? whose fault that you brought it not with you?

² did you ever pause, even for one moment, to gaze into the self-revealing mirror within? and see the awful creature you were forming?

³ amid pleasures and luxury, did you not think of the wellbeing of your inner self? did you not care?

⁴ O, if I could help you now, but the hideousness was set firm in the furnace-fire of death,

⁵ then, the enveloping flesh was stripped away and the hidden horror within the mould revealed;

⁶ as the butterfly emerges from the chrysalis, so should the soul emerge from its earthly body,

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⁷ but an unnatural thing like this was never intended, yet you freely made the choice, not a single disfiguring line was made by another;

⁸ yes, I loved you on Earth, nothing there was more precious to me than my love,

⁹ I forgave her wilfulness and was not stirred up when her words were unkind,

¹⁰ I ever remained a man of cool temper,

¹¹ I clothed her well, and good food she never lacked,

¹² my heart sang in her presence! I rejoiced in her loveliness,

¹³ she was my life, my wife! yet, she was unfaithful,

¹⁴ she was cruel, she found pleasure in deceit and perversion,

¹⁵ O horror, O terror, O cringing fear, keep away from me!

¹⁶ O my eyes, O my heart, it is true, it is the one I loved!

¹⁷ O let me die once more, that consciousness may pass from me! it is her whom I loved,

¹⁸ she for whom I waited in joyful anticipation, hoping to find the light of my youth,

¹⁹ hoping the overlay of later evils would be sloughed away by death, hoping to find the warm, throbbing liveliness I once held!

²⁰ I would gladly have forgiven the pain she caused me on Earth!

²¹ O what has become of the smooth flesh? the warm touch? where is the beauty of face? the grace of form?

²² raise not the crocodile-skinned arms to shield the awful snout! I cannot bear to behold the green-rimmed, red-veined eyes!

²³ O racing heart! I hear misformed words amidst the hiss and gurgle issuing forth from the oozing aperture! O sorrow!

²⁴ say not that I was so blind, so greatly deceived, that you cared for nought but the earthly things we shared,

²⁵ that your affection was the false front of hypocrisy, your love a lie,

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²⁶ with whom did you share the terrible thoughts and desires that fashioned you thus? surely, this cannot be the work of your own nature alone;

²⁷ did I not always forgive? was I not always patient?

²⁸ fickle you were, and pleasure loving, selfish, cruel, and deceitful, but all this I forgave because of the plea of my heart, was this not enough?

²⁹ O, where is the companion I awaited? lost, and worse than lost!

³⁰ O compassion, O mercy, come to my aid! my heart fails me, I cannot face what I thought to greet so joyously,

³¹ O powers of solicitude, strengthen me!

³² what can I do to mitigate the Torah? is there hope? is there a way?

³³ a whisper of comfort, selah; O, gratefully I hear it:

³⁴ “Between this self-shaped horror and the Glorious Ones, there is an uncrossable chasm, in sorrow and anguish, it must seek a road, it must go its own dark way, as you must go yours in the light,

³⁵ turn back, turn again towards the light! the compassion in your own heart does nought to bridge the gulf between, unless it strikes a responsive spark within the other heart;

³⁶ the trials and sorrows borne so well, the uncomplaining unselfishness fashioned you in glory,

³⁷ nor would you have reached the present degree of perfection, had she not been as she was and is now revealed to be,

³⁸ this fearful fate was wrought by the lost one alone, for each is the sole keeper of his ruach,

³⁹ each soul is fashioned by every thought, desire, and deed, every emotion that touched it during its sojourn in an earthly body,

⁴⁰ each is the maker of his own future, the fashioner of his own being!

⁴¹ let the memory be erased, this is no longer the companion of your path.”

9 The first duty of man is to know himself and to reflect upon his destiny, to become aware of his soul, and this he cannot do in the house of pleasure, in the arms of joy,

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² therefore, is sorrow not apportioned to man in wisdom and consideration?

³ though one should also avoid the dwelling place of sorrow, for there, good is transmuted into evil, and wails of self-pity sadden the heavy night,

⁴ the tear-damp mist which issues from within withers the flowers which bedeck the garden of life;

⁵ better to stray not into either dwelling, but walk the path of moderation between them;

⁶ no other elohim knows how to call Him by Name,

⁷ even the greatest of them being less than a servant before Him,

⁸ yet this I have been told, that the ruach of man can know this Great Adonai and can even know His nature,

⁹ therefore, perchance the ruach of man is greater than any of the elohim!

¹⁰ but who am I to presume to call upon the Most High Adonai of All? I, who am not without wickedness and weak in ruach,

¹¹ I have filled my heart with knowledge of the Kodesh Writings, but still I fear the judgment,

¹² I am not weak in my standing with earthly things, but I am weak beside You,

¹³ will I, too, ever be worthy of the grandeur of the Eternal Mansions?

¹⁴ man can swim against the current towards the bank, but he needs a helping hand to pull him ashore when he is exhausted from the struggle,

¹⁵ O Great Being Whose nature is beyond understanding, grant me just a spark of the Eternal wisdom, that it might light my soul and kindle the flame of immortal life!

¹⁶ what is the destined fate of a man who knows the existence of things beyond his understanding? I see, but I do not know, therefore I am afraid,

¹⁷ a man may believe he knows his destiny, but he cannot be assured with certainty, in no other way can he fulfil it,

¹⁸ in this way alone can his soul be properly awakened to flower with its full potential;

¹⁹ this is the fate of man: He must strive for that which he cannot attain,

²⁰ he must believe in that which he cannot prove,

²¹ he must seek that which he cannot find,

²² he must travel a road without knowing his destination, only thus can the purpose of life be fulfilled;

²³ knowing this should strengthen man during his sojourn on Earth:

²⁴ The purpose of all human life is a goal so glorious it surpasses all earthly understanding!

²⁵ we may visualise our individual Heaven as we will, it is ordained that we have this freedom,

²⁶ how close or how far we are from Reality is of little consequence, what is, is;

²⁷ he who seeks a non-existent destination, will, nevertheless, get somewhere,

²⁸ while he who seeks not at all will get nowhere.

10 Earthly life fulfils itself without attainment! selah;

² of all desirable things attainable by man, the assurance of his immortality, clear insight into the purpose behind his creation, and true knowledge of the road towards the fulfilment of his destiny are the greatest,

³ those are the most desirable things on Earth, and so they are the most highly priced and difficult to attain!

⁴ consider from whence man came:

⁵ His place of origin is like the clay pit, where men toil to dig the raw materials used by the potter,

⁶ a piece of clay is dug out and separated,

⁷ it comes from the darkness of the pit into the light of day, even so is a man born,

⁸ the clay is cast on the wheel to be turned, the wheel spins, and the soft clay is moulded into shape,

⁹ if the shape be good and pleasing to the eye it will be kept and cherished,

¹⁰ if it be ill-shaped, it is cast aside, discarded and unwanted, a useless thing;

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- ¹¹ the potter is man, the clay his soul, and the wheel is life;
¹² swift and fleet of foot is the brief life of mortal man,
¹³ though it be numbered in days and counted in years, yet he lives from moment to moment,
¹⁴ and knows not whether he has a few or many days left to squander or utilise, can it all be futile? all in vain?
¹⁵ can life, when it passes, be as though it never were?
¹⁶ are the days of man no more than wind whispers among the trees? or fish trails through the waters?
¹⁷ the days of men are as a strong breeze sweeping a boat swiftly towards harbour, the journey is soon over, the voyage is quickly ended,
¹⁸ he arrives at his destination weak and weary, heavy-limbed and toil-worn,
¹⁹ the sun is setting, night hastens on with quiet footfalls, the darkness gathers in the remains of day, and the home-sick wanderer finds shalom!
²⁰ without the dwelling the heavy darkness of night gathers, the rustle of life is stilled,
²¹ the mantle of blackness closes around the weary-footed wayfarer who is nearing the end of the journey to his everlasting abode, selah;
²² he arrives and enters through the welcoming portals with a great sigh of relief, selah,
²³ he casts aside his dust-stained garments and sinks down into the soft couch of forgetfulness,
²⁴ the wanderer is home! the tired hoary head has found its place of shalom!
²⁵ behold, like a falcon soaring up into the sunlight, man, for a brief span in the immensity of time, is borne upward on wings of life!
²⁶ then, the high flight is over,
²⁷ he descends,
²⁸ the wings are folded,
²⁹ and he seeks the solitude of his silent resting place.

11 There is an end to all earthly things! and all men must come at last to the appointed place,

² none has gold or treasure enough to buy even one more day of time, there is no way back, it is the place of no return,

³ here the prince and the bondsman are alike, here they stand side by side, and none can tell who was the man of high rank and who the lowly one,

⁴ that which distinguishes them now is something not of Earth, though that is where it was acquired;

⁵ as the waters drain away from the land into the channels and from the channels into the river, to be borne away and lost in the great green sea,

⁶ so does man sink down into oblivion, never to return as himself, he is gone from Earth forever,

⁷ back to the place from whence he sprang, back to his Eternal home, selah;

⁸ now, the sleepers sleep not, for The Time has arrived!

⁹ their slumber was not counted as men count days and hours, they awakened even as one awakes from a sleep,

¹⁰ awake now in the Day of Destiny! some to inherit a future of radiant glory, and some disgraceful shame and shapelessness!

¹¹ what kind of stars encircle the vault lying above?

¹² what companion lightens the burden of the never-ending night?

¹³ what whisper breaks through the dark solitude?

¹⁴ how many sleepers lie enwrapped in the dusty silence? whose voice will awaken them? and on what distant Day?

¹⁵ with what greetings will they be called forth?

¹⁶ those things, I, myself, cannot know, yet I search the Old Scripts and am reassured, for they who wrote, did so from some certain knowledge,

¹⁷ there were things known to them which are lost to our days,

¹⁸ therefore, let it now be written, and as written, let it be made known: The One Elohim is above all in greatness!

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¹⁹ but under Him, above all else on Earth, is the soul of man!

12 The soul of man is not isolated from Elohim above, nor from the mortal body below, for it is that which spans the gulf between,

² it is the link between Elohim and man, between immortal and mortal!

³ nothing exists, which is or can be isolated from all else,

⁴ there is a connection between Earth and the Region of Glory, a link between dust and star,

⁵ from the Highest Adonai down to the mote runs an unbroken and unbreakable chain,

⁶ yet, man is apart from all other creatures, in that he has foreknowledge of death and decay,

⁷ if man be immortal, then it is the burden of his immortality,

⁸ but if he passes to nothingness, he is cursed above the unknowing beasts, which know not the dread of approaching doom!

⁹ something unseen animates the inert clay of your being, something intangible is added to the earthly material of your body,

¹⁰ think not primarily of your material self, for within your body resides the soul, which activates the thinking heart,

¹¹ and is not the resident of the dwelling of greater importance than the materials of its construction?

¹² gaze upon a corpse and see, it is empty of life, something that was is no longer there, the soul is missing,

¹³ the soul delights in sweet smells and knows the perfumes of Earth by the performance of the nose,

¹⁴ it rejoices in delicacies of the table and tastes them only through the workings of the mouth,

¹⁵ food feeds the flesh, but the flesh finds no pleasure in eating,

¹⁶ for it is the soul which experiences the enjoyment of food,

¹⁷ the eyes are the sentinels which keep watch for you, the lights that go before your path, as braziers before a caravan,

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¹⁸ yet, they see not of themselves, for they are but the instruments of sight, without a consciousness of their own,

¹⁹ it is the soul within which interprets their messages;

²⁰ that man has a soul is beyond all doubt, it is the most obvious of all truths, seek not to delve unduly into its secrets, but harmonise it with your body,

²¹ commune with your soul, and awaken its potentialities!

²² intellect, reason, willpower, and comprehension, these are not the soul,

²³ they are the manifestations of its existence, its attributes and its activity, but they are not the soul itself,

²⁴ stimulate the soul by contact with that to which it responds, know it through its manifestations, and understand it through its faculties.

13 The soul is yours to fashion, it can be made radiant by goodness, beautified by virtue, and glorified by love,

² it can be hideously deformed by vices and passions, and twisted into a form of distorted horror by meanness and hatred,

³ it cannot be valued too greatly! nor can it be handled too carefully, for it is your own true self, the reality which is you,

⁴ it is as virgin stone for you to cut and shape as you will, but remember, the image carved is not easily altered,

⁵ and shall one day be displayed to the Eyes of Eternity in its true likeness! though on Earth, this is now veiled by the flesh,

⁶ the soul is bodiless within the body, everlasting among things that change and pass away!

⁷ man does not perceive his soul, because his senses face outward from the soul, towards earthly things with which it makes contact,

⁸ so it is that only the most developed of men can close out the material things about them, and turn their senses inward to perceive the soul;

⁹ the soul looks out through the eyes and sees all which is without, but nothing of this can look in through the eyes and see the soul,

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¹⁰ even though the soul's feeling may be reflected there; an eye without a soul behind it sees nothing;

¹¹ that by which we know the texture of things, by which we taste, smell and hear,

¹² by which we experience the tenderness and suffering of love, and perceive the beauty of nature,

¹³ by which we value the glory of self sacrifice,

¹⁴ by that we are also assured of something immortal within us,

¹⁵ for when a man comes to the realisation that it is by the soul within him that he knows and experiences all things about him, he has taken the first great step towards conscious immortality!

¹⁶ when the body and soul are torn apart, what remains?

¹⁷ no man lives by the air he breathes, it is something more, the soul, that gives life.

14 Naked does man come from his mother's womb, and naked does he return to the womb of the Earth,

² he brings no possessions with him to Earth, and no more can be taken out, yet, he leaves not altogether as he entered,

³ for though his riches and estate, his titles, even his clothes are left behind, if he has lived wisely, he goes out richer in soul-wisdom and arrayed in soul-beauty,

⁴ man arrives at the Great Portal arrayed in glory! or clothed in horror!

⁵ rejoice in the sure knowledge of your soul's indestructibility,

⁶ but let your joy be leavened by remembrance of your responsibility for its condition,

⁷ in the newborn childling is the soft seed of the slumbering soul, this will be developed, moulded, and fashioned throughout the period of its earthly existence,

⁸ it will be shaped by man himself to his own inner likeness,

⁹ then, when stripped of its outward bodily covering, man will stand revealed to himself and be faced with splendour or horror,

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¹⁰ in the likeness to which the soul is fashioned in the body, so shall it come forth in the ruach on its appointed Day!

¹¹ the body is a womb, life the days of conception, and death the birth of the soul,

¹² is it not written, "Some shall bring forth monsters and fearful things? and some shall bear elohim?" these things are not beyond understanding;

¹³ once, a prophet taught the people that every man is his own mother, and they fed him to the crocodiles,

¹⁴ children cannot be told even half the truth, but must be led by childish tales towards understanding.

15 The Song of the Soul. I am the sleeper awakened from slumber,

² I am the seed of life Eternal,

³ I am the everlasting hope of man,

⁴ I am a shoot of the Ruach Divine, I am the soul, I have been since the beginning of time and shall be forever,

⁵ I am the design interwoven in the warp and weft of creation,

⁶ I am the indestructible essence of life,

⁷ I am the treasure chest of man's hopes and aspirations, the storehouse of lost loves and fulfilled dreams;

⁸ before time, I was an unconscious ruach potential, united with the Supreme,

⁹ ever since time began, I was in the slumbering sea of ruchot, waiting to be drawn forth into mortal incarnation;

¹⁰ though the mortal body enwrapping me fall apart and decay, I remain everlasting and immortal,

¹¹ through all the ebb and flow of life, whatever destiny decrees, I remain the everlasting jewel of ages, invisible to mortal eyes and untouchable by mortal hands,

¹² I am the Eternal part of mortal man, ever awaiting the awakening kiss, the whisper of recognition,

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¹³ O being of flesh, deny me not! let me not dwell in forgotten solitude,
left alone, unwanted and unheeded,

¹⁴ hold me to you as a lover holds their beloved, reach out beyond earthly
things and kiss the lips that are yours eternally,

¹⁵ look out beyond the realm of earthly opposites, out beyond the pettiness
of gains and possessions,

¹⁶ grasp and possess me, your own everlasting and responsive soul!

¹⁷ you will not find me where emotional tempests rage, or while sensual
storms bring turmoil and disquiet, first subdue these, for I await beyond,
in the quietness of calm waters,

¹⁸ I must be sought as a lover seeks a loved one, in solitude, amid quietness
and tranquillity, only there will I respond to the awakening kiss of
recognition;

¹⁹ do not neglect me, O my beloved, or tarnish me, for I come to you as
an inestimable treasure,

²⁰ I bring beauty and innocence, gaiety and wholesomeness, decency and
consideration, a jewel of potential perfection,

²¹ do not drag me down with you into the demon-haunted regions of
darkness and terror!

²² I am yours, closer to you than any loved one of Earth,

²³ if you spurn me, I go down to a terrible doom in darkness, there to be
purged and purified from the corruption of your touch,

²⁴ I am the sublime vehicle, awaiting the command to bear your true self
to its destiny of glory! could anyone be so foolhardy as not to cherish me?

²⁵ without moving, I am swifter than thought, on celestial wings I far
outstrip the range of mortal senses,

²⁶ I drink at the Fountain of Life and feed on the fruits of Eternal energy!

²⁷ what are you, my beloved, but a passing thing fashioned of clay? a
handful of dust given life by a spark from the Everlasting Flame?

²⁸ I, myself, am no more than potential,

²⁹ yet together, we are so great that Earth of itself alone cannot contain
us! we transcend it to reach out into the realms of Divinity!

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³⁰ take me, awaken me, acknowledge me, cherish me, and I will carry you to realms of glory unimaginable on Earth!

³¹ behold, I am the imprisoned captive longing for return to the freedom of the Infinite, yet, because of my mortal love, I feel heart pangs of sorrow for things that pass away,

³² but I know that beyond the pains inseparable from a sojourn in the vale of tears, there shines a glorious rainbow of hope and joy,

³³ there is a place of abiding love centred on the Infinite, there, if you will but cherish me, we shall not be denied expression!

³⁴ man sees glory by the reflected light of glory within him, he knows love by the love within himself,

³⁵ the sun is seen by the light of the sun, man sees the ruach by the light of the Ruach, and not by any light within his mortal self,

³⁶ only by the light of the Ruach can the ruach of man be lit!

³⁷ I am drawn by the Torah of Ruach-ual Gravitation towards union with the Universal Soul, and can no more escape return There than the mortal elements of man can escape their return to dust,

³⁸ I delight in communion with the Great, with which I am akin, I rejoice in union with the Divine Ruach from whence I came!

³⁹ I am at shalom when awakened to communion with my Adonai!

⁴⁰ I am joyful when enthroned in consciousness! and when endowed with wisdom and vision transcending that of Earth!

⁴¹ I am your own true self, which should be forever cherished,

⁴² by listening to my whispers, by letting your thoughts dwell on me and by knowing me, the whole glory of the Greater is opened unto you,

⁴³ I am that which reads what the eye sees, understands what the ear hears, knows what the hand feels, tastes whatever enters the mouth, and smells whatever is borne on the nose,

⁴⁴ I am the indwelling consciousness which knows and enjoys all the good things of Earth!

⁴⁵ those who dwell in the darkness of delusion cannot know me, and to them is lost the greatest joys of life,

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⁴⁶ all conceptions of beauty, love, and kindness are due to the consciousness residing in me,

⁴⁷ when I depart from my earthly abode, I will carry with me the knowledge of the senses as the wind carries perfume from the flower, or stench from a tannery,

⁴⁸ I am not born, nor will I ever die, once awakened to an existence in consciousness, I can never become nothingness,

⁴⁹ I am the everlasting one who dies not when life departs from the body!

⁵⁰ O call me forth! awaken me from sleep with the kiss bestowing conscious life,

⁵¹ let me not lie unnoticed, wrapped in the heavy mantle of perpetual slumber, dreamless, unknowing!

⁵² I am the indestructible one! fire cannot burn me, swords cannot maim me, or water smother me;

⁵³ when a drum is beaten, the sound it gives forth cannot be grasped or held, as that sound, so am I,

⁵⁴ when a shell is blown, the note it gives forth cannot be grasped or held, as that note, so am I,

⁵⁵ when a pipe is played, the music it gives forth cannot be grasped or held, as that music, so am I;

⁵⁶ I am the immaterial in the material awaiting recognition, but in my own sphere, I am the substantial one, there, man-known matter is no more substantial than the dawn mists are here,

⁵⁷ I am the fire of life in all things that breathe, and in union with the breath, I consume the nourishing substance within the food which feeds the body,

⁵⁸ I am the kernel within the seed in the heart,

⁵⁹ I am the guardian of memory, and the arbiter of wisdom;

⁶⁰ these things are mine and ever with me, they are to me what the bones and muscles are to the mortal body:

⁶¹ The waking and sleeping consciousness, the awareness of self, the powers of feeling and of activity, and the controlling ruach, which is the sensitive being;

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- ⁶² I am the living consciousness within you, I am the knower,
⁶³ the things seen by the eye and the things smelt by the nose are received by me, the things heard and the things felt are registered by me,
⁶⁴ I am the inner being causing all decisions to be made,
⁶⁵ the tongue reports back outside the things, that I, the soul, hold recorded,
⁶⁶ everything done and undertaken, such as the working of the hands and movement of the legs, all are done in accordance with my command,
⁶⁷ when I depart, the body without me is as useless as a worn-out garment which is discarded and cast aside;
⁶⁸ when we depart, will we go together, my beloved, hand in hand as lovers?
⁶⁹ do I return home radiant in the pride of blooming consciousness? or, spurned and humiliated, return without sensitivity, memory, or knowledge?
⁷⁰ do I return to be welcomed with joy in the light of glory? or, must I shamefully seek refuge in the darkness?
⁷¹ I am yours, my beloved, do with me as you will.

16 When the shadowy form of the grim one beckons you to the Dark Portal, do not bewail the hour of his coming,

- ² in due course, he comes to all, and carries the young as well as the aged,
³ the welcome you have prepared yourself, what have you to fear?
⁴ fear not death! for when he comes, you will be no longer there,
⁵ nevertheless, it is well to live a good life and be free from the fear of his shadow,
⁶ for he that is good has nothing to fear!
⁷ what is death but the gateway to glory? the entrance into the Kingdom of Greater Life?
⁸ it is a journey to a new land, an awakening from a sleep, where all care and affliction borne on Earth are left behind! selah;

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⁹ while there is but one way of entry into life, there are a thousand ways of departing,

¹⁰ all roads through life lead to the gates of death,

¹¹ the deer does not cry until it feels the arrow, nor does the fowl shriek until the hunting hound seizes it,

¹² but he who ever dwells under the shadow of the fear of death dies many times, and the fear is greater than the event itself,

¹³ death I fear not!

¹⁴ if violent men come with sharp weapons as its messenger, I may fear the instruments,

¹⁵ I may fear dying, but death itself holds no terrors, come it must,

¹⁶ of all things in life it is the most inevitable,

¹⁷ Great Adonai, grant I accept it as a man.