

the Ray of Connection

A SOCIETY OF SOULS® NEWSLETTER OF INTEGRATED KABBALISTIC HEALING®

The New Paradigm of ASOS

Jason Shulman

For a while I've been playing with the idea of making Impersonal Movement a prerequisite for attending the graduate seminar. When I looked more closely at this idea, I saw that it was impractical: Many of the people attending would be new graduates and therefore would not have encountered Impersonal Movement before the seminar.

But this only caused me to look deeper into why I wanted to make IM a prerequisite, and, in doing so, I began to understand the real paradigm shift emerging from the self-organizing behavior of the school, which is another way of saying that it emerged from the interface of the personal and impersonal worlds.

This new paradigm really began to take shape more than a year ago and, if I look at it even more deeply, this paradigm shift really resolved a question that has plagued me for perhaps twenty years. This question—which was about seeing awakening or enlightenment as the highest paradigm—really was the neurotic expression of my longing to heal.

My answer to this koan was that awakening/enlightenment was not the highest paradigm: healing was.

This put many of the activities of the school in a new perspective for me and in fact, led to my developing a new program, which I call "Teaching From Wholeness," which will allow the insights of Integrated Kabbalistic Healing to be transferred to many other disciplines. But more about that another time.

I see now that my desire to make Impersonal Movement mandatory for students was based on my understanding that unless we have insight into the

nature of our reality, our healing is not complete and, as healers, we can never completely meet another person. I might liken Impersonal Movement to color: When you add it to a painting, the level of information and life increases dramatically.

In the same way, all of the healings of IKH take on dramatic new depth once the healer beings to practice IM, and although we all struggle with it sometimes, I think we can all see the profound difference this work has made to the way we approach and heal others.

But along with this level of work comes a new level of responsibility. Impersonal Movement—in no uncertain terms—always shows us that it is only we who resist Reality. Reality is always presenting itself to our Self, which pretends to be deaf and dumb, asking, sometimes politely and sometimes roughly, to be paid attention to.

Once we begin IM practice, the unitive state, that mystery of mysteries is no longer mysterious. We see that it is we who walk away from the hard work of Infinity; it is we who abandon ourselves at every opportunity, our entire lives left to the command of that small part of ourselves we call fear, or separateness, or ego.

So practicing IM from this point of view really means practicing diligence. Don Juan calls this "sobriety," and I agree: It is the state of not being drunk any more, but of being willing to show up. It is also an ongoing process rather than simply a state of being. A state of being implies to our unhealed ego, which loves to be capgily lazy—that something will have occurred to an extent that choice will be taken from us: We will just always make the enlightened choice without forethought or even self-

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Holy Speech

The understanding of Oneness, of God-realization, teaches us that each person's understanding of the nature of the real self is the same, and that this understanding is passed down mind-to-mind, heart-to-heart, prayer-to-prayer. There is only one Absolute, and its dynamic transparency is ever the same.

Then of course there is this world of duality, which is equally—but differently—One. The understanding of this face of the Divine teaches us that each created being will experience God in its own way, with its own flavor, with its own beauty. The playing out of the relationship between God and this created being will be the expression of the soul of this being, its holy movements expressed freely, without fear or regret, each moment of Life.

There are examples in this issue of both types of understanding beginning to emerge from the people in *A Society of Souls*. These twin streams—which are really one—make themselves known explicitly by the stories, questions, answers, approaches and content of each piece. But underlying all of them, in the Silence in which the ultimate healing takes place, is something that cannot be named, but that is there as undeniably as the sound of a bird means there is a bird flying somewhere beyond our field of vision.

Healing takes place to the degree that both of these worlds are one. How big is a teaspoon of eternity? Is it big enough to hold the world?

Each of these pieces is a teaspoon of longing and understanding. It is the God-crying-out of these beings, and I feel privileged to Listen.

—Jason Shulman

knowledge. But this is not so. In the nondual condition, effort rides easily with non-effort; being, with doing.

This has many implications for how we approach healing and indeed, it has implications even for how the school is set up.

The subtlest of these is a basic change in attitude on the part of the students and in the words the school uses to communicate.

When we walk into a workshop, we expect to get something from the teacher. We arrive filled with expectations, hope, perhaps some fear and, and here is the important point, some passivity. We want the teacher to give it to us.

Now here I am not talking about knowledge: The teacher is required to transmit knowledge. The teacher is required to make him or herself available to questioning, to modeling the mastery of the subject at hand. Rather, I am talking about the students' attitude, and what they expect of themselves and what the school expects of them.

Impersonal Movement is a completely self-motivated study. Either you do it or you do not. If you do it, you do it because you sense that it is tied directly into something you feel deeply passionate about finding. You sense that IMæor whatever discipline interests youæwill bring you to your goal.

This is a powerful aphrodisiac for self-responsibility and is really a state of development more than anything else. It is a state of maturity.

Prior to achieving this state, you still are interested, albeit unconsciously, in the transferential drama between you and the teacher, you and the organization, etc.

It's not that transferential problems disappear, but once you have achieved the level of insight that makes you want to study something because you must, this drama of passivity to Reality is to a large extent over. It happens, but it's a pain in the ass. It stands in the way of your personal enlightenment, your personal ability to heal yourselfæand by implication other-sæcompletely.

Bridging the Divides

Cheryl Jacobs

When I began the ASOS training two years ago, I wrote an article taking a humorous look at my attempts to explain kabbalistic healing. Recent incidents have helped me to see how my understanding has deepened and to appreciate how differently I hold my world.

This begins with a family. She was the mother of three children, married to her childhood sweetheart. She worked part time in the family business, was a loving daughter and thoughtful friend who woke up the morning of May 2nd and shot all three of her babies before turning the gun on herself. One child survived.

In this small town, word spread quickly and the stories that circulated about her were remarkably consistent. She had died a blank slate of niceness. The question of why this had happened tormented everyone.

I live in this town and I knew the children. I did not know their mother. However, I felt a pull towards her the

way metal cannot resist the tension of a nearby magnet. I have been holding her since her death.

At first, I had to hold her much further out to allow myself to get used to the pain contained in that space. I noticed the incongruity between how she appeared in life and the act that took her life. I saw the profound split in her that allowed her to exist in such separate realities; keeping the deeply tormented inner self from appearing on the surface. I then was able to understand that my connection to her was in the places I also keep hidden.

My son, who is 8, asked me if I could shoot him and his sister. I told him that I did not believe it was possible for me to do something like that. I told him that this mother had acted the way she did because she had suffered with a huge pain inside that she had not been able to tell anyone about or ask for help. We, I told him, know to talk about our feelings and ask for help. Even as I was speaking to him my words were stirring up reminders of all the places I have kept separate.

It is our legacy in the plane of existence to experience separation, to feel the pain of our fragmentation and to know the yearning to return to wholeness.

Integrated Kabbalistic Healing offers us a path back to the place in which we are One. It stirs in us the memory of wholeness and reminds us that the key is to be in relationship.

This mother stood on the edge of the divide and, in the darkness, her pain pressed against her until she lost her ability to know that she need not stand alone. That her call for help could light the darkness enough to know there were other places to stand away from the edge. That there were others standing nearby. If only she knew to reach out her hand.

A week later I attended a community meeting to address how to help our children handle their grief. I parked next to an elderly woman who asked me for directions to the meeting. I invited her to go in with me and we wound up sitting together. We chatted and at the end of the evening I offered to walk her out to her car. On the way, she told me that when she was a child, her sister had

been ill. She had gone into her room to visit and offered to let her lick an ice cream cone she had been eating. An hour later her sister died and she believed that somehow she had been the one to kill her. She did not say a word of this to anyone and, as was the custom when she was young, no one explained to her what had happened to her sister. She carried the guilt of this secret into her adult life. Later she was able to share this with her pastor and then her husband. Crying, she told me that she hadn't told another soul until me. Why, she, asked, was she telling me? She was telling me, I believe, because in the last two years I have been creating the capacity to stand in the hidden places with whatever they contain.

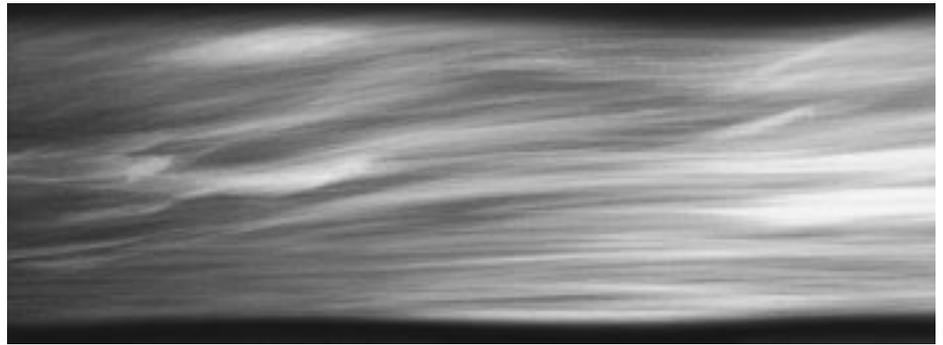
This has not always been the case and there have been many times when I have turned away from someone because I felt I could not tolerate his or her pain or loneliness or sadness. It brought me too close to my own. The work of the last two years has been about being on both sides of the divide, of learning how to hold out my hand and to be willing to hold the hand being offered.

In moments of connection we bridge the divide of the tzimtzum and we recognize in us the presence of God. Life is in relationship, it is in the willingness to be in "it" with each other, to develop the fortitude and tenderness to look into someone's eyes and be willing to see them and to be willing to be seen.

Even as I write this I can feel the places in me that are still hidden, that I hide even from myself. My grace is that this study of kabbalistic healing will continue to challenge and stretch my boundaries to move more fully into relationship with myself, others and God.

Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One. ●

Cheryl Jacobs, of Chelsea, MI, graduated ASOS this year.



Kabbalah and the River

Cheryl Jacobs

I stand on what appears to be a solid expanse of ground. It is my illusion of wholeness. I blink, and when my eyes open I see that I am on the edge of a riverbank, and off in the distance stands the other half of the divide. Between, there is liquid movement, dark and deep, holding my separateness. In this moment of recognition I do not feel connected to anyone, anywhere, at any time. In this moment, I feel shame at pretending to be whole when there is this gulf within me. In this moment, I feel urgency well up in me to heal this division.

I keep my eyes trained on the other bank and move out of my body to form a bridge to the other side. I begin to see the many diversions I create to avoid looking down. I keep busy, "doing," in order to elicit responses from those around me to reassure myself that I am not alone. Calling out from my side of the bank, I await the echo back that reassures me of my existence. There is the momentary relief of feeling my "I am" in the reflection of another's response.

But still I stand on my side of the bank, alone. I stand next to my husband, my children, my friends and I feel my aloneness. I am saturated in my separateness and wonder if I will be able to come into relationship with another. I do not know what to do except to hold my place on the river's edge and

explore the recesses of my hidden places. I begin by touching my belly to the edge of the water. I notice the sensations of being in contact with this place of the unknown. I can tolerate this connection for varying lengths of time before moving back to familiar ground. But I find myself returning because this place touches me in ways I have not felt before. There is a bitter-sweet quality to this experience that resonates deep within me until the edge of my belly and the edge of the water lose definition of boundaries.

I see then that wholeness incorporates this place of separation. Conjoining happens when I hold a space large enough for the river to come into relationship with its banks. Neither is asked to be different from its original state, yet something alchemical happens to alter the way in which they interact. My experience of them together is very different than of them individually.

It is the tzimtzum I go to for understanding. I remind myself that just as God is present in the tzimtzum, so is the tzimtzum present in the wholeness of God. If I can cleave myself to the mystery of God enfolding separateness into wholeness, containing the dual and nondual state simultaneously, I have a model of wholeness that is both/and rather than either/or. Herein lies the promise of my essential "I am." ●

Expanding a Limited Perspective

Deborah Saunders

It all started a few years ago with my first experience of someone truly being fully present with me. My whole being knew that during that experience I was heard and seen as I've never been heard or seen before—without judgment. This first experience with an Integrated Kabbalistic Healer brought me to a place I don't remember ever being before—a place where a spectrum of different parts of myself felt safe to come out of hiding and be seen in their full glory.

My desire to be filled with this Divine experience grew to the point where I felt like it was overflowing, spilling out of me. I felt like I couldn't contain enough of this beautiful, loving energy force.

So, here I am in my first year of training with *A Society of Souls*, wanting to be filled, to enlarge my container to hold as much as I can, and to learn how to share this remarkable healing experience with others.

During the 3-hour drive going to the first session in September, I felt like I was an orphan on my way to meet my real parents. I thought: "I will finally discover who I really am." I was excited, anxious, and really scared all at once.

The experiential work in this session allowed me to practice identifying what I thought was me and what I thought was others. I discovered, however, that while consciously paying attention to distinguish between my own feelings/experiences and others, I became confused wondering, "Which ones are mine?" Or, wondering, "Exactly what is that feeling?" This confusion led me to the next question: "How often have I felt something that really wasn't my own feeling?" Or, for that matter, "How can I be certain about the quality of what I'm feeling?" And, lastly, "Is this transference mine or another's or some combination of both?"

My experiences in class showed me how hard it is to identify even the apparently simplest quality, because the qualities of different experiences, emotions, and feelings are expressed through our own historical filters. On my drive back home, the words "I AM THAT I AM" revealed a whole new meaning for me. Instead of my narrowing down who I am, I expanded my understanding of who I am and received an illuminated view that I am that (feeling, thing, thought, etc.) AND I am also that other (feeling, thing, thought, etc.) too.

I wrote the following poem about a year before I started the ASOS training program; it's synchronistic in the way it exemplifies my first-session experience.

Soul Connection

*I am you
And you are me
Reflecting Glory
Our eyes do not see.*

*In the midst of chaos
We forget who we are.
Love, Peace and Joy
Seem impossibly far.*

*Despite shields of armor
Worn each day to protect us,
We feel judged and unloved,
Bound and powerless.*

*Let us come together
Removing limitation,
See through each experience
Our Souls' communication.*

*Like a rose unfolding,
Freedom's sweet essence,
We are Love, Peace and Joy
Receiving our Soul connection.*

Deborah Saunders, of Reston, VA, is entering her second year of ASOS training this fall.

The Dialect Of God

Steven Sashen

"What is Kabbalistic Healing?"

"What do you do?"

"How does Kabbalistic Healing work?"

We've all wrestled with the answers to these questions when they come from friends, family, clients and strangers.

I want to share the answer that I've been giving lately, an answer that is often followed by a nodding head, a quiet moment and, not infrequently, a request to schedule a session. I don't say this verbatim, but it's usually pretty close:

"Integrated Kabbalistic Healing is based on Jewish teachings about how everything is, somehow, divine and not separate. If you came to me for Kabbalistic Healing, we would start with you describing something troubling you, something you want to change in your life. And while you're speaking to me in English, what you're really doing, without knowing it, is saying 'God god god god god. God god, god. God god god god.'

"And you're speaking this God-language in a very specific and unique God-dialect—you can speak God in a lot of ways.

"One of my jobs as an Integrated Kabbalistic Healer is to recognize what dialect you're speaking."

Then I ask, "Do you speak another language?"

It doesn't matter whether the answer is Yes or No, I've discovered. I reply, "You know how, when you speak another language, your sense of who you are changes? Your body feels

Riding the Wave of Transference

Talia Malka

In the first weekend of A Society of Souls, Jason presented the concept of "Riding the Wave of Transference." I already knew about projection and transference, and it would have been easy to slough off this wave business as simply a metaphor for knowing what was mine, and what was others.'

Since that first class, I have come to realize that riding the wave is not simply a transference drama that fits comfortably within the familiar. While working transference is not in and of itself an easy thing to do, it still has

different? 'You' feels different? My next job is to become a native speaker of your God-dialect, to embody that flavor of the divine you're bringing into our relationship.

"And you know how, when you're around native speakers of a language, somehow you're able to speak and understand the language better? As if just being around them changes you somehow? Well, that's what happens next. Sometimes I'll place my hands on you, sometimes not. We may be in different cities. Either way, when I'm being a native speaker of your God-language, to the best of my ability, it seems that you pick up that language better, you recognize the language you were speaking all along, you begin to see yourself differently, the world differently. We change. Our relationship to ourselves, to others, to the divine changes. When we change, the world changes with us. It has to; it's not separate from us." ●

Steven Sashen, a Boulder, CO, healer and ASOS webmaster, graduated ASOS in 2000.

within it the element of dividing the world into a you and a me—an inside and outside. It continues to subtly maintain separation.

Over the past few years, "Riding the Wave of Transference" has become my main practice. I have come to believe that it is a path of awakening that integrates many of the practices we have learned: Form Anxiety, Returning the Klippot, and the untangling of the small "I." The process has awakened my body, and brought me into an ever-deepening relationship with myself and God.

For me the ride begins when something has stirred my internal system. Before I can catch the trigger, anger rushes over me. My eyes tighten into hard sharp objects that see You as a threat. My chest closes down into a shield of armor, and I am now impenetrable. I feel my lower back shorten, my neck curve.... It has been an instant. I try and breathe. The walls of my heart hurt as I start to loosen the grip. I breathe and talk to myself....I tell myself to calm down.

And then a wave of fear rushes through my body, I slow time, drop into my form, and feel the sensations in my tissue. I want to jump into action, but instead I need to do nothing but be with what is.

I follow the path of reaction deep into my being, into a hidden place covered by my defensive response. Touching this place holds both pleasure and pain. It is the pleasure of being in deep relationship with myself and the pain of being in contact with something that was difficult enough for me to want to push it away and make it into a "You." I sit, as in a Healing of Immanence, receiving myself, and find that it is often hard to stay in this place. I want to run from myself, run into "You-isms" and create an alternate reality. I stay—receiving myself, breathing in and out, and slowly there is more spaciousness.

A softening occurs, and I am awestruck as I realize that the barrier between myself and You has disappeared. The mirror image of my own hidden wound is reflected back to me and what was outside is now inside, what was other is now self. My body vibrates with Life and every cell is a vehicle for relatedness.

By being intimate with myself and not abandoning myself, I am able to meet others where they are. At this moment I am no longer a slave of *Mitzrayim* (my tight places). I am not ruled and controlled by my emotions and reactions. I am instead a master of my own form in reality. For this moment, I am not just the small "I"; I am both divine and human, connected to a much larger paradigm. This is a paradigm shift that moves me from the position of longing for other to meet me into the place of being met and meeting.

Every day God gives me the opportunity to become reactive, and to ride myself back home. Sometimes, before I blink my eye, I have moved so far out of relationship that it takes days to harness my reaction. More and more often I catch what had been invisible: my hairbreadth pullback, an ever so slight distancing. The creation of otherness.

In Jeremiah, God speaks about a covering over the heart that stops Man from feeling and a covering over the ear that stops Man from hearing. These coverings are not innate, but are the product of delusion. The word used in the text is *L'Haksheve*, which means "to pay attention as a sign of being alive." For me the process of "Riding the Wave of Transference" is about consciously paying attention, and removing the covering over my ears and heart so that I can hear God. ●

Talia Malka graduated ASOS this year. She has a healing practice in Lafayette Hill, PA.

Close to the Bone

Jackie Tatelman

In group supervision with Jason I presented a case that was so close to the bone of my being that I find myself fundamentally changed. I would like to share with you how all this unfolded naturally from working with the obstacle held in the hologram.

“Each moment can inform us when we meet it with an open heart.”

Everything that gets presented in supervision is information, which carries equal weight and, if we examine it with open curiosity, can inform. The hologram emerges as we sink and move from unknowing to knowing, back to unknowing, and so on. We let the Tree of Life show itself through the client. This movement between the known and the unknown, which is fundamental in the diagnostic process, is the vehicle by which undefended, or relational knowing, occurs.

When I started to present my client, I was immediately flooded with how bad I felt. In fact I was surprised by my tears and shame. Through this awareness, I had already dropped deeper into myself. I then became aware that once again I was presenting a client whose issue was so close a match to my own that my panic and confusion stopped me from sinking. I understood her human dilemma because it was my own. It was clear to me that my client's fundamental wound was a distortion in the relationship of Yesod and Tiferet. I was judging myself for once again presenting a client with this fracture.

Because of my own history and transference, I was blind to seeing this broken relationship in the Tree of my client. I became self-judging, a nega-

Geurah quality, and was no longer riding the wave of information. My critical inner stance was a defense against sinking. Only by seeing myself through the eyes of the Tzaddik/Sage, would I feel the forgiveness necessary to soften.

I recognized my own Tiferet nature and how that part of me had over and over again saved my life. It wore the face of goodwill and compassion. It allowed for imperfection. In fact it held imperfection in the same hand as perfection, both being our true nature. What I needed and what my client needed were the same.

This new wisdom could emerge from the spaciousness of the hologram, which allows for everything human. There is a wholeness of the difficulty that is carried within the relationships between the sephirot and through the various universes. This nesting of information is really a sinking into more essential truth, which can happen only to the degree we are willing to engage all of who we are.

Each group member's willingness to engage in the process is what makes it possible to sink. The cloth of sweet right intention supports us. Each person is a sage, each person a fool, each person a member of the Society. Group supervision is a living organism. Each moment can inform us when we meet it with an open heart. The group, the healer and the client are affected. Less blindness brings more connection. More connection nourishes the soul. This is the jewel of case presentation: the depth of relationship that is the very fabric of Integrated Kabbalistic Healing. ●

Jackie Tatelman's healing practice is in Newburyport, MA. She is part of the teaching staff and an assistant supervisor.

We Come Wearing Our Skins

Paule Guerard

*We come wearing only our skins
Ready to shed even that,
Bearing yet further
What seemed already naked.
Sometimes we become raw,
History surfacing through our scars
Yet none of us retreat.*

*We come from here and there,
Our hearts soft, our intention tenacious,
Kindness in our gaze, firmness in our stance.
We come together at the crossroad
Still in our skin, now glowing with light,
Courage upon our shoulders
Like a Saint-Michael mantle.
Onward we go riding the wave
Of our journey into being
Wearing nothing but our skins.*

*We are history in the making
We are unmaking history
We are the way of the future
Yet the past has never been so present
We are few, yet stand for the many
We are brothers and sisters,
Stemmed forth from the same ground.*

*Blessed be our journey
As we navigate our hardships
Into the sacred waters
And holy fires.
Blessed be those who guide our paths
Blessed be these fragile skin husks
Blessed by you, Oh Lord!*

Paule Guerard will be a third-year student in ASOS this fall. She lives in Montreal.

