To understand the concept of prostrating oneself at the graves of tzaddikim: The are several levels and ways of appreciating the concept of prostrating oneself at a grave. In general, there are five rationales given:

a) As stated in the Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim, Hilchos Tishah Be’Av, it is customary to visit graves in order to arouse feelings of mourning, to humble the yetzer hora, and [to be inspired to] turn to G-d in teshuvah. This reflects our Sages’ statement that to humble the yetzer hora, one should recall the day of death to it. And it is written: “It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of rejoicing..., [so that] the living take it to heart.” For this will surely make one’s heart contrite.

b) As mentioned in the Shulchan Aruch, Hilchos Rosh HaShanah, [on the day before Rosh HaShanah,] it is customary to go to the cemetery and make manifold supplications. The rationale is given that “the cemetery is the resting place of the tzaddikim. As such, it is a holy and pure place, and a prayer recited there will be more acceptable. [A person] should ask G-d for mercy in the merit of the tzaddikim who rest in the dust.”

In particular, two reasons are given: 1) the place is holy and pure, and this will cause the person’s prayers to be accepted, 2) surely, the person will pray there with a desirable intent as a result of being aroused to teshuvah, because “the living take it to heart.” This will cause his prayers to be desirable and acceptable.

c) [For reasons similar to those] for which one visits the resting place of one’s father, one’s only son, or the like which arouses grieving and lament, opening one’s heart entirely, just as when one’s dead is actually lying before one, at which time one’s heart is truly broken, because of the sorrow which penetrates to the depths of one’s heart, causing one to cry bitterly.

Rabbi Yochanan would carry [a portion of] a bone of his son’s [body] with him, and would tell others, “This is a bone from my

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1. Ramah, Orach Chayim 559:10. Note the commentaries which explain that for this reason, one may even go to a non-Jewish cemetery.
2. Berachos 5a.
5. Be’er Heitev 581:17.
tenth son,” i.e., he would carry the bone with him to arouse sorrow, so that he would not forget his son who died, and as a result, his heart would always be contrite. Similarly, Yaakov our Patriarch “mourned for his son for many days.” He would grieve bitterly over his son’s passing, because it was something which he could not forget at all.

Similarly, when a person goes to the grave [of a tzaddik], although [the tzaddik’s passing] was forgotten for a long time, the person will remember, [and take it to heart] to the extent that he will cry very bitterly. This will cause his heart to open entirely, enabling him to cry over his sins, until his heart is utterly contrite and crushed, [leading] to excessive tears.

This experience can bring a person to complete teshuvah, as is well known. For teshuvah is held back because of a person’s coarseness and haughtiness of heart. When, however, a person’s heart is thoroughly and truly broken, for whatever reason, he has the potential to be aroused to complete teshuvah.

This reflects the type of sorrow referred to as “the sorrows of love” which afflict a person with regard to his children, his health, and his livelihood. The person is crushed in order to motivate him to complete teshuvah, “from [the] person’s inner dimensions, and the depths of his heart.” This is evidenced by Rabbi Yochanan who would say, “This is a bone from my tenth son.” In Rabbi Yochanan’s instance, these were surely “the sorrows of love.”

d) The fourth rationale relates to those who visit the graves of the tzaddikim whom they knew and related to during their lifetime. Just as because of the strength of the bond of faith with which the person believed in [the tzaddik] during his lifetime, as a result of the fact that [the tzaddik] was a G-dly man whom [all] would describe as holy, when the person would enter [the tzaddik’s] presence he would lose all self-concern, [feeling] overwhelming shame and contriteness. He would be embarrassed and would shrink in the presence of the tzaddik, becoming lifeless, like a stone, without the ability to speak. This is a genuine reflection of

6. Berachos 5b; see Rashi’s commentary. Rabbi Yochanan had ten sons, and they all died in his lifetime.
7. Bereishis 37:34.
self-negation, [as explained in Chassidus,\textsuperscript{11} with regard to prefacing our prayers with the verse:]\textsuperscript{12} “G-d, open my lips, and let my mouth speak Your praise.”

Similarly, when a person goes to [the tzaddik’s] holy resting place, he should lose all self-concern in an even more powerful manner. For “the righteous are greater after their death than in their lifetime.”\textsuperscript{13} [These feelings stem from] the great faith with which the person believes in the holiness and purity of [the tzaddik’s] soul which ascended to place in the most sublime [spiritual realms], and from the residual influence of the soul which remains associated with the body in the grave, as [the AriZal] explains in Likkutei Torah,\textsuperscript{14} commenting on the verse:\textsuperscript{15} “His soul will mourn over him.” Moreover, even the encompassing [powers] of [the tzaddik’s] soul establish a connection with [the portion of] the soul [that remains associated with the body in the grave]. This is one of the reasons for erecting a gravestone over the grave, creating a seat for [the soul’s] encompassing [powers] as explained in Likkutei Torah.\textsuperscript{14}

Thus surely when one comes to the holy resting place of a tzaddik and pictures the image of his holy and pure countenance, he will be overwhelmed with fear and awe more than he was in his lifetime. For then, the soul of the tzaddik was [contained] in a physical body, but now it is its pure spiritual state. This enables a person to come to a complete state of self-negation, and yirah ilaah, a sublime state of fear. As explained in the Siddur, in the note to the section on Tikkun Chatzos, yirah ilaah is the inner dimension of fear, fear coupled with shame. Just as a person feels embarrassed in the presence of a great and righteous man because of his own humble stature, and this causes him to lose self concern totally, to the extent that he feels like nothing, so too, with regard to yirah ilaah, he feels shame because of G-d’s greatness. For G-d’s greatness is without limit,\textsuperscript{16} for the Or Ein Sof, G-d’s infinite

\textsuperscript{11.} See Siddur Im Dach, Tefillas Rosh HaShanah, p. 237d, and other sources, which explain that before Shemoneh Esreih, a person should reach a state of self-abnegation so complete that he cannot speak at all, and it is G-d who “opens [his] lips and let[s] his mouth speak....”

\textsuperscript{12.} Tehillim 51:7.

\textsuperscript{13.} Chulin 7b.

\textsuperscript{14.} Taamei HaMitzvos, Parshas Vayechi.

\textsuperscript{15.} Iyov 14:22.

\textsuperscript{16.} Cf. Tehillim 145:3.
light, “extends upward without any bounds, and downward without any end.”

This level of fear is alluded to in our Sages’ statement: “If there is no wisdom, there is no fear.” For the sublime wisdom is the power of nothingness, the attribute of self-negation, and this leads to yirah ilaah as explained.

Similarly, when a person goes to the grave of a holy tzaddik, he can feel great shame and lose all sense of self concern, because he feels great embarrassment over all his deeds and thoughts which he performed until the present day, for they are all revealed before [the tzaddik]. For even in his lifetime, a tzaddik is aware of another person’s thoughts and designs, as is well known. Surely, this applies after the tzaddik’s passing, for then [his existence] is spiritual.

The self-negation and shame [which a person feels] is also a result of the Or Ein Sof which actually gives life to the soul of this tzaddik. For [the tzaddik’s] soul is “an actual part of G-d,” totally subordinated to the Or Ein Sof, as explained in other sources.

In this manner, a person can arouse abundant mercies on the G-dly spark within his soul when becoming conscious of his own low level. This reflects the rung of teshuvah ilaah, sublime teshuvah, as explained in other sources. For the self-abnegation with which he subordinates himself to a Torah sage is in fact, a negation of oneself to G-d, as our Sages said: “Is it possible to cling to the Divine Presence? Instead, he who clings to a Torah sage [is considered as if he clings to the Divine Presence],” as explained in Tanya. (As explained in the Talmud, a similar concept applies with regard to the appointment of a Jewish king. [His sovereignty is an extension of — and a medium to enable people to relate to — G-d’s sovereignty.])

This represents teshuvah ilaah, a far higher level of teshuvah than that discussed with regard to the third level described above.

17. See Zohar Chadash, Yisro 34c; Tikunei Zohar, Tikkun 19, and Tikkun 57.
19. Tanya, ch. 2.
20. Kesubos 111b; Sifri, commenting on Devarim 11:22.
21. Ch. 2.
22. It is not apparent which Talmudic reference is intended. See Derech Mitzvosecha, Mitzvas Minui Melech, and Likkutei Sichos, Vol. IV, p. 1050, where this concept is explained. Significantly, certain texts of the maamar state “as explained in another place,” without attributing the source to the Talmud.
Moreover, the powerful bond of faith tying the soul of the tzaddik to the inner core of the person’s heart, [as amplified by] the power which conceives of [the tzaddik’s] image in a spiritual sense and the tremendous experience of self-abnegation, makes it possible for the person’s soul to cling to a particular dimension of the soul of the tzaddik resting there. This resembles the level of the spirit clinging to the spirit which is mentioned with regard to the tzaddikim, as will be explained in connection with the fifth rationale.

This will also enable the prayers one recites there to ascend to the higher planes as the soul of the tzaddik ascends. And his prayer can bear fruit which will be evident in both the spiritual and material realms. This is [the power of] the faith in the tzaddikim, [and the reason why] people visit their graves even when they do not appreciate [these spiritual concepts] at all, as will be explained.

e) The fifth rationale [for visiting the grave of a tzaddik] relates to a very high [spiritual] rung, a level which indeed is not surpassed by any. This is the prostration at the graves of the tzaddikim which is described in Sefer HaChassidim. This is such a high level that it enables a person to comprehend concepts [on the spiritual plane].

[To explain this point:] The person is able to cause his soul to ascend to the level in which the soul of the tzaddik is attached to the soul of Adam, the first man, which is a comprehensive soul. And this will serve as a stimulus, as their souls ascend in this mystic process, generating an arousal from below. This enables their souls to descend to their bodies and speak to them, thus bringing about an actual clinging of the spirit to the spirit. And this enables [a person visiting the grave of a tzaddik] to comprehend lofty concepts with regard to the secrets of the Torah, and to become encompassed in yichud ilaah, the sublime unity, as mentioned in the text Emek HaMelech. There it is explained that the AriZal would teach his students mystic secrets to recite [at the

23. All of the manuscript copies of the maamar cite the reference as above. This, however, appears to be a scribal error, and the intent, however, would seem to be “as stated in Mishnas Chassidim.” For in Maseches HaYichudim 1:2 of that text, this context is explained.

24. More precisely, the Aramaic term used is mayin nukvin, literally, “female waters,” employing an analogy from our sexual potential.

25. See the author’s introduction, Hakdamah Shelishi, chs. 3-5
graves of] the great tzaddikim, and in this manner, comprehend sublime concepts. Indeed, this was the greatness of the AriZal, that the sublime souls would reveal the secrets of the Torah to him.

This rung is extremely exalted, surpassing [the experience of] the revelation of Eliyahu or [of being granted] ruach hakodesh (the holy spirit), as stated in Shaar HaKedushah of R. Chayim Vital.26 And as explained in the text Emek HaMelech,27 R. Chayim Vital’s [greatness stemmed from the fact] that the soul of Benayahu ben Yehoyada enclothed itself within him, and shined inwardly within him. This was achieved through these mystic secrets [which he repeated] at his grave on numerous occasions. For the [souls of two] shared a connection to each other, as explained there.

With regard to this rung, there are surely extensive levels. [The common factor shared by] all is that these are relevant to men of stature whose souls have not been blemished at all, but rather are pure and pristine, and whose nefesh, ruach, and neshamah shine forth. Or at least, the levels of ruach and nefesh have not been blemished at all.

This level is far more exalted and lofty than the fourth level described above. [For the individuals who visit the graves of the tzaddikim because of the fourth rationale] do not have a conscious appreciation of the spiritual process involved. On this [fifth] level, even lowly individuals can grasp [sublime] concepts and enter into [sublime experiences of spiritual] unity according to the [spiritual] rung of the tzaddik [whose grave they are visiting].

This reflects one spirit actually clinging to the another, i.e., the person joins and cleaves his spirit28 to the spirit of the tzaddik, and the two ascend in the mystic process which generates an arousal from below. As explained in Mishnas Chassidim, ch. 1, with regard to the mystic secret of spiritual unity, mishnah 3, “If he merits, his nefesh, ruach, and neshamah will be fused to the nefesh, ruach, and neshamah of these tzaddikim when they ascend....” See the extensive explanation there. This is sufficient for one who understands.

27. Loc. cit, ch. 4.
28. The Hebrew term ruach translated as “spirit” has a more specific meaning as will be explained.
All of the above can be understood with greater clarity based on the explanation of *Iggeres HaKodesh* on the statement of the holy Zohar\(^{29}\) that a tzaddik who departs from the world is present in all the worlds more than during his lifetime. The fundamental point of these statements is based on our Sages’ description of death:\(^{31}\) “he has left life unto all the living.”

For the life of a tzaddik is spiritual, [encompassing] faith, love, and fear [of G-d].... While the tzaddik was alive on earth, these three attributes were contained in their vessel and garment... i.e., the nefesh\(^{32}\) which is attached to the body. And all of [the tzaddik’s] students would receive merely a glimmer of these attributes and a ray which shined beyond this vessel by means of his holy words and thoughts...

After his passing, as the nefesh which remains in the grave becomes separate from the ruach, [which ascends to] Gan Eden,\(^{33}\) [and which is expressed] in these three attributes, [faith, love and fear of G-d].

[These three attributes parallel the qualities of] Chesed, Gevurah, and Tiferes which are identified with the ruach. For faith is identified with the attribute of da’as, the middle vector, which is [expressed in] the attribute of Tiferes,\(^{34}\) [and love and fear are identified with Chesed and Gevurah.]

[Because the ruach has been freed of the limitations of the nefesh,] each one of [the tzaddik’s] students and all those who are close to him to receive a portion of his spirit in Gan Eden. For it is no longer material, nor is it contained within a vessel. (And for this reason, this ray can disperse in the surroundings, because it is spiritual and it is not enclothed in a material vessel.) In contrast, during the lifetime of the tzaddik, when his ruach was enclothed in his soul, and his soul attached to his body, his students and the

\(^{29.}\) Tanya, *Iggeres HaKodesh*, Epistle 27.

\(^{30.}\) Vol. III, p. 71b.

\(^{31.}\) See similar expressions in the works of Rabbeinu Yitzchak Alfasi, *Yevamos*, the conclusion of ch. 12, and the Rambam, *Mishneh Torah*, *Hilchos Yibbum U’Chalitzah*, the conclusion of ch. 4.

\(^{32.}\) The terms nefesh, ruach, and neshamah are all loosely translated as “soul.” According to the Kabbalah, however, there are specific meanings for each of these terms. Nefesh refers to the level of the soul attached more closely to the body, while ruach and neshamah refer to higher levels.

\(^{33.}\) The spiritual domain of the souls.

Jewish people as a whole can only receive [his influence] through his holy words and thoughts. When, however, the ruach is separated from the nefesh, [the ruach] can shine forth to every one of his students according to his individual level.

As support for this concept, Iggeres HaKodesh cites the story of Yaakov our Patriarch, of whom it is said: 35 Gan Eden entered with him.” And as explained in the text Asarah Maamaros, 36 the atmosphere of Gan Eden radiates around every person. In this aura,37 are ingrained all one’s holy thoughts and words in Torah study and in Divine service. This is definite proof that spiritual influence can radiate in all places.

Therefore, [after the tzaddik’s passing,] it is very easy for his students to receive their portion of the essence of the ruach of their master and his love, fear, and faith which he achieved, and not merely a glimmer of these attributes. (For [they receive] his ruach, i.e., his attributes of Chesed, Gevurah, and Tiferes, as explained above, and not merely the level of nefesh.)

The essential ruach [of the tzaddik] ascends to very high peaks, and is absorbed in the neshamah, in the sublime Gan Eden, and other lofty [spiritual] worlds. [Nevertheless,] it is known that all holy potentials are never entirely detached from their initial level, even after they have ascended to far higher rungs.38 Their initial level remains in its place in the lowly realms, [and yet receives influences from the higher rungs to which the potential ascends. And this initial level radiates within [the tzaddik’s] students, each one according to the extent of the connection and closeness he shared with him, with abundant love, as explained [in Tanya]. To receive the entire spiritual [influence of the tzaddik] is possible only through a great arousal of abundant love, and awesome submission. [This enables] the spirit of the will of one’s heart, to draw down a spirit from above. Note [the full explanation] in that source.

From the above, it can be understood any one of [the tzaddik’s] students can receive their portion and their teachings from the ruach of their master in any place via the aura of Gan Eden which

36. Maamar Chikur Din, sec. 2, ch. 12.
37. This is a translation of the Hebrew term or employed in this maamar. In Tanya, the term avir, atmosphere, is used.
38. See Pardes, Shaar HaMetziyus, ch. 1.
radiates around each individual. Accordingly, it [would appear] not to be necessary to travel to his holy resting place at all, nor to prostrate oneself at his grave.

When, however, would the above apply? When the bond of connection and abundant love for one’s master has not been severed, and it remains the same as it was when his master was alive, and he continues to conduct his Divine service with love, fear, and faith as his master instructed him. This enables him to receive his portion of his master’s spirit as explained in that source.

There is, however, [the possibility that] the thick cords of love will have been severed, because of the travails of the times, and [the involvement] with worldly concerns and material affairs, which cause the light of [the tzaddik’s] Torah and the love and the fear which he radiated to [his students] during his lifetime to almost become quenched. [Indeed,] with the passage of time, [this light] could be extinguished and forgotten entirely as is well known.

For this reason, even when [the tzaddik] was alive, it was necessary to visit him frequently, and hear “the words of the living G-d” from his mouth. For even if his words are recorded, hearing from a distance cannot at all be compared to seeing his face. For the radiance of his countenance far surpasses the concepts received from him. For both of these influences [— the experience of seeing one’s master and the study of his teachings —] are together beneficial, and bring about a powerful bond of abundant love, [empowered by] a marvelous desire.

This is what is meant by our Sages’ statement, “All those who cling to a Torah sage are considered as if they cling to the Divine Presence.” For through the student’s clinging and connection [to the tzaddik], he can receive from the radiance of [the tzaddik’s] ruach through his holy thoughts and speech via the aura of the student’s Torah and Divine service, and this influence can be received and secured within his mind and heart. The radiance of [the tzaddik’s] love and fear can be acquired [by his disciple], as can be appreciated by an extended interpretation of our Rabbis’ statement: “Words which emanate from the heart penetrate to the heart.”

This is the point of our Sages’ statement:40 “A person is obligated to encounter his master during [each of] the festivals.” For at that time, [the person] receives an increased aura from the spirit of his master which shines within him with greater power and intensity. [This additional influence] endows him with the strength and the power to continue to advance in his Divine service with love and fear after parting from his master, according to [the influence] he received from him. All of this is generated by the power of the radiance of [his master’s] countenance.

This is evidenced by the fact that if he remains separate from his master for a prolonged period, even during [his master’s] lifetime, the cords of connection with abundant love are severed and [the person] slides from his level of abundant love in his Divine service. Indeed, this has happened with regard to several individuals.

This is the real reason why [chassidim] always travel to hear “the words of the living G-d” from their master personally, although they have previously heard teachings, and have seen and possess transcripts. They, nevertheless, travel to visit their master, and receive an increased light from his “shining and welcoming countenance,”41 through which is revealed to them the light of the Torah of truth.

Through this, their souls receive light [which inspires] their Divine service with love and fear, for through their bond of love and fear their souls become bonded to the soul of the tzaddik, as can be inferred from the verse:42 “His soul is tied to his soul.” Although seemingly there is no comparison between [the student] and the soul of the master, there most be some point of connection, for the student binds himself to him and believes in him. [Indeed, there is surely a point of connection.] And through [this connection] he can receive his portion from the ruach of his master as explained above.

[The relevance of] the above, can be understood, and indeed even more poignantly so, in a situation when [the master] “has left life unto all the living.” Although [the tzaddik’s] life, i.e., his faith,

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40. Rosh HaShanah 16b.
41. Note Maamarei Admor HaEmtza’i, Shmos, Vol. 1, p. 65, and sources quoted there [Toras Chaim, Chaye Sarah 134a ff; Vayeitze 34b].
42. Bereishis 44:30.
his love, and his fear exist on all planes of existence, and his students can receive their portion, nevertheless, over the passage of time, because of many immediate problems and financial pressures and tension, the light of [a tzaddik’s] teaching and Divine service may be dimmed entirely for his students. Therefore, it is necessary to travel to his resting place, and prostrate oneself at his grave to arouse the love within “[the] person’s inner dimensions, and the depths of his heart.”

For surely this love has not ceased entirely, and traces still remain. In this vein, we find the expression: 43 “his spirit which he imparted within her.” ([This is mentioned in regard to our Sages’ statement:]44 “A woman does not establish a covenant with anyone except the one who made [her a vessel,” i.e., her first husband]. For this reason, even if she parts from him, his spirit still resonates within her, and she cannot [easily] receive [another man’s influence]. For this reason, the Zohar45 emphatically counsels against marrying a widow.)

Indeed, [these traces of love are what motivates] the person’s desire to travel to the resting place of the tzaddik to arouse his love. For if the love had ceased entirely, he would not have a desire for this [journey]. Thus this “spirit which he imparted within” has the potential to arouse the ruach of his master anew, with abundant love, awesome submission, and great effort. [It is possible again] to receive the three attributes of faith, love, and fear, as above, according to the path which his master instructed him.

There are two reasons why it is necessary to travel to [a tzaddik’s] holy resting place to arouse the love [for him]: a) Simply put, the journey [to the resting place] with great desire reflects the generation of an arousal from below. Afterwards, when [the person] reaches [his destination], his great power of faith will cause him to negate his personal existence entirely. And he will prepare himself to approach G-d with a truly contrite spirit, giving over his soul, and pouring out his words before G-d from the depths of his heart, [feeling remorse over] the utter distance.

This will cause G-d to have a spirit from above rest upon him, and the spirit of his master in which he shares a portion which will

44. Sanhedrin 22b.
45. Loc. cit. 102a.
invigorate his soul with the light of the teachings and the Divine service of his master.

b) The second rationale relates to the mystic secret of burying a corpse and the laws of mourning as revealed in *Likkutei Torah* by the AriZal.\(^{46}\) To summarize the fundamental points of his statements: There are two dimensions to a person’s soul, those which are internalized and those which are of an encompassing nature. This relates to the צל ("image") of za’er anpin. The צ relates to the soul powers which are internalized, while the ה and the צ relate to the soul’s encompassing powers. The ה relates to three encompassing powers and the צ, four. While a person is alive, he is vitalized by all these seven powers. Thirty days before his death, however, these encompassing powers, “the image above his head,” depart from him. This is alluded to by the Zohar’s interpretation\(^{47}\) of the verse,\(^{48}\) “Before the day cools, and the shadows depart.” (The “shadows” [refer to these encompassing powers].)

They all, however, return to the person at the time of his death, so that they will also experience the pain of death as punishment, as it is written:\(^{49}\) “You take away their spirit, and they die.”

(As is well known, each of the five levels of nefesh, ruach, neshamah, chayah, and yeichidah, have their own צל, [i.e., their own array of internal and encompassing powers]. At the time of a person’s death, the neshamah and the ruach with their encompassing powers depart to the place which is fit for them. [This does not apply with regard to] the nefesh, and its seven encompassing powers.

[To explain:] The צל of the nefesh divides into its internal powers and its encompassing powers. The internalized powers, the תז of the צל accompanies the body to the grave, as it is written:\(^{50}\) “His soul will mourn over him.” The seven encompassing powers, i.e., the לamed and the mem of the צל of the nefesh remain in the house of mourning. It is not so easy for them to depart [from this place], because this is where they died. This is

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\(^{46}\) See Taamei HaMitzvos, Parshas Vayechi.
\(^{48}\) Shir HaShirim 2:17.
\(^{49}\) Tehillim 104:29.
\(^{50}\) Iyov 14:22.
the inner meaning of our Rabbis’ statement\(^{51}\) that during all the seven days of mourning, the departed soul returns to his home. This is the mystic pattern followed by the encompassing powers of the \textit{nefesh}.

Nevertheless, these powers come and depart for although they desire to be in the house in which they died, they also desire joining to the internal powers of the soul. Therefore, they go to the grave, and then return to the house of mourning.

Nevertheless, on each of the seven days of mourning, one of the encompassing powers departs from the body and remains clinging with the \textit{nefesh}. This pattern is continued until the conclusion of the seven days of mourning, at which time all of them have completed their withdrawal and they become tied to the \textit{nefesh} in the grave. This is the rationale for the seven days of mourning when the soul of the departed still remains in the house of mourning.

While the encompassing powers [of the \textit{nefesh}] are still in the house of mourning, the forces of \textit{kelipah} become strongly attached to the \textit{nefesh} of the deceased, for they cannot attach themselves to the encompassing powers. Each day, the power of \textit{kelipah} wanes until the conclusion of the seven days, at which there remains only [a minimal influence], what is necessary to remain while the flesh of the corpse continues to exist.

The order in which the encompassing powers [of the \textit{nefesh}] begin to go to the grave commences with \textit{lamed} of the \textit{לםצ}. On the first day, the power of \textit{daas}, on the second day, \textit{binah}, and on the third day, \textit{chochmah}. This is the fundamental time of the judgment of the corpse in the grave as is well known. From this time onward, when the influence of the \textit{mem} of the \textit{לםצ} begins to be introduced, the judgment becomes lighter.

For this reason, it is customary in the Ashkenazic community not to build a monument at a grave until after the seven days of mourning have passed. For the building of a monument is intended to empower the encompassing powers of the soul to rest there. But if the monument was built before [the encompassing powers come there, the monument] enables the power of impurity which is attached to the corpse to remain and not to withdraw. To cite a

parallel, building a home without mentioning G-d’s name, in which instance, the spirit of impurity dwells there. After the conclusion of the seven days [of mourning], however, when the encompassing powers of the soul come [to the grave], it is a mitzvah to erect a monument, preparing a seat for the encompassing powers. This concludes [the passage from] Likkutei Torah [by the AriZal].

From the above, it can be understood that the inner powers, i.e., the ṭzadi of the سمצ, of a tzaddik dwell at his resting place, and at the monument erected there rest the encompassing powers, i.e., the lamed of the سمצ, [of the tzaddik], as at explained at length in that text. Surely this is a holy place, at which it is possible to stir the soul of the tzaddik through the power aroused by the visitor through his love and fear. By concentrating his power of connection, a visitor will be able to stir the soul of the holy tzaddik. And it is likely that he will be able to cause his soul to cling to the soul of the tzaddik, and be stirred to [spiritual] arousal. [This, however, applies] only when he will truly concentrate on [the tzaddik] with a full heart, and will first turn to G-d in complete repentance, and genuinely desire to draw down a spirit from the ruach of his master as explained above.

Through the strength of his faith and connection to the soul of the tzaddik and through his power which conceives of [the tzaddik’s] image in a spiritual sense — for the inner dimensions of [the tzaddik’s] soul and the encompassing dimensions which are called the سمצ are present there, — this enables [a visitor] to experience something of a parallel to spirit clinging to the spirit described above.

This will enable him to draw down a portion of his master’s spirit which grant him new life from the light of his Torah and Divine service as would occur when they were bound in a bond of faith during his lifetime when he would see the radiance of his [master’s] countenance.

Indeed, the influence will even surpass what was experienced during his [master’s] lifetime, for then [the influence he received] came through the garments of thought and speech, and at present, he receives from the essential spirit of his master.

Similarly, prayers which he will recite there are surely more likely to be accepted. For as explained above in the name of Asarah Maamaros, the aura of Gan Eden is dispersed around each
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one of the tzaddikim, for they always proceed with the aura of Gan Eden, as manifest in the instance of Yaakov our Patriarch. In contrast, there is an aura of Gehinom which is dispersed around simple people as explained in that text.

When, however, a person comes to the resting place of a tzaddik and prays at his grave, his prayer is surely recited with desirable and whole-hearted feeling, from the inner dimension of his being. As such, when he places his head over the monument where the encompassing powers of the tzaddik’s nefesh rest, every single letter of his words and thoughts will be engulfed in the aura of Gan Eden which is present there. (For the ruach is called the aura of Gan Eden; this also applies with regard to the nefesh.)

And then, when the nefesh of the tzaddik ascends upward, [the visitor’s] prayer will also ascend to the higher realms in the sublime Gan Eden where it will bear fruit on both the spiritual and material planes. For as is well known, all prayers must ascend to the spiritual realms through the entrance to Gan Eden in this world. For this reason, prayers recited at the Cave of Machpelah are very desirous and acceptable, because, as tradition maintains, the entrance to Gan Eden is there. In contrast, prayers which we recite in other places becomes funneled through the impure atmosphere of the gentile lands, and it is possible that prayers recited for several years in those places will not ascend at all as the Baal Shem Tov taught.

[In this vein,] all of the graves of the tzaddikim resemble the Cave of Machpelah. The prayers which we recite there can speedily ascend to the spiritual realms at the time when the nefesh of the tzaddik ascends. For the letters of this prayer become etched within the soul of the tzaddik. Moreover, if [the visitor] merits, [the tzaddik] will intercede positively on his behalf, and can bring about that his request will be drawn down to this material plane.

This concept that a prayer which is recited is accepted there is a fundamental principle which can be understood by all those who seek G-d. They journey to [a tzaddik’s grave] and pray there with great concentration from the depths of their hearts; they may be

52. See the text Meah Kashita (by the Rama of Padua). See also the sources mentioned in Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XXV, p. 98.
assured that there, their prayer will be accepted rapidly. For the holiness of the place brings about two factors: a) that [the visitor] be able to concentrate his heart in prayer. For the strong power of faith [which he has in the tzaddik] will generate feelings of awe and fear, as above.

b) That he can be assured that his prayer will be accepted there. This applies with regard to any Jew, even one who was not a student of [the tzaddik] for the reasons described above. Surely, this applies with regard to a student who is connected to the light of his Torah.

It is even relevant to those who did not know him or relate to him during his lifetime, but merely studied the texts which he left, and appreciate the light and radiation of his Torah, and are reinforced by them in their Divine service to proceed in G-d’s paths. They are also definitely considered as students, for they also share a connection to him, for they believe in the tzaddik and receive the light of his Torah.

[The fact that they believe in the tzaddik shows they share a connection with him.] For a person who has no connection to the tzaddik does not believe in him at all. (As explained in other places, in every generation, there are individuals who do not believe in [the tzaddik of that generation at all,] nor do they desire to receive his influence. On the contrary, their desire is the direct opposite. This is because they do not share any connection to him at all.)

[This relates to the fundamental concept of faith.] Emunah, Hebrew for faith, relates to the Hebrew word [Oman, “foster-father”] as in the verse,55 “And he served as a foster-father for Hadassah...,” i.e., [faith reflects how an entity] is drawn to its source. Therefore, the Jews are described as believers.56 For [the soul of every Jew] is “an actual part of G-d,”57 and thus they are drawn to their source.

Similar concepts apply with regard to faith in tzaddikim. [This faith exists,] because the tzaddikim serve as “roots,” and the

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56. Shabbos 97a.
57. Tanya, ch. 2.
branches, [i.e., other souls,] are drawn to [these roots,] their source, as explained in other texts.\footnote{See \textit{Maah Shaariim, Imrei Kodesh}, sec. 11, p. 29ff.}

[Based on these concepts,] it can be stated with definity that those who study the holy works [of the tzaddikim] and follow the paths of G-d which he revealed, and who delight and derive great pleasure from the light of his Torah, are surely considered as his students. And they can cling to him with their souls in powerful bonds of connection as was possible during his lifetime.

Support for the above can be derived from an incident related in the \textit{Talmud}.\footnote{\textit{Bava Metzia} 85b.} A Torah scholar saw the carriage of Rabbi Chiyah [in \textit{Gan Eden}] and became blinded because of the great light. On the following day, he prostrated himself at the grave of Rabbi Chiyah [and prayed to be healed. As part of his supplication,] he said: “I study the teachings of the master.”\footnote{I.e., the \textit{Tosefta} which Rabbi Chiyah composed (\textit{Rashi, loc. cit.}).} [As a result,] he was healed.

Thus the fact that [the scholar] had studied Rabbi Chiyah’s teachings served as merit for him, entitling him to gaze at [Rabbi Chiyah], and he was healed for this reason. [This explanation is necessary,] for the scholar’s vision of the carriage of Rabbi Chiyah as he ascended to the heavenly academy was surely a spiritual vision, not something that was actually seen. This is possible through one soul clinging to another soul, transcending [the boundaries of] material existence.

There is also another concept explained in the letter from \textit{Iggeres HaKodesh} cited previously:\footnote{\textit{Iggeres HaKodesh} Epistle 27.} that there is another ray [from a tzaddik] disseminated to the students, but, unlike the first, it cannot be enclothed within their intellectual potentials. Instead, it shines upon them from above.

[This light] is generated from the ascent of the \textit{ruach} and \textit{neshamah} [of the tzaddik] to the source from which it was hewn, i.e., the \textit{chakal tapuchin kadishin}.\footnote{\textit{Zohar}, Vol. III, p. 84a, this term refers to \textit{Gan Eden}. See also \textit{Rashi}’s notes to \textit{Bereishis} 27:27.} [This ascent] brings about an arousal from below [including] all of his deeds, statements, thoughts, his Torah study, and his Divine service which he performed throughout his lifetime. [As a result,] in the \textit{chakal}
tapuchin kadishin are sown sublime lights (i.e., the spiritual correspondents of his Torah study and Divine service, for “the reward of a mitzvah is the mitzvah.”) These sublime lights shine to all their students who were motivated to become servants of G-d through his teachings and Divine service. This ray instills in their hearts thoughts of teshuvah and good deeds, which are called “fruits of the second degree.”

This ray, however, is concealed, [to cite an analogy,] like the sun which shines forth to the stars from below the earth. As the Tikkunei [Zohar] states with regard to Moshe Rabbeinu, that his radiation extends in every generation.... This concludes the passage from Iggeres HaKodesh.

This ray extends to all of [the tzaddik’s] students equally, including even those who did not know him personally, but merely studied his holy texts and delight in the radiance of his holy Torah and Divine service. Moreover, they serve G-d according to his path of conduct.

[That this ray relates to the latter category of students] is evident from the wording used there: “All his students who became servants of G-d through his teachings and Divine service.” Similarly, this concept is apparent from the citation of the instance of Moshe Rabbeinu whose Torah (perhaps the intent is, “whose radiation,” [as is in fact stated in Iggeres HaKodesh, as cited above]) extends in every generation to sixty myriad souls of the Jewish people as explained, i.e., those who learn the Torah of Moshe. [This relates to the concept cited previously,] “I study the teachings of the master.” For when his ray shines upon him, he is entitled to gaze upon him.

All of the above relates to the fourth rationale [given for visiting the graves of the tzaddikim]. The fifth rationale is the ultimate expression of prostrating oneself on the grave of a tzaddik, involving the consummation of sublime states of unity and the comprehension of lofty ideas, as intimated by the statement: “You

63. Avos 2:4. See the explanation of this concept in the commentary of In the Path of Our Fathers (Kehot, N.Y., 1994) to the above mishnah.
64. It is possible that there is a scribal error in the text of Iggeres HaKodesh, and the intent is the Zohar, for the concept is explained at length in Vol. III, p. 273a. It is, however, also mentioned in Tikkunei Zohar, Tikkun 69, p. 112a, 114a. See Haaros ViTikkunim LeTanya and Igros Kodesh of the Rebbe, Vol. XVI, p. 304.
65. Berachos 17a.
shall see your [future] world in your lifetime.” This implies that the person actually tastes a portion of Gan Eden in his lifetime.

This is possible because he elevates his nefesh, ruach, and neshamah to a higher plane to be fused to the nefesh, ruach, and neshamah of the tzaddik who is in Gan Eden and delighting in the radiance of the Divine Presence, actually comprehending G-diness as alluded to in the verse,66 “Those who sit in the gardens, friends listen to your voice.” This is interpreted to mean that the angels listen to the voice of the souls which sit in Gan Eden.

Similarly, when tzaddikim reveal secrets of the Torah while they are alive in a physical body, the angels come to hear Torah from his mouth. This is reflected in the Talmud’s narrative67 which relates that the ministering angels came [to listen to Rabbi Yehoshua’s discourse as people come to watch] the celebrations performed before a bride and a groom. And as stated in the Zohar:68 “[The angels] all listened to their voices and words.” This reflects a revelation of the level of yechidah, i.e., the revelation of the essential light of the soul, as it exists in the spiritual realms, cleaving to the living G-d. And as a natural consequence, one will merit the revelation of Eliyahu HaNavi and the spirit of prophecy, as explained in the writings of the AriZal.69

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66. Shir HaShirim 8:13, see the comments of Shir HaShirim Rabbah on this verse.
67. See Chagigah 14b.
69. See the section of Shaar Hakedushah cited in note 26 of the first section of this maamar.