OU ISRAEL CENTRE. JERUSALEM.
“GREAT JEWISH THINKERS”
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RABBI CHAIM Mi’VOLOZHIN (1749 - 1821)
1. Founder of Volozhin Yeshiva (1802)
2. Disciple, Publisher and Successor of Vilna Gaon (d.1797)
3. Author of ‘NEFESH HA’CHAIM’ (published 1824)

NEFESH HACHAIM. SHAAR 1
THE COSMIC EFFECT OF HUMAN ACTIONS

God created man and appointed him to rule over the multitude of powers and infinite worlds, and assigned them to him so that he should be their spokesman and govern them via all the minute details of his actions, speech, thoughts, whether for good, or (heaven forfend) for the opposite.

For via his positive actions, speech and thoughts he fulfills and invests strength in a number of supernal and holy powers and worlds, and adds holiness and light to them, as is written (Yeshayahu 51:16): “and I will place my words in your mouth... to plant the heavens and lay the foundations of the earth.”
And the opposite (heaven forfend) [is also true, that] via his negative actions, speech or thoughts a person can destroy a great number of spiritual forces, and the supernal, holy worlds without number and measure, as is written (Yeshayahu 49:17): “your destroyers and those who lay waste to you shall go forth from you,”

This is what is meant by (Bereshit 1:27): “And God-Elōhi”m created man with His image. In the image of God-Elōhi”m...”, and (Bereshit 9:6) “for God-Elōhi”m made man...”—for just as He is the Elōhi”m, Master of the powers found in the totality of all the worlds, and organizes and governs them each instant per His will, so too did His will rule that man should be the enabler and disabler of many multitudes of powers and worlds via all of the detailed patterns of his behavior, in every situation, literally in every instant and moment, according to his supernal root, which includes his actions, speech and thought, as if he too is the master of their power

Nebuchadnezzar and Titus, via their actions, didn’t cause a single blemish or ruination above, because they have no place or root in the higher worlds that they could affect in any way via their actions. It was only because of our sins that the greatness of heaven lessened and weakened God’s Temple was defiled the heavenly Temple—and by way of this, Nebuchadnezzar and Titus were given power to lay waste to the earthly Temple, which is the counterpart of the heavenly Temple.
For it is known in the Zohar and the writings of the Ariza"l, how the worlds unfold one from another and how they are connected, that each world behaves in the arrangement of its matters and all the details of its concerns, according to the inclination of the power of the world above it, that guides it as a soul guides the body.

And these three aspects: action, speech and thought, they are the three general inner aspects of man that are the three aspects: soul-Neffesh, soul-Ruakh and soul-Neshama. For action, it is in the category of Neffesh, as is written (Bamidbar 15:30): “and the Neffesh that you shall make

And speech, it is in the category of Ruakh, as is written (Shmuel Bet 23:2): “God’s spirit-Ruakh spoke within me,” and (Yeshayahu 11:4) “with the spirit-Ruakh of his lips,” and as Onkeloos translated on the verse (Bereshit 2:7): “and the man became a living soul-Neffesh”: “a speaking spirit-Ruakh.

And thought, it is in the category of the Neshama. It teaches man knowledge and understanding via the holy Torah, and therefore the origin of its abode is in the brain, the tool of thought, and she is the highest category of them all.