



## ***Tet***

“Seeing the Good”

### **Invocation Verse:**

טוֹב-יְהוָה לְכֹל יְרַחֵם יְעֹלְמֵי שָׁיוּ  
*Tov Adonai Lakol, v'rakhamav al kol ma'asav*  
*The Divine is good to all,*  
*Divine Compassion is upon all creation!*  
(Psalm 145:9)

### **Meaning and Mystical Associations:**

*Tet* is related to “goodness” (*Tov*). In the *Sefer Yetzirah*, *tet* is one of the twelve “simple letters,” and represents the activity of hearing, the astrological sign of Leo, the left kidney in the human body, and the month of *Av* in time.

### **Texts and Kabbalah Commentary**

**(Based partially on The Aleph Bet by Rabbi Yitzhak Ginsburgh)**

בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ  
*In the beginning of Elohim's creating the heavens and the earth...*  
Genesis 1:1

The initials of *et hashamayim v'et ha'aretz* form the “hidden Name” in creation, according to Kabbalah. It has the numerical value of 17, which is the same as *tov*, “good.” *Tet* represents goodness, as it's the first letter in *tov*.

Form of *Tet* is pointing in, hinting at the hidden good. It is number nine, symbolizing nine months of pregnancy, the hidden life in the womb. The idea is that there is potential for goodness in everything, and the key is the “uniting of heaven and earth,” which inwardly means uniting awareness with the content of the moment, and outwardly means making peace. Making peace both inwardly and outwardly is aided by the thought that there is “hidden goodness.”

Another hint at the hidden good is the first mention of *tov* in the Torah, in reference to the first light:

וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאֹר כִּי-טוֹב  
*And Elohim saw that the Light was Good...*  
Genesis 1:4

“Saw” and “Light” and “Good” are all aspects of the same thing- consciousness. On the deepest level, goodness is “hidden” in consciousness because consciousness can't “see” itself, but we can feel the goodness inherent within our awareness as its reflected in our senses as pleasure or bliss.

The sages taught that this light was hidden in the Torah for the *tzadikim*, the perfected ones, to receive it in *Olam Haba*, the World to Come. The Baal Shem Tov, however, turned this around by teaching that *Olam Haba* is always in the present, not the future, because the Light is always available, to the degree that we reveal our potential to be *tzaddikim*.

The *tzaddikim* are also connected in Kabbalah with the *sefirah* of *Yesod*, Foundation, the ninth *sefirah* on the Tree of Life. This “foundation” is desire and longing for the good, without which spiritual development is not possible. This desire is brought to fruition through the dual practice of “seeing the good” and “doing the good” – they both have to go together.

Here’s an example of seeing the good:

עבְדוּ אֶת־יְהוָה בְּשִׂמְחָה בְּאוֹ לְפָנָיו בְּרִנָּה  
*Serve the Divine with joy, come before the Presence with glad song...*  
Psalm 100:2

Here’s one of doing the good:

הריני מקבל עלי מצוות הבורא: וְאַהֲבַת לְרֵעִי כָמוֹךְ  
*Behold, I receive upon myself the mitzvah of the Creator:*  
*Love your neighbor as yourself!*  
Phrase of Isaac Luria to be said before prayers

In Kabbalah, *Yosef* is referred to as *HaTzaddik* because he sees the good, trusting completely even when he’s thrown down the pit and sold into slavery, and he does the good by planning for the famine and totally forgiving his brothers.

Here’s a *mishna* that embodies both seeing and doing:

הוֹשִׁיעַ בֶּן פְּרוֹחִיָּה אוֹמֵר, עֲשֵׂה לְךָ רַב, וְקַנְיָה לְךָ חֵבֵר, וְהָיִי זֶן אֶת כָּל הָאָדָם לְכַף זְכוּת  
*Yehoshua ben Parakhya says, “Make for yourself a teacher, acquire for yourself a friend, and judge every person toward the pan of merit.”*  
Pirkei Avot 1:6

How Reb Zushia came to see the good in everyone: He was visiting his master, the Maggid of Mezritch, when a man came asking for a blessing in some enterprise. Zushia said “How can you who has done such and such stand before the holy master and not yearn to atone?”

The man left in shame, and Zushia regretted what he had said and didn’t know what to do. The Maggid gave him a blessing that he should see only the good in people, even if they sinned before his eyes. But his special vision could not be taken away, so when he saw the sins of others, he saw himself as responsible. Rabbi Yisrael of Rizhyn would tell this and add, “If all of us were like him, evil would be destroyed and perfection achieved.”

## Practice

### ***Tet Meditation and Chant***

Invite into your mind people in your life. Then, choose one person to focus on. Whatever feelings or associations come with this person, bring to mind their good qualities, and see if you can focus on the good and amplify it, and praise the person in your mind, seeing them as *tzaddikim*. Then, give them blessings.

Keeping this *kavanah* in mind of seeing the good in others and offering blessing to others, sing the chant: *Tov Adonai Lakol, V'rakhamav al kol ma'asav*.