

The Anxiety of Alienation

In the wilderness of daily living, where the forces of 'outside' and 'external' swirl and seek to devour our fragile sense of wholeness, we retreat to the familiar. In a room, house, street or city of strangers- a familiar face brings with it a calm sense of re-cognition, a redemption from the otherness of others whose mere presence imposes a certain sense of anxiety.

Familiarity implies connection. When we are surrounded by the un-familiar, the foreign, we retreat into what we know most deeply-ourselves. There, in the depths of our own psyches we re-orient and reconnect ourselves to connectivity. The faith and serenity that comes with the revelation of comfort-in-ourselves effaces the alienation of the externalization of being.

The Arizal revealed that within the realm of interiority, the place of comfort and the familiar, there is a gradation of protection. In the movement into oneself in search of comfort and 'safety' each stage is measured relative to the more internalized mode of being that lay anterior to it. Starting with the most interior and moving towards the exterior we find- 1. The root, or *shoresh* 2. The soul, or *neshama* 3. The body, or *guf* 4. The garments, or *levush* 5. The dwelling, or *heichal*.

In the next fragment we will begin to see how each stage of internalization manifests itself in psychological and somatic terms.