

How can we find ourselves, between acceptance and change, between being who we are and trying to grow, diverge, become?

To prepare for this Yom Kippur, we are thinking about one figure who danced this dance: Hillel Zeitlin (1871 - 1942). A philosopher, mystic, writer, and thinker, Zeitlin lived a life of radical change, during a time of many changes in this world. He grew up religious, left religious life for a time, and then returned with a radical devotion, but marked deeply by the open minded inquiry of his years outside of formal religious life.

Zeitlin resists easy interpretation or labeling - a radical proponent of spiritual community, he was also a powerful paradigm of the lonely mystic, writing and speaking tirelessly to and for his own soul. Little-known for a long time, Zeitlin has received increased attention in bits and bursts. Art Green's foundational collection, *Hasidic Spirituality for a New Era: The Religious Writings of Hillel Zeitlin* was an important step, as was the publication of Zeitlin's writings (most still in hebrew) on chassidic and kabbalistic thinkers and works, "*In the Pardes of Chassidut.*" Recent collections on spiritual figures of the twentieth century have placed him at the nexus of philosophy and mysticism that was crucial for the eventual emergence of a decentralized spiritual resurgence. Above all, Zeitlin reflects an intense and honest engagement with his own path, his own soul, and he is unflinchingly devoted to an ever deepening life, no matter what direction he went in.

To approach this narrow bridge between who we are and who we hope to be, we put together some of our favorite reads on this intriguing figure. We start with a short introduction, "Who is Hillel Zeitlin?" from Sam Glauber-Zimra, an important voice on Hillel Zeitlin-related topics. Next, you get "The Great Call of the Hour": Hillel Zeitlin's Yiddish Writings on Yavneh," co-authored by Art Green and Ariel Evan Mayse, and we finish up with Norman Frimer's moving piece, "A Vignette of Rabbi Hillel Zeitlin and the Holocaust (30 years after the storm)."

How can we find ourselves, between acceptance and change, between being who we are and trying to grow, diverge, become? I'm not quite sure, but I look to Zeitlin's struggles for guidance. I'm not sure if he had the answer, but perhaps we can listen to the way he framed his own questions, and perhaps we might be able to ask better questions, to frame and understand our own humble and desperate attempts to move forward in this path a little bit better. And always, as we find ourselves amidst opportunities and challenges, between heaven and earth, let's do it together. Together, let's do it together. May we all be written in the book of life, love, and joy - together.

Remember to click the link above to download the entire PDF, with all three articles attached.