

דרך חיים

מאת כ"ק אדמו"ר דובער נבג"מ זי"ע

THE PATH OF LIFE

The Gate of Repentance

By

Our Master, Teacher, and Rebbe

Rabbi DovBer of Lubavitch

The Mittler Rebbe

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Section One

An introductory letter to all Chassidim from
Rabbi Dovber of Lubavitch, the Mittler Rebbe

Introduction

It is written,¹ “The beginning of wisdom is the fear of *HaShem*.” However, a different verse states,² “The fear of The Lord, that is wisdom.” At first glance, these two verses appear to be contradictory. To clarify, the first verse seems to indicate that the fear of *HaShem* precedes the acquisition of wisdom. This is in line with the Mishnah that states,³ “Anyone whose fear of sin precedes his wisdom, his wisdom is enduring.” In contrast, the second verse which states, “The fear of The Lord, that is wisdom” seems to indicate that wisdom precedes fear of *HaShem*. This verse is in line with another Mishnah which states,⁴ “If there is no wisdom, there is no fear.” The same Mishnah continues and states this in the opposite form as well, “If there is no fear, there is no wisdom.” This phrasing is in line with the former verse, “The beginning of wisdom is the fear of *HaShem*.” If this is the case, then how is one to know which one to start with?

We must therefore conclude that wisdom and fear of *HaShem* are actually one and the same. This is what is meant by the verses, “The fear of The Lord, that is wisdom,” and, “The beginning of wisdom is the fear of *HaShem*.” In other words, the very first entranceway into wisdom in fact is the fear of *HaShem*.

¹ Psalms 111:10

² Job 28:28

³ Avot 3:9

⁴ Avot 3:17

Now, we must point out a distinction in the Mishnah that states, “Anyone whose fear of sin precedes his wisdom, his wisdom is enduring.” This Mishnah is indeed speaking about a hierarchy of precedence, but specifies that it is referring to fear of sin in particular. For, as stated in the Zohar,⁵ “There is fear, and there is fear,” indicating that there are two types of fear. In other words, there is a lower fear, which is called the fear of sin (*Yirat Chet*) and there is an upper fear, which is called the fear of *HaShem* (*Yirat HaShem*) or the fear of God (*Yirat Elokim*), as well known.

Certainly, the lower fear of sin must precede the upper fear of *HaShem* referred to by the aforementioned verse “The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom.” For, this upper fear of *HaShem* and wisdom are one and the same. It is about this upper fear that the Mishnah stated, “If there is no wisdom, there is no fear; If there is no fear, there is no wisdom.” Thus, when the latter Mishnah states, “Anyone whose fear of sin precedes his wisdom,” it is referring to the fear of sin which must precede the fear of *HaShem*, which itself is the wisdom being referred to.

Based upon the above, we find that this verse, “The beginning of wisdom is the fear of *HaShem*,” refers to the attainment of pure and perfect service in the ways of *HaShem*. However, it is also understood that it is impossible to reach this level of fear of *HaShem* without preceding it with the fear of sin. It is specifically through first attaining of fear of sin, that one’s wisdom and fear of *HaShem* will endure. If one

⁵ Tikkunei Zohar, Tikkun 30, 73b

does not first acquire fear of sin, then his wisdom and fear of *HaShem* will not endure at all. Whatever is attained will only be temporary. This should suffice for the understanding.

Now, we must endeavor to further understand this, for there is an additional verse that states,⁶ “The end of the matter, after all is heard: fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole of man.” This verse indicates that fear of God is the end and ultimate goal of everything, but don’t we already know that fear of God is called the beginning, not the end, as in the verse, “The beginning of wisdom is the fear of *HaShem*?”

We therefore must also distinguish between fear that is called fear of God (*Yirat Elokim*) and the fear of *HaShem* (*Yirat HaShem*). We could say that fear of God (*Yirat Elokim*) is equal to fear of sin (*Yirat Chet*), which involves desisting from evil. However, this is not really the case, since, fear of sin (*Yirat Chet*) only involves desisting from evil, whereas fear of God (*Yirat Elokim*) is a loftier level, as known. In other words, fear of God is more than just desisting from evil, but actually is also the foundation for positive actions and good deeds. That is, one who has attained fear of God (*Yirat Elokim*) will be on guard to observe the positive commandments as well. Such a person is called one who serves *HaShem* with fear, since he accepts the yoke of Heaven upon himself on this basis, as known.

Rather, the explanation of the matter is as follows. It is the fear of sin (*Yirat Chet*) which is the primary foundation of

⁶ Ecclesiastes 12:13

repentance. It therefore precedes both fear of God (*Yirat Elokim*) as well as the wisdom of fear of *HaShem* (*Yirat HaShem*). Thus, fear of sin (*Yirat Chet*) is also known as “Lower Repentance” (*Teshuvah Tata’a*), in that one returns to *HaShem* in action. That is, he desists completely from all bad action because he is afraid of casting off the yoke of Heaven and rebelling against *HaShem*.

Now, although this level is still not within the category of fear of God (*Yirat Elokim*), which requires complete acceptance of the yoke of Heaven, nevertheless, it is still called fear of sin (*Yirat Chet*). This is because, at the very least, he has indeed developed a fear of transgressing any sins in actuality. He will therefore guard himself from things such as theft or dishonesty in his business dealings, or taking advantage of the poor. He will instead conduct his trade by the sweat of his brow and by the work of his hands, dealing honestly and faithfully. Likewise, he will guard himself against other evils, such as licentious behavior or any sexual transgressions, even if only in thought. In other words, he will even desist from licentious and lustful thoughts.

Primarily, he recognizes that behavior which is the opposite of fear of sin (*Yirat Chet*) falls completely into the category of casting off the yoke of Heaven, God forbid. Such a person’s heart and mind are frivolous to the extent that he does not even recognize his behavior to be sinful. He tramples over and transgresses all manner of sin for the simple reason that he does not feel it to be sinful altogether. Now, this does not mean that he does not *know* that it is sinful, because he

actually does know. An example of this are his licentious and lustful thoughts. Regarding such thoughts the Sages taught,⁷ “Anyone who, through licentious thoughts, brings himself into a state of arousal, is not permitted into the boundary of the Holy One blessed is He... One who intentionally causes an erection in himself shall be ostracized etc.”

Yet, although he knows all this, he intentionally brings himself into a state of lustful arousal and is therefore considered to be like wicked (*Rasha*). Now, provided that he would actually repent of this, he would not be called actual wicked (*Rasha*). However, he actually does not repent, nor does he repel bad thoughts from his mind at all. On the contrary, he draws his heart and mind into these thoughts, delving into them until he becomes filled with evil lusts, which bring him into the impurity of wasteful nocturnal emissions.

This is just one such example, but the same is true of all the wicked imaginations of the evil inclination. This is as stated,⁸ “For the inclination of man’s heart is evil from his youth,” such that he descends lower and lower into complete evil, that has no goodness in it at all.

It is for this reason that the *Tikkun Chatzot*⁹ prayer was established. It should specifically be recited with tears of contrition and with reflection into the matter of having cast off the yoke of Heaven. This is because it is the casting off of the yoke of Heaven that is the root cause of all the wicked

⁷ Talmud Bavli, Nidah 13b

⁸ Genesis 8:21

⁹ Midnight Prayer of Repentance

thoughts that subsequently sprout in his mind and heart, until he falls into actual wrong action. This is as stated,¹⁰ “The foolish afflict themselves on account of their iniquities,” and as will soon be explained, the iniquity referred to here is their rebelliousness.

Now, within the category of fear of sin, one places the trepidation of God before his very eyes. He does this to humble his heart of stone, so that at the very least, he fears to act in any manner that is wrong in the eyes of *HaShem*. However, it must be pointed out that there are a number of different levels within this general category.

The first, are those who fear the sinful act, fearing even the thought of it, and as such will resist musing upon it in their hearts and minds. However, because they have become so entrenched in the sin, their hearts are constantly drawn toward it. Thus, although such a person strives to drive away these thoughts, they return to him and he repeatedly stumbles and falls. Such a person cannot be considered to have fully repented in a way of complete *Teshuvah*, because he continues to return to his depravity. This is known to all those who do not delude themselves.

An example are those who because of their self-love, are not on guard in themselves, because in their hearts they minimize the sin, as if it is a small thing. This is well known to anyone who does not deceive himself by rationalizing that his bad deeds are not purely evil. Now, although such a person regularly awakens himself to arousal of repentance, it

¹⁰ Psalms 107:17

does not endure in him and he continues to stumble. The reality is that this level cannot be called fear of sin (*Yirat Chet*) and such a person cannot be called a true penitent.

Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that during the times that he does repent and regret his ways and during those times that he does drive evil thoughts completely from his mind, it is in fact considered to be repentance and fear of sin. During such times, when he is in a state of repentance, his penance is indeed desirable before *HaShem*. This is as stated,¹¹ “For *HaShem* searches out all hearts,” and,¹² “The Merciful One seeks the heart.”

Now, the second category are those who have not yet entrenched themselves in evil in the depths of the lusts of their hearts. They therefore are capable of easily turning themselves away from evil. Because they are in control of their hearts they are not drawn into these desires in the first place. Such a person is considered to have true fear of sin (*Yirat Chet*). This is because casting off of the yoke of Heaven through lack of seriousness has not yet taken root in him. His heart is therefore easily humbled, so that he considers the consequences of his actions and is wary of doing or even thinking anything bad. Rather, he has no desire to be drawn into anything which is regarded as hateful or abominable in the eyes of *HaShem*. Although he has not yet attained fear of God (*Yirat Elokim*) through true acceptance of the yoke of Heaven, nevertheless, at least he has completely

¹¹ Chronicles I 28:9

¹² Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 106b

left the category of casting off the yoke of Heaven. This type of person is called one who desists from evil and has attained fear of sin.

Such fear of sin is actually quite close to the level of complete repentance, which is called the upper repentance (*Teshuvah Ila'ah*) and refers to a person who truly returns to *HaShem* with all his heart and soul, literally, as in the verse,¹³ “The fear of The Lord, that is wisdom.” In other words, this type of person has acquired the aspect of wisdom-*Chochmah* (חכמה) in his soul, which refers to the inner nullification to *HaShem* of the “*Koach Mah*-power of what” (כח מה). It is in this regard that the Mishnah stated, “Anyone whose fear of sin precedes his wisdom, his wisdom will endure,” as mentioned above.

Now, it is indeed true that many people on this level sometimes also fall into a state of casting off the yoke of Heaven. For example, they may scoff, joke or otherwise demonstrate negative or bad character traits towards others, such as envy, hatred, anger, conceit, condescension or cruelty and the like. However, these behaviors are not comparable to the casting off of the yoke of Heaven that is found in those who willfully entertain sinful and wicked thoughts in their hearts.

Rather, these bad character traits are only due to the natural tendency to be negative in their relationships with others. The same is true of their scoffing and joking or their tendency to excessive idle chatter and gossip. These all result

¹³ Job 28:28

from natural frivolity because of the dominance of the white gall, rather than because of intentionally rebelling against the Living God and the casting off of the yoke of His kingdom. Nevertheless, the end result of their scoffing is that, ultimately, they descend into the category of casting off the yoke of Heaven in actuality. This is as stated,¹⁴ “Scoffers shall not stand in Your sight.”

The same is true of those who excessively engage in idle chatter, through which they utterly demolish any fear of God that they may have in themselves. This is as stated,¹⁵ “They set their mouth against Heaven and their tongue struts on earth,” with the abundance of their prattle. This behavior is solely due to their utter lack of sensitivity and recognition of the yoke of Heaven. Such people have no fear of God upon their faces and thus, their abundant chatter opens up the concealed evil hidden deep in their souls, which is called, “the depth of evil” (*Omek Ra*), as known. This is the diametric opposite of speaking and discussing words of Torah, which is the “depth of goodness” (*Omek Tov*) on the side of holiness, as known. This will suffice for the understanding.

(It should be pointed out that with such people, due to their excessive chatter they become distracted by all sorts of alien thoughts during prayer. In other words, even when they are trying to concentrate on their prayers and do not want to think idle thoughts, they will be distracted by them. This, in turn, causes them to spiral further down into even more

¹⁴ Psalms 5:5

¹⁵ Psalms 73:9

excessive idle chatter, for it is all one thing, as explained elsewhere.)

The third category of people are those who truly possess fear of God in their hearts. This is because they truly accept the yoke of Heaven upon themselves, both in the service of prayer, as well as in their Torah study. They exert themselves to focus during prayer and to fervently study Torah with all their soul, until the fear of God enters into the depth of their hearts. This causes an impression of their fervor to be established in their hearts for the duration of the day, so that even when they are in the marketplace or otherwise engaged in business matters, the light shining in their soul does not become dimmed or darkened. Certainly, they do not turn their hearts or thoughts away from *HaShem*, but instead abstain and resist every evil matter. Such a person is called one who fears God (*Yerei Elokim*).

It is regarding the attainment of this kind of fear that Ecclesiastes states,¹⁶ “The end of the matter after all is heard: fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole of man.” The Jewish people were similarly instructed,¹⁷ “And now Israel, what does *HaShem* your God require of you, but to fear *HaShem* your God and to walk in all His ways.” In addition, even one’s good deeds and the development of joy in the fulfillment of the commandments (*Mitzvot*) stem from this fear of God. This is the case even in one who serves *HaShem* with love, as demonstrated by the verse,¹⁸ “Happy is the man

¹⁶ Ecclesiastes 12:13

¹⁷ Deuteronomy 10:12

¹⁸ Psalms 112:1

who fears *HaShem*, he greatly delights in His commandments.”

It is from this level of fear of God (*Yirat Elokim*) that he will come to attain fear of *HaShem* (*Yirat HaShem*), which is the aspect of the aforementioned wisdom-*Chochmah* (חכמה). In other words, he will attain the aspect of nullification to *HaShem* in the innermost depths of his heart and mind. This is caused by the open revelation of the light of *HaShem* in his soul, which is the aspect of the “*Ko'ach Mah*-power of what” (כח מ"ה) of his soul, as known. This then, is the meaning of the aforementioned statement,¹⁹ “If there is no fear, there is no wisdom.” However, it is through first establishing fear of sin in his heart that his wisdom will endure forever, as said above. This should suffice for the understanding.

Now, the fourth category are those who do not find their fear of sin to be commensurate to the fear of God they have acquired through toil in prayer, Torah study and the performance of good deeds. This comes about because of two possible reasons:

The first possibility is that he puts the minimum amount of effort in his mind and heart when praying or studying Torah, so that the fear of God or the fear of *HaShem* do not truly take root and become established in his heart to its depth. In other words, in reality, he has not truly acquired fear of God altogether, except in a very passing manner. Rather, he merely deludes himself with false imaginations that he possesses fear of God.

¹⁹ Mishnah Avot 3:17

The second possibility, is that he truly does toil to the very depths of his mind and heart, so that the fear of God has indeed taken root in his soul. However, whether due to financial concerns that absorb his attention or due to other distractions or intrigues, his fear of God slowly dissipates. The effect over time is that he is left completely empty of all fear of God and fear of *HaShem*. His heart thus continues to descend until it becomes as unfeeling as an inanimate object, as known. This actually is the primary reason that causes most people to fall in their service of *HaShem* and it can afflict anyone, young and old alike. Regarding this it states,²⁰ “They reeled to and fro, staggering like a drunkard, and all their wisdom was swallowed up.”

It is on this premise that the midnight prayer of *Tikkun Chatzot* was established, namely, to weep over the exile of the Divine Presence (*Shechinah*), because on a certain level, the Divine Presence (*Shechinah*) refers to the individual spark of Godliness in the soul of every Jew. The exile of the Divine Presence therefore refers to the fact that the light of one’s soul becomes dimmed, having become consumed and concealed in the depths of one’s financial distractions.

Due to monetary stresses and pressures endured from all sides, a person becomes removed from his spiritual station and falls from his of fear of God. With descent after descent, he plummets both in the innerness of his heart and externally, until he loses all semblance of the fear of God and fear of

²⁰ Psalms 107:27

HaShem that he had once attained, as said above. This will suffice for the understanding.

However, there is critical and sound advice that can remedy the above ailment, so that one's heart and mind will not be turned backwards, even while he is involved in business affairs and the pursuit of livelihood. In other words, if he follows this advice, he will not fall. What he must do is place his trust completely in *HaShem*, even regarding financial dealings and business matters. He should not believe that the profits he has gained and the prosperity he has been blessed with are the accomplishment of his own hands and are solely due to his own efforts.

Now, to properly understand this, we must preface with an explanation about earning one's livelihood in general. This is explained elsewhere about the verse,²¹ "Length of days are in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor." Now, we need to understand the fundamental difference between riches and honor. At first glance, they appear to be one and the same. At the very least, they seem to go hand in hand, for the automatic result of wealth in almost all cases, is honor and greatness. Why then does this verse divide them into two separate matters by enumerating them individually, which, on the surface, seems to inform us that they are distinct from each other?

To understand this, let us consider what the Sages of blessed memory stated when the sages of Alexandria asked them,²² "What should a person do to become wealthy? [Rabbi

²¹ Proverbs 3:16

Yehoshua] said to them, ‘He should increase his business transactions etc.’” Now, on the surface this seems like simple, sound advice in line with the natural order of the world. For example, if a person only makes a small investment of capital, according to the natural order, it is likely that his profits will not fulfill his needs. In other words, it would be unnatural for him to invest one hundred dollars and expect a return of thousands of dollars. However, if he were to increase his stock and the volume of his sales, profiting somewhat from each transaction, and continue increasing his investment in the business throughout the year, then during the course of the year he can manage to earn an adequate livelihood that will suffice him for his needs.

Now, there are two ways to go about this. The first way is that he increases his merchandise and buys in much larger quantities, perhaps even double or quadruple the amount that he can actually afford. He then must increase the number of individual sales and throw himself diligently into pursuing numerous avenues of distribution, investing and reinvesting his returns.

The second way involves somewhat greater commercial wisdom, founded on the principle of buying low and selling much higher. In other words, his capital outlays can be much smaller, with much higher returns.

Now, if he combines the two approaches, minimizing his cash outlays, but purchasing large quantities on credit, buying low and selling high, and continually reinvesting, then over

²² Talmud Bavli, Niddah 70b

time, he can profit much more than his actual personal investment, as known.

This is good and sound advice and according to the natural order of things, he should find great success if he follows these fundamental and basic guidelines. However, as everyone knows, this is not always the case, for he may very well not succeed. We clearly see that many people follow these business rules, increasing their sales and merchandise with great diligence and much toil, but in the end do not profit at all. Moreover, they can incur tremendous losses, including not only their principal investment, but the loss of the business itself. In other words, if he is unsuccessful, he can end up buried in debt to the numerous creditors that he borrowed from in order to increase the sales in the first place. Such a case is the very opposite of success, in that the more he grows his business, the more his losses grow.

This being the case, it seems that the above advice damages and destroys his very life, so much so that he would have been better off doing the opposite. If he would not have invested in so much merchandise or expanded his business beyond his means, he would not have lost as much. Even if his profits would have been reduced, he would have been in a much better position than the significant losses he incurred.

Now, in reality there are actually two ways in which one may be involved in business and earning a livelihood. The first is to increase his merchandise and transactions, as said above. If he works with this business model, this is the only way he can succeed.

Now, in truth, the precise amount of one's income and sustenance is determined by *HaShem*, who nourishes and sustains all.²³ Thus, his income is measured with absolute precision, exactly according to his needs in all matters. Nevertheless, in his case, it comes out and manifests through the volume of his transactions, specifically by increasing his merchandise and growing his business. He therefore must diligently invest himself into the business with all manner of deals, toil and investment, perhaps more than he should. However, if he does not do this, he certainly will not succeed in earning a sustainable livelihood.

The second way is the very opposite. In this case, one's income and sustenance has likewise been determined by *HaShem* on *Rosh HaShanah*. However, the income manifests through minimal business dealings. In other words, he does not try to increase his business and he only invests what he can afford, without going into debt, but nonetheless, without expending too much effort he is blessed day by day. This is to say that whatever he would have earned by increasing his volume and merchandise, he earns with minimal investment and energy. On the contrary, for many different reasons, including reasons that transcend the natural order, he actually may become even more successful.

This second way is primarily the matter of receiving blessings from above (*Brachah*), for although his sustenance is derived from his labor, it nonetheless comes out without restraint. This is like the verse,²⁴ "And Yitzchak sowed in

²³ See liturgy of Birchat HaMazon

that land and in that year he found a hundredfold, and *HaShem* blessed him.” In this same way, this kind of person also earns his livelihood from his transactions of grain, wheat, wine or whatever merchandise he carries or imports. However, from a small quantity of merchandise, he profits very greatly. This is similar to how it was with Yitzchak, that from the little that he planted, many times that amount grew. This blessing is referred to in the verse,²⁵ “And *HaShem* your God shall bless you in all that you do.” That is, a small deed can become the receptacle for abundant blessings that clearly come from the Supernal power that transcends the natural order.

However, this way of receiving sustenance is not called by the term “wealth-*Osher*,” but instead is called “blessing-*Brachah*.” The term “wealth” specifically refers to the kind of sustenance that is derived from the increase of merchandise and transactions. Nonetheless, in truth, “It is the blessing of *HaShem* that causes wealth.”²⁶ In other words, in reality it is the abundant blessings of *HaShem* that bring great wealth in his business dealings. We find this in regard to our forefather Avraham, about whom it says,²⁷ “And *HaShem* blessed Avraham in everything.” That is, he was blessed with great abundance far beyond the labor of his hands, to the point that he was extremely wealthy, possessing gold, silver and huge herds of cattle and sheep etc. The same is true of Yitzchak and Yaakov, about whom it states,²⁸ “And the man became

²⁴ Genesis 26:12

²⁵ Deuteronomy 15:18

²⁶ Proverbs 10:22

²⁷ Genesis 24:1

exceedingly prosperous, and he attained bountiful flocks, maids and servants, camels and donkeys etc.”

Therefore, it should be understood, with certainty, that all wealth comes from *HaShem*. However, the term “wealth” specifically refers to blessings that specifically become manifest through increase in merchandise and transactions. It is for this reason that the Sages stated,²⁹ “What should a person do to become wealthy? He should increase his business transactions,” specifically. For it is the increase and volume of transactions that are the vessel and vehicle for financial success and abundant wealth, provided that there is a Divine edict from *HaShem* that he should become wealthy through his business dealings. In other words, this manner of wealth must specifically come according to the natural order and he must be diligent in investing himself greatly in all manner of abundant business dealings, as said above.

Now, if we see someone who becomes wealthy through minimal business dealings, yet is successful far beyond his investment, this would generally be considered as something outside of the norm. In other words, in some cases great wealth can be achieved without abundant business dealings. This is similar to the wealth of Yosef, about whom it says,³⁰ “*HaShem* caused all that he did to prosper in his hand,” without any limitations.

We therefore see that in general there are two types of blessings of success. One comes about specifically through

²⁸ Genesis 30:43

²⁹ Talmud Bavli, Niddah 70b

³⁰ Genesis 39:3

abundant business dealings, as stated, “He should increase his business,” and the second comes about with minimal business dealings, but with an abundance of success and great blessings, as said above.

Thus, there are two manners through which the influence of financial success is comes out from Above. The first manifests primarily through the natural order, which requires much toil in the increasing the volume of transactions, without which he would not succeed at all. The second comes from Above to below in a manner that is primarily higher than the natural order, so that even with the most minor business investments, whatever they may be, he is blessed to succeed without measure or limit. This will suffice for the understanding.

Now, these two general manners in which the blessings in one’s livelihood are drawn forth, have many different particular manifestations. Each person will experience them in various different ways, and they can change from year to year, as is known. It is for this reason that it states,³¹ “a person does not know in what way he will earn a profit.” This is true to such an extent that “a person is literally judged on a daily basis.”³² In other words, although one’s livelihood and income are determined on *Rosh HaShanah*, the manner in which he will receive the influence is determined on a daily basis.

³¹ Talmud Bavli, Pesachim 54b

³² Talmud Bavli, Rosh HaShanah 16a

It is therefore understood that the manner in which the influence will be brought forth to him, i.e. in which of the two aforementioned ways, changes from time to time. Thus, this determination is made regularly, according to his deeds and how he conducts himself in investing the vitality of his soul in the service of *HaShem*, in Torah and prayer etc.

For instance, if his deeds exceed his wisdom,³³ then it is apparent that he accepts the yoke of Heaven upon himself in excess of his wisdom. In other words, his good deeds are in greater measure than even the “*Koach Mah*-power of what” of his soul, and in excess of his heartfelt love and fear of *HaShem*. In such a circumstance, the yoke of worldly concerns is removed from him, in commensurate measure to his service of *HaShem* and good deeds. Therefore, his sustenance is drawn forth to him in a manner of abundant blessing with minimal effort or toil, and with only a minor amount of involvement in business, as we said above. This is as stated,³⁴ “Whomever takes upon himself the yoke of Torah, they remove from him the yoke of government and the yoke of worldly concerns.”

The opposite is also true, with regards to whomever casts off the yoke of Torah. In other words, he makes his business his primary focus, whereas his Torah study is secondary and incidental. In addition, his deeds in Torah, Mitzvot and the service of prayer are lacking and not at all commensurate to his wisdom or fear of God. In such a case the yoke of worldly

³³ Mishnah Avot 3:9

³⁴ Mishnah Avot 3:5

concerns is placed upon him,³⁵ and he must specifically increase his business in order to succeed and secure his livelihood. In other words, he must toil with all of his strength in earning his sustenance, and he must utilize his wisdom to come up with all sorts of schemes and business ventures, and it is only in this manner that he will earn a living. Moreover, even with all of his efforts, he may only succeed in securing his basic needs, and nothing more. Moreover, if he is not quite crafty enough, and makes poor decisions with his work or merchandise, then he will not profit at all, and may come to significant losses.

The above describes the yoke of worldly concerns, as is well known. This yoke will be precisely commensurate to his minimal efforts in the acceptance of the yoke of Torah and Mitzvot with fear of God, and the lack of investment of his heart and mind in the service of the heart known as prayer. Every person is weighed with precise measure each and every *Rosh HaShanah*, exactly according to his deeds, and as such, it will change from time to time, as we said above.

For instance, someone who is deserving of abundant blessings in their livelihood, may instead be required to toil with great effort, even though his good deeds outweigh his wisdom. This may be for some other reason, such as his diminishment of charitable giving or deficiencies in acts of kindness to his fellow-man. His blessings will certainly be impacted if he operates his business dealings with dishonesty, cheating or embezzlement, or if he is not diligent in paying his

³⁵ Ibid.

creditors or workers on time. For, how is he to derive blessings from that which doesn't belong to him?

A person may also draw this upon himself, if his whole desire is just to become wealthy and to amass riches. This is what the Sages meant when they said,³⁶ “What should a person do to become wealthy?” In other words, they were referring to someone who desires to become wealthy specifically. They then responded that, “he should increase his merchandise and business,” meaning that he will automatically come into this category and be forced to increase his business dealings.

The opposite is also true, that abundance and blessings will come to one who is not necessarily fitting in terms of his deeds or his Torah study. Nevertheless, he casts his burden upon *HaShem*³⁷ and has no desire for wealth. He has faith in *HaShem*, and trusts that *HaShem* will provide him with His blessings whether with little or abundance. Likewise, he gives charitably and does acts of goodness and kindness, taking an interest in the welfare of others to the same degree that he considers his own affairs. Because of this, he causes abundant blessings to be drawn forth upon him, much more than whatever may have been allocated to him on *Rosh HaShanah* according to the strict measures of justice etc. This will suffice for the understanding.

Through all of the above we are able to explain two seemingly conflicting verses. The first verse states,³⁸

³⁶ Talmud Bavli, Niddah 70b

³⁷ Psalms 55:23

³⁸ Ecclesiastes 7:12

“wisdom gives life to he who possesses it,” while the other verse states,³⁹ “bread does not come to the wise.” In light of the above, however, it is understood that there are two paths and ways in which one’s sustenance and livelihood may come forth. These two paths are literal opposites. In other words, the person who is befitting of blessings without much toil in business, his wisdom sustains him and enlivens him, so that he earns his needs and profits with very little involvement in business. This is the meaning of the first verse, “wisdom gives life to he who possesses it.” That is, one who possesses wisdom, referring to the root of wisdom in the upper *Mazal*,⁴⁰ it is he who succeeds in drawing forth light, influence, and blessing upon his house, by means of his wisdom. (This is specifically because his deeds outweigh his wisdom in the life of his soul itself, and “the beginning is bound to the end.”⁴¹ This will suffice for the understanding.)

The latter verse which states,⁴² “bread does not come to the wise,” refers to those who are not befitting of blessing, except by means of abundant toil and labor in their business. In his case, all of his wisdom and scheming will not help him, and his sustenance will only be drawn forth through abundant business dealings. His wisdom and intellect do not aid him at all, and he must resort to the toil of his hands, specifically. On the contrary, the more that he schemes with his wisdom, the more he will lose. Rather, as the verse states,⁴³ “By the labor

³⁹ Ecclesiastes 9:11

⁴⁰ Shaar HaYichud, Ch. 25

⁴¹ Sefer Yetzirah 1:7

⁴² Ecclesiastes 9:11

of your hands you shall eat; you shall be happy, and it shall be good for you.” In other words, only by the labor of your hands shall you eat. He will thus need to toil greatly and labor in an abundance of business dealings in order to secure his sustenance. This, then, is what is meant by the latter verse, “bread does not come to the wise,” i.e. that they will not secure bread without abundant toil. This will suffice for the understanding. In contrast, there is the aforementioned aspect of “wisdom that gives life to he who possesses it,” for the reasons we said before, that should suffice those who understand.

(We may also explain these verses in a converse manner. That is, the verse “bread does not come to the wise,” may refer to those who are deserving of blessing without much toil. In their case this verse may be understood to mean that his wisdom will not help him in securing a livelihood. On the contrary, his wisdom will actually detract if he overly utilizes it for business. In contrast, the verse “wisdom gives life to he who possesses it,” may refer to those whose income and sustenance is tied to the labor of their hands. It is only through his abundant schemes and dealings that his wisdom will help him secure his needs. As we mentioned previously, this aspect is called “the yoke of worldly concerns” which is placed upon him because of his diminishment in his acceptance of the yoke of Torah. This will suffice for those who are understanding.)

⁴³ Psalms 128:2

After having expressed all of the truthful words above, I have come to clarify my intention in this open rebuke, with deep-seated love for all of the people of our brotherhood. I am only addressing my dear friends who heed my words, those who are like me and recognize their true place with honesty and truth. They do not delude themselves in various different ways, such as those who lie to themselves with matters that are beyond them to the point that they come to false delusions in their soul, and say “I have the secret etc.”⁴⁴ Certainly, each member of our brotherhood will scrutinize himself with deep scrutiny and inspection in the finest details and depths of their hearts as to all of these words of truth. For, these words discuss matters of repentance (*Teshuvah*), fear of sin, and fear of God, matters that touch one’s actions and the thoughts of his mind and heart. These words should therefore be considered thoughtfully, until one’s heart and mind are utterly cleansed of all empty and false delusions, until one is able to seek *HaShem* with all his heart, as stated,⁴⁵ “I have sought you with all my heart.”

It is regarding this approach that the verse informs us,⁴⁶ “Let us examine and investigate our ways, and return to *HaShem*.” In other words, one must examine and investigate all of his ways and deeds, and not delude himself at all in this, for,⁴⁷ “*HaShem* searches all hearts, and understands all the inclinations of thought.”

⁴⁴ Isaiah 24:16

⁴⁵ Psalms 119:10

⁴⁶ Lamentations 3:40

⁴⁷ Chronicles I 28:8

Thus, it is upon these foundations that I write all of these words of truth, specifically for those people who yearn for truth and desire it. Such people will find solace for their souls in my words, each person according to his time and place, and according to his level. I will write about matters with which I am quite familiar, matters that shouldn't quite even be written. Namely, I shall discuss all of the maladies and diseases that plague each individual, each of whom is afflicted with many different evil sicknesses, and illnesses of the soul.

Therefore, all those who desire to purify their hearts and truly approach the service of *HaShem*, should endeavor to engrave each and every word upon their hearts. One should not read this like one reads a book, or simply to fulfill his obligations. For, if he does so, he will easily come to be distracted in his mind and heart, and he will not come to understand the reasons for his fall, and he will slowly descend over time until he finally capitulates and gives up on his soul.

HaShem knows that I have not written this work out of self-aggrandizement, for there is nothing in it over which to self-aggrandize or boast. This is not a book of wisdom, such as the works of authors who write books of novel ideas and elucidations to demonstrate their prowess. God forbid that the seed of my father⁴⁸ should do such things, as is known to all those who know and recognize me from my youth. Yet, I see the great poverty and strain during these stressful times, such as the great difficulty in earning a livelihood faced by young and old alike, to the point that "Israel has become extremely

⁴⁸ Talmud Bavli, Kiddushin 44b

weakened,”⁴⁹ may *HaShem* have mercy upon His nation. They do not even have the strength or spare time to turn their attention to the toil of the soul in matters of the mind and heart. They can barely devote even an hour to the service of *HaShem* in prayer, Torah study, and the fulfillment of the commandments, and only do so on special occasions. The few individuals who do have a little bit of interest, give up due to “their impatient spirit and difficult servitude.”⁵⁰ Thus, they too do not absorb the teachings of Chassidus in their minds and hearts to their true depth at all. With the slightest distractions they forget everything that they have heard, and it is as if it was never there at all. In addition to the above, travel is quite difficult at this time, both due to the oppressive preoccupation with earning a livelihood, and owing to the great expense of the travel itself, as known.

It is for all of the above reasons that I have taken it upon myself to gather these writings, filled with words of sweetness that ought to be well received in the hearts of those who hear them. These include all of the specific and particular matters that are quite necessary to each individual, each according to his station, as I am well aware. They must all find time to toil in them at every available opportunity, so that they may learn to fear *HaShem*.⁵¹ There is no reason that they should need to abandon themselves beyond their measure or strength.

Additionally, my own strength wanes, and I do not have the same vigor to travel to the distant townships. I therefore

⁴⁹ Judges 6:6

⁵⁰ Exodus 6:9

⁵¹ Deuteronomy 17:19

beseech all those who are dear and beloved to me to place their hearts into all of these words of truth, and not to minimize this matter at all, Heaven forbid. This applies equally to everyone, young and old alike. Every single quorum (*Minyan*) should establish this as a fixed law, and each person should strengthen and support his fellow in this matter. They should also take it upon themselves to regularly study Tanya, and the first two volumes of the Gate of Repentance which are all founded on words of truth. This will succeed in bringing these matters of the heart to light, in all the particular matters of repentance and prayer. This should suffice for those who are understanding.

Now, I must point out that I am well aware of the nature of those in our Chassidic brotherhood. They will spare no expense when it comes to purchasing or procuring written manuscripts of Chassidic teachings, even those laden with errors. Yet, when those same writings are put into print, they don't bother in the slightest to purchase them, even at the cheapest prices. Those that do purchase them, bind them with beautiful bindings and place them on their shelf for safekeeping, saying "when I have the leisure, I shall study it."⁵² However, he will never actually find the time and interest to study it, and he excuses himself because of his short spiritedness from all of "the labor that he labors under the sun."⁵³ I therefore truly warn them against this for their own good, and I will not be ashamed or embarrassed by it. This is

⁵² Avot 2:4

⁵³ Ecclesiastes 1:3

my responsibility and obligation in these times, and this is an extremely important Mitzvah. In any event, I have exonerated myself, and this should suffice. These words are spoken in truth by one who loves all those who truly seek *HaShem* in purity, as “a friend who has a greater bond than a brother.”⁵⁴

DovBer, the son of my father, master, teacher and rabbi, the Godly genius, our teacher and rabbi, Schneur Zalman of blessed memory, whose soul reposes in Eden.

⁵⁴ Proverbs 18:24

Section Two

The main corpus of “*Derech Chayim*”

Chapter One

Behold, every day at the beginning of one's morning prayers, each person says the words,⁵⁵ "My God, the soul which you placed within me is pure." Certainly, it is impossible to say this about the soul in the body, for⁵⁶ "There is not a righteous person on earth." How then, can we say about it, that it is completely pure? Rather, this statement speaks about the upper portion of the soul which does not become invested within the body. This then, is the meaning of "it is pure", that even now it is pure. The continuation of the prayer is, "You have created it." This refers to the portion of the soul which is vested in the body, within the intellectual faculties of *Chochmah* and *Binah* of the brain, and in the emotions of the heart. Here, it is possible for blemish to exist because of sin within the thought and intellectual brains of *Chochmah* and *Binah*, which correspond to the letters *Yud* and *Heh* of *HaShem*'s four letter name. It is for this reason that during the *Shema* recital before going to sleep we confess,⁵⁷ "That I caused a blemish in the letter *Yud* etc". Nonetheless, this is not at all applicable in regard to the portion of the light of the soul which is above investment within the body. This portion of the soul is called *Mazla*⁵⁸ or *Tzelem*, as in the verse,⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Siddur, liturgy of the morning blessings

⁵⁶ Ecclesiastes 7:20

⁵⁷ Siddur, *Kriyat Shma Al HaMitah* liturgy

⁵⁸ Talmud Bavli, Megillah 3a

“For in *Tzelem* does man walk.” About this the *Zohar* states,⁶⁰ “And if a soul should sin – this astonishing!” In other words, how is it possible that the soul, which is pure, could sin?

Now, it is known that these two souls; the upper soul which is pure, and the lower one which is vested in the body, are comparable to a rope whose top is attached above, but whose end is attached to the depths, below. Such is the soul of every Jew, as stated,⁶¹ “Yaakov is the rope of *HaShem*’s inheritance”. Its top end, that is, the source of the soul above, is bound to the very source from where it was hewn, in the living God. Its bottom end, however, vests within the physical body, in the brain and in the heart. Nonetheless, because the souls are attached to *HaShem*, at times, without any prior preparation for this, a person may have a sudden arousal towards *HaShem* and towards truly returning to Him in his thought and in his heart. This is because the portion of his soul called *Mazla*, i.e how it exists above, awakens the lower portion of the soul. This is analogous to one who shakes the top of a rope. Its bottom end will automatically shake in result. Likewise, when,⁶² “A Heavenly voice calls out daily and announces, ‘Woe, for the disgrace of the Torah,’” the children of Israel become automatically aroused from above, to return to *HaShem*.

The reverse is likewise true. When we arouse ourselves to truly returning to *HaShem* through preparing our hearts

⁵⁹ Psalms 39:7

⁶⁰ *Zohar* Vol. 3 (VaYikra) 13b & 16a

⁶¹ Deuteronomy 32:9

⁶² Mishnah Avot 6:2

below, this causes an arousal above, i.e. it arouses the Creator's love for His people Israel. This is similar to the analogy of one who shakes a rope at its **lower** end which causes the upper end to be moved as well. This then, is the meaning of the verse,⁶³ "If you waken and awaken the love etc". "If you waken" refers to the arousal from Above to below, as explained above concerning the Heavenly voice. On the other hand, "If you awaken" refers to the arousal from below to Above, as explained.

The verse then continues,⁶⁴ "Until it is desirable," for,⁶⁵ "there is a time for every desire." In truth, this love of *HaShem* towards the Jewish people, and the love of the Jewish people towards *HaShem*, whether it is from Above to below or whether it is from below to Above, is one and the same love. This is because in essence, i.e. how it is in *HaShem*'s essence, since He is absolutely singular, no differentiations exist there, and therefore there are no differentiations between the two. For example, the love of a father towards his son is because the son is an extension of his father. He is a part of him. Likewise, the son's love for his father is because he was "taken" from his father and he is a part of him. It makes no difference whether the arousal begins from the father to the son, or from the son to the father, since "There is a time for every desire". (Sometimes it comes from Above to below, while at other times it may be the reverse, however, they are essentially the same.)

⁶³ Song of Songs 3:5

⁶⁴ Ibid. 3:5

⁶⁵ Ecclesiastes 3:1

This is similar to what will come about in the future with the coming of the Prophet Eliyahu, as stated,⁶⁶ “He will return the hearts of the fathers to the sons, and the hearts of the sons to the fathers.” Even nowadays this love may at times be aroused, such as during the midnight prayer of *Tikkun Chatzot*. Likewise, during every exile there are propitious times for this, such as during times of trouble for the Jewish People. At such times *HaShem* too, is pained, as in the verse,⁶⁷ “He is pained,” literally.

Therefore, according to the above, one may ask, “For what purpose did the soul descend into the body?” As is known, every descent of the soul into the body is specifically so that it may be elevated, to a higher level than it originally was in its source. This is in accordance to the verse,⁶⁸ “You have been shown to know that *HaShem* is *Elokim*, there is nothing else besides Him”. In the source of the soul, the revelation of *HaShem* is only in a way of “Everything before Him is as naught.”⁶⁹ It is specifically the soul as it is vested in the body that can reach the level of revelation of “Only *HaShem* exists.” It is therefore understood, that through awakening to return to *HaShem* below, one is elevated to a greater degree than if the arousal is initiated from Above by “the Heavenly voice which calls out,” and causes an arousal to return to *HaShem* below, of the soul as it is within the body.

⁶⁶ Malachi 3:24

⁶⁷ Isaiah 63:9

⁶⁸ Deuteronomy 4:35

⁶⁹ Tanya, Vol.1 Ch. 21

Now, this is astonishing! Certainly, most arousals to return to *HaShem* below, is caused by the arousal of a person's spirit Above, from the power and source of the soul, which, at times, radiates and shines within the vessel of the body in order to awaken the mind and sometimes even the heart, to thoughts of repentance, until, eventually, this brings him to return to *HaShem* in actuality. Furthermore, the fact that his return is strong and long lasting, in that he does not revert to straying from the true path, is always drawn from there, as in the initial phase of return, as our Sages stated,⁷⁰ "One who comes to purify himself is aided from above". It is similarly stated,⁷¹ "A person's evil inclination tries to overpower him, to cause him to revert to his ruined state, but *HaShem* aids and assists him etc."

How then, is it possible that the arousal of returning to *HaShem* through one's own efforts is greater than the arousal from above, to the point that we say that this descent of the soul is solely for the elevation brought about through its return? How is it that the lower aspect of the soul, that which is invested in the body, can actually elevate the higher aspect of the soul, which is its root and source? How is it possible for the recipient elevate the influencer so that even the influencer rises to a higher level?

(However, it is not repentance alone which elevates the soul. Rather, it is the fulfillment of the Torah and all of *HaShem's* commandments, specifically in this world, which

⁷⁰ Talmud Bavli, Yoma 38b

⁷¹ Talmud Bavli, Kiddushin 30b

elevates the source of the soul to greater heights. Accordingly, even the soul of Moshe only merited elevation, specifically because it descended into a physical body. This is as stated,⁷² “You have been shown to know” that only *HaShem* exists, specifically here below, because the descent is for the purpose of an ascent, as explained before.)

However, according to what was stated earlier, there is no difference between the upper *Teshuvah* (repentance), which is initiated from Above to below, and the lower *Teshuvah*, which is initiated from below to Above. The explanation is that as they are in their essential state, there is no differentiation between them, such as the example of the love of a father to his son, or of a son to his father. This may also be compared to rebellious children. Though they may return to their father’s ways of their own accord, nonetheless, this is only because they are drawn towards their source i.e. their father. This is as stated,⁷³ “Behold the rock from where you were hewn.” We therefore see that every arousal to return to *HaShem*, even if it is initiated through one’s own volition, is actually only because of our essential bond to *HaShem*.

Now, certainly, in truth, the commandment-*Mitzvah* to return to *HaShem* specifically relates to that part of the soul which is vested in the body. This is because the main aspect of the concept of *Teshuvah*-Return is as stated,⁷⁴ “The spirit shall return.” This return to one’s source is caused because of the great distance which he feels in being separated from

⁷² Deuteronomy 4:35

⁷³ Isaiah 51:1

⁷⁴ Ecclesiastes 12:7

HaShem. This is similar to the return of a lost object to its owner. It is also analogous to the verse which states,⁷⁵ “And you shall return to the land,” that just as they were banished to a distant land, from there they shall return. In other words, it is specifically the fact that they were banished to a distant land which causes the yearning to return. This is also similar to the verse,⁷⁶ “Even if you are banished to the ends of the heavens etc.” Therefore, this *Mitzvah*-commandment of returning, specifically relates to the sinner, whose soul is lost, and who has been banished from his spiritual root. Because of this, through self-awakening, he becomes greatly embittered in his soul, because he no longer wants to be banished. He therefore returns to *HaShem* with all his heart and with all his soul, as in the case of Menasheh, who returned to *HaShem*.⁷⁷

Therefore, we see two matters or aspects here. The first is that in returning to *HaShem*, he cuts himself off, distancing and separating himself from the place of impurity. This refers to the halls and shells of death and evil which are called the “gates of impurity.” The more embittered he is in his heart due to his sins, the more will he separate and distance himself from them. Now, in this first aspect of distancing himself from evil, there is another aspect; that of coming close to *HaShem*. This is the meaning of the verse,⁷⁸ “Return unto *HaShem*”, which is similar to the verse mentioned before of the spirit returning to *HaShem*. In actuality, there is no

⁷⁵ Joshua 1:15

⁷⁶ Deuteronomy 30:4

⁷⁷ Chronicles II 33:12-13

⁷⁸ Hosea 14:3

difference between these two aspects, for according to his distance from death and evil will be his closeness to life and goodness, which is the return to *HaShem*. This is true even though they are two different forms of repentance and return. Although they are two aspects, the first being a return from evil, which is called distancing and separating himself from evil, and the second being a coming close to *HaShem* and binding himself to Him, nonetheless, they are literally one thing. The two are completely interdependent, and are literally in equal balance with each other. An example of this is one who is returning from a distant land; the more he distances himself from there, the closer he comes to his homeland.

Nonetheless, in regard to the actual form of the repentance, as far as what each one is, the two are literal opposites. In other words, the first is that he is propelled to return because of the tremendous sadness and bitterness in his soul at his great distance. The second is that he is propelled to return, specifically because he is coming closer to *HaShem*, with incredible joy and happiness in his soul. This is because, when he thinks about how greatly distant he is from the Living God, he will immediately become embittered in the very essence of his heart, and this will immediately bring him to tears about the sins of his youth. If this is not the case, then it cannot be called true repentance or return altogether, as known. This is as stated by King David,⁷⁹ “All night I make my bed swim, with my tears I dampen my couch,” which

⁷⁹ Psalms 6:7

refers to the recital of the *Shema* prayer before retiring to sleep. One who washes his face with his own tears rectifies the image of God which he blemished.

On the other hand, as soon as he recalls that he has already resolved in his heart to return to *HaShem*, and that he has already done *Teshuvah*, no longer straying and returning to his former state of ruin, but rather, bonding his soul to *HaShem* and to His Torah, which is called⁸⁰ “Returning to *HaShem*,” he will be aroused with great joy in his heart. This is because, by the fact that he has left and separated himself from evil and spiritual death and has departed from darkness, this itself will bring him great joy and gladness, as if he has escaped physical death, and, as known, spiritual death is far worse than physical death. In truth, if this aspect of joy and happiness over having left evil and impurity, to which he was formerly bound, and over having entered the domain of holiness, is lacking in his heart, then it is certain that he has not done true *Teshuvah*-repentance at all. Rather, he should feel a joy similar to a convert who has merited to enter into the Jewish faith, and has found shelter under the wings of the Divine Presence-*Shechinah*.

The above explanation of *Teshuvah*-Return to *HaShem* is unlike those who think that *Teshuvah* means to afflict themselves over the sins of their youth, as stated,⁸¹ “The foolish afflict themselves on account of their sinful ways and their iniquities.” For, the anguish and affliction of fasting may

⁸⁰ Hosea 14:3

⁸¹ Psalms 107:17

indeed rectify that which he blemished. (This is accomplished through the reduction of his fat and blood, thus rectifying that which he blemished through his sin. The sin added increased power to the impure lusts of the fat and blood of his soul, which he blemished.) Nonetheless, the main essence of *Teshuvah*-Return is the fact that in his heart he repents of his sins, resolving never to return to his old ways, and that he returns to *HaShem*. This will cause his soul to rejoice. It is this joy which strengthens the *Teshuvah* in his heart, and thus makes it everlasting. Because of his joy in coming closer to *HaShem*, he never again will stray to his previous actions or thoughts. Nevertheless, the fact that he is anguished in his soul over his past misdeeds is certainly a rectification for his sins. However, this is only effective if he returns to *HaShem* with all his heart, with joy and love, for that is the **main** essence of *Teshuvah*, that he returns to *HaShem*. In other words, he is not merely desisting from evil, but is also coming closer to *HaShem*, which is the primary aspect of “return.” However, if he does not return to *HaShem*, although he may afflict himself, be truly pained about his past in his soul, confess his wrongdoings and leave evil, nonetheless, it will only be temporary. He had a temporarily arousal, but, nonetheless, it is possible for him to revert and stray, when, over time, he falls from his initial arousal, or when he is tested with temptation in an impure place.

However, such is not so in the case of one who has truly returned with complete *Teshuvah*, i.e. one who has returned to *HaShem*. The fact that he has left death and darkness, and is

now going towards life and the great light, will cause him tremendous joy, and this is the sign that he has truly returned. This then, is the explanation of the matter mentioned before, that the bitterness and the joy are in perfect equilibrium. The amount of joy he has is, literally, commensurate to the amount of pain he feels. For, certainly, the fact that he was attached to a place of impurity has touched the very essence of his heart. But, because he has distanced himself from there, thereby coming closer to *HaShem*, his soul rejoices. If he lacks this joy, it is a **certain** indication that his pain is not because of his essential distance from *HaShem*, and, therefore, it will not be everlasting.

However, in light of the above truth, it is not understood how these two opposites, absolute bitterness, and absolute joy, could possibly unite as one? Furthermore, the analogy given above of a person who was saved from death, does not seem to fit with the matter of *Teshuvah*. This is because a person who has been saved from death **only** experiences joy. In contrast, as explained above, to fulfill the *Mitzvah*-commandment of *Teshuvah*, it is imperative to awaken great bitterness in one's heart over the sins of his youth. However, if he is embittered to such a great degree, how is it possible for him to simultaneously rejoice over having left evil? On the other hand, if he rejoices, how can he be considered to have truly returned to *HaShem*, since he never agonized to the core of his heart over the blemishes which he wrought through his transgressions?

Therefore, we must say that these two are literally one thing. They are completely interdependent, as in the analogy of a person leaving the despised land of his exile to return to his beloved homeland. To the degree of his bitterness and disgust over his exile, will be the tremendous joy he experiences the closer he approaches his homeland. They work literally as one. The bitterness and disgust repels him from the exile, while the joy and love drive him toward his homeland. However, how is it that these two can unite as one?

Chapter Two

The primary allegory to illustrate the matter of the upper *Teshuvah*, in which the arousal is from Above to below, and the lower *Teshuvah*, in which the arousal is from below to Above, is the spark which is drawn closer to the flame. When the spark is distant from the torch, its light slowly diminishes. However, the closer it comes to the torch, the more will it radiate and shine to greater breadth and height. When it comes totally close to the torch it becomes included in its fire. This is similar to the moon. As it comes closer to the sun its light becomes brighter. (Here we are not speaking about the “full moon”, but, rather, about when our entire orbit, along with the moon, comes closer to the sun. Furthermore, the allegory of the “spark and flame” may be better understood by how the light of a coal will become dim and will finally be extinguished if it becomes separated from the bonfire. On the other hand, when it is close to the roaring flames of the bonfire it will continue to burn.)

In the above example, there are two possibilities. The first is that the torch or flame comes close to the spark. Through this, automatically, the spark will ignite and shine, until it becomes included in the fire of the torch. The second possibility is that the spark arises from below to above and slowly but surely comes closer to the torch.

It is known, and has been explained elsewhere, that these two possibilities are called the upper *Teshuvah* and the lower

Teshuvah. When there is revelation from Above to below, so that the essence of Godliness radiates within the souls of Israel, so that they are automatically inspired and aroused to return to *HaShem*, this is the upper *Teshuvah* which precedes the lower *Teshuvah*. This is as stated,⁸² “Return us *HaShem* to You” and only afterwards the verse continues “and we shall return” with a true return which is established forever. This is similar to the time during the ten days of repentance between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur (during which time “the King is in the field”), or like the Heavenly voice mentioned previously. But, when the arousal to repent and return to *HaShem* is from below, from the Jewish people themselves, that their souls ascend and come closer to *HaShem* from below to Above, this is called the lower *Teshuvah*. This is similar to the spark which ascends from below to above, and is specifically referring to when the spark is distant. In other words, this takes place specifically in sinners, as mentioned above, for they are aware of their distance from *HaShem* and are embittered over it, which propels them to come closer.

We may now understand the matter of the two opposite, bitterness and joy, which may be found in a returnee, as previously explained, that he is pained and brought to tears over the sins of his youth, and because of his constant fall every day, with extraneous evil thoughts, and that he makes a strong resolution in his heart every day not to follow a path of emptiness any longer. This is the aspect of the lower *Teshuvah*. In other words, he uproots and separates himself

⁸² Lamentations 5:21

from the place of impurity. This is also called, “tears of weeping”, i.e. that he is aroused to tears, as stated,⁸³ “with tears they shall approach” and⁸⁴ “he shall surely go with tears.” It is apparent that at all times, this “going” is specifically through tears. Now, this same “going” in which he has uprooted and separated himself from his previous place of impurity, and is coming closer to holiness, this certainly is similar to the spark which comes close to the torch and radiates more light, as mentioned above. In other words, because he is coming closer to *HaShem*, he will radiate with joy and happiness, as explained above.

This matter is similar to the verse,⁸⁵ “Peace, peace, to the distant and to the near,” that is, the distant one becomes closer. Now, how is it possible for a person who is distant, such a complete sinner, to become close to *HaShem*, literally like those servants of *HaShem*, who are close to the light of the face of the living King? Certainly, it must be understood that it is because *HaShem* comes out of His place and descends below, to him, as it states,⁸⁶ “*HaShem* is close to the broken hearted.” These broken hearted are those who are truly repentant, whose hearts are shattered into tiny pieces because of their great bitterness and submission. This broken spirit is, literally, compared to a sacrificial offering before *HaShem*, as stated,⁸⁷ “The sacrifices of God are the broken spirit.” This

⁸³ Jeremiah 31:8

⁸⁴ Psalms 121:6

⁸⁵ Isaiah 57:19

⁸⁶ Psalms 34:19

⁸⁷ Psalms 51:19

descent of *HaShem*, to uplift the broken hearts of true returnees is similar to how a heavenly fire descended upon the altar during the time of the first Temple, in Jerusalem. This is because,⁸⁸ “*HaShem* is exalted, and beholds the lowly.” In other words, because of a person’s tears of bitterness and lowliness, which are called,⁸⁹ “the lower waters which cry out, ‘we desire to be before the King,’” the King therefore descends to uplift him.

Furthermore, it states,⁹⁰ “*HaShem* seeks all hearts,” and it states,⁹¹ “If you seek Him, He shall be found by you.” This is like the allegory of the torch and flame which is drawn down to the sparks. This is the meaning of “He shall be found by you,” wherever you may be, even in the lowest of levels. This is similar to the verse,⁹² “Seek *HaShem* when He is found,” such as during the ten days of repentance when the “torch” is drawn to the sparks because of His great mercy. Then, when He is close, all the sparks of the wayward and lost return to the light, and literally become near to *HaShem*. This is the explanation of what we said above, that one who is distant literally becomes close.

We find that in this allegory itself, there are two aspects of *Teshuvah*, the upper *Teshuvah* and the lower *Teshuvah*. In other words, it is not that the entire lower *Teshuvah* comes about because of the upper *Teshuvah*. On the contrary, the

⁸⁸ Psalms 138:6

⁸⁹ Tikkuntei Zohar, Tikkun 5 (19b)

⁹⁰ Chronicles I 28:9

⁹¹ Deuteronomy 4:29

⁹² Isaiah 55:6

lower *Teshuvah* is what caused the upper *Teshuvah*, so that He should descend from His place etc. This is the explanation of the matter of joy which follows the weeping, when he “is going in tears,” as explained above. At that moment itself he returns to *HaShem* joyfully with his entire heart, because *HaShem* is literally close to him. This is compared to a son who was distanced from his father. Certainly, his path to his father will be that of weeping, seeking out and searching for his father. However, when he sees his father, he will laugh and cry at the same moment. Likewise, the joy and weeping in his “travel” towards *HaShem* are as one. This then is the meaning of the statement,⁹³ “with weeping shall they come.” The approach is certainly to come close to and greet the face of their Father in Heaven. Certainly, in Him they will rejoice (for, He is what they desire). Nonetheless, the “travel” towards the holy, “to behold the pleasantness of *HaShem*,”⁹⁴ is with tears. This is *Teshuvah* – return to *HaShem*, from the depths of the heart, such as the statement,⁹⁵ “If Israel do *Teshuvah*, they are immediately redeemed.”

Now then, in truth, it should have said, “with tears they shall go,” rather than “with tears they shall come.” The explanation of the matter is that there are two categories of tears. The first are tears of bitterness about his many sins and his hardened heart, and about the fact that his evil inclination overpowers him at all times, to push him into every type of impurity in thought, speech and action etc. Because of this,

⁹³ Jeremiah 31:8

⁹⁴ Psalms 27:4

⁹⁵ Maimonides, Laws of Teshuva 7:5

when he is alone his soul will cry out, “When will I be through with this evil and harsh death?” Now there are two possibilities in this. The first is that his tears flow immediately and automatically, as soon as he recalls his actions and thoughts, and that only evil resides in his heart etc. This is the true subjugation of his heart, and its essential humility. This is similar to the natural humility in the heart of a beggar, who immediately upon recalling the poverty and pitiful state that he is in, in that he is afflicted with the difficulties of raising his children and in his health or sustenance, he will immediately cry bitter tears. This is the similar nature of the soul of the sinner. Upon doing *teshuvah*-Returning to *HaShem*, he is immediately brought to tears, with a tremendous sense of lowliness and humility, because of his transgressions. This is called a broken and shattered heart, which he feels constantly, similar to a poor person whose heart is lowly and humble at all times.

The second possibility is that he will not cry with complete bitterness immediately when he recalls all the sins of his youth, and how his heart is bound to a place of impurity. Rather, it is only after he contemplates deeply how he caused a blemish in the light of his soul, and that he is literally considered to be like a dead person, and how he never ever will behold the face of *HaShem*, for he is completely cast out. Only then, will he be cry true tears. However, during the time that his heart is high, and his spirit is coarse because of his self-involvement with the pleasures of the world or because of the spreading forth of his heart with haughtiness and

arrogance, then, his heart becomes as hard as stone and none of the contemplation about what his sins have caused will be of help to him at all. It is only when he will be afflicted through his children, health, or sustenance, or at times when his heart is broken over some other matter that he will come to repent with a broken heart. This is a much lower level than the *Baal Teshuvah*-Returnee mentioned above, who immediately upon recalling his sins is touched to the very core of his heart, literally as a natural response. This is because it has touched the very core of his soul, which is higher than any reasoning or contemplation. Nonetheless, there is a benefit to those who return because they recognize that they have caused a blemish in Godliness, i.e. those of the second category. The benefit is in the fact that his return is specifically to *HaShem*, and he does not desire to be distant. Therefore, his tears are of the second category, and are called tears of joy, as will be explained in the next chapter.

Chapter Three

Certainly, “*HaShem* seeks all hearts,”⁹⁶ and He is specifically very close to the brokenhearted, as previously mentioned. This refers to one who is distant, who has come close to *HaShem*. This is because, certainly, without a shadow of a doubt, *HaShem* dwells in the heart which is truly broken, to a much greater degree than how He is revealed to those who are close to him through true arousal of Divine pleasure during prayer, Torah study or the fulfillment of the *Mitzvot*-commandments. This is as stated,⁹⁷ “returnees are greater than the perfectly righteous.” This is because the Holy One blessed be He dwells with them to a greater degree. This is as stated in the *Zohar* that He dwells with them from the aspect of His essence and innerness, even more than how He dwells with those who serve *HaShem* with their souls, with Divine pleasure and joy (i.e. the perfectly righteous). As known, the reason for this is that the “depth of the heights” (*Omek Rom*) and the “depths below” (*Omek Tachat*) are in equal balance.⁹⁸ It is for this reason that it states,⁹⁹ “*HaShem* is exalted above and he beholds the lowly.” Likewise, it is stated,¹⁰⁰ “The heaven is My throne... upon these I gaze, upon the poor and the low of spirit...” This is because it is specifically according to His astounding exaltedness that He descends to the lowest

⁹⁶ Chronicles I 28:9

⁹⁷ Maimonides, Laws of Teshuva 7:4; Talmud Bavli Brachot 34b

⁹⁸ Shaar HaYichud, Ch. 1; Sefer Yetzirah 1:5

⁹⁹ Psalms 138:6

¹⁰⁰ Isaiah 66:1-2

of places. For, just as there is no limit to the “depth of the heights” and His exaltedness above, so too, there is no measure to His ability to descend down, even to the lowliest of the “depths below.” It is for this reason that He specifically beholds the lowly, that is, a person who is completely humble. It is specifically such a person who will receive a revelation of the true “nothingness” of *HaShem*. In the case of the completely righteous, their coming close to *HaShem* is through their own efforts. In contrast, with regard to true penitents, *HaShem* descends to them, rather than vice versa. Certainly, this is greater than even the capabilities of the greatest of righteous men.

Now, there are various levels in this. The deeper a person’s bitterness and lowliness of heart, the more he will draw down the true light of the essence of Godliness upon himself. (This is similar to the cases Natan of Tzotzita¹⁰¹ or the case of Eliezer Ben Dordiya,¹⁰² who attained his portion of the World to Come, because his soul left him through weeping, and other such people similar to them.)

This then, is the explanation of the above statement that *HaShem* dwells with them to a greater degree than even the most perfectly righteous. It is because this matter is greater than the ability to ascend of those souls about whom it states,¹⁰³ “Who can ascend the mountain of *HaShem*, those who are of clean hands and of pure hearts etc.” In contrast, with regard to the true penitent, *HaShem* Himself descends to them from the

¹⁰¹ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 52b

¹⁰² Talmud Bavli, Avoda Zara 17a

¹⁰³ Psalms 24:3

very depth of the heights to the depth below. This is as we explained above by way of the analogy of the torch and flame which descends to ignite the sparks.

This is the meaning of¹⁰⁴ “Your right hand is spread out to accept returnees.” Although they may be in the lowest pit due to their many sins, nonetheless, *HaShem* accepts them as they are, even as they are still sunken in their impurities, so long as they return with a truly broken and contrite heart, as explained above. This is like Menasheh who returned to *HaShem* with all his heart, and thus, “Caused a commotion in the heavenly spheres, to receive him.”¹⁰⁵ All of the above is called the “tears of bitterness” of the true *Baal Teshuvah*-Returnee, because he is greatly pained in his heart.

However, the second category of tears is called “tears of joy.” This is as explained above by way of the allegory of a son who seeks his father. When he finally sees him, he will both cry and laugh with joy, at once. This may be more clearly understood through first understanding the meaning of the verse in psalms,¹⁰⁶ “My tears were as bread for me, day and night.” How is it that tears are likened to bread, which sustains man and gives him life?

Now, as known, the propitious time for these tears of repentance is specifically during the midnight prayers of *Tikkun Chatzot*. During this time a Jew recalls the sins of his youth, but primarily his tears are because he has cast off the yoke of Heaven, which is the root cause of all his subsequent

¹⁰⁴ Slichot and High Holiday liturgy

¹⁰⁵ Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 103a

¹⁰⁶ Psalms 42:4

sins. Casting off of the yoke of Heaven is that he follows every lust and whim of his heart, immediately fulfilling his desires, without a thought to the consequences, because he does not set any fear of *HaShem* before his eyes, whatsoever. Such thoughts do not fall upon his heart, for it does not even enter his mind that this may be against *HaShem*'s will, or that he is blemishing his soul, and that this will ultimately bring complete destruction to it.

This is worse than those who only have a hardened heart at various times, without feeling fear and awe of *HaShem*. This comes about solely because their hearts become uplifted due to wealth or children, or success in business. Furthermore, he may become uplifted because of the honor given him etc. This is only temporary, since, once he experiences a downfall from his "high heart," if he loses his wealth and agonizes over his poverty and his lowliness, or if his children cause him much grief, then his heart will soften greatly, and he will cry out to *HaShem* from the bitterness of his soul. He will then confess the sins of his youth, and regret the fact that he has caused blemishes upon himself through his actions. He will clearly recognize that it is an evil and bitter state of affairs to be separate from *HaShem*. He will be pained by his own evil, which afflicts him, for his sins and evil ways have become a "whip to smite him with."¹⁰⁷

Such is not the case in regard to a person who walks rebelliously, following the whims of his heart due to his frivolous nature. A person such as this rebels simply because

¹⁰⁷ Introduction to Tikkunei Zohar;

he gives no thought to his actions whatsoever. It is not because his heart is hardened, nor is it due to audacity, that he fears nothing. Rather, it is solely because he has cast off the yoke of Heaven completely. This is similar to the verse,¹⁰⁸ “And they said to God, ‘leave us alone.’” Therefore, even during a time when he undergoes pain and suffering, he certainly will not return to *HaShem*. The only thing that may cause him to return is if he is placed under the heavy yoke of his enemies and oppressors, who pursue him and make his life miserable until they subjugate him totally. It is only then that he will recognize and understand that it is only because he has cast off the yoke of the fear of Heaven, that the yoke of alien fear was placed upon him, i.e. fear of his enemies who despise the life of his soul. This is as stated,¹⁰⁹ “Because you did not serve *HaShem*... you will serve your enemies.”

The yoke of livelihood is similar to this. In other words, it will be become very burdensome and difficult for him to earn his livelihood, to the point that he literally becomes fed up with his life. Only then will his heart be humbled so that he will come to do true *Teshuvah*, and repent with tears over his frivolousness and light heartedness, that he rebelled against his Maker, and cast off the yoke of Heaven. Then will he return to *HaShem*, and truly accept upon himself the yoke of Heaven. In other words, as soon as any evil thoughts enter into his mind, there will fall upon his heart a great fear and trepidation, not to follow the whims of his heart against the

¹⁰⁸ Job 21:14

¹⁰⁹ Deuteronomy 28:47-48

will of *HaShem*, and he will resist it, because the fear of *HaShem* is literally before his eyes.

(An example of the above was the case of Menasheh, who returned to God with all his heart. Nonetheless, prior to this, all the rebukes by which he was chastised had no effect on him whatsoever and did not bring him to repent. It was only the suffering he was subjected to at the hands of his enemies, when he was defeated by the king who conquered him, that moved him to repent. Now, although his sins (of idol worship etc.) were no different than the kings that preceded him, nonetheless, he sinned **specifically** to anger *HaShem* and to rebel against him,¹¹⁰ as is evidenced by the incident of his golden calf. All of this is part and parcel of the matter of casting off of the yoke of Heaven, mentioned above.)

Every person is capable of finding this matter within himself, and of understanding how the casting off of the yoke of Heaven is worse than the actual alien thoughts themselves. It is quite possible that a person's alien, evil, or lewd thoughts of licentiousness or adultery did not come into his heart out of the heat of his lusts, for he would never commit such an act, or even think about them. Rather, he purposely brings these thoughts of lust and licentiousness upon himself. He brings these thoughts upon himself several times, until when his mind is in the depths of it, he arouses the actual heat of his natural lusts. This is similar to the matter of one who purposely brings about an erection in himself, specifically through licentious thoughts, rather than with his hands. Such

¹¹⁰ Kings II 21:7

a person is in a state of banishment above and he is forbidden from entering into the domain of the Holy One blessed be He, as is known from the writings of our holy Sages of blessed memory.¹¹¹ This only befalls a person who is frivolous by nature and does not place the fear of Heaven upon his heart. He does not say to himself, “How can I intentionally bring such impurity upon myself,” or, “This is disgusting before *HaShem*, and because of this I will be impeded from coming close to holiness and Godliness.” Rather, he does not even consider any of this at all, because he is like an animal. In other words, just like an animal, he does not hesitate from any desire which arises in his heart, even if he is not particularly aroused towards it at the moment at all. It is self-understood that the casting off of the yoke of Heaven is the source of the arousal towards all these evils, which follow it.

However, such is not the case with one who has placed fear of *HaShem* upon his heart. Immediately, when an evil thought arises in his heart, he pushes it out of his heart and restrains himself, so as not to contaminate his soul. This is because the yoke of Heaven is upon his heart, at least to the degree that he will not willingly cause his mind to engage in frivolity and thus he will not draw these thoughts upon himself to begin with.

Therefore, the punishment of one who willingly brings these evil thoughts upon himself is that he is banished from the domain of the holy. In other words, even if at times, he returns to *HaShem*, in a way of “coming close,” in that at

¹¹¹ Tur, Even HaEzer 23 and elsewhere

times he attempts to exert himself during the prayer, nonetheless he is not permitted in. From Above they confuse his thoughts and his heart, and he quickly falls from his service, as is known to those who know. This is as stated in the *Zohar*,¹¹² “The thoughts of the guilty are caused to be confused from above.” This does not necessarily mean that they have transgressed actual sins, but rather, that they have intentionally cast off the yoke of Heaven. According to the Torah, one who is in this category is called a *Rasha* – a wicked person. This is because the essential reason why a person is called a *Rasha*, is because he does not take the yoke of Heaven into consideration, whatsoever. He sins purposely and does not repent. For example, it states,¹¹³ “And he (Moshe) said to the *Rasha* (the wicked one), why would you smite your fellow?” As is known,¹¹⁴ the wicked one referred to in this verse did not **actually** hit his fellow yet, but rather only raised his hand against him in a threatening way, with the intention of hitting him, yet he is nevertheless called wicked.

¹¹² Zohar Naso 122a; Introduction to Etz Chayim

¹¹³ Exodus 2:13

¹¹⁴ Rashi to Exodus 2:13

Chapter Four

The above explains the verse,¹¹⁵ “The foolish afflict themselves on account of their sinful ways.” These sinners are rebels, who have cast off the yoke of Heaven. If they have not repented for the fundamental problem which is the casting off of the yoke, then they are still considered to be foolish in their sinful ways. In other words, although they may afflict themselves, nonetheless they continue to rebel, following the whims of their hearts without the fear of God or the yoke of Heaven upon them, whatsoever. What difference does it make that at times such a person regrets the sins he has done, or even fasts on account of them? This verse wonders about these fools. They fast for their sins, but of what use is it, since it will not help their souls in any way, whatsoever. This is because they have not yet rectified the primary cause of their ruination at its very root and foundation. They have not yet corrected the fact that they have cast off the yoke of Heaven, which is the original cause of all their subsequent sins and transgressions, as mentioned above. Therefore, all the self-torment, fasting or affliction of their bodies, will not make the slightest difference in regard to the actual sin or transgression itself, since they will certainly revert to their evil ways and stray off the path once again. Then, they will again be full of remorse and they will fast again for their sins, yet they remain wicked. About this it states,¹¹⁶ “The wicked are full of

¹¹⁵ Psalms 107:17

¹¹⁶ Reishit Chochmah, Shaar HaYirah Ch. 3

remorse.” That is, because they constantly fall to ruination and sin, they are constantly full of regrets and remorse. This happens repeatedly.

Now, the main rectification for his soul, which he caused to become impure through his sins and transgressions, is through tears and weeping during the midnight prayer of *Tikkun Chatzot*, about the fact that he has cast off the yoke of Heaven. He should place it well upon his heart to accept the yoke of Heaven upon himself in truth and purity. In other words, he should make a strong commitment from the very depths of his heart that he will not draw any evil thoughts upon himself that are against *HaShem*'s will. He must remove them from his heart completely, so that they do not arise at all, for he fears *HaShem*. Therefore, immediately when any evil does come into his heart, he will push it away and remove it immediately, according to the strong commitment in his heart, so that he will no longer be a transgressor and a rebel with such a light attitude. That is, he commits to no longer make light of these matters as he has done, lacking any seriousness in them.

Likewise, in the aspect of “doing good” by way of the positive commandments (as opposed to the above, which is the only the “desisting from evil” of the negative commandments), he will be precise in fulfilling his obligations according to the command of the King. It is only then that his fasting and self-affliction will make any difference relative to his past sins, in that he will never again return to his ruination. For, certainly he has returned to *HaShem* in truth, and the One

who examines hearts, desires him and will accept his penance, as in the statement,¹¹⁷ “Your right hand is spread forth to accept penitents.” This refers to those whose hearts are well prepared, and they have a strong commitment to desist and abstain from evil, so that when they do encounter evil, they immediately remove it from their hearts and thoughts completely. This is specifically through the acceptance of the yoke of Heaven upon themselves. This is as stated,¹¹⁸ “The ultimate goal of everything... fear God...” In other words, he fears to rebel and cause blemish, which is the main foundation of repentance for sins and transgressions.

This is the meaning of the verse,¹¹⁹ “Also hold back your servant from willful sins, let them not prevail over me, then will I be pure and keep myself clean of gross transgression.” One may ask, what is the connection of the two parts of this verse to each other? In other words, if “they shall not prevail over me,” specifically then “will I be pure.” For, the main reason for the aspect of the rule of the sins, which are the external shells of evil, comes about because of the casting off of the yoke of Heaven, as explained previously. Because he has cast off the yoke of Heaven, he becomes fair game, and abandoned to all other dominion. Because of this, all the external shells of evil cast extraneous evil thoughts upon him, to contaminate his soul. He comes under their rule, so that even when he desires to consider repentance to *HaShem*, his soul becomes filled with extraneous, evil thoughts, so as to

¹¹⁷ Slichot and High Holiday liturgy

¹¹⁸ Ecclesiastes 12:13

¹¹⁹ Psalms 19:14

uproot the thoughts of repentance from his heart. He is under the rule of the impure spirit, which causes him to become contaminated and impure. For, since he has cast off the yoke of Heaven and has brought himself to impurity many times, all the gates of impurity are opened up to him, as mentioned above. This is due to a great lacking and insensitivity of his heart to the Godly yoke.

However, when “the sins do not prevail and rule over him,” in other words, when his heart is under his own control, so that he removes any evil from his thoughts and from his heart, immediately, as soon as any evil arises, this is a sure indication that he has left the category of “casting off of the yoke of Heaven.” It is a sign that he now has somewhat of the yoke of Heaven upon himself. Furthermore, it is known that the external shells of evil flee because of the radiance of the yoke of Heaven, as stated,¹²⁰ “Just as wax melts... so shall the wicked be destroyed before God.” This is also known concerning the verse,¹²¹ “For God is not within me,” literally, in a way of fear of *HaShem*, “therefore, all these evils have found me,” that is,¹²² “you shall serve your enemies with a heavy yoke etc.”

(In truth, this is the main reason for the servitude of the exile (*Galut*), which includes two matters. The first is the heavy yoke of difficult times, with suffering and difficulty in securing a livelihood, to the point that¹²³ “with his soul shall

¹²⁰ Psalms 68:3

¹²¹ Deuteronomy 31:17

¹²² Ibid. 28:48

¹²³ Lamentations 5:9; High Holiday Liturgy of Unetane Tokef

he acquire bread etc.” The second is that the enemies of Israel inflict all manners of evil against them, to cause them difficulty and suffering. This is the meaning of the verse,¹²⁴ “We have been swallowed by masters other than You,” which is only because of the aspect of the casting off of the yoke of Heaven mentioned earlier. This is as stated,¹²⁵ “Because you have not served God... with joy and good heartedness” with the acceptance of the yoke of Heaven, with great desire, as in,¹²⁶ “Your kingship they accepted upon themselves with desire,” therefore,¹²⁷ “you shall serve your enemies with a heavy yoke etc.” The punishment is literally according to the transgression.)

This is the meaning of the verse,¹²⁸ “It is evil and bitter having left You.” The explanation of “having left You” is that he has left the aspect of “Your kingship they accepted upon themselves with desire.” In other words, he no longer desires the Kingship of *HaShem* upon himself. It is known that the aspect of *Malchut* – Kingship is called “fear”, and that when one casts off the fear of *HaShem*, the fear of masters other than *HaShem* is therefore placed upon him.

From the above, we can understand the meaning of¹²⁹ “then will I be pure, and keep myself clean of gross transgression.” This “gross transgression” is the rebelliousness against the Supernal Kingdom of *HaShem*.

¹²⁴ Isaiah 26:13

¹²⁵ Deuteronomy 28:47

¹²⁶ Liturgy of the evening prayers

¹²⁷ Ibid. 28:48

¹²⁸ Jeremiah 2:19

¹²⁹ Psalms 19:14

This “gross transgression” is higher than wisdom and reasoning.

This is because there is transgression which is not gross. That is, when his sins come because of his reasoning, that he says,¹³⁰ “*HaShem* has left the land” and he makes himself as if he does not know *HaShem*. This is because his soul is lacking the aspect of sublimation to the Godly “nothingness” and sublimation to *HaShem* which is called the “*Koach Mah* – The Power of What” of the soul. (*Chochmah* can be spelled *Koach Mah*, which represents the aspect of sublimation to *HaShem*, as in the verse¹³¹ “*V’Nachnu Mah* – And what are we,” which is indicative of selflessness and sublimation to *HaShem*.) This is like ignorant folk, and those lacking in knowledge, or the weak minded. Because, as known¹³² “a person does not commit a sin except if a spirit of folly enters into him,” that he becomes literally like an animal. In other words, the “form of Man” of *Mah* of *Chochmah* (which was mentioned previously), is removed from him. (The numerical value of *Mah* (מח-45) is the same as *Adam* (אדם-45) which means “Man”.) Or, this is because the spirit of his animal soul of his physical heart overpowers him. In other words, his power of lust and desire rules over his soul, because he considers this thing to be permissible within him etc. All of this is not yet considered to be “gross transgression.”

Rather, one who knows his Creator, and recognizes Him with the aspect of the *Koach Mah* – the Power of “What” (i.e.

¹³⁰ Ezekiel 8:12

¹³¹ Exodus 16:7

¹³² Talmud Bavli, Sota 3a

the sublimation to *HaShem*), and intends to rebel against *HaShem* and cast off the yoke of Heaven, saying¹³³ “I shall go according to the desires of my heart,” there is no fear of *HaShem* in such a person in any way whatsoever. This comes because he cuts his soul off from its root in Godliness. This is like the aspect of¹³⁴ “other gods,” “who know their Master, and intend to rebel against Him.”¹³⁵ These are the light minded and rebellious, which is higher and above the aspect of wisdom and reasoning, but comes because they are essentially evil. This is one who in essence has destroyed his soul, and draws upon himself strange masters other than *HaShem*, to be a servant to servants. This is what is called “gross transgression” (which is the aspect of *Keter* of *Kelipah* – Crown of the external shells of evil).

His *Teshuvah* is not accepted, for, as mentioned previously “they confuse the thoughts of the guilty.”¹³⁶ This is because he has caused blemish in the aspect of the highest level, the *Yechidah* of his soul, which is harsher than one who has blemished in the *Nefesh*, *Ruach* and *Neshamah*. (This is the meaning of “Those who transgress Me,” in “the body of the King”¹³⁷ which is the aspect of *Keter* (i.e. the *Yechidah*). Likewise, it says,¹³⁸ “I have raised sons” in my brains of *Chochmah*, *Binah* and *Da’at*, “and I have uplifted them” to the

¹³³ Deuteronomy 29:18

¹³⁴ Exodus 20:2

¹³⁵ Rashi to Genesis 13:13

¹³⁶ Zohar Naso 122a; Introduction to Etz Chayim

¹³⁷ Zohar Vol. I 219a

¹³⁸ Isaiah 1:2

aspect of *Keter* of *Chochmah*, “and they have transgressed Me” in My essence, which is the aspect of *Keter* etc.)

Now, when “the sins do not prevail” over him, this is the sign that he has left the category of casting off the yoke of Heaven. That is, he does not have strange masters who swallow him up. “Then I will be pure – *Az Eitam*,” in the essential purity of the essential point of the desire of the essence of the soul, which is above intellect and reasoning. This level is called *Eitam* – I will be pure, but can be spelled *Echad Tam*-The pure one (תם א', i.e. the Singular essence of the soul is pure. These letters also share the same letters as the Hebrew word for Truth – *Emet* - אמת).

It is known that there are three levels in *Tmeemoot* – Purity. The first is the purity of the intellect and reasoning, which is called *Tamim* - תמים. This can be spelled, *Tam Yam* (תם ים). (It is known that the letter *Yod* refers to *Chochmah* – Insightful Wisdom, and that *Mem* refers to the thoughts of *Binah*-Understanding. These two are the main intellectual *sefirot*. Therefore, *Tamim* refers to the purity of the intellect and reasoning. Also, the numerical value of ת is 50, which corresponds to the 50 gates of *Binah*-Understanding.) Now this level of purity is also the purity of the heart, for the brain and the heart are literally one, when he is pure. In other words, his heart is completely pure, so that it does not change at all, that sometimes his feelings are such and at other times they are different. One in this category is called an “*Ish Tam V'Yashar* – a pure and straight man”. For example, Eyov (Job) is called¹³⁹ “a pure and straight man who fears God and

has left evil,” and Noach is called,¹⁴⁰ “A righteous and pure man etc.”

As is known, the arousal of the heart changes from hour to hour. This is clearly observed in all those who become suddenly aroused with a fiery desire to repent and return to *HaShem* in *Teshuvah*. In a short period of time he may fall from this to its literal opposite. In contrast, with those of pure heart, there is not as much of a great arousal of excitement, but he is true, for his heart is pure and complete in this, and this is how his heart literally is in essence. He is completely straightforward. His heart does not lean to the right or to the left, nor will he be caused to change by any obstruction or obstacle. For, his heart will never lean away from the straight path.

Now, the pureness of heart is called *Tamim* – pure, and when the pureness is only in his actions he is called *Tamim B’Maasav* – pure in his actions, which is the meaning of the verse,¹⁴¹ “Those who go in purity”. He is one who is called a man who is pure and straight in his path and in his actions. He desists from evil in actuality, in a way of purity which endures forever, in that his actions will never change from good to evil. Furthermore, he does not even consider any opposition or obstacles which attempt to obstruct him. Also, it is known that “the beginning is bound to the end.”¹⁴² The actual action is the end and its source is in the beginning. (In other words,

¹³⁹ Job 1:8

¹⁴⁰ Genesis 6:9

¹⁴¹ Psalms 84:12

¹⁴² Sefer Yetzirah 1:7

the fact that his actions are pure is because in essence he is pure.) This is the main aspect of truth which is the attribute of the pure, that it is unchanging from beginning to end. (The letters of Truth – *Alef Mem Taf* – ת מ ם, are the first, middle and last letters of the Hebrew *Alef-Beit*. In other words, it is true, from the beginning, throughout the middle, until the very end. Furthermore, they share the same letters as תת ‘ט, mentioned earlier. In other words, the ‘ט – the singularity of *HaShem* is the beginning, and the תת – the purity, is the end, that he is pure in his actions.)

This, then, is the explanation of¹⁴³ “then will I be pure,” תת ‘ט – A singular purity. For, the source and foundation of this purity is in the desire, which is above reasoning. Therefore, he does not deviate at all from the essential point of his simple and pure desire. This is the meaning of¹⁴⁴ “He who goes in purity will go in security” from external influences, which are called “strange masters,” as explained previously. This is because “the beginning is bound up with the end,” so that even his “going” in action will be with security, without any confusion of extraneous thoughts whatsoever. This is much greater than traveling this path with wisdom and reasoning, where at times he will err and fall, as mentioned above.

From all of the above we understand the meaning of the verse,¹⁴⁵ “Also hold back your servant from willful sins, let them not prevail over me, then will I be pure and keep myself

¹⁴³ Psalms 19:14

¹⁴⁴ Proverbs 10:9

¹⁴⁵ Psalms 19:14

clean of gross transgression.” In other words, I will be clean from the source and rule of the external evil shells. Only after this, the subsequent verse continues,¹⁴⁶ “The words of my mouth shall be desirable etc.” In other words, his prayers will arise and be desirable before *HaShem* and He will have desire in his soul, also in the way of a simple essential desire. This is as stated in the *Zohar*,¹⁴⁷ “Meritorious is the man whom *HaShem* desires, that *HaShem* removes every prosecution from him and He overturns gross transgression (*Pesha Rav*-פשע רב) into great influence and blessing (*Shefa Rav*-שפע רב).”

Now, from the above the opposite is also understood, in one who follows the desires of his heart, and casts off the yoke of Heaven, which is the opposite of one who is pure in his actions, with the yoke of Heaven. Such a person will not be cleaned from his gross transgressions, which is the source of the *Kelipah* – the external shells of evil. For, he is a servant to masters other than *HaShem*, and they will rule over him even during the time when he desires to repent. They will confuse him with extraneous evil thoughts, even while he desires to repent, as explained previously. This is because, it is known that *HaShem* created everything with its opposite. In other words, opposite the “depth of good” there is a “depth of evil” of the external shells of evil, as will be explained.

We may now understand the explanation of the verses,¹⁴⁸ “Who may ascend the mountain of *HaShem*, and who may

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. 19:15

¹⁴⁷ *Zohar Chayei Sarah* 129a; *VaYeshev* 179b; *Miketz* 198a; *Shir HaShirim* 74a and elsewhere.

¹⁴⁸ Psalms 24:3-4

stand in His holy place: He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not used My name in vain nor sworn falsely.” There are three things mentioned in this verse. The first is that he has “clean hands” in action specifically, that he has not stolen or murdered or spilled innocent blood in actuality, and he has not cheated in business. He is called “clean handed” in the toil of his hands, and in his actions. It is then that his prayers are received above, as stated,¹⁴⁹ “then will I be pure, the words of my mouth shall be desirable etc.”

In contrast, regarding the opposite, when he is not clean handed, it is stated,¹⁵⁰ “You shall spread forth your palms, but I shall hide my eyes, for your hands are filled with blood.” In other words, it is understood that even if he prays with intent, and “his palms are spread forth,” with his entire heart, “I shall hide my eyes” from his prayers, for “his hands are filled with blood,” since he is full of thievery and murder, even though during the time he is praying, his heart is proper.

This is because the most important thing is the actions of his hands, since “the beginning is bound with the end,”¹⁵¹ as explained previously. This is the meaning of, “He who has clean hands and a pure heart,” in other words, he has a pure heart in the way explained above, and “he has not carried his soul in vain.” In other words, he has the aspect of the purity of the essential desire which is above the intellect and reasoning, which is called *Tom* – Pure (with a *Cholam*). (The explanation of a *Cholam* is that it is a vowel which is above

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. 19:14-15

¹⁵⁰ Isaiah 1:15

¹⁵¹ Sefer Yetzirah 1:7

the letter. It is also a point. This signifies that it is the essential “point” of desire which is above “intellect and reasoning.” Because he is pure in essence, his actions will be pure as well, as previously explained.) It is about him that the subsequent verse states,¹⁵² “He will receive blessings from *HaShem*” when he prays the eighteen blessings of the *Shemoneh Esreh* prayer. That is, “the words of his mouth will be desirable,” and his prayers are heard.

In contrast, one who is not “clean handed,” although at times, during his prayers, he may be greatly aroused in his heart towards *HaShem*, he will not “receive blessing,” for, “I shall hide my eyes from him.”

It is therefore understood from all of the above that the main thing is the acceptance of the yoke of Heaven, in action specifically, which is called “pure in his actions.” This is the main rectification for the sins of one’s youth, specifically during the time of the midnight prayer of *Tikkun Chatzot*, as mentioned previously.

¹⁵² Psalms 24:5

Chapter Five

From all of the above we can understand the verse,¹⁵³ “The path of the wicked is like darkness, they know not on what they stumble.” That is to say, “the path of the wicked is like darkness” is allegorical to one who is traveling in darkness and trips on a piece of wood or a stone without knowing over what he stumbled. If there was light, he would not stumble over it at all, because he would be careful of it. It is specifically because of the darkness that he does not know over what his feet stumble.

Likewise, in the analogue it is understood that there are two types of evil. The first is that he sees and feels it within himself, when he becomes aroused in a felt way, for the object of his desire. In other words, he knows over what he stumbles and he is therefore capable of guarding himself from it. If he desires to do so, and guard his soul with knowledge and free choice, he is fully capable of not following this damaging path, in which he will certainly be injured. This is as it states,¹⁵⁴ “See, I have placed before you this day life and good, and death and evil.” In other words, he sees two paths before him with his eyes. The first path is the path of life and goodness, and the second is a path of death and evil. He will choose the path of life and will flee from the path of death, because he has eyes, and he can see and distinguish between the two. This sight is the aspect of the sight of the light of *Chochmah*-

¹⁵³ Proverbs 4:19

¹⁵⁴ Deuteronomy 30:15

wisdom, which may be spelled, *Koach Mah* – the power of what. In other words, it is the sublimation and subjugation to *HaShem* which is found in his Divine soul. This is as known, that *Chochmah* – Wisdom is called light since it illuminates, and is the aspect of the sublimation to the Godly “nothingness” which is found in every Jew, for it radiates in his soul. This then is the meaning of, “See, I have placed before you,” in a way of sight and recognition.

However, if he does not see and recognize in a way of sight, of *Chochmah*, this is because he has blemished the letter *Yud* of *HaShem*’s name, which corresponds to the *Chochmah*-Wisdom of his soul. He therefore walks in darkness, and will certainly stumble and become ensnared in evil and death, without even knowing or feeling it, whatsoever. This is like one who travels in actual darkness, not knowing over what he may stumble and fall, as mentioned above. This is what is called the aspect of “the depth of evil,” which is the opposite of the “depth of good,” as known.

This matter may be understood according to what was stated before concerning the matter of the casting off the yoke of Heaven, in that he follows the whims of his heart. This casting off of the yoke of Heaven is the source of all the lusts of his soul. Furthermore, we explained before that following after the whims and desires of his heart comes only as a result of casting off the yoke of Heaven. In other words, he removed the desire to accept the yoke of Heaven upon himself, and is lacking in this even in the way of a desire for a desire. (A desire for a desire is like a general self-perception, which is

the source of all of a person's particular desires, as explained elsewhere.) Because of this, he will automatically come to falling to the whims and desires of his heart. That is, because he has cast off the yoke of Heaven, the yoke of strange masters is placed upon him, as explained previously. This is because he has been cut off from his source in the aspect of the *Yechidah* which is above intellect and reasoning. This is called the depth of evil.

Because of this, power is given over to the external shells of evil, which are called "*kitrin d'misavoota* – the crowns of filth," which are the gates of impurity. They cause his soul to become impure with extraneous lewd thoughts, even when he does not desire them by choice and knowingly. Rather, they come by themselves, because of the rule of "strange masters," as explained before. This is the meaning of the verse,¹⁵⁵ "*Derech rasha'im k'aphelah* – the path of the wicked is like darkness."

In order to understand this with greater clarity, we must understand that there are two types of darkness. There is *Ophel* (אופל) which is masculine, and there is *Aphelah* (אפילה) which is feminine, and is higher than *Ophel* - אופל. *Ophel* – אופל of *Kelipah* is masculine, and is therefore the aspect of the influencer of all types of concealed evils. This is called hidden influence of evil, which is above all intellect and reasoning, for it is not seen or felt at all. This is like the verse,¹⁵⁶ "You know the people that they are in evil," that they are

¹⁵⁵ Proverbs 4:19

¹⁵⁶ Exodus 32:22

encompassed by evil. In other words, the evil encompasses them from all sides in a concealed fashion, as stated,¹⁵⁷ “They compassed me about; indeed, they surrounded me.” These are the encompassing lights of the external shells of evil, from the aspect of *Keter* (the desire and pleasure, which are encompassing lights) of these external shells. This is when extraneous evil thoughts come upon a person, without his knowledge or awareness. In other words, this comes from the concealed desire which is above the awareness of *Da’at*. In other words, it is above his conscious control. It is called an encompassment which encompasses and surrounds him from all sides, and he does not know or feel it at all. It is so natural and embedded in his being, that he is unaware of it. In the terminology of the Talmud¹⁵⁸ this is “when one becomes so accustomed to the sin that it feels to him as if it is permissible, and he doesn’t feel it to be a sin at all.”

Likewise, the Sages explain the verse,¹⁵⁹ “The sins of my heels surround me,” that these are the sins which a person tramples upon with his heels. In other words, he becomes so accustomed to transgressing them, that they become regarded as permissible to him, and he does not feel it to be sinful at all. This is likewise the case with this surrounding encompassment of evil, which is concealed in his soul, and encompasses him from his head to his feet. What is above his head is called, “Above *Da’at* – awareness” and what is below his feet is

¹⁵⁷ Psalms 118:11

¹⁵⁸ Tractate Erchin 30b

¹⁵⁹ Psalms 49:6

called, “Below *Da’at* – awareness.” This is like someone who does something in the way of a nature, without any awareness. For example, regarding his thoughts which are not for *HaShem*, he does not feel them at all, for they are “only natural” in his mind. Or, this is like a person who transgresses a commandment without any intent of rebelling and casting off the yoke of Heaven, but rather he does it without any awareness at all. This is because of his lack of feeling for it, that it is a sin, and it is as if he tramples it with his feet. However, the same verse begins and advises that he is repaid¹⁶⁰ “on the days of evil” which are the days on which the judgments rule and the prosecutors demand and are listened to. It then continues, “the sins of my heels surround me, above my head.” This is also like the verse,¹⁶¹ “My sins have gone over my head; like a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me,” which is the aspect of the encompassing lights of evil mentioned above. This is what is called *Ophel* – Darkness (אופל), that it darkens and conceals, as in the aspect of the depth of evil, in a concealing and encompassing way.

For, it is known that for everything that *HaShem* creates, He also creates its opposite. (In other words, everything that exists on the side of the Holy has something corresponding to it on the side of evil.) On the side of Holiness, this encompassing light is called the Upper Wonder – פלא (which shares the same letters as אפל – the darkness of the side of evil). The terminology of “wondrousness” is an aspect of

¹⁶⁰ Psalms 49:6

¹⁶¹ Psalms 38:5

concealment, something which is hidden from the intellect and reasoning. This is called the upper darkness, as it states,¹⁶² “He places darkness on His side,” or like the verse,¹⁶³ “He that dwells in the concealed place of the most high, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.” It is here that the Divine soul resides and is concealed, as in the subsequent verse,¹⁶⁴ “I will say of *HaShem*, who is my covering and my fortress.” It is from this level where salvation comes, as in the very next verse,¹⁶⁵ “He will deliver you from the snare of the fowlers.” This “snare” is compared to the sins which a person tramples with his heels, so that his heels become ensnared, like one who becomes ensnared in a trap, as in the verse,¹⁶⁶ “Like birds who are ensnared in a trap.” Thus, the previous verse we mentioned continues, “He will deliver you from the snare of the fowlers, and from the devastating pestilence.” The “devastating pestilence” refers to the aspect of this hidden death, which is caused by the sins “which have gone over my head,” mentioned above.

From this upper encompassment of the Holy side, there is no influence or sustenance to the external forces whatsoever. In other words, one whose essential point of his desire is attached and connected Above, to *HaShem*, as mentioned earlier when speaking about one who is pure, “Shall not fear the terror at night; nor the arrows that fly by day; nor the

¹⁶² Psalms 18:12

¹⁶³ Psalms 91:1

¹⁶⁴ Psalms 91:2

¹⁶⁵ Psalms 91:3

¹⁶⁶ Ecclesiastes 9:12

pestilence that walks in darkness; nor the destruction that wastes at noonday.”¹⁶⁷ These verses speak of the influence of the external forces in the attributes of day and night (i.e. both revealed and concealed evils), but the pure person shall not fear them. This is because of the prior verse,¹⁶⁸ “Under His wings you will find refuge.” This refers to the encompassing lights of *Binah* – Comprehension, which become manifested until below the feet. (This refers to the garment of the *Chashmal*, which is called the “protector of the emotions,” but refers to it specifically as it is after rectification-*Tikkun*, in which the “cloak of leather – *Katnot Or* – כתנות עור” is turned to a “cloak of light – *Katnot Or* – כתנות אור,” as explained elsewhere.) This is we state,¹⁶⁹ “Spread the *Sukkah* of your peace upon us, and conceal us in the shadow of your wings” in order that “the satan should be removed from before us and from behind us.” (It is explained elsewhere that the *Sukkah* refers to the encompassing lights of *Binah* - Comprehension.) This is called “protection from the outside,” which refers to the protection from revealed evil of the emotions and action, that “your evil afflicts you,”¹⁷⁰ with the attribute of judgment and revealed afflictions.

(Now, the “refuge” of the aspect of the encompassing lights of *Keter* of Holiness, protect one even from the concealed evil, from “the snare of the fowler,” and from “the fear of the night,” which are the judgments that dominate the

¹⁶⁷ Psalms 91:5-6

¹⁶⁸ Psalms 91:4

¹⁶⁹ Siddur, Liturgy of the Evening Prayers

¹⁷⁰ Jeremiah 2:19

body because of the evil which he has perpetrated in actuality. Furthermore, they protect from the “the arrow which flies by day,” which are the judgments which dominate the soul, to blemish it in a revealed way. In other words, just as an arrow kills the body, these “arrows” cause blemishes in the thought, and in the emotions of the heart. The verse then continues, “Nor the pestilence that walks in darkness; nor of the destruction that wastes at noonday,” darkness and noonday are two opposites. One is of the ultimate darkness while the other is the ultimate light. The darkness refers to when he is completely concealed in actual evil, because he actively darkens and conceals the Godly light of his soul and it is hidden and concealed from him. This is like one who draws upon himself licentious and evil thoughts and sins. This is drawn from the aspect of *Ophel* – אופל (darkness), which is called “the influencer of every type of evil and concealment,” to darken the light. (This was explained previously with the explanation of *Ophel* – אופל, which is masculine - the influencer, and *Aphelah* – אפילה, which is feminine - the recipient.)

The evil thoughts which he draws upon himself cause the light of his soul to slowly be extinguished, to the point where he literally reaches¹⁷¹ “the gates of death.” This is the explanation of “the pestilence that walks in darkness,” i.e. the aspect of spiritual death, which kills and destroys in a concealed way, without him knowing or feeling it at all. This is like a person who is injured in darkness, and does not know

¹⁷¹ Psalms 107:18

who or what caused him this injury. This is called אפל – the darkness of the side of evil, which is the opposite of פלא – The Upper wonder, on the side of Holiness. (Nonetheless, the destruction of the pestilence comes with strength and power, in the heat of the day, which is called “noonday.” This is like when at times his inclination overpowers him with a great and overpowering heat, until he is burning with lust within himself. This is because the external shells of evil overpower him with powerful might, to heat him up with the fire of these evil lusts. This is as explained elsewhere on the verse regarding Tamar,¹⁷² “take her out and let her be burned,” in the flames and heat of the sun. In other words, this refers to the exile (*Galut*), in which “we are swallowed up by masters besides You,”¹⁷³ who influence the Jewish people with powerful might, like the verse,¹⁷⁴ “Israel is swallowed up.” The only rectification for this is by burning, that is, to burn up the evil at its source. This is during the heat of the day with the enslavement of earning a livelihood with great difficulty and toil, as in the verse,¹⁷⁵ “by the sweat of your brow shall you eat bread.”)

All of the above may be compared to two types of weapons of war. One is concealed, to attack the enemy from a hidden place, like from the forest or pits, without him knowing where the arrows come from. The second type of weapon of war is with the might of throwing fire upon the enemy etc.

¹⁷² Genesis 38:24

¹⁷³ Isaiah 26:13

¹⁷⁴ Hosea 8:8

¹⁷⁵ Genesis 3:19

(This is like it states,¹⁷⁶ “the sun has scorched me” in the heat of the day, and as stated by the Zohar,¹⁷⁷ “the strength of the sun refers to mighty judgments etc.”) About all of these aspects of evil, the Psalm continues,¹⁷⁸ “A thousand shall fall at your side... but it shall not come near you... because, You *HaShem* are my refuge... the young lion and the crocodile you shall trample under foot.” In other words, it is not enough that the external forces shall not receive any influence or sustenance from the “heels,” like the matter of “a snake is curled on the heels of Rabbi Chanina Ben Dosa,”¹⁷⁹ rather, even more than this, “you shall trample” them. This is as stated,¹⁸⁰ “He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”)

Now, the aspect of *Aphelah* – אפילה (darkness) is the aspect of the feminine. In other words, it is the place of darkness. Therefore, the darkness automatically darkens there. This is because it is a receptacle for darkness. This is even worse than the darkness itself, because of the fact that there is no possibility for the light to shine there. This is not the case with the aspect of darkness itself, which is only the absence of light. In the case of darkness itself, when the light reaches there, it will radiate and light up the darkness, as in the verse,¹⁸¹ “And it was a cloud and darkness, and it enlightened the night.” This is also as is explained elsewhere about the

¹⁷⁶ Song of Songs 1:6

¹⁷⁷ Zohar Pekudei 236b

¹⁷⁸ Psalms 91:7-13

¹⁷⁹ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 5a

¹⁸⁰ Genesis 3:15

¹⁸¹ Exodus 14:20

benefit of light which radiates the darkness, so that the darkness itself radiates. That is, when the concealed encompassing lights of Holiness which were mentioned earlier, are revealed.

Now, the explanation of the matter is that one who is a receptacle, to receive from the concealed evil at all times, which is called “*Ophel* – Darkness (אופל)” of the evil husks of *Kelipah*, which was explained above, it is within his power to draw upon himself this encompassing influencer of the external shells of evil. In other words, he draws upon himself many extraneous lewd and evil thoughts from the influencer of “darkness.” This is the aspect of *Malchut* (the feminine vessel) of *Keter* (the source and influencer) of the evil husks of *Kelipah*. This is much worse than the influencer itself. (One main reason for this is that since it is known that *Malchut* represents the letters and the vessels which bring something out into revelation, here too, it is specifically the fact that he is a receptacle and vessel to bring out evil into actuality and revelation. This is worse than the influence itself. Without the receptacle, the influence would have no venue for revelation.)

This aspect, of the receiver and vessel of evil is called *Aphelah* – אפילה, with a *Heh* – ה, making the word feminine, which is the aspect of “the receiver.” The reason it is worse, is because her source is actually higher than the darkness of the external shells of evil itself. (This is as known that the source of the vessels is higher than the source of the light. It is specifically because of this that the vessels have the capability

to contain the light and influence.) Therefore, the light of Holiness does not shine there at all, not even the concealed light of the upper encompassing light of Holiness (which is called *Peleh* (פלא) – Wondrousness, as mentioned above). This is the meaning of the verse,¹⁸² “they are in evil,” that they are a recipient to receive the influence of every type of evil (from the aspect of gross iniquity, mentioned earlier). This is also the meaning of what is said about the redemption from Egypt,¹⁸³ that “they were taken out of darkness (*Aphelah*-אפילה) to a great light,” i.e. that they were taken out of the fifty gates of impurity and evil.

We now may understand the meaning of the aforementioned verse,¹⁸⁴ “the path of the wicked is like darkness (*Aphelah*-אפילה).” Because, the wicked, who are in an state of casting off the yoke of Heaven, which is completely above intellect, reasoning and choice, as explained earlier, become recipients for “the crowns of impurity,” to become contaminated with every type of impurity which is influenced upon them. The impurity of these people is even stronger than the impurity of the influencers. This is the meaning of “the path of the wicked is like darkness (*Aphelah*-אפילה),” which is a feminine terminology denoting a recipient. In other words, they travel on a crooked path which is concealed in the encompassing light of the external shells of evil, and they do not know on what they will stumble.

¹⁸² Exodus 32:22

¹⁸³ Liturgy of the Haggada for Passover

¹⁸⁴ Proverbs 4:19

This is like the allegory of one who is traveling in darkness, who stumbles on every type of stumbling block, but he does not know or feel it at all, and it appears to him as if he did not stumble at all. This is higher and worse than the “pestilence that walks in darkness (*Ophel*-אופל),”¹⁸⁵ for in that case he at least feels the death of his soul, only that he does not know where it comes from, and who has damaged him. In this case though, the intent of the verse¹⁸⁶ “they do not know on what they will stumble,” is not just that he does not know with what he has stumbled. Rather, the intent is that he does not even know **that** he has stumbled at all.

This is similar to the matter explained above, about the sins which he tramples with his heels. This is the reason why to the wicked, a sin the size of a mountain appears to be as narrow as a hair, because of the force of their easiness in casting off the yoke of Heaven. This is because “the path of the wicked is like darkness (*Aphelah*-אפילה).” In other words, the aspect of the highest level, the *Yechidah* of their souls is in darkness, to the point that “they are called dead even during their lifetime.”¹⁸⁷ This is as stated,¹⁸⁸ “The lamp of the wicked shall be extinguished.” Therefore, automatically, “they do not know on what they stumble,” for, “they are in evil”, as explained above. That is, their state of evil is in an aspect which is higher than reason, which is apparent in the

¹⁸⁵ Psalms 91:6

¹⁸⁶ Proverbs 4:19

¹⁸⁷ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 18b

¹⁸⁸ Proverbs 24:20

stumbling of their feet, which is below reason, for they are one and the same, as mentioned earlier.

In contrast, with regards to the righteous the verse states,¹⁸⁹ “the path (*Orach*-אורה) of the righteous is straight and well lit,” this being the opposite of the crooked paths of the wicked. (The explanation of a “crooked or winding path”¹⁹⁰ is that it is a downward spiral of concealment upon concealment of Godliness. Just as there are “hidden paths of good” there are “hidden paths of evil.” Furthermore, the terminology אורה – path, is feminine, which is the aspect of the recipient, i.e. the Righteous are recipients for holiness.) In contrast, it is explained that דרך-*Derech*-path, is masculine, the aspect of the influencer which influences to אפילה – the feminine recipient of the external shells of evil. This is as stated, “And you will bruise their heel”, which refers to the time of the “heels of Moshiach,” these being our times which are called,¹⁹¹ “the sins of my heels.”

For, in general, the Jewish people are like a body, as is known, and in this final generation we are like the “heel” of the body. Because of this, in these generations the wicked overpower and control with evil prosecution, for “they do not know that they stumble,”¹⁹² and there is a great concealment of Godliness, as mentioned above and as is known. The rectification for this darkness is not with the light of pleasure,

¹⁸⁹ Proverbs 4:18

¹⁹⁰ Judges 5:6

¹⁹¹ Psalms 49:6

¹⁹² Proverbs 4:19

desire or intellect in the service of *HaShem*, but only with tears, as will soon be explained.

Chapter Six

We may now begin to understand the explanation of the verse which was mentioned earlier,¹⁹³ “My tears have been my bread etc.” It was explained before, regarding the matter of the midnight prayer of *Tikkun Chatzot*, that it is the appropriate time for weeping, with tears, about one’s sin of casting off the yoke of Heaven. Now, we must understand exactly why it is specifically tears that make a greater difference than everything else, in regard to this sin of casting off the yoke of Heaven. In order to understand this, we must precede with the explanation of the verse,¹⁹⁴ “Do not stray after your hearts and after your eyes.”

It is stated,¹⁹⁵ “The eyes and the heart are the two agents of sin. The eye sees and the heart lusts etc.” If this is so, then the verse above should have been stated in the reverse. It should have said, “Do not stray after your eyes and after your hearts.” In other words, it first should have said that one should not stray after his eyes to look, and then the automatic result would be that the heart would not lust for the object that he sees. Why then does the verse first state “do not stray after your hearts,” and only later “after your eyes”?

Now, we explained above in the explanation of the three levels of purity of *Tom*, *Tamim* and *Tam*, that a person who is pure and complete in his actions is higher than all the other

¹⁹³ Psalms 42:4

¹⁹⁴ Numbers 15:39

¹⁹⁵ Rashi to Numbers 15:39; Talmud Yerushalmi, Brachot 1:5

levels of purity. This is because, as previously explained,¹⁹⁶ “the end is bound with the beginning.” (In other words, the fact that his actions are completely pure and complete, and totally separate from sin and evil, is because in the essence of his soul he is completely pure, whole, and separate from evil.) Likewise, it is understood here, regarding *Teshuvah*—repentance and return to *HaShem*, that it is divided into three levels.

The first level is repentance in action, i.e. that he desists from evil completely, in actuality, like “the clean-handed person”¹⁹⁷ mentioned earlier. The second level is the repentance of the heart, which is the repentance and remorse which he feels in his heart, when he recites the *Viduy*-confession. This is called “acknowledgement and leaving off.”¹⁹⁸ That is, he admits to the evil of past behavior and makes the commitment to leave these evil ways in the future. Now, the actual act of leaving the sin and desisting from his evil actions is the first level of “repentance in action,” which is the main matter of repentance. The repentance of the heart, of confession, includes both the remorse in his heart, and the actual confession with his mouth. In other words, this is the revealed humbling of himself, like a servant who confesses his misdeeds before his master. It is specifically through this that he becomes desirable before his master. However, if he does not admit to his sins, and says “I have not sinned,” his “repentance” is not desirable whatsoever, as stated,¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁶ Sefer Yetzirah 1:7

¹⁹⁷ Psalms 24:4

¹⁹⁸ Rambam, Laws of Teshuva 1:1

“Behold, I will enter into judgment with you, because you say, ‘I have not sinned.’” Therefore, a soul who sins and only repents with *Teshuvah*-repentance in the thoughts of his heart, but did not confess his evil ways, is lowered to *Sheol* (the grave or pit, referring to hell) and is then uplifted from there, as stated,²⁰⁰ “He brings down to the grave, and brings up,” as is explained elsewhere. The third level is the repentance of the desire and the thought, that he uproots his evil desires from their very foundations and removes them completely, so that he no longer has any desire for this evil forever. This is a more inner aspect of repentance than the previous two levels.

It was explained above in the matter of the levels of purity of *Tam* and *Tamim*, that purity in action is higher and greater than the purity of the mind and heart. Likewise, it is understood regarding the matter of repentance that one who returns to *HaShem* and leaves sin in actuality, in that he no longer follows that path, is greater than them all. In other words, the source of his repentance is higher than the repentance of the desire in the brain, mentioned above. The proof for this is from the fact that we can clearly see that the thoughts of repentance in his heart and mind can cease at times, and he can return to falling into all sorts of evil thoughts. Then he returns again and repents in his heart and mind etc.

This is not the case at all with one who returns in actuality, in other words, that he no longer desires to follow

¹⁹⁹ Jeremiah 2:35

²⁰⁰ Samuel I 2:6

the lusts of his heart and mind at all. This is like one who does not listen to the agents which tempt him to come into the hands of sin. In other words, these are the eyes and heart, which are called the agents and intermediaries to draw him after sin and to bring extraneous evil thoughts and desires into his heart, to the point that his very soul is caused to become impure in actuality. This is like the agent of a prostitute who tempts one to desire her. Likewise, the eye sees and the heart desires, and they are called the agents who tempt, in actuality. But, when he does not allow himself to stray after his heart and his eyes, this is the root of the matter of *Teshuvah* – repentance which is called repentance in action.

This then is the meaning of the verse,²⁰¹ “Do not stray after your hearts and after your eyes.” The intent is that he should not allow himself to desire and stray after that which his heart dictates. In other words, he no longer follows the lusts of his heart. Such a person is called a penitent in actuality and in action.

If so, then for this reason that the verse begins with the words “do not stray after your hearts,” and only afterwards, “and after your eyes.” For, certainly, before he ever goes to the place of impurity, his heart draws him there. Only afterwards, when he arrives at that place do his eyes see and gaze, and then when he looks, he is drawn with the lust of the heart to engage in or think about the sin. It is then that the eyes precede the heart. This is stated by the Sages,²⁰² “One

²⁰¹ Numbers 15:39

²⁰² Talmud Bavli, Nedarim 20a

who gazes at women will end up coming to the hands of sin,” in actuality. This is because the eye is the agent which brings and draws down the power of impurity, to cause the heart of man, which is called “a prostitute,” to become aroused with a fiery lust. This is as the aforementioned verse continues regarding the heart and the eyes, and states, “*Asher atem zonim achareihem* - which you stray after.” (The root of the word “*zonim*” which is translated as “stray” is really “*zonah*” which means “prostitute”.) “Prostitute” is the aspect of the feminine. This is like the female who lusts after the male, and her entire heart is drawn after him, to receive his influence. This is only when she goes after the lusts of her heart to the place of impurity, that then, the eyes see etc. This is not the case if she would not leave her house at all in pursuit of the lusts of her heart.

Likewise, the aspect of the “crowns of disgust,” the *Ketarim*-crowns of the external shells of evil are called the “influencers,” and man is called, “the prostitute who strays after them.” That is, he is the receptacle to become impure with their impurity. This happens specifically when he strays after his heart to be drawn there, as in the teaching,²⁰³ “One who comes to make himself impure, they open the gates of impurity for him,” referring to these influencers of every type of impurity.

We, therefore, find that the main aspect of *Teshuvah* – repentance and return to *HaShem*, is specifically in action, i.e. that he does not return to the path of his heart. Therefore, this

²⁰³ Talmud Bavli Avoda Zara 55a; Yoma 38b; Menachot 29b

is the reason why the verse first states,²⁰⁴ “do no stray after your hearts,” because the heart is called the agent from the recipient to the influencer. Only afterwards does the verse state, “and after your eyes,” which is called the agent from the gates of impurity of the influencer to the recipient, to cause the heart to lust and become aroused. This is the explanation of the statement that they are the two agents of sin. That is, the heart is the agent from man to receive the evil influence, while the eyes are the agents of the influencers of evil to cause man to sin. This will suffice for those of understanding.

Now, this is not to say that the words “do not stray” do not also apply to “after your eyes,” for indeed they do apply. This is to say that even when the evil comes to him suddenly, without him drawing his heart towards it first, he should close his eyes from gazing at evil. About this he is warned not to pursue what he may suddenly see, to stray after his eyes, like Samson, who strayed after his eyes. (It is noteworthy that the Talmud states²⁰⁵ that because he sinned with his eyes, he was punished with his eyes, and they were poked out.) Here too, in the gazing of his eyes, there is an aspect of repentance in action. In other words, he should shut his eyes so that he should not be drawn after the crowns of disgust through intentional gazing, “*Asher atem zonim achareihem* - which you stray (prostitute) after them,” literally.

It is, therefore, understood by all those who have a desire for true and complete *Teshuvah*, that the foundation of

²⁰⁴ Numbers 15:39

²⁰⁵ Talmud Bavli, Sota 9b

repentance is merely the lack of action, i.e. to be a “*Shev V’Al Ta’aseh* – One who sits and desists from any action at all.”²⁰⁶ In other words, he pushes every evil thought from his heart, and does not stray after his heart. This is because,²⁰⁷ “the heart of man is evil from his youth,” and it is because of this that he is drawn to think every type of evil. Each time that he pushes this evil out of his heart completely, it is called repentance in action and actuality, that is, he is leaving the ways of sin. Although he is only abstaining from allowing his heart to think about the evil, this is literally like one who does not allow himself to be drawn after his heart to a place of evil in the first instance, for they are one and the same thing.

This is the main fulfillment and establishment of his repentance, as stated,²⁰⁸ “Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers.” This verse mentions walking, standing, and sitting. The “walking” is in action, that he should not turn and stray after his heart to begin with. The “standing” is when his heart is already turned there, and he is already standing “in the path of the sinners” etc. This will suffice for those of understanding.

(In truth, we must understand the mention of “the seat of scoffers” at the end of the verse, for from this we infer that it is much stronger and worse than “the counsel of the wicked” and “the way of sinners.” At first glance though, the aspect of “scoffing” and joking seems to only be baseless merriment

²⁰⁶ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 20a

²⁰⁷ Genesis 8:21

²⁰⁸ Psalms 1:1

and merrymaking, and not actually complete sin. How then is it worse than the two prior levels?

Rather, the explanation of the matter is that in regard to “the counsel of the wicked” who tempt him to fall to sin, and “the way of sinners” in which he stands and is ready to sin, he is nonetheless able to come to true *Teshuvah* – repentance from this evil path. This is as stated, “do not stray,” i.e. do not listen to “the counsel of the wicked.” In the case of these two categories, it is quite possible that these desires may be subdued and subside from his heart because of his fear of *HaShem*, because he does not want to destroy his soul. In contrast, when he is already “sitting in the seat of scoffers” there is no hope of him ever repenting. The reason for this is because the source of “the seat of scoffers” is in the aspect of completely casting off the yoke of Heaven, as we explained before.

In this aspect of casting off the yoke of Heaven, there are two possibilities and ways that it may be. The first is that he does not consider having any fear of *HaShem* at all, for he says,²⁰⁹ “*HaShem* has forsaken the land, and *HaShem* does not see.” Or, he does not consider that he is about to destroy his soul, for he only desires to fulfill his lust, even though his end will be bitter. This is because he is overpowered by his inclination which burns within him. Now, merriment and joking are worse than all of the above. This is because the source of the merriment and joking comes because of the frivolity in his soul. This is the matter of his heart being wide

²⁰⁹ Ezekiel 8:12

open to every whim that occurs to it, without restraining the spirit of his heart from anything at all. This is the nature of the “white gall” whose nature leads to frivolity and baseless merriment at all times. In other words, it is this nature which causes all of his laughter and lightheadedness, and his expansive spirit, which is unrestrained, and his excessive frivolous and baseless speech. This is all only because he is frivolous in the essential nature of his soul. It is specifically these types of people who are called “scoffers,” because they scoff at every Godly matter, and they do not take any serious consideration of it at all.

Such a person casts off the yoke of Heaven not because he intends to rebel against *HaShem*, but rather, because of the frivolity and shallowness of his soul, that his heart is open to merriment and scoffing at everything. (In other words, he is incapable of taking anything seriously.) Because of this, he has no sense or feel for any fear of *HaShem* whatsoever, because he is the very opposite of a fitting receptacle for the fear of *HaShem*. This is not to say that he renounces *HaShem* or that he does not believe in retribution for a person’s sins. Rather, he simply does not feel it at all because of the frivolous nature of his soul, that he makes light of everything and is, literally, a joker. This is literally a form of madness and insanity, as stated,²¹⁰ “And he changed his behavior before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands.” (The word for these “scoffers” is “*Holelim*,” and the word used in this verse for “mad” is “*Vayitholel*.” Thus, from the shared root word,

²¹⁰ Samuel I 21:14

we see that this aspect of scoffing is a form of madness.) This is the opposite of the faculty of *Da'at*-Knowledge which is the aspect of “feeling” and awareness, specifically.

This then is the meaning of the statement,²¹¹ “The scoffers (*Holelim*) shall not stand before your eyes.” That is, the category of scoffers can never receive a revelation of the *Shechinah* (which is the awareness of the presence of *HaShem*). The reason for this is because the revelation of the *Shechinah* is only possible when there is fear of *HaShem* and the acceptance of the yoke of Heaven, as is known. These aspects of fear of *HaShem*, and the yoke of Heaven are completely separate and removed from scoffers. On the contrary, they cast off the yoke of Heaven because of their great frivolity. It is for this reason that it has been stated regarding the terrible strength of this aspect of “scoffing,” that “one scoff pushes away one hundred rebukes etc.”²¹² In other words, no words of rebuke can cause the heart of the scoffer to fall from his foolishness and be humbled. This is not because of the hardness of his heart, but rather, it is only because of this nature in his soul, that his heart pushes away anything which feels to be a fear and yoke of Heaven that may come to conquer his heart and cause him to be humbled and restrain his spirit.

This is the meaning of the statement,²¹³ “Do not reprove a scoffer... rebuke a wise man,” who is the opposite of the

²¹¹ Psalms 5:6

²¹² A common saying that is along the lines of Proverbs 9:8, Avot 3:17; Mesilat Yesharim Ch. 5; and mentioned in numerous places.

²¹³ Proverbs 9:8

scoffer. The wise person is one, who by the nature of his soul, feels the rebuke in his heart, and constantly restrains his heart. He is one who constantly has an aspect of subjugation to *HaShem* (from the *Koach Mah* of *Chochmah*-Wisdom, which is the sublimation of the light of wisdom as mentioned earlier), to receive the yoke of Heaven upon himself. Therefore, with a moment of rebuke his heart is conquered, for he is a proper receptacle for this. This is because his heart is closed and contracted, which is the opposite of the openheartedness and spreading forth of the scoffers. (This is the nature of the “black gall,” i.e. that his heart is contracted and humbled to receive the yoke of Heaven upon himself. This type of nature is that of the wise man, to love rebuke, and he is zealous and studious by nature, in all of his studies.)

This is the meaning of the verse,²¹⁴ “One rebuke enters more into a wise man, than a hundred blows to a fool.” In other words, he immediately feels every rebuke and reproof in his heart, more than a fool feels a hundred lashes. For, the heart of the fool is that of the scoffer, with no feeling whatsoever, even when he is in the very heat of the fire, like lashes. This is as stated,²¹⁵ “Though you should grind a fool in a mortar among crushed grain with a pestle, yet his foolishness will not depart from him.” This is not the case with one who understands a reproof in the depths of his heart, even a single rebuke, as stated,²¹⁶ “One rebuke in the heart of man is better than one hundred lashes etc.” In contrast, there

²¹⁴ Proverbs 17:10

²¹⁵ Proverbs 27:22

²¹⁶ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 7a

is no hope for the scoffer, only,²¹⁷ “Cast out the scoffer etc.” This will suffice for those of understanding.

Now, the source of this *Kelipah* – external shell of evil of the scoffers, is called *Kelipat Haplishtim* – The *Kelipah* of the Philistines, as stated,²¹⁸ “The Philistines were scoffers”. (This is also as explained elsewhere on the verse,²¹⁹ “And Yitzchak settled and dug a well... which the Philistines had closed up.” In other words, the aspect of the Philistines, who are the scoffers and merrymakers, closes up the light of the love of *HaShem* of Avraham, which radiates every day during a Jews prayers. Because of this, he immediately falls into foreign loves because he has “sat in the seat of scoffers” this being merriment and scoffing, which is like an open thoroughfare. (The word for “open thoroughfare” is “*Mephulash*” which shares the same root as “Philistines – *Phlishtim*.”) In other words, his heart is like an open thoroughfare which is open to every type of laughter and foreign pleasure, without any feeling for any matter of spiritual refinement, as explained above. Now, this is not the case with Yitzchak, who personified the aspect of fear of *HaShem*,²²⁰ which is included within the love of Avraham, with the acceptance of the yoke of Heaven. Here, the aspect of the Philistines, which is the *Kelipah* of scoffing that closes the heart and conceals the light of Godliness, has no effect at all. This is because, the aspects of the fear of *HaShem* and acceptance of the yoke of Heaven

²¹⁷ Proverbs 22:10

²¹⁸ Talmud Bavli, Avoda Zarah 19a

²¹⁹ Genesis 26:18

²²⁰ Genesis 31:42

that is personified by Yitzchak, is its literal and ultimate opposite.)

This then is the meaning of the aforementioned verse,²²¹ “Happy is he... who has not sat in the seat of scoffers.” For, if he did sit there, he would automatically follow the advice of the wicked and stand in the path of sinners. For it is due to the casting off of the yoke of Heaven, that his heart becomes open to everything. (This is like *Apikorsim* (the rebellious) who know their Master, and yet they literally rebel against *HaShem* intentionally. These people are called scoffers, and this is the aspect of the Sefirot of *Keter-Crown*, *Chochmah-Wisdom* and *Binah-Understanding* of the external shells of evil (*Kelipah*), because “included in two hundred is one hundred.”²²² That is, because he is entrenched in the root of evil, this automatically includes everything that stems from it to be expressed in actual evil thought, speech and action.)

From the above we may discern the meaning of the verse,²²³ “Surely He scoffs the scoffers.” This refers to one who comes to contaminate himself, for his heart is opened to everything with merriment, and he draws upon himself all the gates of impurity. It is regarding these people that it states, “Surely He scoffs the scoffers.” (In other words, through their “scoffing” itself they become receptacles for “scoffing,” open to the gates of impurity and further entrenched in evil.) From this we see that the casting off of the yoke of Heaven causes the gates of impurity to be drawn down upon him, and that these

²²¹ Psalms 1:1

²²² Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 31a

²²³ Proverbs 3:34

“scoffers” are receptacles for the casting off of the yoke of Heaven.

(There is actually no difference between these scoffers explained above, and *Apikorsim* – the intentionally rebellious. The only difference is that with regard to the *Apikorsim* – rebellious, it is the casting off of the yoke of Heaven which causes their scorn and precedes it. In contrast, with regard to the “scoffers” it is this frivolous nature of their souls which causes them to cast off the yoke of Heaven. These two categories are literally the same, only that for scoffers there is hope of repentance through great affliction and tribulation, to humble the frivolity of their hearts. This is not the case with the intentionally rebellious *Apikorsim*, as is known.)

Chapter Seven

We must now understand the continuation of the verse,²²⁴ “He did not sit in the seat of scoffers; But his delight is in the Torah of *HaShem*, and in His Torah he toils day and night.” Now, at first glance these are two complete opposites (i.e. the sitting of scoffers and the toil in Torah). How then can they be connected and juxtaposed to one another? For certainly the simple understanding of the words, “his delight is in the Torah of *HaShem*” is the literal opposite of “walking in the counsel of the wicked...” and “sitting in the seat of scoffers.”

Now, in truth, the main opposition to the aforementioned evil is actual repentance in action, to “not walk in the counsel of the wicked.” This was explained before, in the explanation of the verse “do not stray after your hearts etc.” Rather, the end of the verse, “his delight is in the Torah of *HaShem*” must be in response to “the seat of scoffers,” which it immediately follows. In other words, the literal opposition to “the seat of scoffers” is the zealotry in the toil of study of the Torah of *HaShem*.

According to what we said before, that sitting “in the seat of scoffers” is worse than all of the other external shells of evil (*Kelipah*), we must understand the meaning of what the Psalmist says, that its rectification is only through the Torah of *HaShem*?

Now, it is certainly true that the main aspect of real repentance (*Teshuvah*) is primarily only the abstinence from

²²⁴ Psalms 1:1-2

evil, to “not walk in the counsel of the wicked etc.” However, the fact that “he has not walked... stood... or sat...” in the ways of wickedness, is because “his delight is in the Torah of *HaShem*.” Now, the fact that “his delight is in the Torah of *HaShem*” is an indication that he has rectified the blemish of his soul, of “casting off of the yoke of Heaven,” through shedding tears of repentance during the midnight prayer of *Tikkun Chatzot*. This is the meaning of the verse,²²⁵ “My tears have been my bread etc.”

For, anyone who truly desires to come close to *HaShem* and to not be cast aside, should understand and recognize that the entire reason for his distance from the living God in following the whims of his heart and falling into every type of evil thought and sin, is only because he does not guard his soul, and does not conquer his heart and spirit.

In other words, when he is sitting together with others, he should make sure not to be frivolous and lightheaded, opening his heart to every manner of merriment and joking. That is, he should not speak every thought that arises in his soul, with excessive speech and a tongue that runs. For, we clearly observe that when it comes to vain speech and idle chatter, even though they may not be words of scorn and frivolity, nonetheless, we see that a person will speak excessively all manner of idle and vain words with no self-restraint whatsoever. This is solely because his heart is light and his spirit is coarse, for he does not put the shame of *HaShem* in his heart, to consider in his soul before whom he stands and

²²⁵ Psalms 42:4

sits and before whom he speaks all these words of vanity with such great abundance. This is solely due to the fact that his feeling of any fear of *HaShem* is so minute and miniscule. Therefore, his words come out with great breadth and expansiveness, unrestrained in any way. All of this expansive frivolous talk flows from one source, which is the same source that causes him to pursue the whims of his heart and to fall to every lust that his soul desires. This source is the casting off of the yoke of Heaven, literally.

Now, although the Torah does not explicitly forbid idle chatter, nonetheless, its effect is that it definitely uproots the fear of *HaShem* from a person's heart completely. This is certainly true with regard to immature childish chatter, i.e. joking and merriment, in which there surely is an even greater measure of "casting off the yoke of Heaven," to the point that it is very close to the aspect of the scorn, merriment and boastfulness of the *Kelipah* of the Philistines, as explained above. Because his heart is so open to everything, since he has no fear of *HaShem* before him whatsoever, certainly, all of the external shells of evil enter into such an unprotected ruin. These external shells of evil draw every type of impurity upon his soul, in order to destroy it. This is also the reason why he plummets to the pursuit of the whims of his heart, and falls into extraneous evil thoughts. Therefore, the surest advice to guard against these ills so that a person should not become ensnared in the chambers of evil, is solely to keep his heart within his own domain and under control at all times. He

should therefore abstain from anything that will ultimately result in him casting off the yoke of Heaven.

In other words, he should restrain his spirit from speaking idle chatter, and certainly not speak words of merriment and joking, like immature children who sit and chatter excessively in a joking manner. For, although they do not feel this to be a transgression and a blemish in their souls, it is nonetheless a powerful impurity, and they are considered as having cast off the yoke of Heaven with the intent to rebel. This is because this idle chatter uproots the fear of *HaShem* from a person's soul, from its very source, to the point where he can never achieve any level of sublimation to the Godliness of *HaShem*. For, in doing so he has already become lighthearted, with great frivolity, which is the opposite of the Godly. Furthermore, as is known, a person cannot come close to that which is holy without placing great fear and humility before *HaShem* in his heart, which is the opposite of lightheartedness and frivolity. This is because, all expansiveness of the heart and casting off of the yoke of Heaven "is an abomination in the presence of *HaShem*."²²⁶ This will suffice for those of understanding.

Now, certainly, a person whose heart has been touched by the fear of *HaShem* through true repentance from the very depths of his heart, always feels shamed and humbled in his heart. Because of this, he will never become lighthearted, speaking frivolous and vain words, whatsoever. This comes about for two reasons: Firstly, because his heart is broken and

²²⁶ Deuteronomy 24:4

he is despicable in his own eyes, and, in his heart, he is constantly agonized and consternated over the sins of his youth. Therefore, his heart will not feel uplifted, to expand into empty chatter or any type of merriment and jesting. This is because he feels like a penniless pauper, who is broken hearted, for he lacks even the most basic sustenance and bread. Therefore, he does not feel exalted in his heart, nor does he engage in abundant words of gaiety. Furthermore, he is not drawn after pleasures, such as hearing the voice of song. This is as stated,²²⁷ “Like pouring vinegar upon niter is one who sings songs to a dispirited heart.” Thus, the truly penitent is like a beggar, for he feels humbled in the very essence of his soul like a spiritual pauper. Therefore, his speech is minimal and his spirit is lowly. He will not be able to be lighthearted at all, and the matter of casting off the yoke of Heaven will be quite distant from him.

This is also true of a person who is not in a state of repentance at all times, but who, nonetheless, has this constant sadness and bitterness engraved upon his heart when he remembers his sins. This is similar to a person whose “black gall” is dominant by nature, so that he feels like a pauper because of the deficiencies of his soul. Even though he may be physically wealthy, having honor and respect, nonetheless, he always recognizes his true station, and feels despicable and disgusting in his own eyes. His “heart is like dust to all,”²²⁸ and he feels that all creatures are better than him.

²²⁷ Proverbs 25:20

²²⁸ The prayer of Mar, son of Ravina, included in the conclusion of the Shemonh Esreh literugy.

Even a person who cannot find *actual* sins and transgressions easily within his soul is, nonetheless, capable of finding and making a clear account of all his thoughts which were not for *HaShem*, and of all his foreign desires, and more specifically, his great distance from *HaShem* and from Torah and Mitzvot, including his lack of true prayer from the depths of his heart.

If he truly searches within himself without deluding himself or making light of such matters, then he will come to be aware of his severe deficiencies. This is provided that he does not fool himself, finding no faults with himself because of his natural self-love. This self-delusion causes him not be pedantic with himself. However, if he makes an honest accounting, then he will find that his soul is literally empty.

Those who have fear of sin will greatly feel and be bothered in their hearts by even the finest of evils, even those sins which others usually “trample with their heels.”²²⁹ For such people, even the finest evil will be greatly magnified in their eyes, and upon recollecting even these minor sins they will immediately be touched and moved in their hearts. Those whose hearts are less sensitive in regard to what they think and do, this is only because of their frivolousness and the lightness of their hearts, because of their lack of fear of sin.

Now, there are a great many levels of fear of sin, each person according to who and what he is. There are those who are anguished every time they open their mouths and fall to idle speech, and they certainly are pained when they fall to

²²⁹ Rashi to Deuteronomy 7:12

speaking words which express evil thoughts. Such a person will certainly be distressed if, because of these evil thoughts, impurity comes upon him. For in succumbing to them he causes blemish to his circumcision, which is the sign of the Holy covenant (*P'gam HaBrit*) to which he is bound. In doing so, he causes the external shells of an impure spirit to rest upon his soul so that he becomes impure thereby etc. He therefore takes everything into account.

Such people are called²³⁰ “masters of accounting,” who take stock of all their deeds each and every day. Specifically, during the *Shemah* recital before retiring to sleep at night, one should take stock and examine everything he has done or thought throughout the day, putting his heart fully into it. If he is honest in his assessment, he will be anguished by it. All of this comes from fear of sin, which is the adversary of all transgressions, the root of which is the rebelliousness of casting off the yoke of Heaven as a result of lightheartedness and frivolity, i.e. that he does not consider or take any account of anything, as mentioned above.

In truth, most of people's confusion is primarily in this matter. In other words, many people see all types of evil in themselves, without anything being concealed from them, not even half a thing, and yet they feel no need to be disturbed by this at all. Only on occasion, when a person is aroused to *HaShem*, will he feel himself to be full of evil. He will then become enraged about the state of his soul, and may temporarily fall into sadness and depression. However, when

²³⁰ Zohar Vol. 3, p. 178a

he realizes that he is hopeless, he will revert to his former ruination to an even greater degree than before, until “the fallen one shall surely fall,”²³¹ for he despairs in his soul.

In truth, however, this is only the counsel of the evil inclination whose intent is to cause him to fall completely. He must therefore be very strong, and must tell his heart that the reason these evils have come upon him and grasped him in their clutches, is because he has no fear of sin in his heart. For, it is because of this lack of awareness in his heart during the day and at other times, that he slowly descends into lightness and frivolity.

He should know that it is either because of his frivolous nature or because of his self-involvement, that he forgets about fear of God. This causes his fear of sin to diminish, since fear of sin and fear of God are one and the same, and are therefore interdependent. Because of the fact that he has no fear of God in his heart, he therefore has no fear of sin. In other words, he has no fear of sin because he has no fear of God. (This is as elucidated elsewhere regarding the verse,²³² “Because my God is not within me,” that is, the fear of God is not within him, “therefore, these evils have come upon me”.)

However, there are many people who have the opposite problem. They worry over and above the proper measure. They agonize and are overly consternated about every evil that they discover in themselves to the point that they despair and feel that they are beyond hope. They feel this way even if the

²³¹ Deuteronomy 22:8

²³² Deuteronomy 31:17

evil they find in their self-assessment is only in matters of speech or thought alone, or that he finds himself lacking in the service of *HaShem* with the mind or heart, or in the toil of Torah and Mitzvot (the commandments) and the like.

Now, of course, the path of repentance is such that the more one is pained in his heart, the more desirable and accepted is his repentance. However, this is only in regard to action, specifically. Regarding thought, and particularly shortcomings in the performance of positive commandments, such as Torah study, Mitzvot or prayer, this additional agonizing is of no benefit whatsoever. After all, he must also consider that he is physical and his body has a mixture of good and evil. The primary evil that he suffers from, however, is his depression, for it causes him to be pulled into to the side of evil, as is known. Rather, what one who suffers this evil must do, is that immediately when his heart becomes pained, he should not despair. Instead, he must strengthen himself in his heart and in his commitment not to follow after vanity any longer. He must set the fear of God before him at all times, so that he should always fear sin, and not succumb to this ploy of his inclination. This will suffice for those of understanding.

The second reason that he feels shame and humility in his heart is because of a level of fear of God which is higher than fear of sin. This is so, even though the two are one and the same, as explained above, that he fears sin because he fears God. Nevertheless, we see that there are people who fear sin, but do not have a constant grasp and awareness of fear of God in their minds and hearts, such as during involvement with

their livelihood, for instance. (This may also be caused by his coarseness in regard to permitted matters, such as his lust for permitted foods, or permitted sexual relations etc.)

It may also be possible that his fear of God is not commensurate to his fear of sin. This is often observed in simple folk or women who do fear sin, and are certainly fearful of transgressing grave sins such as Shabbat observance, murder, or adultery. This may even apply to lesser sins, which they will fear in their very souls and consider totally foreign to their hearts. Nonetheless, we see that the fear of God is quite miniscule in their hearts, in that they may cheat or steal when engaging in business matters, or they may swear falsely, speak gossip and slander, or use foul language and the like. This is because they lack fear of God.

For, this type of fear of God is called “fear of His exaltedness” (*Yirat HaRomemut*) and is brought about specifically through the toil of the heart and mind in prayer, until a person becomes aroused with fear of God. Therefore, how can there be any great degree of fear of God in a person who is utterly lacking in the service of the heart during prayer. It is only because of the natural faith in God that is embedded in his soul, that he has any fear of God at all. Even then, this fear is only in a very general manner, in that that he does not wish to rebel against God. In other words, he solely fears to rebel against God, to transgress His will openly, in public, at the very least.

Nevertheless, even this fear is better than and the opposite of the casting off the yoke of Heaven, mentioned earlier, in

which he does not take anything into consideration at all. This type of fear is therefore included in “the fear of sin which precedes his wisdom”²³³ so that “his wisdom is everlasting.”²³⁴ (In contrast, if a person lacks even this, yet proceeds with the service of the heart and mind, it cannot endure the test of time.) This is as stated,²³⁵ “If there is no fear, there is no wisdom,” which refers to fear of sin. The continuation of the Mishnah is, “If there is no wisdom there is no fear,” which refers to the fear of God. This will suffice for those of understanding.

(However, there can never be fear of God without fear of sin, for certainly, “included in two hundred is one hundred.”²³⁶ However, we often see that this is not the case, and that the two are not commensurate to each other. In other words, we actually **do** find people who appear to have fear of God, in that they are aroused with awe and fear during their prayers, and that they are fit and proper at all times. Yet, they do not have a great degree of fear of sin, to the point that sometimes they may become frivolous and may come to casting off the yoke of Heaven in several negative matters.

Now, these may not be severe transgressions such as profaning the Shabbat and forbidden sexual relations or the like. Nonetheless, they will succumb to lusting after money, which may bring them to dishonesty in business matters, such

²³³ Mishnah Avot 3:9

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Mishnah Avot 3:17

²³⁶ Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 31a

as cheating or deceiving, so that their hands are not completely pure.

Likewise, in all other matters between himself and his Maker, a person may be lacking in positive action and could be full of negative thoughts. He may possess all types of nasty qualities, such as arrogance, coarseness of spirit, anger and so forth, and he does not budge from these negative traits even to a hair's breadth. Likewise, he may become miserly, and not give charity or perform acts of loving kindness. He may become cruel, lacking in mercy, or have an evil eye, constantly being jealous of others, or the like. He may also fall to merriment and jesting, and may even commingle with idolaters, Heaven forbid.

All of these negative traits go beyond his certain lusts for permissible things, such as his excessive lusts for permitted foods and permitted sexual relations. Likewise, he may fall to greatly desiring honor, or all manner of other worldly pleasures, and he will not restrain himself from any of them. Although he guards himself from all evil and forbidden matters that are explicitly forbidden by the Torah, because of his fear of God and fear of sin, however, many times it is not commensurate to the arousal of fear of God in his heart.

Now, at first glance, this is very astonishing. For, we must say that such a person is greatly lacking in his fear of sin, in *all* matters, and that he cannot be considered to be within the category of one who fears God at all. The verse clearly states,²³⁷ "Fear God and guard His commandments," from

²³⁷ Ecclesiastes 12:13

which it is understood that these two matters are interdependent.

Furthermore, it is known that the fulfillment of the commandments is dependent upon the love of *HaShem*. For, love of *HaShem* is the motivating source for the fulfillment of the two-hundred and forty-eight positive commandments, while the fear of *HaShem* is the motivating source for abstaining from transgressing the three-hundred and sixty-five negative commandments. This is as stated,²³⁸ “to love *HaShem* your God, and to serve him,” which refers to the positive commandments and clearly indicates that they are dependent upon love of *HaShem*. Nevertheless, it also states,²³⁹ “What does *HaShem* your God request of you, but to fear *HaShem* your God and to walk in His ways etc.” This is because the fear of *HaShem* is actually inclusive of all of the commandments. For, after all, even the positive commandments are the decrees of the King, and are therefore part and parcel of the acceptance of the yoke of Heaven specifically, as is understood by those who are understanding.

On the other hand, it is impossible to conclude that because such a person’s fear of sin is not commensurate to his fear of God, therefore his arousal of fear of God during prayer must be considered to be an actual self-deception in his soul. For, as is known, the arousal of love and fear of *HaShem* during prayer is drawn from the *Koach Mah*—the power of “what” (i.e. sublimation) which is called the *Chochmah*—

²³⁸ Deuteronomy 11:13

²³⁹ Deuteronomy 10:12

Wisdom of the Divine soul. In other words, it comes about as a result the power of the Godly soul which is essential to Him, and is thus an actual arousal towards Godliness. It is for this reason that each person, according to the source of his soul, may become aroused with fear of God in the first instance. This is as stated,²⁴⁰ “*HaShem* resides in the hearts etc.”

This matter of arousal of fear of *HaShem* in the heart, is literally an arousal of the emotion of fear in the physical heart. This is brought about by a clear recognition of his Creator. That is, when he contemplates the absolute greatness and wondrousness of *HaShem*, and how it is He who is the source of everything etc., a fear of Him shall fall upon his heart, which is called actual fear of God. This comes about in a felt way in one’s heart of flesh, as stated,²⁴¹ “O’ *HaShem*, I have heard report of You and I was afraid.” (As is known, the aspect of “hearing” refers to the aspect of the comprehension of *Binah*. In other words, through the above contemplation-*Hitbonenut* in the way of comprehension, one arouses this fear of God in his heart.)

This being the case, how can it be that we do not necessarily find a fear of sin appropriate to this level in such a person? How is it that his fear of sin is not commensurate to the fear of God that is within him? Each and every person can find these two opposite poles in his soul, on a literally daily basis. In other words, on the one hand a person may rouse his fear and love of God during prayer or at any other time as he

²⁴⁰ Proverbs 21:2

²⁴¹ Habakkuk 3:2

wishes. However, the very next moment he can find himself to be completely empty, and void of any fear of sin at all. In other words, this arousal does not seem to make any difference in helping him stand up against all the evil qualities and traits of his heart, such as anger, haughtiness, stinginess, or cruelty etc. Certainly, it does not seem to affect him enough to desist from casting off the yoke of Heaven with his extraneous lewd thoughts.

(This dichotomy is true all the more so in our orphaned generation, in which we clearly see that every person is lacking greatly in fear of sin. Anyone who has eyes in his head can clearly see this lacking, in both the young and old alike. They stumble in every possible manner, which ultimately results from casting off the yoke of Heaven due to their frivolity and not taking anything seriously, as previously explained. Yet, they nevertheless regard themselves as having fear of God, engaging in the service of the mind and heart in prayer, whenever they find the time for it. And in truth, they are correct, since the fear of God in Torah, Mitzvot, charity, prayer and repentance of the heart etc., may be found in each and every Jew according to his capabilities, as stated,²⁴² “Your nation are all righteous etc.” (This excludes those who are completely empty. Such people are called the sinners of Israel, and yet, they too “are filled with Mitzvot like a pomegranate is filled with seeds etc.”²⁴³)

²⁴² Isaiah 60:21

²⁴³ Talmud Bavli, Chagigah 26b

Now, all of the above fear of God is only to be found at intermittent, specific times, such as during prayer, repentance, Torah study or the observance of the Mitzvot etc., each person according to their capacity. However, most of the time, each person wallows in the pursuit of all of the vanities and emptiness of this lowly world, each person according to his path. “They swagger and sway like a drunkard,”²⁴⁴ i.e. they are “drunkards not from wine,”²⁴⁵ “and all of their wisdom” and therefore their fear of God, “becomes swallowed up.”²⁴⁶ In other words, any aspect of good that they may possess is swallowed up by evil. This is similar to how the good fat cows of Pharaoh’s dream²⁴⁷ were swallowed by the emaciated bad cows. Yet, even after the emaciated bad cows swallowed the fat good cows, nonetheless, they remained emaciated and bad in appearance, just as they had been to begin with. It is regarding this matter that the verse states,²⁴⁸ “A time when man will rule over man, to do evil unto him.” This is the primary matter of the exile of the *Shechinah*-The Divine Presence, as will soon be explained. This will suffice for those who are understanding.

²⁴⁴ Psalms 107:27

²⁴⁵ Isaiah 51:21

²⁴⁶ Psalms 107:27

²⁴⁷ Genesis 41:1-4

²⁴⁸ Ecclesiastes 8:9

Chapter Eight

What we must therefore understand, is that both within the aspect of fear of sin and within the aspect of fear of God, there are two types of fears. The first comes because of the strength and power of a person's Divine service, in the toil of his soul during prayer, and during all other propitious times. In other words, through contemplation and recognition of his Creator he causes his heart be a fitting vessel for the arousal of fear in his heart and mind, according to his capacity. He accustoms himself to such contemplation with constant diligence and zeal, until the yoke of Heaven becomes engraved upon his heart, with the two types of fear mentioned above.

The first is the fear of sin, that he fears to rebel against his Master through any transgression or sin, even a lenient transgression of the words of our Sages, as is known. The second is the fear of God, which is brought about by his contemplation into the greatness of the Creator. This causes him to become roused with intellectual love and fear, which will be commensurate to his comprehension. This type of fear is called, "the awe and fear of His exaltedness." Each person may acquire this fear, each according to his capabilities and level. However, this fear is not equal at all times, for, certainly, a person goes through many changes from moment to moment.

For example, when a person is actively preoccupied with his personal dealings or when his burden of earning a

livelihood becomes increased upon him, then his mind and heart may become confused. This is even more true during times of hardship, in which case, for whatever reason, a person may become so confused to the point that “his heart is no longer with him”²⁴⁹ to even be able to think about matters of love and fear of God. Even if he does recall the fear of God, it will be extremely distant from him, because of his short spiritedness and the heavy and burdensome labor, which, literally, embitters his life. In such a case, over the course of time he will certainly fall from his spiritual station until, slowly but surely, even the fear of sin may be uprooted from his heart. He will certainly lack the fear of God that comes as a result of his toil in comprehending Godly matters.

Although he has not yet come to the category of casting off the yoke of Heaven, nonetheless, all of his toil in his service of *HaShem* to implant the fear of sin in his heart, has been lost completely. He becomes like one who has never even tasted the fear of God. He descends from level to level in this manner, until his heart is emptied of all fear of Heaven, God forbid. This is considered to be spiritual death, in which there is no Godly life or light whatsoever, may the Merciful One save us. He becomes like a piece of rotting wood or like an inanimate object. Like one who by his very nature is completely empty of vitality, he becomes like a dry block of wood, or like a ruined field where it is futile to plant seeds, for they will not take hold and grow.

²⁴⁹ Proverbs 23:7

Now, if any impression of the fear does remain upon his heart, then it is possible that at a propitious time, he may be aroused from Above to repent. This arousal will inspire him to act upon it, for²⁵⁰ “the spirit of the Lord drives forth in him.” He will then awaken from his slumber to return to *HaShem* with the service of the heart, to arouse love and fear in his heart during prayer at times. Certainly, he will also strengthen his heart regarding fear of sin and always accept the yoke of Heaven upon himself. He will not stray, neither to the right nor to the left, and the strength of Divine light and life will be with him.

However, if even a trace impression no longer remains in him, then no Godly spirit will affect him, to arouse his soul. This will be the case even when it is a propitious time above, such as during the ten days of repentance between *Rosh HaShana* and *Yom Kippur* about which it states,²⁵¹ “Seek HaShem when He is to be found, call Him when He is close.” Similarly, at midnight during the time of *Tikkun Chatzot* or on Shabbat and Holidays are other propitious times etc. During such times, all souls ascend, but he will never ascend. For him there is only a complete descent, which comes about because of his preoccupation with livelihood or the fact that he is going through difficult times of hardships, as mentioned above. (In such a case his heart may become broken and humbled to return with a lower level of *Teshuvah*-repentance etc.) All of this comes about because he draws himself to involving his

²⁵⁰ Isaiah 59:19

²⁵¹ Isaiah 55:6

heart and soul to their very depths in matters that create a separation and a barrier between him and his Creator. An example of such a prohibition would be theft, adultery, murder or transgressing the Shabbat etc.

In truth, though, this can be caused even by something which is not actually forbidden, but by anything which causes his soul to become completely invested in physicality. (Because, in truth, even when a person involves himself in business with the entire depth of his heart and mind, in that he is willing to sacrifice his life for even the smallest amount of money, such as the worth of a *perutah*), then his entire soul becomes involved in it, and nothing is left of the service of God. Nonetheless, a remedy may be found for him during auspicious times above, as mentioned before, on condition that he has not cheated or stolen in his transactions, and if he has had compassion for the poor etc. Likewise, in regard to lusts such as permissible sexual relations, his soul is not completely destroyed if he has not fallen to thoughts of sin to such a point that he has brought impurity upon himself through nocturnal emissions or through emitting wasteful seed purposely.

Likewise, in regard to all the pleasures of this world, such as all types of delicacies and expensive clothes which inflate his ego and cause his heart to be uplifted, he is still capable of salvaging himself from this fallen state, through giving charity and doing acts of kindness to the poor, and favors to others. However, if this is not the case, and instead he follows the whims of his heart, totally involving himself in gratifying his

own lusts for pleasure, like a glutton or a drunkard, and he uplifts his heart in arrogance, and ignores the plight of the poor, to help them, then certainly there is no fear before his eyes whatsoever, not even a trace impression of it. (This is as stated,²⁵² “But Yeshurun grew fat and kicked; you have grown fat, you have become coarse etc.” Similarly, the Talmud states that,²⁵³ “the wine or pleasures of *Progita* and the waters of *Diomeset* deprived Israel of the Ten Tribes.” (It is explained that the sin which precipitated their exile was excessive involvement in material pleasures, signified by the wine of *Progita* etc.)) Such a person dominates others with arrogance and afflicts the poor, uplifting himself over everyone and everything. This type of person is called,²⁵⁴ “Bad to the Creator, and bad to the creatures,” for certainly he is like a completely evil person, filled with grave transgressions. There is no hope for his soul at all.

This is as stated,²⁵⁵ “You have grown fat, you have become coarse” as in,²⁵⁶ “It shall come to pass when I bring you into the land” there will be “houses filled with goodness” but “guard yourself, lest you forget *HaShem*.” For, even if a person has not actually cheated or stolen at all, nevertheless, because his heart becomes uplifted and arrogant because of the abundant goodness, it is possible to forget *HaShem* completely, “and become fat.” Should this occur, he will

²⁵² Deuteronomy 32:15

²⁵³ Shabbat 147b

²⁵⁴ Talmud Bavli, Kiddushin 40a

²⁵⁵ Deuteronomy 32:15

²⁵⁶ Deuteronomy 6:10-12

descend even to the point of the sin of idolatry, for such is the way of things. When, because of his uplifted heart, there is a withdrawal of the Holy light of the yoke of Heaven (because of his preoccupation with worldly pleasures), his heart will automatically stray after vanities.

Nonetheless, it is understood that affliction in matters of income, health or children are for his good, since that is the opposite of a “house filled with goodness.” Such measures break the arrogant heart of all its arrogance and merriment, and will cause him to return to *HaShem*. (This is similar to what was mentioned earlier regarding the king Menasheh,²⁵⁷ who returned to *HaShem* as a result of being afflicted.) Now, all of the above only applies to a person who has fallen from the levels of fear of God and fear of sin, which were previously implanted in his heart as a result of his toil in contemplation and the service of the heart in prayer.

However, the second level of the two types of fear mentioned above is like a natural fear of God and fear of sin, which is embedded in the soul of each and every Jew, and never undergoes change. This is clearly understood from the fact that even Jews who are full of evil and frivolity, and have transgressed all the sins in the world, nonetheless, as soon as such a Jew is told to reject his faith, he would die rather than transgress this, God forbid. He will be willing to give up his very life for the sake of Heaven, no less than a Jew who has always been completely upright and pure in his service of *HaShem*. This is because the very essence of the Jewish soul

²⁵⁷ Chronicles II 33:12-13

is connected and bound to *HaShem*. He will, therefore, naturally be willing to give up his life, rather than completely separating himself from *HaShem*.

Likewise, we see that there is a natural fear of sin in every Jew, each person according to his level. It is the very nature of their souls not to purposely transgress grave sins. We even see this in six or seven-year-old children, that if they would be told to transgress Shabbat observance, or to eat non-kosher food, they would risk their lives rather than transgress this. Certainly, if fourteen or fifteen-year-old children would be told to eat on Yom Kippur or not wear Tzitzit, by the nature of their souls they would not transgress. (This excludes with those who have become accustomed to frivolity from their youth.) Furthermore, this is not merely due to parental influence, since even an orphan will carefully guard his Judaism.

Actually, women are even more careful in guarding their Judaism, and specifically in regard to matters of *Nidah*. It is as a nature to their souls. They are also more careful in other Mitzvot. For example, with regard to not profaning Shabbat or any other prohibition, they are very meticulous and careful. Furthermore, by nature, the Mitzvot are very precious to them. We even find many simple folk who are pure in their actions and much more meticulous in performing the Mitzvot than many knowledgeable Torah scholars, as known.

All of this is solely because of the source of their Godly souls, which is called “the aspect of their essential Jewishness”. (This is the aspect of the *Yechidah* of the soul,

which literally radiates in a revealed way, specifically in their actions, (since “the beginning is bound with the end”). This, then, is the meaning of the verse,²⁵⁸ “Your nation is all righteous”, literally, in actuality. Therefore, “Every Israelite has a portion in the world to come.”²⁵⁹ As known, this is specifically because they fulfill the commandments in actuality, because “the beginning is bound with the end.”²⁶⁰ In other words, the essential point of this nature in their Godly souls, which is literally bound to Godliness in an essential way. This nature is such that even though it is quite possibly that the Godly light of the soul may be diminished, to the point that he is completely empty of everything in the mind and heart, nonetheless, although a Jew has sinned, he is still a Jew.

Now, in regard to this nature of the Jewish soul, as it relates to the action and performance of the Mitzvot, this has not undergone any change whatsoever, even over time. We clearly see that from the very first generations until the very last generations, no change has taken place. The Mitzvot we perform today are literally the very same Mitzvot they performed. However, in regard to the service of the mind and heart, or in regard to the study of Torah, each generation is different. For example, one cannot begin to compare this last generation to the generation of Moshe, Yehoshua or King Shlomo. We cannot even compare it to the generations of the Tana'im and the Amora'im following the destruction of the second Temple. Nonetheless, in regard to the strength of their

²⁵⁸ Isaiah 60:21

²⁵⁹ Mishnah Sanhedrin 10:1

²⁶⁰ Sefer Yetzirah 1:7

commitment or their strength of faith, all generations are generally equal.

This is because in the essential nature, there is no difference between lofty souls, which are compared to the “head” and the lowly souls, which are compared to the “heels,” such as those of this last generation. (This is analogous to a person, in whom the purity of his essential desire and the purity of his actions are literally one and the same. In regards to this, it makes no difference if his mind and heart at times radiate to greater or lesser degrees.) A person who is pure in his actions may reach the same level as a person who is pure in a way of self-sacrifice for the sanctification of *HaShem*’s Holy name, just as the greatest and most righteous of men. (This is evidenced by the fact that the quality of self-sacrifice for the sake of God exists **equally** in all Jews, literally, from the simplest folk to the most perfectly righteous.

Furthermore, in every single generation, this is equal. This is clearly evidenced from the matter of the forced conversions that all Jews, from the smallest children to the Torah scholars, withstood. As a people, we already have been tested in every generation for the past three thousand years, starting from the time of the giving of the Torah, and the strength of Jewish faith has not faltered or changed by an iota. No matter what tests of faith, no matter what trials, tribulations and afflictions were cast upon them, their faith remained intact, and *HaShem* saved them from their enemies, in each generation. All of this is an indicator of the source of

the Jewish people, in its essence.) Thus, there is no change in this essential nature which is in the soul of each and every Jew in every generation, from the greatest to the smallest.

Now, all of the above relates to action, in which the two above mentioned aspects, which are the fear of sin and the fear of God, are included. This is because it is like a nature for a Jew to have fear of God, since *HaShem* created the Jewish souls in this manner. We find that even in the heart of a frivolous person, his heart will break and he will become humbled due to his sins. The only problem is that he is incapable of conquering the evil inclination which burns within him. This is because a spirit of folly has entered him, and he temporarily becomes like an animal. This is likewise the case in regard to the fear of sin in the general population, including women and children.

This fear of God is the same fear that the righteous have because of the nature of their souls. It is much greater than fear of God which comes through toil in the heart, mind and comprehension. This type of love and fear is called “natural love and fear,” which is literally like a nature in the general population of the Jewish people. Another aspect regarding this fear, which is different than the fear acquired through comprehension, is that it is eternal and everlasting, and can never be uprooted. This is because every essence is unchanging, and this is the essence of their Jewishness, which is the foundation and root of all their service of God. It is “this, which stood for our fathers and for us,”²⁶¹ for, “how

²⁶¹ Liturgy of the Passover Haggadah

beautiful is our inheritance.”²⁶² This is what stood up and was established in every generation, to protect the Jewish people from all prosecution, both spiritually and physically. This is as stated,²⁶³ “And yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, nor will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them.” This is because, “The heart of the fathers is towards the sons,”²⁶⁴ and this too is in an essential, natural way. This will suffice for those of understanding.

²⁶² Liturgy of the morning prayers

²⁶³ Leviticus 26:44

²⁶⁴ Malachi 3:24

Chapter Nine

We may now answer the question that was posed previously.²⁶⁵ That is, we find that there are people whose fear of sin is not commensurate to their fear of God, even though they serve *HaShem* with fear that arises from their contemplation. This is because the arousal of love and fear that is caused by their intellectual grasp and recognition, is transient and passing. In other words, little by little they are caused to fall from their state of awareness due to their involvement in matters of this physical world, as we previously explained. For, this awareness and grasp is attained by means of consistency in service of *HaShem*, but it is not a revelation of the essence of the soul known as the *Yechidah*.

(Rather, it is solely a revelation of the aspect of *Chochmah*-wisdom of the Godly soul, whose light spreads forth into the faculty of *Binah*-comprehension, which is the heart.²⁶⁶ This is only temporary, and may therefore become extinguished, like the flame of a candle that may become extinguished in air that is very humid and muggy. In contrast, the aspect of the *Yechidah* of the soul is essential, and does not become extinguished at all. This is as explained regarding the verse,²⁶⁷ “Deliver my soul from the sword, my *Yechidah*²⁶⁸ from the hand of the dog,” as known.)

²⁶⁵ In chapter eight

²⁶⁶ Tikkunei Zohar 17a

²⁶⁷ Psalms 22:21

In contrast, the essential fear of God (and the essential love of God which is called the great love (*Ahavah Rabba*) and natural hidden love of God (*Ahavah Mesuteret*) never undergoes any changes or exchanges whatsoever, as we previously explained.

(It is also understood from this that the natural love and fear that one arouses in their heart through contemplation and grasp in one's mind, is only transient and fleeting in the mind. In other words, the arousal in the mind is only a cause through which to thereby arouse and reveal the natural love and fear that is concealed in the essential depth of the heart. The proof for this is from the fact that we see that the arousal of the natural love and fear will come with a much greater strength and spreading forth than the arousal that took place in his mind. This is true even though it is the intellect which gave birth to the emotional arousal, as explained elsewhere regarding the verse,²⁶⁹ "I was like beasts before You." That is, the intellect is solely like a light that illuminates the path to find the one that he seeks and loves. However, once he beholds his beloved whom he seeks, then his essential and natural love becomes revealed, and he no longer needs the illumination of the light of the intellect at all. This will suffice for the understanding.)

Through this we may understand the term used in the *Shma* recital, "v'*Ahavta*-and you shall love" which is a command, but is also an automatic result and consequence.

²⁶⁸ "My only one" or "My singular one"

²⁶⁹ Psalms 73:22

Both of these aspects are true. For, with the revelation of the aspect of the aforementioned *Yechidah* of the soul, the essential great love of *HaShem* is automatically drawn forth. The command, however, is to awaken this essential love from its concealment, by means of great toil and labor in the intellectual faculties of the mind. The same is true with the arousal of the natural and essential quality of fear of God, that it should be drawn forth from its concealment. This is as stated,²⁷⁰ “What does *HaShem* your God request of you, but that you fear *HaShem* your God.” In other words, the request is that you draw forth the concealed essence to be revealed within the heart. This shall suffice for the understanding.

Now, this essential love and fear that every Jew possesses hidden in the very depth and core of his heart, is only drawn forth into revelation from its concealment in two things. These two things are repentance-*Teshuvah* and good deeds-*Ma'asim Tovim*. It is for this reason that it states,²⁷¹ “A single moment of repentance and good deeds in this world is greater than all of the world to come.” The reason for this is because repentance-*Teshuvah* specifically comes from the very depths of the heart. In other words, it is a revelation of the aspect of the essential core of the *Yechidah* of the soul, which is made by *HaShem* Himself, as stated,²⁷² “The souls which I have made.” This refers to the return of the essential *Yechidah* of the soul, as it states,²⁷³ “And the spirit returns to God who

²⁷⁰ Deuteronomy 10:12

²⁷¹ Mishnah Avot 4:17

²⁷² Isaiah 57:16

²⁷³ Ecclesiastes 12:7

gave it.” This return is brought about only means of extreme anguish, to the point that he is brought to tears in a manner that is generally higher than particular calculations of intellect and reason. Rather, it is specifically through the anguish and physical suffering of his body that his essential *Yechidah* is roused. This is as stated,²⁷⁴ “In your distress, when all these things come upon you, in the end of days, you will return to *HaShem*... if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul etc.” This is to say that the very core of his heart becomes openly revealed from its essential concealment.

This arousal must be commensurate to the extent that he cast off the yoke of Heaven, cutting himself off from the root of his soul. For, in doing so, he specifically caused a blemish and concealment of the aspect of the essential *Yechidah* of his soul, as we explained above at length. It is over this that he sheds tears with the bitterness of his soul, for it is from this casting off of the yoke of Heaven that he was brought to sin in actuality. Thus, the two are interdependent, as we previously explained. In other words, this is as we explained regarding the matter of the purity and simplicity of the essential depth of his desire, and that this beginning is bound to the end action.²⁷⁵

Thus, it is like an essential nature that is embedded in the soul of each and every Jew to give up his live for the sanctification of *HaShem*'s name. The same holds true for each and every one of the commandments (*Mitzvot*) of *HaShem*, for it is through their faith in Him that they live,²⁷⁶

²⁷⁴ Deuteronomy 4:29-30

²⁷⁵ Sefer Yetzirah 1:7

²⁷⁶ Habakkuk 2:4

and it is through this self-sacrifice that they draw forth the natural essential life of the core of the soul. In other words, this self-sacrifice is solely due to the essence of the soul itself, which is the aspect of the *Yechidah*.

In contrast, the casting off of the yoke of Heaven is the diametric opposite of this, whereby he certainly cuts himself off from the root of his soul in the Living God. This is to such an extent that the Godly light is utterly withdrawn from the root of his soul when he transgresses *HaShem*'s will in actuality, or does not perform acts of goodness due to the frivolity of his heart. Regarding this it states,²⁷⁷ "The foolish afflict themselves on account of the way of their transgressions." The transgressions refer to the rebelliousness,²⁷⁸ since it is the rebelliousness which is the root cause that includes all subsequent actual sins and transgressions that stem from it. In other words, they are one and the same thing.

However, repentance from the very depths of one's heart causes the Godly light to be returned and enliven the very root of his soul, that is,²⁷⁹ "The spirit returns to God who gave it," and becomes bonded once again with the very source of life itself. (For, as we previously explained at length, *HaShem* likewise returns to him.) Thus, it is through repentance that he rectifies the blemish he caused by casting off the yoke of Heaven, which automatically rectifies the blemishes caused by all of his other sins, all of which stemmed from the casting off of the yoke of Heaven. This rectification is the root of the

²⁷⁷ Psalms 107:17

²⁷⁸ See Ramban commentary to Yoma 36b

²⁷⁹ Ecclesiastes 12:7

eternal life of the soul and the world to come, for the soul is alive and adheres to the Source of Life at its very essence. This is as written²⁸⁰ “After two days He will revive us, on the third day He will raise us up, *that we may live* before Him.” Similarly, it states regarding the world to come,²⁸¹ “And it shall be said on that day: ‘Behold, this is our God.’” This will suffice for the understanding.

Now, the second aspect that draws forth the essential natural love of a Jew, are the actual acts of good deeds in the fulfillment of the physical commandments. For the simplicity of the action is also rooted in the very essence of the soul, which is the *Yechidah* of the soul. For, as we have mentioned, the beginning is bound with the end.²⁸² Similarly, it states,²⁸³ “The end of the matter, after all has been heard; fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the totality of man.” In other words, the particular actions in the fulfillment of the commandments are the expressions of the totality of the soul of man, the *Yechidah*. This is further demonstrated by the verse,²⁸⁴ “You shall keep My statutes and My ordinances, which if a man shall do, he shall live by them.” In other words, it is the fulfillment of the commandments in actuality which draws forth the essential life of the soul specifically from its essential source, for they are one, and they are bound with one another. Proof of this is exhibited in the fact that the

²⁸⁰ Hosea 6:2

²⁸¹ Isaiah 25:9

²⁸² Sefer Yetzirah 1:7

²⁸³ Ecclesiastes 12:13

²⁸⁴ Leviticus 18:5

Jewish people would willingly give up their lives to sanctify the name of *HaShem*, rather than to negate or transgress His commandments in actuality, as we previously explained.

It is for these reasons that the Sages decreed in the aforementioned Mishnah that it is specifically these two things, repentance and good deeds in this physical world, which transform evil into good. In other words, this is accomplished by means of the essential *Yechidah* of the soul, which is the receptacle that draws forth the aspect of the Singular Essence of *HaShem* which is called, “The *Yachid*-Singular life of all the worlds.”²⁸⁵ For it is He who is the source of all life, and this is the essential life which is the source of the life of the world to come, as is known. This will suffice for the understanding.

After having presented all the above, we may now understand the meaning of the verse,²⁸⁶ “My tears have been my bread day and night, while they say to me throughout the day ‘where is your God?’” In other words, this question of “where is your God?” refers to the core sin of casting off the yoke of Heaven, and indicates that Godliness has withdrawn. (For example, the various exiles are called by the term “The exile of the *Shechinah*.” Likewise, it states in the Zohar²⁸⁷ “During the time of exile the Holy One, blessed is He, withdraws high above” and²⁸⁸ “The *Shechinah*-Divine

²⁸⁵ See Shaar HaYichud, Ch. 10-11, and Baruch She’Amar liturgy in the morning prayers.

²⁸⁶ Psalms 42:4

²⁸⁷ Zohar Vol. 1, 210a; Vol. 2, 58b; Vol. 3, 20b

²⁸⁸ Zohar Vol. 2, 216b

Presence is exiled amongst the nations, and the wife is separated from her Husband etc.” The *Shechinah* generally refers to the totality of the Jewish people, and on a particular level, it refers to the sparks of Godliness that comprise the souls of each individual Jew. Thus, by casting off the yoke of Heaven, he causes the light of Godliness to be withdrawn from the source of his soul. It is for this reason that he is asked, “where is your God?” In other words, this applies to each and every individual Jew.)

Now, it is known that there are two levels in Divine providence. The first is an external aspect, which is drawn forth from the aspect of the hind-side of the name *Elokim*. In other words, when influence is drawn forth in this manner there are numerous intermediaries and numerous levels of concealment after concealment, until the Divine influence is finally garbed in the garments of sackcloth of the natural order. In this case, the Divine influence is drawn forth through the seventy ministering angels of the seventy nations, through the planetary orbits and constellations of the aspect of the external husks of *Nogah* of the world of *Asiyah*-actualization. (In reality, however, these forces are only like “An axe in the hand of the woodcutter,”²⁸⁹ and in truth, *HaShem* “Arranges them in their positions according to His will.”²⁹⁰ It is regarding this that the verse states,²⁹¹ “Why do the nations say ‘where is their God?’ But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He desires.” Similarly, it states,²⁹²

²⁸⁹ Isaiah 10:15

²⁹⁰ Evening prayers liturgy

²⁹¹ Psalms 115:2-3

“I will respond, says *HaShem*; I will respond to the heavens, and they shall respond to the earth.” Nevertheless, in this type of Divine providence, the Divine influence is utterly hidden in garments of great concealment. Thus, this is the primary matter of the exile of the Divine Presence (*Shechinah*) amongst the seventy ministering angels of the seventy nations, as known. Nevertheless, it should be clear that “His kingdom rules over all,”²⁹³ as it states,²⁹⁴ “God reigns over all the nations,” and,²⁹⁵ “Who would not fear You, King of the nations,” since,²⁹⁶ “The entire earth shall fear *HaShem*.”)

The second type of Divine providence is the inner aspect, which comes from the inner aspect of Godliness. In other words, it comes from the ineffable essential name of *HaShem*, as He manifests within the name *Elokim*. (In a more particular manner, it should be understood that even in the name *Elokim* (אלהים) itself there is a difference between the first seventy-two possible permutations of the name, which are holy combinations, and the final forty-eight permutations which manifest within the external husks and the seventy archangels of the nations. These final forty-eight (מ"ח) permutations are known as “The land of the children of *Cham*-חמ-48,”²⁹⁷ as known.²⁹⁸ In other words, they are the aspect of the external

²⁹² Hosea 2:23

²⁹³ Psalms 103:19

²⁹⁴ Psalms 47:9

²⁹⁵ Jeremiah 10:7

²⁹⁶ Psalms 33:8

²⁹⁷ Shaar HaKavanot, Pesach, Drush 1; Torah Ohr, Hosafot Parshat Yitro;

²⁹⁸ As is known from Sefer Yetzirah 4:12, two letters of the *Aleph-Beit* can form two constructs (such as א"ב and ב"א) and three letters form six constructs, and so forth. Thus, five letters can form one-hundred and twenty constructs. It is

husk of *Klipat Nogah* of the world of *Asiyah*, which is mostly evil.)

This type of inner Divine influence is reflected in the verse,²⁹⁹ “May *HaShem* shine his face upon you,” (and as is known “face-*Panim*” may also be translated as “*Pnim*-innerness”). Similarly, regarding this type of inner influence, the Sages of blessed memory stated,³⁰⁰ “There is no constellation that influences the Jewish people.” This is because, when the Jewish people fulfill the will of *HaShem*, with repentance and the fulfillment of the Mitzvot, then the influence is drawn forth to them from the inner aspect of Divine providence. This is as stated,³⁰¹ “The eye of *HaShem* is towards those who fear Him,” referring to the essential and natural fear of God ingrained in the Jewish people, due to the nature of their Godly souls, as said above. For,³⁰² “The soul of man is the spirit of *HaShem*,” and,³⁰³ man is “Formed in the image of God.” This should suffice for those of understanding.

explained that the name *ELoHI*”*M*-אלהי”*M* consists of five letters, but these letters themselves form two words “*Mi*-מי-who,” which indicates concealment, and “*Eleh*-לה-these,” which indicates revelation. Thus, the first seventy-two permutations of the name *ELoHI*”*M*-אלהי”*M* which begin with one of the three letters of “*Eleh*-לה-these,” are indicative of revelation. In contrast, the final forty-eight permutations which begin with the letters “*Mi*-מי-who” are indicative of greater concealment. The external husks of evil derive their influence from the final forty-eight (ח”ט) permutations of the name *ELoHI*”*M*-אלהי”*M*, which are known as “the land of the children of *Cham*-ח-ם-48.” (See *Igrot Kodesh* of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Vol. 2, p. 177.)

²⁹⁹ Numbers 6:25

³⁰⁰ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 156a

³⁰¹ Psalms 33:18

³⁰² Proverbs 20:27

³⁰³ Genesis 1:26-27

(Through this explanation we may defend the words of the Rambam against those who decry his views regarding Divine providence. He presents the view that Divine providence only applies to man, and not to inanimate objects, vegetation, or animals. However, it must be pointed out that his intention when he refers to “man” is to one who has attained the perfected form of man in the image of God. Thus, “man” refers to the state of Adam prior to the sin of the tree of knowledge, or to the perfectly righteous³⁰⁴ men about whom it states,³⁰⁵ “The eye of *HaShem* is towards those who fear Him.”

If this is the case, however, then how will the Rambam respond to verses such as,³⁰⁶ “Your eyes are open upon all the ways of the children of man,” and,³⁰⁷ “He that fashioned all their hearts, understands all of their deeds.” These verses are clearly referring to a knowledge and understanding of the deeds of the wicked, not just the righteous. This is as stated,³⁰⁸ “Can any man hide himself in a concealed place that I shall not see him?” Thus, it is apparent that there is Divine providence even upon those who have become filled with a spirit of folly to the point that they have become literally like animals.

Therefore, this matter must be stood in accordance with what is stated in the Zohar,³⁰⁹ that there are two types of

³⁰⁴ *Tzaddikim Gmurim*

³⁰⁵ Psalms 33:18

³⁰⁶ Jeremiah 32:19

³⁰⁷ Psalms 33:15

³⁰⁸ Jeremiah 23:24

³⁰⁹ Zohar Vol. 3, 130a

Divine supervision. There is supervision for the good, for righteous individuals who are supervised with the attribute of kindness. There is also supervision for the wicked, who are supervised with the attribute of judgment, as stated regarding Sodom,³¹⁰ “I will descend now and see.” Similarly, it states,³¹¹ “He advances payment to those that hate Him, in order to destroy them.” In addition, it is known that³¹² “on the path that one wishes to proceed, there he is led.” This is true to such an extent that it states regarding king Achav,³¹³ “I will go and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all of his prophets,” specifically in order to cause him to err. This is like the proverb,³¹⁴ “If it concerns the scorners, He scorns them,” and like the teaching,³¹⁵ “One who comes to make himself impure, they [in Heaven] provide him with an opening to do so.”

Thus, we see that there is certainly Divine supervision over all the actions of mankind, and that they are all judged specifically according to their deeds. Therefore, all agree that the primary supervision is over the category of mankind, which includes the nations of the world as well. This is as stated,³¹⁶ “Shall the Judge of the entire earth not do justice?” Furthermore, this is proved to be the case by the story of Ninveh or by the verse,³¹⁷ “For the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.”

³¹⁰ Genesis 18:21

³¹¹ Deuteronomy 7:10

³¹² Talmud Bavli Makot 10b

³¹³ Kings I 22:22

³¹⁴ Proverbs 3:34

³¹⁵ Talmud Bavli Avoda Zarah 55a

³¹⁶ Genesis 18:25

³¹⁷ Genesis 15:16

In truth, however, Divine supervision extends to all creatures, including creatures that are animate, vegetative and animal. This is as stated,³¹⁸ “He gives food to all flesh,” and,³¹⁹ “He sits and sustains the entire world, from the horns of the wild oxen to the eggs of lice.” Similarly, His supervision and dominion reigns over the inanimate and plant-life, such as mountains etc. This is as stated, “I have also withheld rain from you... one portion of land was rained upon, while the portion that was not rained upon withered.”

Thus, it must be understood that, in general, there is an inner aspect of supervision and an external aspect of supervision. By way of analogy, this may be compared to a king who rules over his own home and city himself, but will delegate the remainder of his lands to his ministers. Nevertheless, no minister can act on his own authority and he can do nothing without the approval of the king. It is in this manner that Divine providence applies to the land of Israel, as it states,³²⁰ “The eyes of *HaShem* your God are always upon it.” Likewise, when the Jewish people fulfill *HaShem*’s will, then they are under the dominion of the inner aspect of Divine supervision.

However, if not, then they are given to the external aspect of Divine supervision and are placed under the dominion of the seventy arch-angels of the nations. Under such circumstances they are pressured on all sides with no advocate, neither above nor below. It is this external aspect of

³¹⁸ Psalms 136:25

³¹⁹ Talmud Bavli, Avoda Zarah 3b

³²⁰ Deuteronomy 11:12

Divine supervision that is the primary matter of the exile of the Divine Presence (*Shechinah*). This is as stated,³²¹ “To every place that the Jewish people were exiled, the Divine Presence went with them... They were exiled to Edom, and the Divine Presence with them etc.” During exile it is³²² “A time when man rules over another man, to do evil to him.” In other words, during such a time they derive their sustenance through the forty-eight final permutations of the name *Elokim*-אלהים, which are called the hind-side and externality, as we previously mentioned.)

This, then, is the meaning of the question, “where is your God?” In other words, it is referring to the aspect of the inner revelation of Godliness that radiates within the Jewish people when they are in the light and radiance of the face of the Living King. Through their sins, however, a partition of iron³²³ separates between them, so to speak. This is as stated,³²⁴ “I will surely hide My face from them in that day, for all the evil which they have wrought.” Similarly, it states,³²⁵ “I will go and return to My place, until they acknowledge their guilt and seek My face.” For, as we said before, one’s sins cause the Divine Presence to be withdrawn into concealment.

³²¹ Talmud Bavli, Megilla 29a; Sifri end of Parshat Masei

³²² Ecclesiastes 8:9

³²³ Iron-*Barzel*-ברזל-239 has the same numerical value as *Amalek*-עמלק-240 when including the word itself (*kolel*). *Amalek* is representative of the casting off of the yoke of Heaven as the core of all sin, as explained regarding the verse (Numbers 24:20) “*Amalek* is the head of the nations, but his end shall come to destruction.” See the discourse entitled “*Yafeh Sha’ah Achat*” in *Ma’amarei Admor HaEmtzae’ee, Kuntreisim*.

³²⁴ Deuteronomy 31:18

³²⁵ Hosea 5:15

However, by means of the tears that one sheds each midnight over this question, “Where is your God,” he restores the kingdom of Heaven and causes it to be drawn forth in an inner essential manner to the Jewish people. Through these tears, he rectifies all blemishes that were caused by their sins, all of which stem from casting off the yoke of Heaven. (This is similar to how the Jewish people cried to *HaShem* with a great voice³²⁶ during the second temple, and restored the crown of *HaShem* to its former glory.³²⁷) This is because of the fact that when one cries with tears, these tears flow forth from the very depth of the heart, from the pain and anguish of the soul in its innermost essence, which is the aspect of the *Yechidah*.

Thus, he cries and groans over all of his iniquity, and over the withdrawal of Godliness that he has caused by casting off the yoke of Heaven. He is thus pained to his core over having left *HaShem* and having cast off His rule from upon him. He is embittered to the point that he is literally filled with bitterness, as in the verse,³²⁸ “He has filled me with bitterness.” However, he is filled with this bitterness in the same manner and to the same extent as he was once filled with pleasure. For this terminology of “*hisbi’ani*-he has sated me-*השבני*” is usually reserved for pleasure. Thus, the essential pain that he experiences is the diametric opposite of the essential pleasure. In other words, there is an aspect of “being filled” wherein the entire essence of his soul is filled with this

³²⁶ Nehemia 9:4

³²⁷ Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 64a

³²⁸ Lamentations 3:15

bitterness. This is because the matter touches him so completely, to the very core of his soul.

As known, pleasure and pain are two scales of equal balance. That is, to the exact extent that one derives great pleasure from something, one will derive commensurate pain from the absence of that pleasure, literally. They are exactly equal to one another, no more and no less. It is therefore understood that, to the exact degree that he is pained and embittered over the withdrawal of the light of Godliness during the time of exile, it is to that same extent that he would take pleasure in receiving the light of the countenance of the Living King during the time of the redemption and the rebuilding of the Holy Temple. They are exactly equal to one another with a single measure. This will suffice for those of understanding.

Chapter Ten

We may now understand the meaning of the verse,³²⁹ “My tears were as bread for me, day and night.” On a simple level, it is understood that because of his great bitterness, his tears are compared to bread in the sense that they cause his soul to be filled, as we said above. (It is well known that, even naturally, when one is in mourning and pained over the absence of a love-one, such as a son for his father or a father for his son, the tears that he sheds are good for him. His tears act as a catharsis, bringing out the pain that is hidden in the depth of his soul, and his tears satisfy him like one who is sated with bread. Moreover, we observe that one who distracts him or inhibits his tears will actually cause him more pain, to the point that he may instead expire or faint due to his overwhelming emotional arousal. In contrast, if he cries and sheds tears with all of his heart, he will be satisfied like one who has sated himself with bread.)

It is to be understood that the same is true on a spiritual level. In other words, when he is pained and embittered in his soul over the absence and withdrawal of Godly light, to the point that this touches him at the very core and essence of his *Yechidah*, then it is certain that the tears that he sheds also come from the very depths of his heart. That is, his tears are from the very same essential source as his Godly pleasure, and therefore, the tears draw forth the essence of his soul to revive

³²⁹ Psalms 42:4

him. For, as we previously explained, the pleasure and pain are exactly commensurate to one another. It is for this reason that his tears of embitterment literally satisfy his soul, like one who is sated by the consumption of bread. In other words, it is to the same extent that he will be sated by the “bread of pleasure” (*Lechem Panag*³³⁰ of the world to come). This refers to how he will be filled with delight in Godliness, which literally restores life to his soul.

This, then, is the meaning of the verse,³³¹ “My tears were as bread for me,” sustaining and filling the heart and restoring the soul. Thus, we find that the vitality and sustainment of the Godly soul is specifically because of his embittered tears over his distance from Godliness, and that these two aspects are literally in equal balance. This being the case, the tears that he sheds over the absence of Godliness in his soul, is exactly the same thing as the pleasure he would have were Godliness to be revealed in his soul. In other words, they are one and the same matter, for it is from the depth of his pain that we may recognize the true strength and depth of his pleasure in Godliness in the essence of his soul. It is for this very reason that he is pained to such tears, and therefore, each and every tear is an indication of his essential bond to Godliness. His tears therefore repair all of the blemishes and deficiencies that he caused by casting off the yoke of Heaven, which is the source of all sin and iniquity. This will suffice for those of understanding.

³³⁰ Zohar Bereishit 16b

³³¹ Psalms 42:4

(This matter is further corroborated by what is explained elsewhere, in the writings of the Kabbalists. They wrote that if one does not shed tears during the ten days of repentance, it is an indication that his soul is incomplete. A “complete” soul refers to the aspect of the essential *Yechidah* of the soul, which is complete. This person, however, does not shed tears even when the “torch” is drawn close to the “spark,” such as during the ten days of repentance about which it states,³³² “Seek *HaShem* when He is to be found; call upon Him when He is near.” In other words, even during such times that his essential root is more recognizable and accessible, he does not cry out with any essential embitterment in his soul. This is only because his soul is incomplete, as above. This will suffice for the understanding.)

It is for the above reasons that the midnight prayer of *Tikkun Chatzot* was established, the primary aspect being the tears that one sheds over having cast off the yoke of Heaven. For it is the casting off of the yoke of Heaven that causes the exile of the Divine Presence (*Shechinah*) amongst the seventy arch-angels of the seventy nations, who know their Master and rebel against Him. This causes the³³³ “Time when man rules over another man, to do evil to him,” as we explained above.

Now, whoever does not shed tears over the exile of the Divine Presence during the midnight prayer of *Tikkun Chatzot*, can be certain that his soul is incomplete. For, it is certain that his soul is not filled with any bitterness whatsoever. This is

³³² Isaiah 55:6

³³³ Ecclesiastes 8:9

only because he has already cast off the yoke of Heaven, and he has “blessed himself in his heart, saying ‘Peace will be with me, though I walk in the way my heart sees fit.’”³³⁴ Allegorically, this may be compared to a servant who rebels against his master, displaying utter insolence before his master, as if he is not his master at all. In the eyes of the master, the brazen display of insolence is far worse than any particular command of the master that the servant violated or did not fulfill. For, it is his insolence which is at the core of his rebelliousness, and is what causes him to stray from the will of his master. Even if he is still subjugated somewhat, his brazen insolence demonstrates that his soul is prepared to cast off his master’s yoke completely, at any given moment.

This is as previously explained at length in regard to the verse,³³⁵ “The foolish afflict themselves on account of their iniquities.” That is, the iniquity refers to their rebelliousness, which is the source of all the particular manifestations of evil. Therefore, although it is quite possible that he repents and regrets his sins, and he cries and afflicts himself with bitterness in his soul, nevertheless, he has not yet purified the root of the impurity in his soul, which is the casting off of the yoke of Heaven. This is as stated above, that “the foolish afflict themselves on account of their iniquities,” but they never repair or repent of the root cause, which is the casting off of the yoke of Heaven. Thus, they remain fools. This should suffice for the understanding.

³³⁴ Deuteronomy 29:18

³³⁵ Psalms 107:17

Now, we may also explain the verse,³³⁶ “My tears were as bread for me, day and night,” in a different and more positive manner. That is, the “bread” can be understood to be referring to the “bread of Torah,” with which he involves himself “day and night.” Similarly, the terms “day and night” also refer to the *Shma* recital of the morning and evening.

This matter may be better understood in light of the explanations of the verse,³³⁷ “This is my comfort in my affliction; Your word has enlivened me.” The basic explanation is that the “affliction” refers to the pain and suffering, and the bitterness of his soul over his impoverished state. For, as is known,³³⁸ there is no one more impoverished than one who is poor in knowledge of *HaShem*, and one who does not know or recognize his Creator. He lacks knowledge and awareness of Godliness because his soul is literally completely empty of all Godly light. He is therefore compared to an actual pauper whose soul is completely empty of all physical vitality, to the point that³³⁹ “A pauper is considered like one who is dead,” quite literally. Nevertheless, the verse continues and explains that the comfort for this poverty is, “Your word has enlivened me.” This refers to the word of *HaShem* which is the “Torah of Light.”³⁴⁰ The words of Torah will enliven his soul and enlighten him with Godly vitality, quite literally.

³³⁶ Psalms 42:4

³³⁷ Psalms 119:50

³³⁸ Talmud Bavli, Nedarim 41a

³³⁹ Talmud Bavli, Nedarim 64b

³⁴⁰ Proverbs 6:23

Now, at first glance, this is quite a wondrous matter! If he is such a pauper, utterly lacking in knowledge and awareness of his Creator, then how is he to be enlivened with Godly light in the light of Torah? For, as known, the Torah and the Holy One blessed be He are one,³⁴¹ and similarly, we already explained that,³⁴² “If there is no fear there is no wisdom etc.”

Rather, the explanation of the matter is as stated in the Zohar,³⁴³ that there are three levels that are tied to one another. The Jewish people are tied to the Torah and the Torah is tied to the Holy One, blessed be He. This refers to the six-hundred-thousand root souls of the Jewish people, each of whom is bound to the six-hundred-thousand letters of the written Torah. For the Torah has two aspects, the concealed and the revealed. Thus, it is certainly this way with the sparks of each Godly soul, each of which is rooted above in its Divine source which is called “*Mazla*”³⁴⁴ (which is the aspect of the *Yechidah*). This refers to the essential bond of the soul to its letter in the supernal Torah, which is the concealed aspect of the Torah. The revealed letters of the Torah, however, are like the sparks that manifests within the body to enliven it with Godly light and illumination, literally. This is because the Torah is bound to the Holy One, blessed be He, who also acts in a concealed and revealed manner (as explained elsewhere at length).

³⁴¹ Zohar Acharei 73a; Vayishlach 60; Emor 93

³⁴² Mishnah Avot 3:17

³⁴³ Zohar Acharei 73a

³⁴⁴ Shaar HaYichud, Ch. 25

Nevertheless, it is understood from this that every single offshoot of each and every Jewish soul, including even the smallest spark of a Jewish soul in every generation, is rooted in the six-hundred thousand root souls, each of which is rooted in a letter of the Torah. In other words, there is a letter of the essential Torah that illuminates that soul with a revelation of Godly light and vitality, literally. It is in this regard that the verse states,³⁴⁵ “Your word has enlivened me.” That is, each and every particular soul is enlivened according to the supernal root of his particular soul in the Torah, which is bound with the Holy One blessed be He. For they are all one and these three bonds are tied in one knot, and never undergo any changes whatsoever. This will suffice for the understanding.

With this in mind, we may answer the question we posed in regard to the aforementioned verse, “This is my comfort in my affliction; Your word has enlivened me.” It is understood that every particular soul can potentially become impoverished of Godly knowledge and awareness. This happens when the form of man (*Tzelem Adam*) departs from his soul on account of his sins, the root of which is his casting off of the yoke of Heaven. When this occurs, he is considered to be like an animal, since a spirit of folly enters him and he behaves like an animal. For his soul becomes empty of all Divine light, because he has cast off the yoke of Heaven from upon himself and has gone in the ways of his heart.

³⁴⁵ Psalms 119:50

On occasion, however, he will cry with bitterness in his soul over having left *HaShem* his God, to the point that he will feel extremely impoverished and embittered, as we said above. In this case, he certainly awakens the root of his soul above, and arouses the abundant supernal mercies which transcend even *Chochmah*-wisdom. (For that is the true source from whence all souls are hewn, as is explained elsewhere regarding the verse,³⁴⁶ “For You are our father,” as known.) In doing so, he awakens merciful thoughts upon his soul, so that his spark should not be banished and cast into the lowest abyss. Thus, the light of the supernal Torah is drawn forth upon the root of his soul, until it descends to manifest within the revealed letter of the Torah to which his soul is bound. Thereby, the spark of his soul is enlivened through the Torah that he learns, which is the word of *HaShem* which is called “Your word” in the aforementioned verse.

All this is possible because these three bonds are a single knot, as we mentioned above. Therefore, it is possible for a single letter of Torah to enliven his soul at the very root and source of it (in the light of *Abba* [*Chochmah*-wisdom] of the world of *Atzilut*). This is so, even though the spark that is manifest within the body has already become impure with the sin of casting off the yoke of Heaven, which causes blemish in the root of the soul itself, as we explained above. However, this is only accomplished by means of drawing forth the abundant supernal mercies, that transcend reason and wisdom, specifically. In other words, one who is impoverished of

³⁴⁶ Isaiah 63:16

knowledge (*Da'at*), and is below the aspect of Godly awareness in *Da'at* must reach higher than *Da'at*-knowledge. This is accomplished through his tears, which come from higher than *Da'at*-knowledge, and come from the very depths of his heart which touches the very essence of his soul itself, literally.

It is for this reason that we observe that, from even a minor amount of Torah study, such as a single chapter or one Mishnah, a person can be protected from extraneous thoughts and the spirit of folly throughout the entire day. This can be achieved even from the single verse of the *Shma* recital, which is also considered Torah study. This is because “Your word enlivens me” at the very root of the soul itself, which encompasses this spark and guards it throughout the day. This is as stated,³⁴⁷ “When you lay down it shall watch over you, and when you wake it shall talk with you.” Likewise, it is for this reason that the Mitzva-commandment of Torah study applies in every place and at all times, as stated,³⁴⁸ “And you shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk on the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.” This generally refers to the morning and evening *Shma* recital, through which one fulfills their obligation of Torah study according to the opinion of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, as is known.

This then, is the meaning of the verse,³⁴⁹ “My tears were as bread for me, day and night.” That is, through the tears that

³⁴⁷ Proverbs 6:22

³⁴⁸ Deuteronomy 6:7

³⁴⁹ Psalms 42:4

one sheds during the midnight prayer over having left *HaShem*, one arouses abundant mercy upon his soul, so that his soul will become enlivened with the bread of Torah. For the revealed letters of the Torah are called bread, which enlighten and enliven the Godly soul much like physical food enlivens the physical soul. This is as stated,³⁵⁰ “Your Torah is in my innards,” like bread which sustains and nourishes a person, binding his soul with his body. In the same manner, Torah study binds the light of Godliness with the Godly soul as it is within the body, nourishing and restoring the soul.

Now, the aspect of the encompassing lights that protect the soul above, comes from the root of the letters of the Torah, as they are above, as we mentioned earlier. These inner letters illuminate the root of his soul itself, causing it to encompass and illuminate the soul below. However, the revealed physical letters of the Torah are compared to bread, as it states,³⁵¹ “Go and eat My bread,” referring to Torah.

Thus, when his impoverished soul consumes this bread of Torah, it becomes his mainstay and staple. It sustains and enlivens him, so that he does not die of spiritual death, and it protects him from plummeting to the lowest abyss. This is as stated, “Your word has enlivened me,” in literally the same manner as a pauper is sustained by a small portion of bread that he is given. This is generally accomplished through the recital of *Shma* each morning and evening, even though the commandment of Torah study truly applies throughout the

³⁵⁰ Psalms 40:9

³⁵¹ Proverbs 9:5

entire day, as we said before. Thus, the verse,³⁵² “My tears were as bread for me, day and night,” refers to the midnight prayer of *Tikkun Chatzot*. It is specifically these tears that subsequently sustain him like bread in the morning and evening *Shma* recital, and in his daily Torah study, about which it states,³⁵³ “This book of Torah shall not depart from your mouth, and you shall toil in it day and night.” This will suffice for the understanding.

Now, in truth, it is impossible to say that this is the simple explanation of the verse “My tears were as bread for me, day and night.” For, the tears in this verse arise from the previous question, “Where is your God?” It is from this lack of Godliness that his tears constantly flow, filling his soul with bitterness as one is filled by bread, as we previously explained. In other words, in this verse, the “bread” does not refer to the bread of Torah which enlivens and rejuvenates his soul, for that is the very opposite of bitterness. That is, in regard to Torah study it states,³⁵⁴ “This is my comfort in my affliction, Your word has enlivened me.” In other words, Torah study is the very opposite of bitterness, as it overturns pain and affliction into joy, as we explained above. Similarly, it states,³⁵⁵ “The precepts of *HaShem* are upright, rejoicing the heart,” like we recite in the blessings of the *Shma*,³⁵⁶ “And we rejoice in the words of Your Torah.”

³⁵² Psalms 42:4

³⁵³ Joshua 1:8

³⁵⁴ Psalms 119:50

³⁵⁵ Psalms 19:9

³⁵⁶ Blessings of Kriyat Shma

Rather, we must explain this verse in the manner that we previously explained. That is, it is the tears of bitterness which fill and sustain his soul like one who is filled with bread. This is in place of being filled with the bread of Torah. For the bread of Torah is the Godly delight in the wisdom of the Torah which restores and rejuvenates the soul with joy. In contrast, the bread of his tears of bitterness are caused by his great pain over the lack of Godly light and illumination in his soul.

However, although these two aspects are diametric opposites, they are exactly commensurate to one another. In other words, his delight in the Godly illumination of the bread of Torah is exactly commensurate to the bread of tears over his lack of Godly illumination. They are exactly proportional to each other, as we previously explained. Therefore, his diligence in Torah study will be exactly commensurate to his tears, as it states,³⁵⁷ “The reward is according to the pain.”

Moreover, the Sages stated that³⁵⁸ “The gates of tears are never locked.” He may therefore always revive his miserable soul and comfort it from its affliction, as stated,³⁵⁹ “This is my comfort in my affliction, Your word has enlivened me.” It is indeed quite apparent that one’s toil in Torah study does not come about due to the delight of his soul in prayer, but from the very opposite. That is, it is his embittered spirit and his impoverished knowledge which propel him in his study. Moreover, it is the void in his soul that acts as an empty vessel

³⁵⁷ Mishnah Avot 5:23

³⁵⁸ Talmud Bavli, Bava Metziah 59a

³⁵⁹ Psalms 119:50

to contain an abundance of the teachings of the eternal tree of life, found in the Torah.

In contrast, one who delights and rejoices in the service of the heart and mind in prayer, fills his soul with this delight itself, and is thereby caused to diminish his Torah study. The opposite is also true, that³⁶⁰ “Anyone who says he has nothing but Torah, he does not even have Torah.” In other words, one cannot fill their soul with Torah alone, for it is prayer and repentance with the bitterness of the soul that must precede Torah study. This prepares his soul to be an empty and impoverished vessel, and to contain the Godly light of Torah. That is, he must be like the pauper who earns his bread with the sweat and the toil of his soul, and it is the only thing that comforts him. For, he is an impoverished pauper, and does not aggrandize himself whatsoever.

It is regarding this that it states,³⁶¹ “Happy is the man that has not walked in the council of the wicked... but his desire is in the Torah of *HaShem*.” In other words, he desires Torah constantly, like an impoverished person who desires bread solely to sustain his soul. Thus, the verse continues, “He toils in His Torah day and night,” for he has no other source of vitality, and his soul is completely empty because of his lowliness. He sheds tears over casting off the yoke of Heaven, and as such, he automatically “Does not walk in the council of the wicked, does not stand in the way of sinners, and does not sit in the seat of the scornful.” Rather, “His desire is in the

³⁶⁰ Talmud Bavli Yevamot 109b

³⁶¹ Psalms 1:1

Torah of *HaShem*,” for the two aspects are interdependent and intertwined, for the reasons explained above. With the above we have answered the aforementioned question on this verse “his desire is in the Torah of *HaShem*.” This should suffice for the understanding.

Chapter Eleven

After having provided all of the explanations above, we may now understand the root of the matter of repentance (*Teshuvah*) which touches the very essence of the soul, and draws it forth. (This is called his “essential Jewishness, as known.) His essence is thus drawn forth until his soul is filled with bitterness, as explained above.

These tears are drawn forth specifically due to two things. The first is the matter of his having cast off the yoke of Heaven to the point that the Godly light is withdrawn from his soul. Because of this, he is completely distant from all service of the heart and the act of repentance. This is because,³⁶² “They do not afford him the opportunity to repent.” The second reason is over his evil actions themselves, in that he has transgressed and caused blemish in actuality. He constantly recalls this in his heart, as it states,³⁶³ “For I know my transgressions and my sin is constantly before me.” Immediately upon his recollection of the particular things that the evil inclination in his heart has done, he will be brought to tears of bitterness in his soul, to the point that it touches the very essence of his soul. (This is due to the essential Jewishness, which is the aspect of the *Yechidah* of his soul. It is this essence which is the root source from which every Jew

³⁶² Mishnah Yomah 8:9

³⁶³ Psalms 51:5

will literally give up his very life for the sanctification of *HaShem*'s name, as we previously explained.)

(It is specifically by being brought to tears that he affects a complete rectification of his eyes which see and his heart which lusts. This is as stated,³⁶⁴ “Do not stray after your heart and after your eyes.” It is explained that,³⁶⁵ “The eyes and the heart are the two intermediaries of sin.” That is, the eye is the intermediary by which he draws forth his lusts. Therefore, it is by means of the tears he sheds with his eyes that he rectifies the eyes. For it is through his tears that he overturns the pleasure of his power of sight into abject agony, to the point of tears. This is as stated in various works of *Mussar*, that it is the tears that rectify blemishes to the light of the power of sight. Likewise, according to the works of *Kabbalah*, tears generally come from the depths of the agony of the soul to the point that the mind cannot contain the pain, and his emotion thus overflows into tears. Thus, tears occur specifically when the core of one's heart has been touched, and it is for this reason that tears are able to rectify the core of the heart which was drawn to sin due to the evil lusts of the eyes. For they are one and the same matter and they are exactly commensurate to each other. This is as explained above in regard to the tears of the ten days of repentance. That is,³⁶⁶ “The gates of tears are never locked,” and it is by means of tears that he draws forth the abundant supernal mercies from the Essence of *HaShem* who forgives him for all his sins and iniquity.)

³⁶⁴ Numbers 15:39

³⁶⁵ Talmud Yerushalmi, Brachot 1:5

³⁶⁶ Talmud Bavli, Bava Metziah 59a

Regarding this it is stated,³⁶⁷ “They shall come with weeping, and with supplications,” by means of repentance with embittered souls. In the Zohar this is called,³⁶⁸ “The lower waters that cry, ‘We desire to be before the Holy King.’” By means of these tears there is an arousal of the abundant supernal mercies, as stated,³⁶⁹ “With great compassion I shall gather you.” Similarly, it states that when³⁷⁰ “He returns to *HaShem*, He will have compassion upon him.” This is comparable to the heartfelt compassion of a father towards his sons who returns from being scattered and astray. In the same manner,³⁷¹ “He gathers the dispersed of Israel,” after which the next verse continues, “He heals the broken hearted.” In other words, when He reveals His closeness to the Jewish people, the anguish and sadness over the exile will be replaced with rejoicing.

This is analogous to sons who see their father after having been distant for an extended period. When they finally see their father, they will shed tears of joy and their father will comfort them and rejoice along with them. These are called tears of joy, as mentioned above. This is what is meant by the verse “They shall come with weeping,” when they return to their Father in Heaven, to behold the face of the Living God. This is as stated,³⁷² “Return *HaShem*, O’ how long... gladden us commensurate to the days that we were afflicted.” When

³⁶⁷ Jeremiah 31:8

³⁶⁸ Tikkunei Zohar 19b

³⁶⁹ Isaiah 54:7

³⁷⁰ Isaiah 55:7

³⁷¹ Psalms 147:2-3

³⁷² Psalms 90:13

the Father thus returns to the son, this is what is called the upper repentance (*Teshuvah Ila'ah*). However, it was first preceded by the lower repentance (*Teshuvah Tata'ah*) and the return of the son towards his father in the essential depth of his heart and soul, as explained before.

(This is the meaning of the verse,³⁷³ “You turn man to pulp, and you say ‘Return, sons of man.’” The word “You turn-*Tashev*-תשב” shares the same letters as “*Shabbat*-שבת.” This is because every Shabbat there is a radiance from the “Day which is all Shabbat,” which refers to the world to come. In other words, this generally refers to the radiance of the upper repentance, mentioned above. However, it is first preceded by the word “You turn-*Tashev*-תשב man to pulp” which refers to the broken-heartedness of the aforementioned lower repentance. It is in regards to the broken-heartedness of the lower repentance that the continuation of the Psalm is to be understood. In other words, it is referring to the great descent of the lofty soul into the lowly physical body, where it is exposed to the tree of knowledge of good and evil. For this physical world is from the aspect of the external husks of *Kelipat Nogah* which is mostly evil, consisting of harsh judgments etc. This is as the Psalm continues, “You have set our iniquities before Yourself... For all our days have passed by because of Your fury... Who knows the power of your anger... Return *HaShem*, until when? Relent concerning Your servant... Gladden us according to the days You afflicted us, the years when we saw evil...” It concludes with the words,

³⁷³ Psalms 90:3

“May Your works be visible to Your servants, and Your majesty upon their children.” This will occur after the rectification of the sin of the tree of knowledge, after which there will be a revelation of the abundant goodness that is currently hidden.)

However, these tears of joy when He returns and has compassion upon us, and comforts us, and gladdens us, are seemingly the very opposite of the tears over the great distance from Godly illumination. For those tears are tears of embitterment, as we previously explained regarding the verse,³⁷⁴ “My tears were as bread for me, day and night, when they say to me all day long ‘Where is your God?’” However, this is not the case when there is a revelation and illumination of Godly light amongst the Jewish people. This is as we supplicate,³⁷⁵ “Reveal the glory of Your kingship upon us soon, appear and be uplifted over us before the eyes of all living things. Bring near our scattered people from among the nations, and gather our dispersed from the ends of the earth. Bring us to Tziyon, Your city, with joyous song, to Yerushalayim, the House of Your Sanctuary, with everlasting joy.” When this occurs, there is a tremendous joy in the spark of every Jewish soul, to the point that he weeps with elation.

Now, these tears include two aspects. The first aspect comes from the fact that his essence was so distant up until this point. The second aspect is that he now is close and beholds the radiance of the face of the Living King. This is as

³⁷⁴ Psalms 42:4

³⁷⁵ Yom Kippur Musaf Liturgy

stated,³⁷⁶ “And on that day he shall say, ‘Behold, this is our God for whom we have waited... we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.’” However, the true penitent will have a much greater joy in *HaShem*, even though his joy is mixed with tears. On the contrary, it is because of his tears that the joy in his soul is all the greater, to the point that it cannot be contained in the vessel of his mind and heart, and it is for this reason that he cries. In other words, his mind and heart are bursting with joy to the point that he cannot contain himself. This is similar to the joy of Yosef when he saw his brother Benyamin.³⁷⁷

(It is regarding this distinction that the verse states,³⁷⁸ “The humble shall increase their joy in *HaShem*.” This refers to the perfectly righteous, who fulfill the Torah and Mitzvot perfectly. They will certainly rejoice in *HaShem*, and their lot is their pure service of *HaShem* in Torah and Mitzvot. However, the continuation of the verse states, “The impoverished among men shall exult in the Holy One of Israel.” This refers to the truly penitent, whose souls are completely impoverished and empty of Godly vitality. They are like paupers whose souls are empty and filled only with bitterness over their total lack of all Godly light, as we explained above. However, it is specifically they who will “Exult in the Holy One of Israel” to a much greater extent, and with a much greater revelation. This is because the entire depth and essence of their souls was drawn forth in their bitter

³⁷⁶ Isaiah 25:9

³⁷⁷ Genesis 45:1-2

³⁷⁸ Isaiah 29:19

tears. Because of this, they will rejoice to a much greater extent, to the point that they cannot contain it, and they will shed tears of joy because of their overpowering elation. We therefore find that the tears of joy are exactly commensurate to the tears of bitterness, and that they are interdependent. In other words, to the exact extent that he wept with tears of bitterness over the question ‘Where is your God?’ to that same extent he will rejoice boundlessly when *HaShem* is revealed to him, in a manner that his heart cannot contain it. This will suffice for the understanding.

With all of the above we have understood the matter of the tears and joy that come as one, and how when it comes to repentance (*Teshuvah*) these two opposite aspects come together as one, as previously discussed. For, in fact, they are not truly opposites at all, but are one and the same. The fact that he rejoices when he returns to *HaShem*, which is the primary matter of *Teshuvah*, as we explained above, is specifically according to the pain and consternation he first experienced over his abundant transgressions, the most primary of which was the sin of casting off the yoke of Heaven. In other words, the joy that he experiences in rejoicing in *HaShem* when he returns to Him and seeks Him with all of his heart, is precisely commensurate to the fact that he cries to *HaShem* out of the constraints,³⁷⁹ from the depth of his heart. This is like the verse,³⁸⁰ “From the depths I have called out to *HaShem*,” referring to the very depths of the

³⁷⁹ Psalms 118:5

³⁸⁰ Psalms 130:1

depth of the heart, which touches the very core of his Jewishness. It is from that essential depth that he resolves to turn from evil and do good, and it is like a nature at the core of his soul, to such an extent that he will do so with utter self-sacrifice. For, as known, this essential nature of self-sacrifice amongst the Jewish people has been tested in every generation, as we previously explained.

Thus, it is certain that after he cries out to *HaShem* from the very depths of his heart, he immediately draws the gates of abundant mercies upon his soul. For, as we previously mentioned, the gates of tears are never locked whatsoever. Through this, he will come to rejoice in *HaShem* with tremendous elation, when *HaShem* returns to him. Primarily, he rejoices over having left the darkness and certain death of the evil husks (*Kelipot*), and having come to the great light of Godliness. Because he has gone from certain death to life, the vessel of his mind and heart will not be able to contain his joy, and it is for this reason that he will shed tears of joy, as we explained. Therefore, these two opposites are literally one thing, and they are interdependent and intertwined. It is in this regard that the verse stated that,³⁸¹ “The impoverished among men shall exult in the Holy One of Israel.” That is, *HaShem* literally saves them from death and gives them life, which are one and the same thing, and not two opposites at all.)

(We find this same matter in Psalm 51 which first states,³⁸² “Wash me thoroughly of my iniquity and cleanse me from my

³⁸¹ Isaiah 29:19

³⁸² Psalms 51:4

sin,” and then continues,³⁸³ “Make me hear joy and gladness, that the bones that You have crushed may rejoice... Create a clean heart in me... Restore unto me the joy of Your salvation...” It concludes,³⁸⁴ “The sacrifices of God are the broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart, God will not despise.” All of this demonstrates that it is the contrite and broken-heart wherein one is essentially pained over their sins, which is what brings a true penitent to the essential gladness and joy. This will suffice for the understanding.)

From all of the above we may also understand the greatness of the lower repentance (*Teshuvah Tata’a*), wherein it is he who awakens himself to repentance in action. This is much greater than the upper repentance (*Teshuvah Ila’ah*) wherein he is awakened from Above. Allegorically, this is like the analogy of the long rope that we previously explained. Nonetheless, it does state,³⁸⁵ “Return us to You, *HaShem*, and we shall return,” which refers to the true repentance of the upper repentance (*Teshuvah Ila’a*) which precedes the lower repentance (*Teshuvah Tata’a*). This too is certainly true, as it refers to the future to come, in which the upper repentance will precede the lower repentance. For regarding the future to come it first states “Return us” and only afterwards “we shall return.” Similarly, regarding the future to come it first states,³⁸⁶ “He shall return the hearts of the fathers to the children,” and

³⁸³ Psalms 51:10-12

³⁸⁴ Psalm 51:19

³⁸⁵ Lamentations 5:21

³⁸⁶ Malachi 3:24

only afterwards, “And the hearts of the children to their fathers.”

Currently, however, the lower repentance must precede the upper repentance. This is as stated,³⁸⁷ “If the Jewish people do not repent, they will not be redeemed,” as known. The reason for this is understood from all of the above regarding the general essential matter of repentance. For as we previously explained with the analogy of the torch, when it is distant then the spark must ascend on its own to become included in the torch. In contrast, when it is in close proximity, then the spark is drawn to torch because of the strength of the torch. In the same manner, during the time of exile the Holy One, blessed be He, withdraws above and He is at a distance, so to speak. This is as stated,³⁸⁸ “I shall surely hide My face on that day.” During such a time, the holy sparks of the Divine Presence (that is, the souls of the Jewish people) are in a state of exile and great distance from the Essential Luminary. Therefore, their ascent must be of their own accord, on their own volition. This is as explained above regarding the awakening to repentance, that each and every Jew must awaken themselves at the very core and essence of their Jewishness, in action specifically. Each person must awaken the very root of their soul and rectify the withdrawal of Godly illumination which is caused by the casting off of the yoke of Heaven, as previously explained at length.

³⁸⁷ Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 97b

³⁸⁸ Deuteronomy 31:18

It is through this, specifically, that the Essential Luminary will be drawn close and *HaShem* will return to them from His inner essence. When this occurs, then He will transform the groans of bitterness in their souls to tremendous rejoicing, as there will be a drawing forth of His abundant mercies, as explained above. This return is called the upper repentance of the verse,³⁸⁹ “He shall return the hearts of the fathers to the sons.” However, this will occur in the future to come, when there is a revelation of the Glory of *HaShem* below, upon the sparks and souls of Israel, in a manner of great closeness. The Jewish people will then cleave to *HaShem* and adhere to Him with an unbreakable eternal bond. This is as stated,³⁹⁰ “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My spirit within you and I will make it so that you will follow My decrees and guard My ordinances and fulfill them etc.” At that time the order will be reversed, as it first it states, “Return us,” referring to the closeness of the Luminary and the Essence of The Infinite Light of *HaShem*, blessed be He. Only afterwards does the verse state “We shall return,” with a complete and true eternal repentance, with a total adhesion of the sparks to the torch, in a manner of closeness.

(Nevertheless, He is also close during the ten days of repentance, about which it states,³⁹¹ “Seek *HaShem* when He is to be found, call Him while He is near.” The same is true of

³⁸⁹ Malachi 3:24

³⁹⁰ Ezekiel 36:26-27

³⁹¹ Isaiah 55:6

each and every Shabbat, as we previously mentioned. Moreover, this is even true on a daily basis, as stated,³⁹² “Every day a Heavenly voice calls out and says, ‘Return O’ wayward sons.’”)

We thus find that both of these aspects are true. That is, the lower repentance must precede the upper repentance during the time of exile. During the time of exile, the primary effort must be from below to above, and the redemption itself is dependent upon the repentance of the Jewish people. This is as stated,³⁹³ “If the Jewish people repent, they will immediately be redeemed,” for this repentance affects that,³⁹⁴ “He will return to us and have compassion upon us.” He will then,³⁹⁵ “Make us glad, commensurate to the days of our affliction,” until,³⁹⁶ “The graciousness of The Lord our God will be upon us,” which will occur in the future to come. For at that time the upper repentance will come first. *HaShem* will return us to Him from above to below and with great closeness of the Luminary. This is as stated regarding the future to come,³⁹⁷ “Your Teacher shall not hide Himself anymore, but your eyes shall behold your Teacher,” and similarly,³⁹⁸ “On that day it will be said, ‘Behold, this is our God!’” Likewise, it states,³⁹⁹ “After two days He will revive us, on the third day He will lift us up, that we may live in His presence,” with

³⁹² Midrash Eicha Rabba 25; Mishnah Avot 6:2

³⁹³ Midrash Rabba, Shir HaShirim Ch. 5; Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 97b

³⁹⁴ Micah 7:19

³⁹⁵ Psalms 90:15

³⁹⁶ Psalms 90:17

³⁹⁷ Isaiah 30:20

³⁹⁸ Isaiah 25:9

³⁹⁹ Hosea 6:2

eternal life, for “His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom.”⁴⁰⁰
This will suffice for the understanding.

It is therefore understood that everything that will come about from the upper repentance in the future, comes about solely due to the lower repentance of the Jewish people from the aspect of their essential bond. (The same is true of the aspect of the daily radiance of the upper repentance in the aforementioned Heavenly voice.) It is therefore the lower repentance of exile which brings about the,⁴⁰¹ “Return the hearts of the fathers to the sons” which will occur in the future to come. It is thus understood that it is the lower end of the rope of “Yaakov, who is the rope of His inheritance”⁴⁰² which will cause an awakening of the upper end of the rope, and awaken the upper return and repentance.”

The reason that the lower repentance must precede the upper return, is due to an oath. That is, there is an oath that has been taken that there will not be an arousal Above, except if it is first preceded by an arousal by the Jewish people below. This is as stated,⁴⁰³ “I have made you swear, ‘O daughter of Jerusalem,’” referring to the Jewish people, “if you waken” from below, “and awaken” from above, “until it is desirable,” which refers to the arousal of the essential and natural great love and desire for *HaShem* that every Jew possesses. That is, they must awaken until they desire *HaShem* of their own volition. If they do not awaken thus, then the verse is

⁴⁰⁰ Daniel 3:33

⁴⁰¹ Malachi 3:24

⁴⁰² Deuteronomy 32:9

⁴⁰³ Song of Songs 3:5

understood negatively that, “If you do not awaken yourselves from below on your own, then there will not be an awakening from Above.” The reason for this, is because⁴⁰⁴ this is what arose in His supernal essential will.

(In truth, there is alternative understanding of this oath. That is, it is the Jewish people who make this oath, that they will not awaken the great love from below to Above until such time that it is desirable before Him. That is, the Jewish people desire the future to come, about which it states, “He will return the hearts of the fathers to the sons,” from Above to below. Similarly, it states that⁴⁰⁵ every midnight *HaShem* “Roars like a lion because of His fold.”⁴⁰⁶ For He too “Sheds two tears into the great ocean”⁴⁰⁷ when He recalls His great essential love of the Jewish people. However, both of these explanations are true. For, when it comes to the essential love there is no difference between the love of the son to the father or the father to the son, as we explained before.)

Nevertheless, it is understood from all of the above that the lower repentance of the Jewish people comes first. This being the case, the explanation of the words “Until it is desirable” refers both to the desire of the Father for the son and the desire of the son for the Father, as one. Regarding this it states,⁴⁰⁸ “In its time I shall hasten it,” – in its time, specifically. For,⁴⁰⁹ “There is a time for every desire,” and, in

⁴⁰⁴ Talmud Bavli Menachot 29b

⁴⁰⁵ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 3a

⁴⁰⁶ Jeremiah 25:30

⁴⁰⁷ Zohar Vol. 1, 26b

⁴⁰⁸ Isaiah 60:22

⁴⁰⁹ Ecclesiastes 3:17

the future to come “You will be a desirable land,”⁴¹⁰ about whom it states,⁴¹¹ “You shall be called ‘My desire is in her,’ for *HaShem* delights in you.” Moreover, it is known that⁴¹² “The merit of our forefathers is eternal and unceasing.” This is as stated,⁴¹³ “Know, therefore, that *HaShem* your God, He is God; the faithful God, who keeps the covenant... and *HaShem* your God shall keep His covenant with you and the kindness that He swore to your forefathers.” Similarly, it states,⁴¹⁴ “That He has sworn to our fathers from the days of old.” It is regarding this that we say,⁴¹⁵ “Return us to You, *HaShem*, and we shall return; renew our days, as the days of old.” At such time⁴¹⁶ “The hearts of the fathers will return to the sons,” which is when the Luminary comes forth in a manner of closeness, as we explained above. This will suffice for the understanding.

⁴¹⁰ Malachi 3:12

⁴¹¹ Isaiah 62:4

⁴¹² Midrash Vayikra Rabba 36:6

⁴¹³ Deuteronomy 7:12

⁴¹⁴ Micah 7:20

⁴¹⁵ Lamentations 5:21

⁴¹⁶ Malachi 3:24

