

Essential Faith

Awareness of HaShem's Presence

By

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Translated from the introduction to

Shaar HaEmunah by

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Warning

The Holy Torah, the living words of the Living God, commands us,¹ “You shall not desecrate My Holy Name.” In explaining the true unity and service of *HaShem*, blessed is He, this book necessarily and unavoidably makes use of His Holy Name. It therefore is holy and sacred and great care should be taken not to desecrate it in any way, shape or form.²

Now that we have entered the era of the true and complete redemption, it is our mitzvah and obligation to learn and disseminate the teachings of the knowledge of *HaShem*,³ “So that all the peoples of the earth may know that *HaShem*, He is God, there is none else.” Nevertheless, it behooves us to do so with the utmost reverence and care to sanctify His Great and Awesome Name. Therefore, wherever His Divine names are found in this book we have placed quotation marks between the letters, thus assuring that they are not the actual Divine names themselves.

In addition, it should be noted that the ineffable name of *HaShem* **is not to be pronounced** whatsoever. This is as stated in the prophecy of Amos,⁴ “He shall say: ‘Silence-שׁוֹמֵט, for we must not (orally) make mention with the Name *HaShem*!’”⁵ Rather, one must

¹ Leviticus 22:32

² Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 115a

³ Kings I 8:60

⁴ Amos 6:10

⁵ That is, it is forbidden to orally mention His Name *HaShem*-יהוה. Therefore, when we pray or read the Torah, we must be silent-שׁוֹמֵט-65, by saying His title Lord-*Adonay*-”אדוני-65 instead. However, since His title Lord-*Adonay* is also holy, therefore, in regular conversation, we say *HaShem*, which means “The Name.” See Ginat Egoz by Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated under the title *HaShem is One*, Vol. 1.

toil only to **know** *HaShem* and thereby know His Name, as stated,⁶ “For he has loved Me, therefore I shall deliver him; I will set him on high, because he knows My Name.” The verse specifies, “because he **knows** My Name,” and not because, “he says My Name,” or because, “he uses My Name.” As known, the Ten Commandments warn us, that the only sin *HaShem* does not forgive, is the sin of bearing His Holy Name in vain.⁷ It is thus of critical importance that we alert you to this.

Therefore, because the focus of this book is solely on the unity and service of *HaShem*, blessed is He, great care must be taken to treat it with the utmost respect. Be aware that it should not be defaced, destroyed or taken into any impure place, such as the toilet or bathroom.

If, for whatever reason, you need to dispose of this book, do not discard it in the trash. Instead, drop it off at your local Orthodox Jewish Synagogue, where it can be enjoyed by someone who will appreciate its value (or, if it is tattered beyond repair from much use, will be respectfully disposed of, according to the manner prescribed by Torah law.)

On the other hand, whosoever studies this work and contemplates its great depth, is assured abundant blessings from *HaShem*, blessed is He and blessed is His Name. This is as stated,⁸ “Whosoever lengthens their contemplation of His Oneness shall be rewarded with length of days and years.”

It is our sincere hope and prayer that our humble offering will find favor before *HaShem*, blessed is He, and that the dissemination

⁶ Psalms 91:14

⁷ Exodus 20:6

⁸ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 13b

of these teachings will be the final act that ushers in the true and complete redemption. May we fully realize the time,⁹ “When there will be neither famine nor war, envy nor competition, for goodness will flow in abundance and all delights will be as freely available as dust. The occupation of the **entire** world will be solely to know *HaShem*. Therefore, the Jews will be great sages¹⁰ and know the hidden matters, grasping the knowledge of their Creator according to the full extent of human potential, as Isaiah (11:9) states, ‘The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of *HaShem* as the waters cover the ocean floor.’”

The Translators

⁹ Mishneh Torah, Melachim u’Milchamot 12:5

¹⁰ Who will teach the entire world about *HaShem*, for all the nations will be thirsty for this knowledge and will greatly desire it.

Chapter One

It is written,¹¹ “And Zion said, *HaShem*-יהו"ה has left me and *HaShem*-יהו"ה has forgotten me.” Now, at first glance, this is an astounding statement. How does it apply to say that there can be an aspect of forgetfulness above in the living God, since *HaShem*-יהו"ה, the Essential Intrinsic Preexistent Being, blessed be He, is above time, as indicated by His four-letter ineffable proper name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, which means “Was, Is and Will be as One,”¹² whereas forgetfulness applies only to something that is bound by time? We therefore say,¹³ “There is no forgetfulness before the throne of Your glory” or,¹⁴ “He remembers all things forgotten etc.”

However, the explanation is that this forgetfulness is not in *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה essence, but rather is similar to the forgetfulness of the Jewish people, who are called, “The community of Israel.” However, their forgetfulness too is astounding! For, if there always is an aspect of Godly light dwelling within them, how could there possibly be a matter of forgetting *HaShem*-יהו"ה within the community of Israel? As known, this Godly light is called the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*-יהו"ה (*Shechinah*), that dwells within them even when they are in exile, sunken “in their impurities etc.”¹⁵

¹¹ Isaiah 49:14

¹² *Tanya, Shaar HaYichud VeHaEmunah* Ch. 7; Also see Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 1, *The Gate of Intrinsic Being (Shaar HaHavayah)*.

¹³ *Zichronot* prayers in *Musaf* of *Rosh Hashanah*

¹⁴ *Zichronot* prayers in *Musaf* of *Rosh Hashanah*

¹⁵ Leviticus 16:16

This Indwelling Presence of HaShem-יהו"ה (*Shechinah*) refers to the Godly spirit that gnaws within each and every Jew to return to HaShem-יהו"ה with all his heart and to adhere to His Torah and Mitzvot-commandments. Though they may be overpowered by the yoke of mundane matters and deep preoccupation in earning a livelihood, which completely confuse their mind and heart, nevertheless, whoever falls will not be cut off and fall completely, God forbid. This is as stated,¹⁶ “Many waters cannot extinguish the love.” In other words, even the many waters of preoccupation in earning a livelihood cannot extinguish the light of the great essential love of *HaShem-יהו"ה*, which is rooted in our souls as a nature, as explained elsewhere. This is because it literally is an aspect of *HaShem's-יהו"ה* Godly light (that is called¹⁷ “the spirit imprinted like wax”). It is called the “Indwelling Presence of *HaShem-יהו"ה*” (*Shechinah*) within which no change or exchange takes place. This is as stated,¹⁸ “I *HaShem-יהו"ה* have not changed and you the children of Israel have not ceased.” That is, just as “I *HaShem-יהו"ה* have not changed,” so too, the Godly light that dwells within the children of Israel “has not ceased.” Therefore, even when they are in exile, “I have not despised them to destroy them by abrogating my covenant with them etc.” This being the case, how can the community of Israel fall into an aspect of forgetfulness?

Indeed, we observe that it is possible even for those who are dedicated servants of *HaShem-יהו"ה* to completely forget about Him when they are very preoccupied with earning a livelihood, until it can

¹⁶ Song of Songs 8:7

¹⁷ *Zohar Mishpatim* 99b; *Etz Chaim, Shaar* 39, *Drush* 7 and 8. Also see *Maamarei Admor HaEmtza'ee, Dvarim* Vol. 1, p. 24.

¹⁸ Malachi 3:6; Also see *Torat Chaim, Noach* 49a.

appear to a person that, “My strength and the power of my own hand accomplished all this greatness for me.”¹⁹ Therefore, it is written,²⁰ “Guard yourself, lest you forget *HaShem*-יהו"ה etc.” This ailment especially affects those who are successful in their endeavors, as known.

However, as known, the explanation is that there are two levels at play here:

The first is a level that can fall into forgetfulness. This is because forgetfulness results mainly when a person’s attention is distracted (*Heseach HaDa'at*), when the attention of his mind and heart on matters of Godliness becomes completely removed. Now, at first glance, this is not readily understood, because of a seeming contradiction in the first and second paragraphs of the Shema recital. The first paragraph states,²¹ “You shall love *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God with all your heart and with all your soul,” whereas the second paragraph states,²² “You shall collect your grain.” In addition, the second paragraph also states, “To love *HaShem*-יהו"ה and serve Him with all your hearts etc.” However, if forgetfulness falls upon a person because of preoccupation with livelihood, as in the verse “you shall collect your grain,” how is it actually possible to fulfill one’s obligation of loving *HaShem*-יהו"ה with all one’s soul? It appears as if these two statements are at odds with each other.

However, we must say that forgetfulness only applies to something in the realm of knowledge and awareness that is achieved through thorough comprehension and understanding in one’s mind

¹⁹ Deuteronomy 8:17

²⁰ Deuteronomy 6:12 & 8:11

²¹ Deuteronomy 6:5

²² Deuteronomy 11:14 & 11:13

and heart. This is as stated,²³ “You shall know today and place it upon your heart that *HaShem*-יהו"ה, He is God, in the heavens above and on the earth below, there is nothing else” or the verse²⁴ “You have been shown to know that *HaShem*-יהו"ה, He is God, there is nothing besides Him etc.” Knowledge (*Da'at*) is the aspect of strong recognition and feelings toward *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Godliness in the mind and heart. This is as stated,²⁵ “Even an ox knows his master and a donkey recognizes his master’s trough” – and is therefore drawn to him – “but Israel does not know, My folk do not contemplate etc.”

Now, on this level of knowledge²⁶ there may be change and exchange, which is the matter of the distraction of attention (*Heseach HaDa'at*) mentioned above. That is, one’s attention becomes moved and removed from its current position. For example, when a person becomes deeply preoccupied with something, the attention of his mind and heart become completely removed from his previous focus, such as learning Torah and the like. Even about Torah learning itself, it states that,²⁷ “Because Rebbi was preoccupied in this tractate, he forgot what was written in that tractate etc.” It is for this reason that we are commanded, “Guard yourself, lest you forget etc.,” which indicates that it indeed is possible to forget *HaShem*-יהו"ה, which is the distraction of our attention from Him. This is why we were commanded to know, which is the opposite of forgetting.

²³ Deuteronomy 4:39

²⁴ Deuteronomy 4:35

²⁵ Isaiah 1:3

²⁶ The lower knowledge (*Daat Tachton*) which receives from *Abba* and *Imma* (wisdom-*Chochmah* and understanding-*Binah*) through *Hitbonenut*-contemplation. (See Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as The Gate of Unity. Also see Rabbi Hillel of Paritch’s commentary to chapter one of Shaar HaYichud, translated as Listen Israel.)

²⁷ Talmud Bavli, *Shabbat* 3b

In other words, we should always strive to²⁸ “know and pursue knowledge of *HaShem*-יהו"ה etc.,” and not remove the attention of our hearts from this Godly knowledge, even for a moment. This is as David said to his son Solomon,²⁹ “Know the God of your father etc.” This being the case, the positive commandment to know *HaShem*-יהו"ה and the negative commandment not to forget Him³⁰ are all one, because they are interdependent. By continually fulfilling the positive commandment to know *HaShem*-יהו"ה a person does not come to transgress the commandment not to forget, which is the distraction of one’s attention. Obviously, transgressing the negative commandment not to forget Him, is the direct consequence of not fulfilling the positive commandment to know Him. This is because forgetfulness is merely the outcome of the distraction of one’s attention.

Moreover, because of forgetfulness, a person can come to cast off the yoke of obedience to *HaShem*-יהו"ה altogether and even transgress grave sins, as stated,³¹ “Israel does not know, my folk do not contemplate. Woe to a sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity.” Now, at first glance, this is a shocking statement! How is it that because of a mere lack of knowledge (*Da'at*) and contemplation (*Hitbonenut*) they are called sinful and laden with iniquity?

However, it is because distraction of one’s attention and recognition (which constitutes forgetfulness), ultimately results in completely casting off of the yoke of *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה Kingship. This is why we were warned, “Guard yourself lest you forget etc.” Therefore, the prophet admonished the children of Israel,³² “Even an

²⁸ Hoseah 6:3

²⁹ Chronicles I 28:9

³⁰ See *Sefer HaMitzvot* from Maimonides

³¹ Isaiah 1:4

³² Isaiah 1:3

ox knows his master and a donkey recognizes his master's trough, but Israel does not know, My folk do not contemplate," the outcome of which is, "Woe a sinful nation, a folk laden with iniquity etc." In other words, falling into complete wickedness is merely the outcome of complete forgetfulness, which is the distraction of the attention. This will suffice for the understanding.

Now, the second level³³ that exists in the community of Israel is much higher than the aspect of knowledge and comprehension of *HaShem's* יהו"ה Godliness grasped in the mind and heart of each person according to his capacity.³⁴ This is as written, "You shall love *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God with all your soul," that is, with actual self-sacrifice, which transcends knowledge and recognition and is equal in every Jewish soul, from the greatest to the smallest. This is the aspect of the Godly light imbedded in the essence of the soul, in its innermost essence. This is called,³⁵ "The recesses of the heart" or "The essential point of the heart," as known. It is from this essential power that every Jew is capable of self-sacrifice for the sanctification of *HaShem's* יהו"ה name.

On this level, the matter of forgetfulness does not apply altogether since here there is no change or exchange whatsoever, because this Godly light radiates constantly in the essential point of the heart without cessation or change whatsoever. As known, this is the aspect of the *Yechidah* level of the soul. Regarding this the Community of Israel says,³⁶ "Place me as a seal upon your heart." Just

³³ The upper knowledge (*Daat Elyon*) which unites *Abba* and *Imma* (wisdom-*Chochmah* and understanding-*Binah*) as a gift from above.

³⁴ Tanya, Introduction in the words of *Zohar*, *Vayera* 103b.

³⁵ Psalms 44:22

³⁶ Song of Songs 8:6

as the letters of a seal are engraved into it, so likewise, the essential light of the soul is engraved and imbedded in the heart.

In the words of the Zohar,³⁷ “Even though you wander here and there, My impression remains within you etc.” “Wandering here and there,” refers to the aspect of the mind and heart, which become completely preoccupied in other matters, until they fall into the category of forgetfulness and distraction of the attention, mentioned above. Nonetheless, “My impression” – which is the aspect of the essential inner point of the heart and is the essential point of the desire that even transcends the arousal of desire – “remains within you.” This is because within aroused desires there can be changes and exchanges, such as preoccupation in earning a livelihood, whereas within the essential point of the heart, at its ultimate depth, no change at all applies. Rather, it always cleaves to its source in *HaShem*-יהו"ה above. This is called the “Indwelling Presence of HaShem-יהו"ה” (*Shechinah*) within the souls of the Jewish people, as known. Regarding this it states,³⁸ “She hugs and cleaves to You,” in other words, “My impression remains within you like a seal etc.”

As known, this essential point of the soul becomes openly recognized when a Jew sacrifices himself for the sanctification of *HaShem's*-יהו"ה name or in true penitents, such as Rabbi Elazar Ben Dordaya,³⁹ whose soul expired through weeping, and the like. In this way we may now understand the matter of, “you shall collect your grain,” in that it does not at all contradict the light of the great love “with all your soul.” This will suffice for the understanding.

³⁷ *Zohar, VaYechi* 244b; *Mishpatim* 114a.

³⁸ *Hosha'ana* prayer, *Om Ani Choma* (for day three).

³⁹ *Talmud Bavli, Avoda Zarah* 17a.

Chapter Two

This then, is the meaning of the above verse, “And Zion said.” Zion refers to the aspect of the essential inner point of the heart, which is called,⁴⁰ “Zion the Excellent” (*Tziyon HaMetzuyenet*). The verse continues, “*HaShem*-יהו"ה has left me and *HaShem*-יהו"ה has forgotten me” – which is said as a matter of astonishment. In other words, how could it be that *HaShem*-יהו"ה has left me? Certainly,⁴¹ “Just as waters reflect the face to the face, so does the heart of man reflect to the heart of man.”

That is, even if there is forgetfulness in the community of Israel, because of the aforementioned aspect of Godly knowledge which can sometimes fall into a state of forgetfulness and is generally called⁴² “the falling Sukkan of David,” nonetheless, this only applies to the minds and hearts of the Jewish people, which are like a receptacle. That is, due to deep preoccupation in mundane matters, their minds and hearts become totally confused until they come to totally forget. This is the distraction of attention mentioned above, wherein there can always be cessation and change.

However, from the aspect of the essential inner point of their hearts, there is no change or exchange whatsoever, since it is an aspect of actual Godliness that is called, “The Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*-יהו"ה” (*Shechinah*), as mentioned above. Therefore, certainly “as waters reflect the face to the face,” above there also

⁴⁰ *Hosha'ana* prayer, *Even Shetia* (for day two). (That is, the term “Zion-*Tziyon*-צִיּוֹן” is of the same root as “excellent-*Metzuyan*-מְצֻיָּן.”)

⁴¹ Proverbs 27:19

⁴² Amos 9:11; Also see *Zohar*, *Tetzave* 186b, and *Maamarei Admor HaEmtza'ee*, *Na"Ch* p. 352.

radiates from the aspect of the inner light and essential Godliness of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, which is called, "the light of *HaShem*-יהו"ה that encompasses all worlds" (*Sovev Kol Almin*) and is higher than the Godly light as it is en clothed within time and space, as known. There, the aspect of forgetfulness is altogether not applicable, as we recite, "There is no forgetfulness before the throne of Your glory," – this applies specifically "before" the throne of Your glory. How then can it be that "*HaShem*-יהו"ה has forgotten me?" Does the verse not state, "I *HaShem*-יהו"ה have not changed" just like "you the children of Israel have not ceased?" Similarly, it states, "I have not despised them to destroy them by abrogating my covenant with them" for the above-mentioned reason. This will suffice for the understanding.

Rather, the explanation must be that according to all the above, the matter is not dependent only on the, "waters that reflect a face to a face etc." For were that the case, then why is it that during the Egyptian exile the Jewish people were enslaved under the ultimate pressure and were not redeemed until God knew and felt their anguish? This is as stated,⁴³ "And their cry went up etc., and God knew etc." He similarly said to Moshe,⁴⁴ "And I have also heard the cry of the children of Israel etc., and I have remembered my covenant etc." This makes it sound as if for the entire duration of their difficult exile He did not remember them, yet how can there be forgetfulness before Him when He literally dwells with them in the aspect of their inner essence, which transcends the aspect of "knowledge" wherein it is not applicable for there to be an aspect of forgetfulness, for the reason explained above? Moreover, at that time, the Jewish people

⁴³ Exodus 2:23-25

⁴⁴ Exodus 6:5

only possessed the “essential bond” that transcends Godly knowledge, for they did not yet know *HaShem*-יהו"ה and His Torah until they subsequently received the Torah at Mount Sinai.

Now, it is known that the Jewish people were only redeemed from Egypt specifically because of the power and merit of their simple faith (*Emunah*). This faith was rooted and imbedded in their souls solely as an inheritance from their forefathers. Regarding this it states,⁴⁵ “I have remembered for you the affection of your youth, how you followed Me in the desert, in a land not sown.” The “affection of your youth” refers specifically to the exile in Egypt, and it is specifically this that is remembered with an eternal remembrance. This aspect of remembrance transcends forgetfulness, and will never be forgotten.

The explanation of all this, as known, is that there are two types of “knowledge” (*Da'at*). There is the “upper knowledge” (*Da'at Elyon*) and there is “lower knowledge” (*Da'at Tachton*). This is as stated,⁴⁶ “For *HaShem*-יהו"ה is a God of knowledges (*De'ot*)” - in the plural. The explanation of this is that they represent two types of influences. The first is the coming into being from the Godly nothing (*Ayin*) into the aspect of something (*Yesh*), wherein *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Godliness becomes concealed. This is the “lower knowledge” (*Da'at Tachton*), which is according to the perception of the recipients of existence.

The “upper knowledge” (*Da'at Elyon*) however, is the aspect of *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Supernal light and influence as it is drawn from the essence of His being, before Whom “all that exists is as nothing.”

⁴⁵ Jeremiah 2:2

⁴⁶ Samuel I 2:3; Also see *Maamarei Admor HaEmtza'ee, Vayikra* Vol. 1, p. 262; *Torat Chaim, Bereishit* 18c; *Shaar HaEmunah* 51b.

In the coming future this aspect of the essence of *HaShem* 's-ה"ה יהו Godliness will be revealed as it is. Regarding this it states,⁴⁷ “They all shall know Me,” – quite literally,⁴⁸ “For the glory of *HaShem*-ה"ה יהו Himself shall be revealed.” It similarly states,⁴⁹ “The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of *HaShem*-ה"ה יהו as the waters cover the ocean floor” – quite literally! However, during the exile in Egypt, this was only in an aspect of simple but strong faith, which they inherited from their forefathers. It was because of this that they merited the revelations of the actual essence of His being during the exodus.

This, then, is the meaning of “and God knew.” That is, He knew in the “upper knowledge” (*Da'at Elyon*) as He is in His glory and Essence, just as it will be in the coming future. This is to say that He felt and knew their sufferings, just as He knows and feels the very essence of His Being, literally. This is like the verse,⁵⁰ “In all their afflictions, He was afflicted.”

In contrast, the aspect of the “lower knowledge” is the aspect of *HaShem* 's-ה"ה יהו Godly knowledge and supervision, in that He knows and understands all the deeds of mankind. This is like the order of the chaining down and creation of the worlds to bring them into being from nothing to something, which is in a way of constriction (*Tzimtzum*) and concealment, until it is possible for external forces to exist. This is like how during every exile *HaShem*-ה"ה יהו is in a state of concealment, as it states,⁵¹ “I shall surely hide My

⁴⁷ Jeremiah 31:33

⁴⁸ Isaiah 40:5

⁴⁹ Isaiah 11:9

⁵⁰ Isaiah 63:9

⁵¹ Deuteronomy 31:18

face on that day,” and as it states in the Zohar,⁵² “During exile the Holy One, blessed is He, withdraws far above etc.” It similarly states,⁵³ “I will go and return to My place etc.,” for⁵⁴ “He grasps all worlds, but there is no one that grasps Him,” and as in the statement,⁵⁵ “He is the place of the world, but the world is not His place,” as known.

However, specifically through simple faith, because it is an aspect of the essential innerness, in which forgetfulness does not at all apply, we are able to arouse the corresponding aspect of the essence of *HaShem* 's יהו"ה Being above, where there likewise is no change, even in the face of the accusing angels, God forbid. This is as stated, “I have not despised them to destroy them by abrogating my covenant with them” and “you the children of Israel have not ceased,” as discussed above. Therefore, He is pained by their sufferings, just as a father feels the suffering of his child as his own pain, literally, as it states,⁵⁶ “In all their afflictions, He is afflicted.”

Such is not the case regarding the “lower knowledge” (*Da'at Tachton*). Rather, it is as if it is outside of Himself, so to speak, similar to the knowledge of the chaining down of the worlds, in which case, the same verse may also be read as, “In all their afflictions, He

⁵² *Zohar VaYigash* p. 210a; *Vayikra* 20b; Also see *Torat Chaim, Lech Lecha* p. 95a.

⁵³ Hosea 5:15

⁵⁴ *Zohar (Ra'aya MeHemna) Pinchas* p. 225a.

⁵⁵ *Bereishit Rabba* 68:9

⁵⁶ *Isaiah* 63:9

is not afflicted.”⁵⁷ This is similar to the verse,⁵⁸ “He has made us and we are His,” which can also be read as, “He has made us, and not us.” Similarly, it states,⁵⁹ “Actions are accounted by Him” which can also be read, “Actions are of no account.” For although⁶⁰ “His eyes are open to all the ways of man,” nevertheless, in this “lower knowledge” it is possible for there to be an aspect of forgetfulness and distraction of attention. And it is regarding this that the community of Israel stated, “*HaShem*-ה"ה יהו"ה has left me and *HaShem*-ה"ה יהו"ה has forgotten me” – for they too had forgotten and left *HaShem*-ה"ה יהו"ה, as it states, “they have left Me.”

However, in the aspect of the inner point of the heart, wherein strong faith is truly imbedded like an essential nature, regarding this it states, “There is no forgetfulness before the throne of Your glory.” It is for this reason that *HaShem*-ה"ה יהו"ה responded to Zion,⁶¹ “Can a woman forget her suckling child, that she should not have compassion on the child of her womb? These too may be forgotten, but I will not forget you,” for⁶² “You are the children of *HaShem*-ה"ה יהו"ה your God.” This will suffice for the understanding.

Now, because at the time of the Egyptian exile the Jewish people had this simple faith, therefore in the coming future they will merit beholding *HaShem*’s-ה"ה יהו"ה essence and being, literally. At the

⁵⁷ This is the matter of *Kree*-how the verse is read, versus *Ksiv*-how it is written. In this and the subsequently referenced verses, the spoken sound of the word “Lo” is the same, yet it can mean either לֹא-*Lo*-no or not, or it can mean לוֹ-*Lo*-his or he is. That is, these verses are written with an *Aleph*-א, but read with a *Vav*-ו. So this same verse can mean, “in all their afflictions, He is afflicted” or “in all their afflictions, He is not afflicted.” The same is true of the subsequently quoted verses as additional examples of this.

⁵⁸ Psalms 100:3

⁵⁹ Samuel I 2:3

⁶⁰ Jeremiah 32:19

⁶¹ Isaiah 44:15

⁶² Deuteronomy 14:1

giving of the Torah they merited a small foretaste of this, as it states,⁶³ “And the entire nation saw etc.” This then, is the meaning of “I have remembered for you” - in the coming future – “the affection of your youth” - specifically their simple faith during the exodus, a faith that transcends knowledge and recognition in the mind and heart, as explained above. The children of Israel are therefore commanded to remember the exodus from Egypt for all time. This is as written,⁶⁴ “So that you remember the day you left the land of Egypt all the days of your life,” which even includes the days of Moshiach and the coming world, as explained in the words of our sages, of blessed memory. The reason is because these two matters are interdependent. That is, just as from Above to below, *HaShem*-יהו"ה remembers in a manner of a remembrance that has no change, so likewise, from below to Above, the Jewish people will even remember in the coming world, in which they will come to actually see, as it states,⁶⁵ “Here, this is our God,” in His presence, with no more changes whatsoever. This will suffice for the understanding.

⁶³ Exodus 20:14

⁶⁴ Deuteronomy 16:3

⁶⁵ Isaiah 25:9

Chapter Three

We now must understand further regarding the remembrance of⁶⁶ “I have remembered the affection of your youth,” and that aside for their powerful faith in believing Moshe while they were still in Egypt, they also followed *HaShem*-יהו"ה in the desert, in a land not sown, as written,⁶⁷ “You followed Me in the desert, in a land not sown.”

This may be understood through the famous parable of a father who has a small son who is very precious and dear to him, who he wants to test regarding two matters. The first is in his wisdom and knowledge and the second is in the goodness and faithfulness of his heart, to see whether he is bound with true love for his father, to the point of actual self-sacrifice. Now, how shall he test him? For, if the father is always in close proximity to his son and bestows his son with all the desires of his heart, then it is no wonder that the heart of the son will be faithful to his father in every way. Therefore, the father conceals and distances himself from his son in a most hidden and concealed place, so that his son will be anguished and seek him out. Through this, the father will discern the essential depth of his son's love for him.

Now, immediately upon the concealment of the father from the son, the son will be very anguished and pursue and seek out his father with all his might. In this, we can see the inner heart of the son, in that he thoroughly seeks out his father. However, after the son has searched for his father in all the places and paths where he knows his

⁶⁶ Jeremiah 2:2

⁶⁷ Ibid.

father is regularly found and he nonetheless does not find him, it is certain that he will be agonized by this and will always bemoan the great loss of his father, who is the very light of his eyes and the life of his head. He will constantly weep in private from the depths of his soul and will be inconsolable; until he despairs in his soul of ever seeing his father again. After having despaired, as time passes, the bitterness of his heart begins to cool, until slowly but surely, he forgets and stops searching out his father or weeping over it. We therefore find that the bond and connection of the son to his father eventually becomes completely severed.

Now, two things cause this. The first is the short attention (*Da'at*) of the child. He has a short attention span and does not understand or recognize that his father is just testing him or that the concealment in which he hides himself is not in essence, nor is the distance that he distanced himself true - that, in truth, he is destined to be close once again, because his father did not distance himself out of hatred, but only to test him and know what is in his heart.

The second is the despair of the child in that he gives up hope within his soul. In this we see that his love is small and that his bond to his father was not that faithful, because if his bond was strong, he would not fall into a sense of loss of hope altogether. A faithful son will strengthen his resolve and will seek out his father with all his might. Although his father is hidden and concealed from his eyes, he will not fall into despair at all. In his heart he knows that if his own love, faith and bond are strong, then certainly, as “waters reflect a face to the face,” his father must only be concealing himself in order to test him.

This kind of son is wise and faithful with all his heart. He understands that ultimately the concealment is not true. He therefore

always searches for his father on all the paths he knows his father frequents. Even if he does not find him, he does not weep or despair in his soul. On the contrary, he constantly seeks him out with all his heart, searching in all of his father's ways and paths. He follows the footsteps of his father and on the paths that his father travels and in all the places that his father is regularly found, and even if he does not find his father in any of his paths, he nonetheless rejoices in his soul and is confident that since he is traveling the paths of his father, he will certainly find him. At times, perhaps he will glimpse his father in the distance, and then he will follow behind him and attach himself to him. Although he may not see the face of his father from up close, he will nevertheless follow from behind and at a distance, and will rejoice as if he saw him up close and face to face. Since he knows that these are the paths of his father, he will strengthen himself in pursuit of him even if he only sees him from behind.

Now, when the father sees the strength of effort of the son to seek him out in his paths, even if only to behold him from behind and that he does not ever despair, he discerns the great strength of his son's bond and faith – that he pursues him even in the thick of darkness, even when he cannot see his father's face or see him at all. Nevertheless, he pursues him with all his strength and might. This arouses the great love of the father to his son in a double and quadrupled measure compared to how it was at first, until he cannot no longer contain himself and reveals himself from his hiding place and shows his son the radiance of his countenance and the inner depths of his heart with great love that cannot be contained within his vessels, to the point that he kisses him with multiple kisses. This is like a father who plays with his precious son and kisses him with multiple kisses, because a single kiss is simply not enough. He kisses

him again and again because of his great and abundant love. In this case, the love he had for his dear son already was in his heart, but when he hid himself, he distanced and concealed the light of this great love so as not to reveal it.

Now, because of this restraint, after he sees the strong bond of the faithful son in the test that he tested him and he sees that his heart is faithful and that he seeks him out with all his heart, even when he is concealed from him, as discussed above, then when the father finally reveals his face, he becomes aroused with a great love toward his son to a much greater measure than before, so that he kisses him with a double measure. This is because the light of his great love was doubled and quadrupled from its original condition prior to distancing himself from his son. This is because the great love that is now revealed after the test of “distance and concealment” comes from the inner essence and depth of his heart, much more than when his son was always with him.

This is to say that it is specifically the concealment and distance that brought out the faith of the son in his father with greater strength, to a greater degree than when they were together. The same thing applies to the father’s feelings toward his son; the distance itself brings about additional love for his son in a double measure, when he subsequently reveals the light of his countenance to his son, after the son has shown the faithfulness of his heart. This is because of the above-mentioned reason and is specifically called “doubled kisses” (*Nesheekeen Kfulim*). This will suffice for the understanding.

Chapter Four

Let us now understand the analogue in all the details of the above analogy. *HaShem's* יהו"ה love for the Jewish people, who are called His “children,” is similar to this. Therefore, the verse states about the coming future,⁶⁸ “He will return the heart of the fathers to the sons etc.”

In other words, the love that the Jewish people have for *HaShem*-יהו"ה when they are close to him (such as the great strength of their love at the giving of the Torah, when their Heavenly Father spoke to them “face to face,” or similarly, in the time of the first Temple in the days of Solomon) is no great novelty. However, when *HaShem*-יהו"ה wants to test them, he conceals His countenance, such as during exile, about which it states,⁶⁹ “You are a God that hides” or as stated,⁷⁰ “He withdraws higher and higher etc.”

During such times the Jewish people come under the harsh subjugation of preoccupation with earning their livelihood, investing their very souls to procure their sustenance with tremendous stress and duress, literally to the point of exhaustion. Albeit, though they are⁷¹ “at their wits end from the difficult labor...for their lives are embittered,” nonetheless, their hearts do not turn backwards, nor do they despair of seeking out *HaShem*-יהו"ה with all their heart and soul through Torah, mitzvot, prayer and repentance from the very depths of the heart. This is as stated,⁷² “In your distress, when all these things

⁶⁸ Malachi 3:24

⁶⁹ Isaiah 45:15

⁷⁰ *Zohar VaYigash* 210a; *VaYikra* 20b

⁷¹ Exodus 6:9

⁷² Deuteronomy 4:30

will come upon you in the end of days, you will return to *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God and listen to His voice...and from there you shall seek *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God, and you shall find Him, if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul.”

This is like the analogy of the faithful son who has a powerful love for his father and is wise. He understands that the separation between him and his father is only a test to know what is in his heart, whether he will strengthen his resolve or not, as discussed previously. He strengthens his resolve with all his might to seek out all of the paths and ways of his father. This is the matter of going after *HaShem*-יהו"ה through His Torah and through serving Him by fulfilling His *mitzvot*-commandments since they are called,⁷³ “the ways of *HaShem*-יהו"ה” and⁷⁴ “the paths of *HaShem*-יהו"ה.”

Though he does not behold the countenance of *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה illumination, because the *mitzvot* are en clothed in physical things, such as the wool of the *Tzitzit* or the parchment of the four portions of the *Tefillin* and the like, nevertheless, he is like the child who travels upon the paths and ways of his Father, for these are called “the ways of *HaShem*-יהו"ה,” as king David said,⁷⁵ “I will speak of Your precepts and will gaze upon Your ways.” In other words, these are the ways that *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself walks upon. This refers to the aspect of *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Inner Supernal Desire that is hidden within His *mitzvot*-commandments, that are literally called “the way of *HaShem*-יהו"ה,” as stated,⁷⁶ “They shall keep the way of *HaShem*-יהו"ה.”

⁷³ Hosea 14:10

⁷⁴ Psalms 25:10

⁷⁵ Psalms 119:15

⁷⁶ Genesis 18:19

This is analogous to a person who walks on the paths and ways that the king walks on. Though he only sees him from behind, he follows after him. Regarding this it states,⁷⁷ “You shall walk after *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God,” meaning only after Him, by going in His ways of Torah study and the fulfillment of His commandments all day long, as stated,⁷⁸ “I will gaze upon Your ways” – literally.

Now, one must strengthen oneself to follow after *HaShem*-יהו"ה, in His ways of Torah and Mitzvot even during a time of distance and concealment, whether this is caused by impatience or whether it is caused by the concealment of *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Godliness during exile, both of which are true. And although when he walks upon the paths of Torah and *mitzvot*, *HaShem*-יהו"ה appears to him from afar and he only perceives externally and from “behind *HaShem*-יהו"ה,” as we said above, nevertheless, he must strengthen himself with all his might so that his heart will not be turned back. At the very least, when he thinks and speaks the words of Torah his heart should be directed towards seeking out and searching after *HaShem*-יהו"ה.

Now, when the father sees the great effort of the son, even when he is distant, his love for his son becomes doubly magnified. Similarly, the radiance of *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה love for Israel becomes doubly magnified and is called “doubled kisses,” as previously discussed. *HaShem*-יהו"ה will return His countenance and the radiance of His great love to the Jewish people in a doubled measure to radiate within our souls to an even greater degree than He did at the time of the giving of the Torah, about which it states,⁷⁹ “Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth” (which, as known, refers to the hidden

⁷⁷ Deuteronomy 13:5

⁷⁸ Psalms 119:15

⁷⁹ Song of Songs 1:2

meaning of the *Mitzvot*-commandments).⁸⁰ This is the aspect of the aforementioned “doubled kisses” which come about specifically as a result of the distance and after the test. Then the love will be doubled in comparison to the revealed love as it was when they were close and face to face. This will suffice for the understanding.

This may similarly be understood regarding prayer, which takes the place of the sacrificial offerings⁸¹ in the Holy Temple. During the time of exile there is certainly concealment of *HaShem* 's-יהו"ה Godliness. Even when one toils greatly in the service of the heart and mind during prayer, nonetheless, the forces of obstruction can overpower him through extraneous thoughts that confuse his prayer. This occurs because of the depth of the connection of one's mind and heart to matters of livelihood and the like. Certainly, he becomes overpowered by these extraneous forces that confuse the mind and heart, making it altogether difficult to reach the inner point of the heart. This is like the father who hides even when his son seeks him greatly and still the son cannot find him.

This is as stated,⁸² “On that day I shall conceal My face.” I shall conceal My face (*Panay*) means the concealment of the inner aspect (*Pnimityut*) of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, which is the aspect of the light and illumination of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, that transcends all worlds (*Sovev Kol Almin*) and is not grasped in a revealed way in the heart. Rather, one only beholds *HaShem*-יהו"ה from afar. Nevertheless, his heart does not turn back nor does he despair in his soul whatsoever. On the contrary, he strengthens himself with all his

⁸⁰ See Rashi to Song of Songs 1:2. Also see *Maamarei Admor HaEmtza'ee, Dvarim* Vol. 4, p. 1,473.

⁸¹ Talmud Bavli, *Brachot* 26a-26b

⁸² Deuteronomy 31:18

might to seek and search out *HaShem*-יהו"ה in the service of the heart and mind, which is prayer. Even though *HaShem*-יהו"ה is greatly hidden and concealed, he pursues *HaShem*-יהו"ה with all his might, drawing himself after Him with all his heart, just like the son who is drawn after his father and seeks him out.

Now, it is written, “And from there you shall seek *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God, and you shall find Him, if you search after Him with all your heart and with all your soul.” Certainly, by reason of the above-mentioned parable, “*HaShem*-יהו"ה will return His countenance” with a doubled inner illumination of great love that is called, “doubled kisses.” This will suffice for the understanding.

This specifically is the meaning of “I have remembered the affection of your youth...when you followed me in the desert.” For, during the exodus from Egypt they were tested with great tests from *HaShem*-יהו"ה, such as how Pharaoh chased after them with his army,⁸³ and likewise when they travelled without water in the desert.⁸⁴ Nevertheless, they followed *HaShem*-יהו"ה even though it was from afar, because until the giving of the Torah they had yet to behold the radiance of *HaShem*-יהו"ה closely. It was only because of their pure and simple faith that they had the fortitude to follow *HaShem*-יהו"ה as stated,⁸⁵ “And they believed in *HaShem*-יהו"ה etc.”

Through this, *HaShem*-יהו"ה beheld the inner point of their faithful bond to Him. This is similar to the aforementioned analogy of the father who hides from his son in order to see into the heart of his son and the strength of his commitment to pursue him. This is the meaning of the verse, “You followed me.” Through this test they

⁸³ Exodus 14:5

⁸⁴ Exodus 15:22, 17:1

⁸⁵ Exodus 14:31

merited to behold *HaShem*-יהו"ה face to face in a manner of great love and doubled kisses, as in the verse,⁸⁶ “Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth etc.”

Now, the giving of the Torah was only a foretaste of the coming future, as the sages, of blessed memory stated,⁸⁷ “The Israelites who stood at the mountain were cleansed of all impurity.” However, from this example we understand that the concealment of *HaShem's*-יהו"ה face during this long and bitter exile only increases the tremendous revelation of doubled and quadrupled love when the redemption will finally happen. As it states about the future redemption, “He will return the heart of the fathers to the sons and the heart of the sons to their fathers.” This “return” is the return of His countenance toward us with tremendous love, a love that is far greater than the former love, which is called “doubled kisses.” This will suffice for the understanding.

Now, through the above analogy we may clearly understand the great strength and power of strong faith, through which our forefathers were redeemed from Egypt. That is, “following Me in the desert” was what brought about the great revelation of the radiance of the countenance of their Father in Heaven in a doubled measure. However, all this is only applicable when there is an aspect of going and seeking the father on the paths upon which he walks, as understood from the details of the aforementioned analogy, and as stated, “You shall walk after *HaShem*-יהו"ה.” In other words, although he only walks after *HaShem*-יהו"ה, nevertheless it must be in

⁸⁶ Song of Songs 1:2

⁸⁷ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 146a.

a way of “walking,” in that he literally walks in the ways of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, though he does not see Him up close but only from afar.

However, the sages of blessed memory stated,⁸⁸ “Six-hundred and thirteen *mitzvot*-commandments were given to Moshe. Chabakuk came and stood them upon one alone.” This is the *mitzvah* of faith (*Emunah*), as stated,⁸⁹ “The righteous lives by his faith.” We see that the *mitzvah* of faith includes all six hundred and thirteen *mitzvot* in it, because,⁹⁰ “everything follows that which establishes the rest.” Furthermore, “that which establishes” establishes everything equally, those being all six-hundred and thirteen *mitzvot*, which include both the two-hundred and forty-eight positive *mitzvot* and the three-hundred and sixty-five negative *mitzvot*.

Now, when it comes to the two-hundred and forty-eight positive *mitzvot*, it is certain that it is specifically faith that establishes and is the foundation of them all, as understood from the analogy mentioned above. That is, the son puts forth great effort to pursue his father and seek him out on his paths – which refers to the positive *mitzvot*, in that they are called the “ways of *HaShem*-יהו"ה” and the “paths of *HaShem*-יהו"ה,” as mentioned above. However, when it comes to the three-hundred and sixty-five negative *mitzvot*, which only constitute desisting from acting, which is “to sit and do nothing,” how can they be called “walking” altogether? How then would it be applicable to say that this is a “walking after *HaShem*-יהו"ה” through the strength of pure and simple faith? Moreover, how are these three-hundred and sixty-five negative *mitzvot* also founded on and included specifically in faith? Additionally, the verse “The righteous lives by

⁸⁸ Talmud Bavli, *Makkot* 23b

⁸⁹ Habakuk 2:4

⁹⁰ Talmud Bavli, *Shabbat* 15b

his faith,” is known to refer solely to the positive mitzvot, through which a person is called righteous (*Tzaddik*), as it states,⁹¹ “And it shall be a righteousness to us, if we observe **to do** all this commandment etc.”

Now, to understand this, we must preface with the statement of our sages, of blessed memory regarding the verse,⁹² “This is My Name for ever and this is My remembrance for all generations.” The word “My name (*Shemi*-שמי)” together with the *Yod*-י and *Heh*-ה of *HaShem's*-יהו"ה Name equals three-hundred and sixty-five, referring to the negative *mitzvot*. The word, “My remembrance (*Zichri*-זכרי)” together with the *Vav*-ו and *Heh*-ה of *HaShem's*-יהו"ה Name equals two-hundred and forty-eight, referring to the positive *mitzvot*.⁹³ The difficulty regarding this is known, namely, how is it that the negative *mitzvot* are connected to the letters *Yod-Heh*-יה"י which are higher than the letters *Vav-Heh*-וה"ה of *HaShem's*-יהו"ה name? This is very astonishing!

Now it is known from the *Zohar*⁹⁴ that the two-hundred and forty-eight positive *mitzvot* are called “the two-hundred and forty-eight organs of the King” and that these are the aspect of the five general kindnesses (*Heh Chassadim*) which draw forth Godly light specifically into an aspect of lights within vessels. In contrast, the root of the negative *mitzvot* is in the *Yod-Heh*-יה"י of *HaShem's*-יהו"ה name, which is the aspect of the encompassing lights that protect the

⁹¹ Deuteronomy 6:25

⁹² Exodus 3:15

⁹³ See *Ginat Egoz* of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 2. Also see *Likkutei Torah*, *Pekudei* 3b; *Tikkunei Zohar*, introduction 4b-5a; *Maamarei Admor HaEmtza'ee*, *Dvarim* Vol. 2 p. 412; *Na"Ch* p. 93.

⁹⁴ *Tikkunei Zohar*, *Tikkun* 30, 74

supernal lights that vest within the two-hundred and forty-eight positive *mitzvot*.

We may understand this through the well-known analogy of a wise father who commands his only son, that for the good of his soul, he should follow certain ways and practices that will help him for good in his life. He tells him that he should never deviate from these ways but should rather live them throughout his life. However, he does not reveal the reasons why he should do these good actions. They remain hidden and secret. If he were to reveal the reasons to his son, the son may come to rationalize why he should deviate from the instructions of his father. Moreover, he will not be as strong in his resolve to keep these instructions. However, if the son does not know the reasons, he will faithfully guard himself to do everything his father commanded, without deviation. He will do this with pure faith because he believes in his father with all of his heart, to do his will in a manner which is completely above reason. Certainly, he will believe that these directives are the very life of his soul, even without knowing the reason. He will not leave them nor deviate from them, even to a hair's breadth, literally. This is specifically only because of his strength of faith in his father.

The opposite is also true regarding all those things he was commanded to guard himself from because they are despicable and hateful in his father's eyes. He simply warns him to guard himself from doing these things, because they literally are damaging and destructive to his soul. Though the son does not actually understand why he must take great care to distance himself from such things or exactly how it is that they are dangerous, damaging or even fatal, nevertheless, he takes great care to guard himself from them, purely and simply by the power of his faith in his father. This is because he

trusts his father and if he tells him that these things are bad and will damage him, he believes his father and stays away from them. More so, he will even hate them, though he hasn't the slightest understanding of the matter. Simply because of his faith and trust in his father, whatever the father despises, he too will despise. However, the primary and most salient reason is because it is specifically his father who commanded him regarding all these things, and when it comes to his father, he would never consider transgressing and going against his will.

From this we see that when the child desists from doing those things that his father prohibited him from doing, his power of faith actually becomes much more revealed than when he merely strengthens himself to fulfill the positive acts that his father commanded him to do. This is because by guarding himself in the negative commandments he fulfills his father's will solely because of his trust and faith. In contrast, when he does the positive commandments, even though it is through his faith that he strengthens himself to do them, nonetheless, he is motivated by a degree of revelation of the reason for his father's will. When he guards himself from things that are against his father's will, on the other hand, it is much higher than any level of illumination of light. Rather, it is called an "encompassing light," since it is much more concealed. It is even more concealed than the hidden reasoning of why the positive commandments are good for his soul. He therefore needs to guard himself and be extremely careful with a much greater degree of resolve. This is because the more the matter is concealed, the more the power of his faith will need to be strengthened, just as was explained previously about the positive commandments, that the father conceals the reasons so that the son will guard himself and

fulfill them even without the reasons. This will suffice for the understanding.

Another example of this is when a father who is a doctor instructs his son, “You should eat such and such item because it will strengthen your health and give you vitality. On the other hand, don’t eat this other item. Instead, guard yourself from eating it, because it is dangerous to you and may actually kill you.” Certainly, the son will trust his father and will take care not to eat it, because he does not want to die. If confronted with it, he will flee from it, with an even greater strength of faith than he will have when eating the item that his father told him sustains his life etc. This will suffice for those who are understanding.

Additionally, there will be a far greater degree of strong faith when fulfilling the negative will of his father out of honor and respect for the father. That is, there is a much greater strength in not disrespecting one’s father by not transgressing his will regarding the negative command, than the respect shown when one fulfills the father’s positive will and command, for even if he does not fulfill the positive command, at least he has not dishonored his father or caused him anguish. In contrast, when he transgresses the negative command, he causes a blemish and greatly dishonors his father. One therefore guards himself much more when it comes to negative commands than positive ones. This will suffice for the understanding.

Now, from all the details of this parable, we now understand the general difference between the positive *mitzvot* and the negative *mitzvot*. As known, the positive commandments are called, “The way of life and goodness,” whereas the negative ones are called, “The way

of death and evil – literally!” This is as stated,⁹⁵ “Behold, I have set before you today, life and goodness and death and evil.” Similarly, we were commanded to follow the way of the practical *mitzvot* even though we do not know the secrets and reasons for them. It is for this reason that the sages stated that the *mitzvot* do not require intention,⁹⁶ for it is specifically when they are without intention and reasoning that their fulfillment is done solely because of the faith mentioned in the verse, “You shall walk after *HaShem*-יהו"ה.” That is, it is called walking after *HaShem*-יהו"ה from afar, in that one does not know the Godly reasoning or “secret” for the physical action.

Now, the Torah indeed explains the reasons for some *mitzvot*, such as the *mitzvot* of *Tzitzit*, *Tefillin*, *Sukkah*, *Lulav* and *Etrog* and the like. For example, regarding the *mitzvah* of *Tzitzit*, the Torah states,⁹⁷ “And you shall see them and remember,” or regarding the *mitzvah* of *Tefillin* it states,⁹⁸ “And all the nations of the world shall see that the name of *HaShem*-יהו"ה is called upon you etc.,” or regarding the *mitzvah* of *Sukkah* it states,⁹⁹ “For I made the children of Israel dwell in booths etc.” Nevertheless, the hidden supernal secrets regarding the roots of these deeds were not made known to them. Examples of this are the aspect of the inner lights (*Or Pnimi*) and encompassing lights (*Or Makif*) of the *Tzitzit*, or the thirty-two pathways of wisdom-*Chochmah* of *Tefillin* in the four chambers of the brain etc. Similar examples are the encompassing lights of *Imma* in the *Schach* (covering) of the *Sukkah* or the drawing down of knowledge-*Da'at* into *Nukvah* by means of the *Lulav* and *Etrog*. This

⁹⁵ Deuteronomy 30:15

⁹⁶ Talmud Bavli, *Eiruv* 95b

⁹⁷ Numbers 15:39

⁹⁸ Deuteronomy 28:10

⁹⁹ Leviticus 23:43

similarly applies to many other mitzvot. Moreover, this certainly is the case regarding those *mitzvot* whose reasons were not given altogether, which are called *Chukim* (statutes), as in the verse,¹⁰⁰ “If you walk in My statutes and keep My mitzvot etc.”

Even with regard to the *mitzvah* to recite the *Shema*, which is the commandment to unify the ten supernal *Sefirot* with the Essence of the One who emanated them, nevertheless, the primary fulfillment of this *mitzvah* is accomplished by fulfilling one’s simple obligation alone, in a way that is above understanding. The statement that, “the mitzvot do not require the intention of the mind,” means that not only is this not required, but, quite the contrary, it actually is far better to do them without mystical intentions, but rather to simply fulfill *HaShem*’s יהוה's Supernal will alone, because this type of fulfillment comes solely and specifically by the power of simple faith. This is like the above analogy of the son's faith which is revealed specifically because his father commanded him to do these things without revealing the reasons for them. He therefore guards himself to fulfill his father’s will with pure and simple faith, neither deviating to the left nor to the right. This would not be the case were he to know the reasons, because he would not have the same strong resolve in his heart and he could come to deviate slightly etc. This will suffice for the understanding.

Now, it is understood from the above analogy, that in regard to those negative *mitzvot* which were not given with reasons at all, such as the *mitzvot* not to wear *Sha’atnez* or the *mitzvah* of *Kilaim*, or of not cooking, consuming or benefitting from the cooked admixture of meat and milk, or the prohibition against eating blood or any other

¹⁰⁰ Leviticus 26:3

forbidden food, such as pork etc., there is an even greater concealment of light, since the reasons are totally unknown. Nonetheless, one resists solely due to the decree of his Father in Heaven, blessed is He. The same is true of forbidden sexual relations. Though a person may lust after them,¹⁰¹ he refrains simply because his Father in Heaven commanded him against them. This is as stated,¹⁰² “A man should not say ‘I do not want to eat pork’, but rather ‘I do want to eat it and the only reason I don’t is because my Father in Heaven commanded me against it.’”

Even in regard to negative mitzvot whose reason was given and which make intellectual sense, such as not to steal, murder, commit forbidden sexual acts, desecrate the Shabbat and the like, nevertheless, the secrets of *HaShem*-ה' about what great blemishes they cause supernally, was not made known. Rather, they too are like the analogy above, about the father warning his son to stay away and guard his soul from them because of the great harm they will cause him. Here too, he will guard himself with greater strength of faith, to a greater degree than how he strengthens himself to fulfill a positive command of his father. This is because there is a greater strength and measure of faith in this for two reasons:

The first reason is because he will also despise that which is hateful to his father, over and above the fact that it is damaging to his soul. The second reason is because the greater concealment will bring out a greater degree of his faith, because this level is called the “encompassing lights,” which are in a greater state of concealment. However, these two are one with a third reason, which is that he does

¹⁰¹ Talmud Bavli, *Makot* 23b

¹⁰² *Torat Kohanim*, end of *Parshat Kedoshim*; Also see *Shaar HaTeshuva*, *Shaar Tefilah* p. 71d and on.

not want to disrespect the honor of his father. In this respect, transgressing a prohibition is worse in his eyes than abstaining from the fulfillment of a positive command of his father. This will suffice for the understanding.

In the same manner, there are two reasons for abstaining from doing the negative commandments of *HaShem*-יהו"ה with great resolve. First, because *HaShem*-יהו"ה hates them and they are against His will. When Jews truly bind themselves to *HaShem*-יהו"ה with faithfulness, as “sons” of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, then they certainly will have great strength of faith specifically in this. That is, they will despise and want to eradicate evil with all their strength and might, as stated,¹⁰³ “And you shall eradicate the evil from your midst,” just as one flees from something that threatens his life.

The second reason is out of honor and respect for our Father in Heaven, so as not to besmirch or disrespect His honor. For although the reasons and manner of the great blemish is unknown, just as the reason for the fulfillment of the negative mitzvot is unknown, nevertheless, this itself is what empowers and strengthens a Jew to be steadfast in his faith. This is because, as said above, the primary essence of faith specifically comes out in those mitzvot the reason of which is unknown.

All in all, we understand from all the above that the fulfillment of the positive *mitzvot* is an aspect of inner, pervading lights invested in various vessels to fulfill *HaShem* 's-יהו"ה Supernal will, though this too is through simple faith. This is as stated, “The righteous lives by his faith,” referring to the positive *mitzvot* about which it states,¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Deuteronomy 13:6

¹⁰⁴ Leviticus 18:5

“You shall live by them,” specifically referring to eternal life. As explained above, they do not require the intent or reasoning of the mind. However, the root of the negative mitzvot is higher, to the extent that they come about through greater strength of faith. This is because they are rooted in the “encompassing light” and are exceedingly hidden. Therefore, it is the abstention from doing the negative *mitzvot*, through “sitting and not doing,” that draws down the aspect of the “encompassing lights” to protect the positive deeds of the positive mitzvot so that they should be established within their vessels and so that the external forces will not derive sustenance from them. This, then, is the meaning of “My name (*Shemi*-יְשִׁמִּי)” with *Yod*-י and *Heh*-ה equaling the three-hundred and sixty-five negative commandments, which encompass the *Vav*-ו and *Heh*-ה of the two-hundred and forty-eight positive commandments. This will suffice for the understanding. This answers the question mentioned above of how it is that the matter of faith includes all six-hundred and thirteen commandments within it. This will suffice for those of understanding.

Chapter Five

This then, is the meaning of the verse, “You have followed Me in the desert, in a land not sown.” That is, following after *HaShem*-יהו"ה with faith must be in a way that is directed, so as not to deviate to the right or left. It is of utmost importance not to veer off the straight path at all, as the verse states, “You shall go after *HaShem*-יהו"ה,” meaning that this going must solely be “after *HaShem*-יהו"ה” without deviation from the path, neither to the right nor to the left.

Whoever deviates from the path is said to be lost upon a crooked path. He can come to harm upon this wicked path, to the point of the death of his soul in the grave (*She'ol*) of ruination (*Avadon*) and destruction (*Shachat*).¹⁰⁵ This is called,¹⁰⁶ “The ways to the grave” or¹⁰⁷ “The paths of crookedness,” as known. Therefore, this is the primary foundation for the protection of one’s soul, namely, that if he does not at all stray from the straight path (by guarding himself through the negative *mitzvot*) then automatically, his path will be “before *HaShem*-יהו"ה” in holiness through the fulfillment of the positive *mitzvot*. It is for this reason that *HaShem*-יהו"ה praised the Jewish people by specifically saying that “they followed after Me in the desert.” As known, a desert has no paved roads. Moreover, most desert paths are presumed to be dangerous places populated with snakes, serpents and scorpions. These represent the three totally harsh and wicked husks of evil (*Kelipot*).¹⁰⁸ This is as stated,¹⁰⁹ “HaShem-

¹⁰⁵ Proverbs 15:11; 27:20; Psalms 16:10; Talmud Bavli *Eruvin* 19a.

¹⁰⁶ Proverbs 7:27

¹⁰⁷ Judges 5:6

¹⁰⁸ Deuteronomy 8:15; Also see *Likutei Torah, Naso* 20a; *Shaar HaTeshuvah* Vol. 1, p. 4b.

¹⁰⁹ Deuteronomy 8:15

יהו"ה... Who led you through the great and dreadful desert, wherein were snakes, serpents and scorpions etc.”

Additionally, as known, the¹¹⁰ “desert of the nations” is where the harshest husks of wickedness can be found. This is why the goat of the *Azazel* offering was banished to the desert,¹¹¹ to transport all the sins of the children of Israel there. This then, is the meaning of the verse, “In a land not sown,” this is to say, in a land where the light of holiness does not at all shine. It is like a place of complete and utter darkness devoid of any illumination of light. Nonetheless, through the great protection of the power of their tremendous faith, they even travelled in the desert of the snake, serpent and scorpion. This was possible because they followed only *HaShem*-יהו"ה, without any deviations, neither to the right nor to the left. Through this they subdued the husks (*Kelipot*) of the “Desert of the nations” at their source, which is an even greater level than the “going after *HaShem*-יהו"ה” through the positive mitzvot, as was explained above. This will suffice for the understanding.

¹¹⁰ Ezekiel 20:35

¹¹¹ Leviticus 16:8-21; *Maamarei Admor HaEmtza'ee, Na"Ch* p. 498.

Chapter Six

Now, all this will be remembered for the Jewish people with an eternal remembrance, because it all demonstrates the great and essential strength of their faith in the very core of their being. This is the reason why all six-hundred and thirteen *mitzvot* rest upon a single *mitzvah* – the *mitzvah* of faith. Moreover, strength of faith is especially demonstrated when guarding oneself from the three-hundred and sixty-five prohibitions. In doing, they become an encompassing light that protects the soul from prosecution in the supernal realm.

This is analogous to a person who wears a coat of armor for protection from arrows. Similarly, the verse states,¹¹² “He enclothes himself in righteousness, like a coat of mail.” This refers to keeping the three-hundred and sixty-five prohibitions that protect a person from enemy arrows, which are the harsh husks (*Kelipot*) of total wickedness. This guards against,¹¹³ “Their tongue, which is like sharpened arrows” that prosecute in the supernal realm and thus devour and siphon off vitality from the side of holiness. This is as stated,¹¹⁴ “Your wickedness will chastise you,” and as known regarding the verse,¹¹⁵ “They devour Israel with every mouth,” or as stated,¹¹⁶ “When men rose up against us... Blessed is *HaShem*-יהוה who did not give us as prey to their teeth.” As known, this also is the matter of the seven bad cows that swallowed the good cows, though¹¹⁷

¹¹² Isaiah 59:17

¹¹³ Jeremiah 9:7

¹¹⁴ Jeremiah 2:19

¹¹⁵ Isaiah 9:11

¹¹⁶ Psalms 124:2-6

¹¹⁷ Genesis 41:21

“their appearance remained bad.” Similarly, the verse states,¹¹⁸ “Israel is swallowed up amongst the nations,” that is, by the seventy angels of the nations. This then, is the meaning of,¹¹⁹ “They devour Israel with every mouth.” This means that goodness becomes consumed by wickedness, as known.

We therefore find that the three-hundred and sixty-five negative, prohibitive *mitzvot*, act as an encompassing light that protects the positive *mitzvot*, which are called the “two-hundred and forty-eight organs of the King.” This is so that the external forces will not draw vitality from them whatsoever. This is why it is specifically “My Name (*Shemi*-שמי)” with *Yod*-י and *Heh*-ה that corresponds to the three-hundred and sixty-five negative commandments. It is specifically with the *Yod*-י and *Heh*-ה of *HaShem*’s-יהוה name, which correspond to the Divine attributes of *Chochmah*-Wisdom and *Binah*-Understanding.¹²⁰ This is because the principal protection from all wickedness, specifically takes place within one’s thought, since it is there that the inner unification of *Abba*-Father (*Chochmah*-insight) and *Imma*-Mother (*Binah*-understanding) occurs, which is the source and encompassing light of the upper unity (*Yichuda Ila’a*) in the two-hundred and forty-eight positive commandments.

The opposite is also true. When a person’s thoughts are blemished, then the encompassing lights of *Chochmah*-insight and *Binah*-understanding withdraw and he can fall into every manner of wickedness. This is similar to the statement,¹²¹ “Thoughts of sinning are worse than the sin itself.” For, although one is only punished for

¹¹⁸ Hosea 8:8

¹¹⁹ Isaiah 9:11

¹²⁰ *Zohar (Idra Zuta) HaAzinu* 290b; *Tanya, Igeret HaTeshuvah* Ch. 4; *Maamarei Admor HaEmtza’ee, Dvarim* Vol. 2, p. 366 & p. 656.

¹²¹ Talmud Bavli, *Yoma* 29a

the act and not for the thought, nevertheless, the thought is worse than the sin itself, because it is the thought that acts as an encompassing shield and protection, as previously discussed. Proof of this is the fact that when it comes to any positive thought,¹²² “The Holy One, blessed be He, joins it with a deed,” as known.

Additional proof is from the *mitzvah* of Torah study which is equal to all other mitzvot and as our sages, of blessed memory said,¹²³ “The land (of Israel) was only lost due to neglect of Torah study,” as the verse states,¹²⁴ “Why is the land lost and laid waste like a wilderness... because they forsook My Torah etc.” The reason for this was explained above, namely, that the root of Torah is within the *Chochmah* (insight) of the brain in the head and is the source that encompasses all two-hundred and forty-eight organs, corresponding to the two-hundred and forty-eight positive *mitzvot*. Therefore, neglect of Torah study causes blemishes in the encompassing thought and analysis of the words of Torah, the automatic result of which is that the positive *mitzvot* lack their root. The result is as if he has caused blemish in all the positive *mitzvot*.

Likewise, guarding oneself from wickedness is specifically dependent upon the thoughts of the mind. We observe that the cause of falling into total wickedness always originates in the mind, in that one deepens his thoughts into evil matters, such as lust and theft or the like, and from thinking it, one comes to doing it, God forbid. The matter of “turning from wickedness” primarily applies to thought. In other words, when a person pushes all bad thoughts out of his mind and completely distances himself from them, the automatic result is

¹²² Talmud Bavli, *Kiddushin* 40a

¹²³ Introduction to *Eicha Rabba*; Talmud Yerushalmi *Chagiga* 1:7; Talmud Bavli *Yoma* 9b.

¹²⁴ Jeremiah 9:11-12

that he will not come to do them, God forbid. We therefore see that entertaining the thought of sin in one's mind is worse than the sin itself, because it leads to it.

It is therefore understood that strong faith in the fulfillment of the positive *mitzvot* is as a nature in our souls. However, beyond this, there is a power of faith in *Chochmah* (insight) and *Binah* (understanding) in the thought of the mind, which protects the soul from every kind of evil, and is the power to push away and remove one's thoughts from evil with all of one's might and strength, solely out of faith. This faith is called an encompassing light (*Makif*) and is called by the term¹²⁵ *Ateret* (Crown), as known.

(However, it is possible that this encompassing light of faith can be in regard to falsehood or even in regard to something evil. This is as stated,¹²⁶ “When a burglar stands upon the breach [and is about to enter,] he calls out to the Merciful One for assistance.” Now, the fact that he calls out to *HaShem*-יהוה to respond and assist him in the burglary, is a true prayer resulting from his faith. On the other hand, the fact that through this theft he commits an act of pure wickedness – is a result of the lust of his animal soul and does not cancel out his faith at all. This is because the encompassing light of faith radiates externally from afar and does not penetrate him in a revealed way at all. This is the meaning of the statement,¹²⁷ “The name of Heaven is habitually expressed in all mouths,” – even in the mouths of false witnesses who swear falsely in *HaShem's*-יהוה name, God forbid. Nonetheless, in and of itself, their power of faith is true. Therefore,

¹²⁵ Pardes Rimonim, Shaar 23, Atara; Also see Maamarei Admor HaZaken 5565 Vol. 2, p. 740; Vol. 1 p.4 (in the name of the early Kabbalists); Nevi'im p. 223; Likkutei Torah, V'Etchanan 5c.

¹²⁶ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 63a

¹²⁷ See *Maamarei Admor HaEmtza'ee, Kuntreisim*, p. 142; *Shaar HaTeshuvah* Vol. 1, p. 8b.

the *mitzvah* of faith is specifically to bring it into a state of inner revelation within the mind and heart with great strength, even though it is an inherited trait from our forefathers¹²⁸ [in an encompassing fashion]. This will suffice for the understanding.)

This clarifies the statement in *Midrash Eicha*¹²⁹ that at the time of the first Holy Temple, *HaShem*-יהו"ה overlooked their sins of theft, licentiousness and bloodshed, but he did not overlook their sin of neglecting the study of Torah. This is as stated,¹³⁰ “Why was the land [of Israel] lost and laid waste like a wilderness? *HaShem*-יהו"ה said, because they forsook My Torah etc.” For, when there is a strong bond of thought and thorough analysis in Torah study, that is, in an aspect of the *Yod*-י and *Heh*-ה of *Chochmah* (insight) and *Binah* (understanding) in the minds of the community of Israel in general, then they are bound with and unified with *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה thoughts, blessed be He. For, He too studies Torah in His essential wisdom every day,¹³¹ and although it is vested in physical matters, this is not concealment at all relative to His Essence, as known. This is because,¹³² “His words are alive and established,” literally as they were at the giving of the Torah. Moreover, in relation to the aspect of *Ma"H* of *Chochmah*, the aspect of the garment of *Nogah* does not cause concealment altogether. This will suffice for the understanding.

¹²⁸ Tanya, Ch. 18 & Ch. 33

¹²⁹ Introduction to *Eicha Rabba*

¹³⁰ Jeremiah 9:11-12

¹³¹ Talmud Bavli, *Avoda Zarah* 3b

¹³² See *Kriyat Shma Blessing, Emet VeYatziv*

Chapter Seven

We now must introduce one additional matter. As known,¹³³ “God made each thing opposite the other,” – literally. Just as on the side of holiness there is the power for Godly faith, so likewise on the side of evil there also is a power of faith, which is called “alien faith.” Thus, our sages, of blessed memory, said in Tractate Yoma,¹³⁴ that the first holy Temple was destroyed due to the cardinal sins of idolatry, licentiousness and bloodshed (however, the Holy One blessed be He overlooked these sins until they specifically transgressed the sin of neglecting the study of Torah, as mentioned before). On the other hand, though we know that in the second Temple they were occupied in Torah study, the performance of *mitzvot* and charity, nonetheless it was destroyed due to the baseless hatred (*Sinat Chinam*) that was rampant amongst them. This teaches us that baseless hatred is equal to the three cardinal sins of idolatry, licentiousness, and bloodshed.

Now, we need to understand. If they were involved in Torah, *mitzvot* and acts of charity, why was the second Temple destroyed due to baseless hatred!? As we know, the vast majority of Jews at that time, actually possessed the quality of self-sacrifice for Torah and *mitzvot*. One example is the Jews in the time of the Maccabees. They were totally self-sacrificing for the sake of Torah and the service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה when the Greeks attempted to abrogate Torah and *mitzvot*. This was similarly the case in the generations of the “pairs”

¹³³ Ecclesiastes 7:14

¹³⁴ Talmud Bavli *Yoma* 9b

such as Hillel and Shammai and their students, until the generation of Rabbi Akiva and his companions, such as Rabbi Chaninah ben Teradion,¹³⁵ all of whom were martyred in the sanctification of *HaShem's*-יהו"ה name and for the sake of Torah and *mitzvot*, as known. How then, could it be that the second Temple was destroyed for the sin of baseless hatred and that this alone was comparable to the three cardinal sins of idolatry, licentiousness and bloodshed!?

The explanation is that “God made each thing opposite the other.” During the time of the first Temple, the power of Godly faith was openly revealed amongst the Jewish people. More specifically, there were open revelations of *HaShem's*-יהו"ה Godliness in the Holy of Holies, such as the miracles associated with the “holy ark” and the tablets. Moreover, the revelation of the spirit of prophecy was poured upon the prophets etc. Now, at the very same time, on the opposing side of evil, alien faiths were also rampant, such as the worship of the stars and constellations and the worship of *Ba'al* and *Ashera* and the like. Throughout the period of the kings of Israel and Judah, until the generation of the prophet Jeremiah, many Jews adhered to idolatrous practices. This is as stated,¹³⁶ “Their wives offered to other gods,” and,¹³⁷ “There sat women weeping for the *Tamuz* idol,” or,¹³⁸ “Since we ceased our offerings to the queen of heaven... we have been in want of all things etc.” Similarly, there were also a multitude of false prophets at the time, such as the prophets of *Ba'al* and *Ashera* in their various casts, as known.

¹³⁵ Talmud Bavli, *Brachot* 61b; *Avoda Zarah* 18b

¹³⁶ Jeremiah 44:15, 19, 20, 25

¹³⁷ Ezekiel 8:14

¹³⁸ Jeremiah 44:18

Moreover, even a prophet who speaks in the name of *HaShem*-יהו"ה and admonishes the people not to worship idols, but says even a single statement in the name of *HaShem*-יהו"ה that *HaShem*-יהו"ה did not command him to say, that prophet too¹³⁹ “has spoken iniquity in the name of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, and is subject to the death penalty” no less than the prophets of *Ba'al*. This accords with the statement in *Parshat Re'eh*,¹⁴⁰ “If there arises in the midst of you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams...and the sign or wonder comes to pass... and he spoke to you saying, ‘let us go after other gods...’ he shall be put to death, because he has spoken perversion against *HaShem*-יהו"ה etc.” Similarly, in *Parshat Shoftim*¹⁴¹ it states, “But the prophet who shall speak any word presumptuously in My Name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die. And if you say in your heart, ‘how shall we know the word that *HaShem*-יהו"ה has not spoken?’ When a prophet speaks in the name of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, if the thing does not follow nor come to pass, that is the thing which *HaShem*-יהו"ה has not spoken, the prophet has spoken it presumptuously, you shall not be afraid of him.” From this it is understood that whether a prophet speaks in the name of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, that which *HaShem*-יהו"ה never told him to speak, or whether a prophet speaks in the name of false gods, their judgment is equal. This then, is the primary qualification of false prophecy. It is similar to the spirit that said,¹⁴² “Let me go out and be a lying spirit in the mouths of all these prophets etc.”

¹³⁹ Deuteronomy 13:2, 3, 6; Also see Rambam *Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah* Ch. 9; *Avoda Zarah* Ch. 5, and the commentaries there.

¹⁴⁰ Deuteronomy 13:2, 3, 6

¹⁴¹ Deuteronomy 18:20-22

¹⁴² Kings I 22:22

Since at the time of the first Holy temple, *HaShem* 's-יהו"ה Godly influence descended in a manner that Godly faith was openly revealed, through the miraculous presence of the holy ark, the tablets and true prophets of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, therefore, on the opposing side of the “evil husks” there was the aspect of alien and false faiths with false prophets, such as the prophets of *Ba'al*. Moreover, many people believed that these alien gods were the source of physical sustenance, as the women stated, "Since we ceased our offerings to the Queen of heaven... we are in want of all things etc.” This is the diametric opposite of true Godly faith, the primary aspect of which is to believe in *HaShem*-יהו"ה alone, blessed be He, and that He personally supervises every detail of creation with Divine providence. This is as stated,¹⁴³ “Your eyes are open upon all the ways of mankind,” and similarly it states,¹⁴⁴ “*HaShem*-יהו"ה looks down from the heavens and beholds all mankind,” or,¹⁴⁵ “[And it shall come to pass on that day, that *HaShem*-יהו"ה will punish] the hosts of heaven on high, [and the kings of the earth upon the earth etc.]” For no angel or star has the authority to effect any of its actions without *HaShem* 's-יהו"ה will, for they are merely like an axe in the hand of the woodchopper¹⁴⁶ or like a horse in relation to its rider, as it states,¹⁴⁷ “Can a hatchet glory over the one who chops with it?” Similarly, it states,¹⁴⁸ “Behold, *HaShem*-יהו"ה rides upon a swift cloud” for the hosts of heaven are called,¹⁴⁹ “Clouds upon which He rides.” This is the meaning of what we say

¹⁴³ Jeremiah 32:19

¹⁴⁴ Psalms 33:13

¹⁴⁵ Isaiah 24:21

¹⁴⁶ *Moreh Nevuchim*, Part III, Ch. 29.

¹⁴⁷ Isaiah 10:15

¹⁴⁸ Isaiah 19:1

¹⁴⁹ *Zohar*, Bo 43a

in our prayers,¹⁵⁰ “He arranges the stars in their positions in the firmament according to His will” - literally.

The false prophets, one the other hand, had false beliefs and gave primary importance to His subsidiary instruments. That is, they believed in the stars and constellations and offered incense to them in the belief that power was granted to them to bestow influence upon the world and conduct it. This is as stated,¹⁵¹ “They have forsaken Me, the source of living waters, and have hewn out broken cisterns that hold no water.” This, literally, is contrary to true Godly faith in *HaShem*-יהו"ה, in that “God made each thing opposite the other.” It is also written,¹⁵² “One nation shall strive for power over the other nation,” which Rashi explains, “They will not be equal in greatness; rather, when one rises the other will fall, as scripture states,¹⁵³ ‘I shall become full from the destroyed city.’ That is, Tyre only became full (and gained power) with the destruction of Jerusalem.”¹⁵⁴ Similarly, at that time, the opposing forces struggled for power over the Godly faith which was openly revealed during the period of the first Temple. This happened by means of false faiths which were similar in their subject, namely, they too were involved with Godliness. In other words, they did not deny the simple unity of *HaShem*-יהו"ה,¹⁵⁵ God forbid. On the contrary, they still continued to bring offerings in the holy Temple and even fulfilled all of the positive mitzvot. Nonetheless, they were drawn to idolatry through false prophets, and this sin resulted in the destruction of the first Temple.

¹⁵⁰ *Arvit* evening prayer, blessings of *Kriyat Shma*

¹⁵¹ Jeremiah 2:13

¹⁵² Genesis 25:23

¹⁵³ Ezekiel 26:2

¹⁵⁴ Talmud Bavli, Megilla 26a; Pesachim 42b.

¹⁵⁵ See *Maamarei Admor HaEmtza'ee, Hanachot* 5577 p. 225, and the references there.

This is because Godly faith was revealed in full force, such as the revelation of the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*-יהו"ה (Shechinah) in the Holy of Holies, which was the revelation of the Essence of *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Godliness which is called *Sovev Kol Almin* (transcending all worlds), as we learn that,¹⁵⁶ “He constricted His Indwelling Presence between the two poles of the holy ark etc.,” and the primary Godly faith is specifically in the essence of *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Godliness, which¹⁵⁷ “is not graspable by any thought whatsoever,” and is called *Sovev Kol Almin* (transcending all the worlds). It is for this reason that faith is called by the term “Crown (*Ateret*)” because it is comparable to a beautiful crown upon the head etc. Therefore, it also states,¹⁵⁸ “He is truth and she is Faith.” This is because the faith of the community of Israel acts as a receptacle to contain the aspect of the Truth of the Essence of the Unlimited Light of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed be He, as He is – literally, in that He is called Truth, as it states,¹⁵⁹ “Your truth, my G-d etc.”

However, the second Temple lacked five things;¹⁶⁰ the ark, the tablets, prophecy etc. Rather, only a tiny radiance of Godly light in the form of a heavenly voice¹⁶¹ (*Bat Kol*) was left at their disposal. There no longer was a revelation of *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Godliness as He literally is, even in the Holy of Holies. Rather there was only revelation as revealed through the filter of a “garment” that conceals His essential light. Furthermore, this revelation was brought about only through the outer services in the Temple, such as the service of

¹⁵⁶ *Bereishit Rabba* 4:4

¹⁵⁷ Introduction to *Tikkunei Zohar* 17a.

¹⁵⁸ *Zohar Balak* 198b

¹⁵⁹ Psalms 71:22

¹⁶⁰ Talmud Bavli, *Yomah* 21b and the commentaries there.

¹⁶¹ Talmud Bavli, *Sota* 48b

the altar (*Mizbe'ach*), the table (*Shulchan*), and the candelabra (*Menorah*), which are only the aspect of Godly light as it is drawn down by way of the chaining down and enclothing of the worlds (*Seder Hishtalshelut*); in other words, *HaShem* יהו"ה's inner light that fills all worlds (*Memale Kol Almin*).

Therefore, in the husks (*Kelipah*) that oppose holiness there also was only opposition in an inner, pervading manner of enclothing below, rather than in a way of alien faith, as before. This is because, though "Alien faiths" are false faiths, nonetheless, at least they deal with the matter of Godliness, except that they err in believing that the star or constellation is a primary source of influence. This is a false faith in *HaShem*-יהו"ה, for it is the mistaken belief that He granted actual authority to the stars and constellations or the like.

However, since during the period of the second Temple the light of Godly faith that encompasses all worlds (*Sovev Kol Almin*) was not strongly revealed in the Holy of Holies, therefore the opposition to it through false prophecy was also not strong. Rather, the alien faith was manifested in worldly matters, primarily in the form of baseless hatred of one Jew to another. The reason is because baseless hatred also is caused primarily through the power of faith. That is, that a person believes the gossip and slander about his fellow Jew and thereby becomes hateful and vindictive toward him. Likewise, the other fellow also believes the gossip and slander about him and becomes hateful and vindictive too etc. If only they would not believe the slander and gossip about each other, then on the contrary, their hearts would be strengthened to seek only goodness for each other and they would remain faithful and beloved friends who only wish the best for each other.

Rather, this is caused by a spirit of delusion¹⁶² which can even cause divisiveness and disunity between the closest friends, thus bringing accusations from Above upon all of them, because when a friend becomes an enemy below in this physical realm, this arouses harsh judgments and accusations upon the spiritual life of his soul above. Thus, the sin that he has transgressed below awakens, to become¹⁶³ “a whip with which to smite him” and literally disrupts his family life, his health and his livelihood. Additionally, when one Jew hates his fellow, he also awakens supernal accusations against his fellow. All these are the work of the “Accuser” (*Satan*) to cause divisiveness amongst people and this is the reason for the great length of the exile. There is not a single city or place that is not embroiled in baseless hatred stemming from false beliefs, because people believe lies and become vindictive towards each other, until they “swallow each other alive” and awaken accusations which destroy everything. This is especially true of this orphaned generation, in which even the leaders of the generation have fallen into exceedingly baseless hatred. (This may be compared to how it was amongst the princes of Israel in the period of the first Temple, as stated in Tractate Yoma that,¹⁶⁴ “They would eat and drink together, but would stab each other with the swords of their tongues etc.”)

Now, aside for the belief in gossip, lies and slander, another primary cause of hatred is envy towards whoever is wealthy and successful in earning his livelihood. The hatred and envy towards such people is tremendous. This tendency is mostly found amongst

¹⁶² Isaiah 19:14

¹⁶³ *Zohar* introduction 11b

¹⁶⁴ Talmud Bavli, *Yoma* 9b

the nations of the world. About this the verse states,¹⁶⁵ “Their tongue is a sharpened arrow to speak deceit; with his mouth one speaks peaceably to his neighbor, but in his heart he lays in wait for him” to overpower and kill his neighbor. Such is the punishment upon those who are wealthy and successful, but who show no mercy or kindness to the poor and impoverished. Rather, such a person takes all sustenance for himself, places every manner of imposition and affliction upon the poor,¹⁶⁶ but is lenient on himself, may *HaShem*-יהוה atone. This will suffice for the understanding.

¹⁶⁵ Jeremiah 9:7

¹⁶⁶ Samuel II Ch. 12

Chapter Eight

Now, after all these words of truth a person may clearly understand the great power of strong faith, and how it includes and is the foundation of all the positive and negative *mitzvot*-commandments, as it states,¹⁶⁷ “For I believe Your mitzvot.” Faith also includes all the particular levels of service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה in the mind and heart, in both emotional and intellectual love and awe of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, each person according to his time and place, as well as the delight in *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Godliness that the soul experiences when a person is spiritually worthy. This is as known regarding the verse¹⁶⁸ “My flesh and heart will sing for joy to the living God,” and similarly,¹⁶⁹ “My soul yearns and pines for the courts of *HaShem*-יהו"ה” with sweetness, pleasantness, and endearment etc. The same is true in the opposite sense, in regard to the great anguish and bitterness that is experienced when one is distant from the unity of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, which touches the very essential point of the heart, as it does in the truly penitent, as known. All this comes about solely through the power of faith, which is imbedded in the very essence of the soul, and all the above-mentioned matters are only like rays of light that branch out of faith in the service of the mind and heart, in deeds and in acts of penitence from the depth of the heart. The same applies to the delight in *HaShem*-יהו"ה that is experienced on Shabbat and holidays.

It is therefore incumbent upon each and every person to come close to *HaShem*-יהו"ה with prayer, repentance and good deeds, and

¹⁶⁷ Psalms 119:66

¹⁶⁸ Psalms 84:3

¹⁶⁹ Psalms 84:3

to greatly strengthen his heart with the power and might of this essential faith in *HaShem* יהו"ה-ה Essential Being, specifically. It is specifically through this that the light of Truth will shine in all aspects of his daily service, in his mind and heart, in his fulfillment of the positive *mitzvot* and in desisting from doing the negative *mitzvot*, and in his repentance of returning to *HaShem*-יהו"ה etc. Regarding this it specifically states,¹⁷⁰ "They are renewed every morning; Great is Your faithfulness etc." That is, the Godly soul shines every morning specifically because of the power of faith. About this it states, "The righteous lives by his faith." In other words, it is faith that enlivens a person with Godly life. Through this even his physical livelihood will be enlivened specifically through *HaShem* יהו"ה-ה Divine providence. This will suffice for the understanding.

Hence, we see that the very essence and foundation of all Godly service is specifically the *mitzvah* of simple faith. About this we say in the Haggadah,¹⁷¹ "This is what stood for our fathers and us etc." "This" refers specifically to the *mitzvah* of faith (*Emunah*), in that its merit is eternal and rescues us from every manner of accusation, both supernal and temporal. This is as stated, "I have not despised them to destroy them by abrogating my covenant with them etc." This also is the meaning of the continuation of the verse in the Haggadah, "For not only one rose up against us to destroy us etc," (as is explained in Shaar HaEmunah).¹⁷²

Therefore, it is exceedingly important for every person to strengthen and arouse the power of faith in his soul, for certainly every Jew possesses it as a nature, literally as an inheritance from our

¹⁷⁰ Lamentations 3:23

¹⁷¹ Haggadah Shel Pesach

¹⁷² Shaar HaEmunah p. 11a

forefathers. This is why the *mitzvah* of faith is not explicitly mentioned in the Torah – because a “commandment” is not applicable here. Rather, all that is necessary is just to awaken what inherently is already there for its light to shine forth in a revealed manner with strength and fortitude. This will suffice for the understanding.

Now, after truly strengthening one's faith, each person according to his ability may come to an aspect of revelation and illumination of Godly knowledge and the specific levels of Godly excitement which are awakened through the contemplation (*Hitbonenut*) of the *HaShem*'s-ה"ה upper unity (*Yichuda Ila'a*) and His lower unity (*Yichuda Tata'a*) during the recital of the *Shema*, this being the *mitzvah* to acknowledge *HaShem*'s-ה"ה unity, with Godly comprehension and recognition in the mind and heart, each person according to his stature. Included, are the *mitzvot* to love and fear *HaShem*-ה"ה during the recital of the two chapters of the *Shema*.¹⁷³ This is because love and fear of *HaShem*-ה"ה, whether intellectual or emotional, are only branches that stem from the power of comprehension and recognition in the mind and heart. Therefore, we first state, “Listen Israel,” and only afterwards we say, “You shall love *HaShem*-ה"ה your God etc. and serve Him” through the acceptance of the yoke of His kingdom, as known.

All these matters are clearly evident to those who see with the eye of the intellect, and it is apparent that faith is the pillar and foundation for all Godly service, because “everything follows that which establishes it.” The same is true regarding that which comes after simple faith, which is the *mitzvah* to know *HaShem*-ה"ה, as it

¹⁷³ See *Siddur of Alter Rebbe, Shaar HaTefilin* 15d and on; *Torat Chaim, Noach* 58b.

states,¹⁷⁴ “I will betroth you to Me with faith and with the knowledge of *HaShem*-יהו"ה.” Similarly, it states,¹⁷⁵ “You shall know this day and set it upon your heart that *HaShem*-יהו"ה He is the God; in the heavens above and on the earth below, there is nothing else,” and,¹⁷⁶ “You have been shown to know that *HaShem*-יהו"ה He is the God, there is nothing besides Him,” as mentioned above in regard to the matter of the negative *mitzvah* not to forget.

With this purpose in mind, I have committed myself to awaken the hearts of my brothers and friends, all those who are like me. For although they are already accustomed in their minds and hearts regarding the manner in which to receive the details of Godly knowledge, nevertheless, they should not err in their souls to think that they have touched upon the ultimate truth of *HaShem's*-יהו"ה Godly light. For although it is good for those who have tasted, and although ecstasy and Godly pleasure is accessible at propitious times, such as on Shabbat and biblical holidays, nonetheless, they must venture to truly behold the ultimate truth, this being the true and ultimate foundation for all Godly toil in the mind, the heart and in action, which is specifically the *mitzvah* of faith (*Emunah*). I therefore I have taken it upon myself to collect words of truth regarding the matter and essence of faith. In addition, I have collected various discourses and precious expositions on the subject of the splitting of the sea and the exodus from Egypt, as they relate to the subject of faith. However, my goal here is not to merely expound. Rather, these are solely words that have been gathered from or founded upon the path of light and truth that was illuminated by my

¹⁷⁴ Hosea 2:22

¹⁷⁵ Deuteronomy 4:39

¹⁷⁶ Deuteronomy 4:35

father and master, the Godly genius of blessed memory, in his discourses, that have been accepted in the hearts of all who heard and understood them. Therefore, everyone whose desire is to find serenity in his soul, especially in these difficult times, should set it upon his heart with a strong commitment, to come close to *HaShem*-יהו"ה through strong faith in the very essence of his soul. This will suffice for the understanding.

In addition, I have found it fitting to join to this composition, which is called “The Gate of Faith” (*Shaar HaEmunah*), an additional pamphlet that speaks about the matter of the *HaShem* 's-יהו"ה unity, in all the details of the chaining down of the ten *Sefirot* in the four worlds of *Atzilut*, *Briyah*, *Yetzirah* and *Asiyah*. It summarizes everything that a person can bring close to his intellect in a manner of comprehension that can vest within and be grasped by the mind and heart regarding every detail of the chaining down of the worlds (*Seder Hishtalshelut*). That is, it explains everything from the very first *Tzimtzum* (constriction) until the very end of the world of *Asiyah* (Action). This composition is generally known by the name *Kuntres HaHitbonenut* (The Tract on Contemplation),¹⁷⁷ and many have yearned to see it in print, for there are many mistakes in the hand-copied manuscripts. I trust that my positive intentions for the good of every person who truly and honestly seeks God, will be desirable before *HaShem*-יהו"ה and that I will be judged meritoriously in whatever may be found to not be fitting in the eyes of the wise, as it states,¹⁷⁸ “Who can discern his errors etc.”

¹⁷⁷ This refers to *Shaar HaYichud*, translated as The Gate of Unity, and is known as the key to the teachings of Chassidut.

¹⁷⁸ Psalms 19:13

May *HaShem*-ה"ה יהו uplift the horn of Israel and enlighten their eyes with the light of *HaShem*-ה"ה יהו, the eternal light, with grace, kindness, and mercy. May He bless them with spiritual and physical life and may He always support and uplift them ¹⁷⁹ until the coming of the redeemer.

These are the words of one who speaks in truth and with the love of the light of truth and faith, “a friend that is closer than a brother,”¹⁸⁰ who is bound with the bonds of great love and eternal love to all those who seek and search out *HaShem*-ה"ה יהו in the ways of the Torah of truth, the mitzvot, prayer and repentance.

From the depths of my heart,

Dov Ber, the son of my father, master, teacher and Rabbi, the holy genius, our master and teacher, Rabbi Shneur Zalman, may the memory of the righteous bring blessings and may his soul repose in Eden.

¹⁷⁹ Isaiah 63:9

¹⁸⁰ Proverbs 18:24