

ספר

שערי קדושה

למורנו ורבנו הרב הקדוש

רבי חיים ויטאל זצ"ל

Gates of Holiness

By the Holy Kabbalist

Rabbi Chaim Vital

A practical guide to attaining Divine Inspiration, the Holy Spirit, Prophecy, the revelation of Eliyahu the prophet and the souls of Tzaddikim etc.

Translated and adapted into English by

Rabbi Amiram Markel

Rabbi Yehudah Shimon Markel

ISBN: 978-1-387-69169-2

Copyright © 2022 (5782) by
The Neirot Foundation

All rights are reserved. This book may not be reproduced, in part or in whole, in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, audio-recording, or by any information storage and retrieval systems now known or hereafter invented, without the express written permission of The Neirot Foundation of Jewish Thought.

Other books by the authors:

HaShem Is One – גנת אגוז באנגלית
The Knowledge of HaShem – ספר דעה את ה'
The Beginning of Wisdom – ספר התחלת החכמה
Gate of Unity-English translation – ספר שער היחוד באנגלית
Gate of Unity with commentary – שער היחוד המבואר
The Principles of Religion – קונטרס עקרי הדת
The Teachings of The Rebbe – ספר המאמרים תשי"א-תשט"ו
Going Kosher – ספר כשרון המעשה
Essential Faith – הקדמה לשער האמונה
Revealing the Infinite – המשך ס"ו באנגלית
The Path of Life – דרך חיים באנגלית

These books and more are available online at:

www.Neirot.com
&
www.Truekabbalah.com

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 path of 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 disseminate these teachings,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 by the Prophet Amos,⁴ “Then he shall say: ‘Silence, for we must not make mention of the name of *Hashem!*’” Rather, one must toil only to **know** *HaShem* and thereby know His name, as stated,⁵ “For he has loved Me, therefore I shall deliver him; I

¹ Leviticus 22:32

² Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 115a

³ Kings I 8:60

⁴ Amos 6:10

⁵ Psalms 91:14

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 warns us that the only sin *HaShem* does not forgive, is the sin of bearing His Holy Name in vain.⁶ 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 either be enjoyed by someone who will appreciate its value, or if is tattered and worn 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*. This is as stated,⁷ “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 of these teachings will be the final act that ushers in the true and complete redemption. May we fully

⁶ Exodus 20:6

⁷ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 13b

realize the time,⁸ “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 sages⁹ 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 world shall be filled with the knowledge of *HaShem* as the waters cover the ocean floor.’”

5 Av, 5782
The Translators

⁸ Mishneh Torah, Melachim u’Milchamot 12:5

⁹ Who will teach the entire world about *HaShem*, for all the nations will be thirsty for this knowledge and will greatly desire it.

Preface of Rabbi Chaim Vital

I have seen those who seek to ascend, but they are few. They long to climb up, but the ladder is hidden from their view. They contemplate the books of the ancients, seeking to discover the paths of life; the way upon which to tread and the deeds that will uplift their soul to its supernal root, so that they may adhere to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, who is Eternal Perfection, blessed is He; similar to the prophets who spent all their days adhering to their Maker. Through that adhesion the Holy Spirit rested upon them and showed them the path where light dwells, enlightening their eyes in the secrets of Torah, as King David, peace be upon him, said,¹⁰ “Unveil my eyes, that I may behold wonders from Your Torah.” The Holy Spirit guided them on a straight path to the “Inhabited City” that is prepared for those who ascend.

After the prophets came the ancient *Chassidim*. These were hermits who sought to follow in the footsteps of the prophets and emulate them. Living in caverns and deserts, they secluded themselves from society. Some remained secluded in their homes but behaved like those in the deserts. Day and night they never ceased praising their Creator through studying His Torah and singing the Psalms of King David, peace be upon him, which gladden the heart. This they did constantly, until their mind adhered to the supernal lights with powerful and mighty yearning. This was their practice all their days, until

¹⁰ Psalms 119

they rose to the level of receiving the Holy Spirit, prophesying unceasingly. However, since each one acted alone and the character of one person is dissimilar to that of another, the means and methods of how these holy men served *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, were lost to us, so that we cannot emulate their ways.

Because of this, the hearts and knowledge of the following generations dwindled and people who attained the Holy Spirit vanished. These holy men went to their resting places, leaving us groaning from thirst and hunger. Finally, hopelessness of ever exploring this wondrous wisdom sprouted in the hearts of men. Only two or three grains may be found in a stalk of wheat; one in a city or two in a clan, who seek water, but there is none, for all vision has been sealed. This is because the methods of how to approach and come close to the inner holiness were never written in a book.

Later, there arose men who sought to attain spiritual levels by invoking the angels, through the power of invoking their holy names. However, they hoped for light and beheld darkness; for the angels they conjured were of a very low order, who were appointed to affect matters of this lowly world. This being so, they are composed of both good and evil and themselves perceive neither Truth nor the supernal lights. Therefore, they revealed matters that were mixed with good and evil, truth and error and vain things; matters, such as mystical cures, alchemy (the art of transforming silver into gold and copper or tin into silver), amulets, oaths and incantations.

Furthermore, these people fell to imbibing wine and strong drink.

If only they would have been as devoted to studying Torah and doing mitzvot! They would have learned from the example of the four great sages of Israel who entered Paradise.¹¹ Not one of them left unscathed, except for the saintly Rabbi Akiva, and even in his case, the attendant angels attempted to eject him. Had not *HaShem*-יהו"ה helped him, he would not have entered in peace and left in peace. If even the greatest sages of Israel were thus endangered, how much more so, we, who cannot begin to compare to them?

Truth be told, these holy sages aspired to attain very great levels, bordering on prophecy. Therefore, they were placed in harm's way. However, in regard to us, would that we should merit even a tiny glimmer of the Holy spirit, such as the revelation of Eliyahu the Prophet, which many have merited to attain, as well known; or such as the revelation of the souls of the righteous *Tzaddikim*, as mentioned often in *Sefer HaTikkunim*-The book of Rectifications.¹²

Furthermore, even in our times, I have witnessed holy men who merited attaining all this. Moreover, there is such a level that a person's own soul, because of its great refinement, is revealed to him and directs him in all matters. All these ways are within reach to those who are worthy of them, even in our times. Still and all, great discernment and much experience are

¹¹ The word paradise is a corruption of the Hebrew word Pardes.

¹² The subject of the revelation of the souls of the righteous *Tzaddikim* is discussed at further length in *Kuntres HaShitatchut* of Rabbi DovBer of Lubavitch, translated into English under the title *Visiting the Gravesites of the Righteous*.

necessary in order that it be established upon truth, for perhaps a different spirit visited him; one that is impure. All this will be explained in Part Three, Gate Eight.

Due to all the above, I feel compelled to free true seekers of their difficulties, by supporting their right hand and instructing them concerning the path they should follow. Therefore, I have decided to compose this book, small in quantity but great in quality; may it enlighten the eyes of the wise.

I have called it, “Gates of Holiness.” In it, I will explain hidden matters that have never been openly taught in previous generations. I have received these teachings directly from the mouth of the holy man of God, the messenger of *HaShem* of *Hosts* – יהו"ה צבאות, my master and teacher, Rabbi Yitzchak Luria, the holy Ari'zal.

Being that these are concealed and hidden matters that have forever been kept secret, I will, therefore, reveal only a hands-breadth while concealing two thousand cubits. Thus, with great difficulty, I will unlock the gates of holiness and push them open just a crack, merely the width of a pin. May it be that those who are worthy, merit entering the inner sanctum. *HaShem*-יהו"ה is good and will not deprive goodness from those who walk in purity.

I have divided the book into four parts:

Part One – Regarding saintly and ascetic conduct that leads to the attainment of the Holy Spirit. This part is divided into six gates.

Part Two – Words of rebuke, including an explanation of reward and punishment in connection to the positive and negative commandments-*mitzvot*. This part is divided into eight gates.

Part Three – Regarding how to attain the Holy Spirit. This part is divided into eight parts.

Part Four – Regarding methods of meditative “unifications” (*Yichudim*) through which the Holy Spirit may be attained. I have personally tried and tested these and have found them to be effective. However, I will only enumerate their details briefly, by way of signposts that point the way.

Part One

Gate One

The blemishes caused by transgressing the *mitzvot* of *HaShem* יהו"ה's Torah

Let me instill you with wisdom and enlighten you regarding the great damage that befalls a Jew who transgresses any of the 365 *mitzvot* that *HaShem*-יהו"ה forbade us from doing or desists from fulfilling any of the 248 positive *mitzvot* that He commanded us to do.

As known, the physical body of man is not his actual identity. It is merely called human flesh, as in the verse,¹³ “You clothed me with skin and flesh and covered me with bones and veins.” Furthermore, it is written,¹⁴ “It may not be applied to the flesh of man etc.” From this we understand that man is the inner aspect, whereas, the body (the flesh) is similar to a garment. The intellectual soul of man, which is his true identity, is invested in the body as long as he remains in this physical world. However, upon death, he is divested of the garment of the body and instead, becomes clothed in a spiritual, rarified and pure garment. This is as scripture states,¹⁵ “Remove the soiled garments from upon him;” and he said to him, “Behold,

¹³ Job 10:11

¹⁴ Exodus 30:32

¹⁵ Zechariah 3:4

I have removed your iniquity from upon you and dressed you in a pure garment.” This garment is called, “The Raiment of the Rabbis.”

Just as the tailor makes a garment according to the form of a person’s body, so *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, made the body, which is the garment for the soul, in the form of the image of the soul. That is, He made 248 organs plus 365 veins and arteries that connect them. The blood and life-force surge from organ to organ by means of these arteries that are similar to pipes. Once the body was formed, *HaShem*-יהו"ה blew the spirit of life into it.¹⁶ This spirit is comprised of 248 spiritual organs and 365 spiritual veins that are invested within the 248 organs and 365 veins of the physical body. With this, the organs of the soul act through the organs of the body, which are their tools, like an axe in the hand of the lumberjack. Proof of this, is the fact that the physical organs only perform their functions so long as the soul resides within them; the eyes see and the ears hear etc. However, upon the departure of the soul, the eyes dim and all sense and feeling vanishes from the 248 organs.

In like manner, the 365 spiritual veins of the soul are invested within the 365 physical veins and distribute the physical sustenance of the blood to the 248 organs of the body, together with the spiritual sustenance within it, to sustain the 248 organs of the soul. Upon death, when the soul departs, life-force ceases to be drawn to the body. As a result, the physical veins and organs fall apart, decompose and become as if they

¹⁶ Genesis 2:7

never were. From this we see that the actual identity of a person is his intellectual soul and that it resides within the body, which acts as its garment while the soul remains in this world.

Know that when the first man sinned by eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, both his body and soul took on a composition of good and evil. This is the matter of “the contamination of the serpent,”¹⁷ that was instilled in Eve and Adam. This dross brought about illness, disease and death, both spiritually and physically. This is the meaning of the verse,¹⁸ “For on the day that you eat from it, you shall surely die” – meaning the death of the soul, as well as the death of the body.¹⁹

We will now explain the matter of the good and evil that became mixed in them. (Examine what is written in Part Three, gates two and three, and you will understand what is written in this gate.) Behold, when man sinned with the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he caused this admixture to permeate all worlds.²⁰ Due to this, there is nothing that does not include both good and evil in it.

Therefore, the body of man was formed from the four elements of the physical world²¹ that have both good and evil included in them. These are fire, air, water and earth. However, man’s body was formed from the choicest portion of these

¹⁷ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 146a and elsewhere.

¹⁸ Genesis 2:17

¹⁹ The literal translation of the verse is, “Die, you shall die,” that is, both physical and spiritual death.

²⁰ See Sefer HaMashalim of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as The Book of Allegories 1-4, and elsewhere.

²¹ Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah, Ch. 4.

elements.²² Nevertheless, this choice portion also has an admixture of evil in it. Man's four humors (that is, the white, black, red and green humors)²³ were formed from the grossest portion of these elements. For the body to be healthy, these humors must be balanced. However, if there is an imbalance, and any one of them overpowers the positive characteristics of the others with its negative characteristics, the result is illness and disease. If it is even more overpowering, death may result.

As explained, the admixture of good and evil permeated all worlds, even the upper, spiritual worlds. This being the case, the soul of man was also affected, for was it not hewn from the same four spiritual elements from which all the supernal beings were formed? These four elements are the four letters of the name *HaShem*-יהו"ה,²⁴ blessed is He and blessed is His name. About this it says,²⁵ "From the four spirits, come O spirit etc." This "spirit" that comes is the essential soul of man from the side of goodness.

However, God made everything with its opposite.²⁶ Just as the upper spiritual worlds are the source of goodness and purity, so He created a source of evil and impurity. This is the

²² The physical body of man is the most refined matter in all of physical creation, as opposed to the grosser physicality of all other creatures.

²³ The white humor is phlegm, the black humor is the gall produced by the spleen, the red humor is blood and the green humor is the gall of the gallbladder. These humors affect the physical health and balance of a person, as well as his character and disposition.

²⁴ For a more expansive explanation of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, and the manner in which all novel creations are brought forth by and dependent upon the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Essential Being of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, see Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated under the title *HaShem is One*.

²⁵ Ezekiel 37:9

²⁶ Ecclesiastes 7:14

Sitra Achera (The Other Side) which is called *Adam BliYa'al* (The Incurable Man).²⁷ It is made up of four sources of destruction²⁸ and four indicators of plague,²⁹ which are its four bad elements. From there, an evil soul, which is called, “The Evil Inclination” (*Yetzer HaRa*), is drawn to man. If this soul overpowers the good soul, destruction, plagues and spiritual illnesses befall it. Moreover, if it is too overpowering, it can even cause spiritual death, God forbid.

Now, the pure soul, which is compared to the fruit, consists of 613 organs and veins and resides within the 613 organs and veins of the impure soul, which is compared to the shell (*Kelipah*) covering over the fruit. In turn, they both reside within the 613 organs and veins of the body. Thus, the organs of the pure soul reside within the organs of the impure soul and the organs of the impure soul reside within the organs of the body.

In order to exist, each of these two souls needs spiritual sustenance. However, the spiritual sustenance of the holy soul is drawn to it through the fulfillment of *HaShem*’s יהו"ה Torah, which consists of 613 *mitzvot*, corresponding to the 613 organs

²⁷ Proverbs 6:12 – “אדם בליעל” – The term “*BliYa'al*-על” divides into the two words “without a yoke-*Bli Ol*-על,” meaning, without the yoke of Heaven, and can also be read “without ascent-*Bli Ya'al*-על,” meaning, the animalistic inclination in man, that descends downward, as stated (Eccl. 3:21), “Who realizes that the spirit of man is the one that ascends on high while the spirit of the beast is the one that descends below down into the earth.”

²⁸ See Mishnah Bava Kama 1:1 – “The four Fathers of Damages” (אבות נזיקין).

²⁹ See Mishna Nega'im 1:1 – “The indicators of plague (מראות נגעים), are two, which in fact are four.”

of the soul. Thus, the Torah is called “bread (*Lechem*-לחם),”³⁰ as in the verse,³¹ “Come, partake of My bread.” Each of the 248 organs receives sustenance from a specific *mitzvah* that relates to that organ. However, if a Jew lacks the fulfillment of any *mitzvah*, the organ specific to that *mitzvah* will lack the sustenance drawn to it from the four letters of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה.

This is indicated by the verse,³² “You (*HaShem*) give life to all.” All the *mitzvot* depend on these four letters, as our sages of blessed memory said,³³ “The letters *Yod* (י) *Hey* (ה) coupled with the word, ‘My name’ (שמי) of the verse,³⁴ ‘This is My name and this is My memorial (זוה שמי וזה זכרי) have the numerical value of 365. The letters *Vav* (ו) *Hey* (ה) coupled with the word, ‘My memorial’ (זכרי) of the same verse, have the numerical value of 248.”

Likewise, as mentioned above, the roots of the four elements of the holy soul are drawn from these four letters. Therefore, if a person totally lacks a specific *mitzvah*, the corresponding organ of his holy soul starves to death and departs, God forbid. In turn, when this holiness departs from it,

³⁰ The term “bread-*Lechem*-לחם-78” has a numerical value of “He was, and He is, and He will be-*Hayah v’Hoveh v’Yihyeh*-והיה והיה ויהיה-78,” and is a reference to the inner sustenance of the eternal Truth of the Torah of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. This is called “The Inner Bread” (*Lechem HaPanim*-לחם הפנים) which is a constant in the Holy Temple, as it states (Exodus 25:30), “And you shall set showbread (*Lechem HaPanim*-לחם הפנים) upon the table, before Me, always (*Tamid*-תמיד).” (See Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 4, section entitled “The First Vowel *Cholem*-חל"ם.”)

³¹ Proverbs 9:5

³² Nehemiah 9:6

³³ Zohar I 24a; Zohar III 110b, 222b; 273b, and elsewhere

³⁴ Exodus 3:15

the spirit of impurity from the four elements of the impure soul fills the void and becomes vested in it. This is the secret of the Rabbinic dictum,³⁵ “Tyre did not become a great metropolis until Jerusalem was destroyed.” Thus, the organ now receives its sustenance from the “impure bread” that was exiled from there.

This is the meaning of the statement,³⁶ “The wicked are considered to be dead during their lifetime.”³⁷ This is because the holy soul from the Living God has withdrawn from them. Rather, death, which is called, “The ultimate source of impurities,”³⁸ rests upon them.³⁹

Conversely, regarding a Jew who desists from transgressing the 365 negative *mitzvot*, the sages stated,⁴⁰ “A person who desists from transgressing a negative *mitzvah* is rewarded as if he performed a positive *mitzvah*.” In other words, by not transgressing, he empowers the spiritual sustenance that is drawn through the positive *mitzvot*, as mentioned above, to flow through the “pipes,” which are the 365 veins of the soul, thus enlivening its 248 organs.

However, if he transgresses any of them, the pipe specific to that transgression becomes blocked due to the

³⁵ Rashi to Genesis 25:23; See Talmud Bavli, Pesachim 42a; Megillah 6a; Zohar II 236a, 238b.

³⁶ Berachot 18b; Zohar III 123a

³⁷ Similarly, it states (Proverbs 12:9), “Better is the lowly one who is His servant, than a pompous one who lacks bread (*Lechem*-להם),” referring the the aforementioned spiritual sustenance. (See Tzava’at HaRivash (HaRav Yisroel Ba’al Shem Tov) translated as The Way of The Baal Shem Tov, Section 114.)

³⁸ Rashi to Numbers 19:22 and elsewhere. (אבי אבות הטומאה)

³⁹ That is, their life is not a life.

⁴⁰ Talmud Bavli, Kiddushin 39a

contamination of the sustenance from the *Kelipah*, which adheres to the walls of the pipe. When the pipe withers, the organ that receives from it withers with it. This is so, even if the life-force is not totally withdrawn from it, similar to one who lacks a positive *mitzvah*. Nonetheless, it becomes blemished.

This being the case, every Jew should make every effort to fulfill as many of the 613 *mitzvot* that he can. Furthermore, when he fulfills a positive *mitzvah*, he should have in mind to rid the specific organ of his soul which correlates to that *mitzvah*, of the dross of that *Kelipah*. Once the dross has been removed, the holy organ of the *mitzvah* may rest upon him. This is the secret of the verse,⁴¹ “Their sins were upon their bones,” because when the one rises, the other falls.

Likewise, when an opportunity to transgress comes about, he should restrain himself from doing it and have in mind that by doing so, the dross in the specific vein of his soul which correlates to that transgression withdraws. With this, the blockage will be removed and the spiritual influence which is drawn by way of that spiritual pipe will be able to flow through. In this way, his soul becomes a seat and a vehicle for *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה holiness, blessed is He. This is the secret of,⁴² “The forefathers are the Chariot (*Merkavah*).”

⁴¹ Ezekiel 32:27

⁴² Bereshit Rabbah 47:6

Part One

Gate Two

Concerning the blemishes that come about through bad character traits

The character traits are naturally embedded in the lowly, elemental soul of man. This soul is comprised of four aspects; inanimate, vegetative, animate and articulate.⁴³ They too are a composite of good and evil. Therefore, the good and bad character traits depend on this soul. They constitute a seat, foundation and root for the upper, intellectual soul, upon which the 613 *mitzvot* of the Torah depend, as mentioned above in gate one. Because of this, the character traits are not included as part and parcel of the 613 *mitzvot*. Nonetheless, they are essential prerequisites to their fulfillment or negation, for the simple reason that the intellectual soul is powerless to fulfill the *mitzvot* with the 613 organs of the body, except through the agency of the elemental soul which is connected to the body. This is the secret meaning of the verse,⁴⁴ “For the soul of every flesh; its blood is its life.” This being the case, bad character traits are actually much worse than the transgressions themselves.

⁴³ Inanimate-*Domem*-דומם, vegetative-*Tzome'ach*-צומח, animate-*Chay*-חי, and articulate-*Medaber*-מדבר.

⁴⁴ Leviticus 17:14

We may now understand why our sages, of blessed memory, said,⁴⁵ “When a person loses his temper, it is as if he is actually worshipping idolatry” – which is a negation of all 613 *mitzvot* of the Torah! Furthermore, they said,⁴⁶ “Whosoever has a haughty spirit is likened to one who denies the fundamental truth of *HaShem*’s יהו"ה existence. He is worthy of being cut down like an *Asherah* grove.”⁴⁷ There are many such quotes. Contemplate this greatly and consider that since the character traits are root-causes and fundamental characteristics imbedded in the natural soul, they are not counted amongst the 613 *mitzvot* that depend on the intellectual soul. We therefore find that greater caution must be taken to safeguard oneself from bad character traits, than even from fulfilling the positive *mitzvot* or desisting from committing the negative *mitzvot*. This is because if a Jew has good character traits, he will not find it difficult to fulfill all the *mitzvot*.

With this, we may now understand some astounding comments made by our sages, of blessed memory, regarding character traits, such as the statement that humility and a sense of lowliness bring about the Holy Spirit (*Ru’ach HaKodesh*), in which the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem* יהו"ה (the *Shechinah*) rests upon a person. Furthermore, Eliyahu said,⁴⁸ “Only a person who is not short-tempered will be given the

⁴⁵ Zohar I 27b; Zohar II 182b; Zohar III 179b, 234b; Tikkunim 89b; Zohar Chadash Noach; Mishneh Torah, Hilchot De’ot 2:3

⁴⁶ Talmud Bavli, Sotah 5a

⁴⁷ This was a grove used for the ancient idolatry of tree worship.

⁴⁸ Kallah Rabbati Ch. 5

ability to explain the meanings of Torah. Moreover, I too, will not be revealed except to one who is not short-tempered.” Likewise, our sages of blessed memory said,⁴⁹ “Who is worthy of life in the coming world? Whosoever is lowly and humble.” There are many such statements. Note that they mention good character traits rather than fulfilling the *mitzvot*. Set your eyes upon these goals and you shall surely find success.

However, just as the four physical elements are the roots from which the 613 organs of the body were formed, so likewise, the physical life-force of these four elements are the foundations of all the good and bad character traits, which are the means by which the Torah and the 613 *mitzvot*, that come from the four-letter Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, may be fulfilled or negated. It is the intellectual soul, which is comprised of the four spiritual elements from which its 613 organs were hewn, that fulfills the *mitzvot*.⁵⁰ Contemplate this well and you will understand that the basis for the fulfillment or negation of the *mitzvot* are good and bad character traits.

We have already explained that *HaShem*-יהו"ה composed everything of two opposites, good and evil. Just as there are four bodily elements composed of good and bad; the white, green, black and red humors, and these powers either establish a physically healthy body (“Matter”) or damage it, so

⁴⁹ Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 88b

⁵⁰ This means that in order for the Divine soul to perform the physical *mitzvot*, it must act through the agency of the four elements of the animal soul (which are the physical life-force of the body and the source of all the natural character traits). This is because the Divine soul is invested in the animal soul and the animal soul is invested in the body, as will be explained.

is it regarding the life-force of the natural, elemental soul (“Form”). Its four elements are also comprised of both good and evil which affect its health through good character traits, or its illness, through bad character traits that are drawn from its four evil, impure *Kelipot* (Husks).

When a Jew rids himself of these bad character traits, then, in their stead, the four letters of *HaShem*’s יהו"ה Name become invested in the natural soul and become a life-giving light for it. Thus, the natural soul and the physical body become a vehicle for *HaShem*’s יהו"ה holiness in the world of Action (*Asiyah*) [which is the *Nefesh* level of the intellectual soul]. This, literally, is similar to what was explained about the intellectual soul when it fulfills the *mitzvot*.

Moreover, keep in mind that, besides this, through occupying oneself in the study of the four levels of Torah, which form the acronym פרדס-**PaRDeS** (The Orchard), which are *Peshat*, *Remez*, *Derush*, and *Sod*,⁵¹ the *Ruach* level of one’s intellectual soul becomes a seat for the four letters of *HaShem*’s יהו"ה Name in the world of Formation (*Yetzirah*). Likewise, through contemplation and mental focus, the *Neshamah* level of his intellectual soul becomes a seat for the four letters of *HaShem*’s יהו"ה Name in the world of Creation (*Beriyah*).

⁵¹ That is, פ-*Peshat* is the straightforward, simple meaning of the verses; ר-*Remez* is the meaning that is intimated but not explicitly stated in the verses; ד-*Deroosh* is the meaning arrived at through deeper investigation and analysis of the verses; ס-*Sod* is the esoteric secrets of the verses.

Returning to the explanation of the acquisition of good character traits through the clarification of the four elements; know that all the bad character traits are rooted in the evil and *Kelipah* of the four levels of the elemental soul. Because of this, all bad character traits may be categorized into four kinds, as follows:

A) The Element of Fire:

This element is the source of arrogance, which is called, “A Coarse Spirit.”⁵² This is because it is the lightest and highest of all the elements. It includes anger, because, when his will is not done, an arrogant person becomes angered. If he would always be humble and recognize his own limitations and shortcomings, he would not lose his temper. From this we see that arrogance and anger are one and the same quality. This character trait has three offshoots;

1) Being short-tempered. If not for haughtiness, a person would never be short-tempered, similar to what we explained about anger.

2) Seeking to dominate others and be honored by them. This is because he believes he is their superior.

⁵² *Gas Ru'ach* – גַּס רוּחַ

3) Hatred toward anyone who actually is his superior. This too is an offshoot of arrogance.

B) The Element of Wind (Air)

This element is the source of the kind of speech that is called, “Idle Chatter.” That is, talking about frivolous matters that have no bearing on anything, neither spiritually nor physically. This character trait has four offshoots;

1) Speaking words of flattery.

2) Speaking falsehoods.

3) Speaking badly (the evil tongue) of others.

4) Speaking words of boasting and self-aggrandizement to others.

C) The Element of Water

This element is the source of lust and the desire for pleasure. This is because water causes all manner of pleasurable things to grow. This character trait has two offshoots;

1) Envy. This leads to stealing another's property or seducing his wife or the theft of anything that someone else possesses that he wants to delight in.

2) Jealousy. If his friend is wealthy or the like, which he wishes he could be; he will harbor jealousy toward him.

D) The Element of Earth

This element is the source of depression in all its details. It has one offshoot;

1) Slothfulness. This causes him to be lazy in studying Torah or fulfilling the *mitzvot*, either because he is depressed by the difficulty of acquiring the vanities of this world or because of troubles that befall him. Such a person will never be happy with his lot, in any matter. Moreover, no matter how wealthy he becomes, it will never satisfy him.

From the above, we find that there are four sources of all the bad character traits. These are arrogance (including anger, which adheres to it), idle chatter, lust for pleasure, and depression. Their sources are the four *Kelipot* of the *Yetzer HaRa* (The Evil Inclination) in the elemental soul.

The opposites of these are four good character traits whose sources are the four good elements of the elemental soul. These are:

1) Humility. This is a total sense of unimportance. Such a person distances himself from any kind of anger, because anger is a result of haughtiness.

2) Silence. Except when he is occupied in the study of Torah and *mitzvot* or in the physical needs of the body or for the needs of others, he acts as if mute, as one who cannot open his mouth.

3) He despises all physical pleasure or unnecessary excesses.

4) He is always happy with his lot. This is because he realizes that it all is from *HaShem*-יהו"ה above, and everything that *HaShem*-יהו"ה brings about is for the good.⁵³ This attitude also results in alacrity with perfect joy in serving his Creator, as scripture states,⁵⁴ “I rejoice in Your words as one who has discovered vast treasure.” Similarly, our sages stated,⁵⁵ “Make Torah study your permanent priority and your occupation a temporary one.”

We see that when bad character traits are embedded in a Jew, they obstruct him from fulfilling Torah and *mitzvot*. Even if he does fulfill them, it will not be for the sake of Heaven

⁵³ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 60b; Midrash Bereishit Rabba 51:3, and elsewhere; Also see Tzava'at HaRivash translated as The Way of The Baal Shem Tov, Section 2.

⁵⁴ Psalms 119:162

⁵⁵ Mishnah Avot 1:15

and they will be very burdensome to him. About such a person scripture states,⁵⁶ “A golden ring in the snout of a pig,” because his impurity is still within him, vested within the *Kelipot*. This is as our sages, of blessed memory said,⁵⁷ “If a person is meritorious, his Torah learning becomes a life-giving elixir. However, if he is not meritorious, it becomes fatally poisonous.”

However, if a person rises up to overcome his evil inclination and battles against it, until through great effort he rids himself of his bad character traits, and thus truly fulfills Torah and *mitzvot*; he is called a “Perfect *Tzaddik*,” a “God Fearing Person” and a “Mighty Warrior who conquers his evil inclination.”

Moreover, if a Jew advances in this, accustoming himself to it to an even greater degree, until he completely rids himself of all bad traits, to the point that his soul no longer lusts after them at all, and he acquires good traits to the point that they literally become natural to him, in that he no longer needs to battle against the evil inclination, since both his body and elemental soul have become thoroughly cleansed of all physical dross, as *Sefer HaTikkunim* comments⁵⁸ on the verse,⁵⁹ “Take your shoes off your feet” in regard to Moshe; then the four letters of the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה become invested in him and he becomes a holy seat for *HaShem* 's-יהו"ה chariot (*Merkavah*), blessed is He. Such a person is called a “Friend of *HaShem*-

⁵⁶ Proverbs 11

⁵⁷ Talmud Bavli, Yoma 75

⁵⁸ Tikkunei Zohar, Tikun 31 and 48

⁵⁹ Exodus 3:5

יהו"ה out of love.” He is called a “Perfect *Chassid*” – one who is perfect with every kind of perfection.

Part One

Gate Three

A thorough explanation of the levels of “*Tzaddik*” and “*Chassid*” and how one should act in order to attain them

If a Jew wishes to purify and sanctify himself and truly accept the yoke of the Heavenly kingdom upon himself, let him prepare himself with all his might to perform all 613 *mitzvot* with alacrity. Through their fulfillment the 613 organs and veins of his soul will become perfected, as mentioned above. This is because if he lacks even one of the 248 positive *mitzvot*, he still lacks an organ of his soul. About such a person scripture states,⁶⁰ “A lacking which is incalculable,” which is worse than the matter of, “Anyone who has a blemish may not approach.”⁶¹

However, a Jew who fulfills the positive *mitzvot*, but has transgressed even one of the 365 negative *mitzvot*, is within the category of an actual “*Baal Moom*” – a blemished person. This is because the pipe (or vein) that draws sustenance to the organs

⁶⁰ Ecclesiastes 1:15

⁶¹ This is because, as explained above, a blemish in a *mitzvah* is not the complete absence of the *mitzvah*. Therefore, one who lacks a positive *mitzvah* altogether, is worse off than one who performs it, but in a blemished and imperfect manner. Nonetheless, though his positive *mitzvot* are blemished, and since he does not transgress the negative *mitzvot*, he does not fall into the category of an actual “*Baal Moom*,” that is, a truly blemished person.

has become bent [thereby obstructing the flow]. About such a person the verse states,⁶² “irreparably crooked.” However, the meaning of the verse is that it is only irreparable once the soul has departed from this world, because one cannot perform the *mitzvot* that he lacks or repent and thereby rectify the transgressions that he committed, except while he still is in this world. This is as scripture states,⁶³ “Whatever you can accomplish while you are able, do it, for there is neither deed nor accounting nor knowledge nor wisdom in the grave to which you are going.” “Deed” here, refers to performing the positive *mitzvot*, “Accounting” refers to repenting over the negative ones and “knowledge” refers to the knowledge gained through the study of *HaShem* ’s יהו"ה Torah. None of these are possible “in the grave to which you are going.”

From here we see that as long as a Jew has not fulfilled the 613 *mitzvot*, he is in the category of an “Imperfect *Tzaddik*.” It is not without warrant, that our teacher Moshe, peace be upon him, prayed for permission to enter the land 515 times, corresponding to the numerical value of the word, “and I pleaded for grace-*VaEtchanan*-וואתהגן-515.⁶⁴ He sought to perfect his soul by keeping the 613 *mitzvot* [many of which only apply in the land of Israel].

If a Jew fulfills all the *mitzvot*, but has not also fully acquired all the good character traits, in that he must constantly

⁶² Ecclesiastes 1:15

⁶³ Ecclesiastes 9:10

⁶⁴ Midrash Dvarim Rabba 11:1

battle and conquer his *Yetzer HaRa*, such a person is in the category of a “Perfect *Tzaddik* who conquers his *Yetzer*.”

However, once all the good character traits become so totally imbedded in a person that they become his nature, so that he performs the 613 *mitzvot* with joy that comes from love, without any resistance from the *Yetzer HaRa*, because his physicality has become totally refined, he is called a “Perfect *Chassid*.” Similarly, King David said,⁶⁵ “My heart is empty within me.”⁶⁶ Furthermore, he said,⁶⁷ “*HaShem*-יהוה, my heart was not proud, nor were my eyes haughty. Neither did I pursue matters that were too great or wondrous for me. Have I not calmed and stilled my soul like an infant nursing from his mother? My soul is like a nursing infant.” This is to say that he appears as if all his good character traits were already naturally embedded in him when he first came out of his mother’s womb. Therefore, because good character traits and the performance of the *mitzvot* had become so embedded in King David’s nature, he called himself a *Chassid*, as in the verse,⁶⁸ “Guard my soul, for I am a *Chassid*.”

Moreover, our sages, of blessed memory, said,⁶⁹ “Whosoever desires to become a *Chassid* should fulfill the words of *Pirkei Avot* – which speak regarding the acquisition of good character traits. For example, our sages, of blessed

⁶⁵ Psalms 109

⁶⁶ This means that he rid himself totally of the evil inclination (*Yetzer HaRa*) by starving it to death. (See Talmud Bavli, Bava Batra 17a; Brachot 61b; Talmud Yerushalmi Brachot 9:5; Sotah 5:5; Orchot Tzaddikim 26:82; Tanya, Ch. 1)

⁶⁷ Psalms 131

⁶⁸ Psalms 86

⁶⁹ Talmud Baba Kama 30

memory, said,⁷⁰ “Rabbi [Yehudah the Prince] said, “What is the straight path that a person should follow? Everything that is both beautiful to the doer and beautiful to him from others etc.” Akaviah ben Mehalalel said,⁷¹ “Contemplate three matters and you will never come to the possibility of transgressing. Know from whence you came and where you are going and before whom you are destined to give an accounting. From whence did you come? – From a putrid drop. Where are you going? – To a place of dust, maggots and worms. Before whom are you destined to give an accounting? – Before the King, King of kings, The Holy One, blessed is He.” Likewise, Rabbi Levitas of Yavneh said,⁷² “Be very, very humble, for the hope of man is maggots.”

What Akaviah meant when he said, “and you will never come to the possibility of transgressing” is that you will never be subject to the *Yetzer HaRa* which causes a person to transgress, because your *Yetzer HaRa* will cease to be. However, if the *Yetzer HaRa* still exists and one merely restrains himself by force of willpower, he should have stated, “you will not transgress.”

Generally, what comes out of this is that a *Tzaddik* is a person who has a *Yetzer HaRa* but fulfills the 613 *mitzvot* by overcoming it. On the other hand, a person who has acquired good character traits completely, as his nature, fulfills the

⁷⁰ Avot 2:1

⁷¹ Avot 3:1

⁷² Avot 4:4

mitzvot because his *Yetzer HaRa* has been abrogated. Such a person is called a “Perfect *Chassid*.”

In addition, there is a level of piety (*Chassidut*) even higher than this, which is the highest of all levels. Such a person is called “Holy.” This level is mentioned often in *Sefer HaTikkunim* and in the *Zohar*, especially in *Parashat Kee Teitzei* of *Ra’aya Mehemna*,⁷³ as follows:

“It is not without warrant that the Holy One, blessed is He, said, ‘Whosoever occupies himself in the study of Torah, in doing acts of lovingkindness and in praying with the congregation, I regard it as if he redeemed Me and My children from exile amongst the nations of the world.’ Now, how many people occupy themselves in the study of Torah, in doing acts of lovingkindness and in praying with the congregation, but nonetheless, the Holy One, blessed is He, His Indwelling Presence (the *Shechinah*) and Israel are not redeemed!?! However, the meaning here is that a person should be occupied in the study of Torah for the sole purpose of uniting the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*-יהו"ה (the *Shechinah*) to the Holy One, blessed is He.

As we have established, “Acts of lovingkindness” here, means that a true *Chassid* is one who is kind⁷⁴ toward his Master. That is, his intent in doing all the *mitzvot* is to liberate the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*-יהו"ה (the *Shechinah*) from exile. By doing so, he acts kindly toward the Holy One, blessed

⁷³ Zohar III 281a

⁷⁴ That is, he performs kindness-*Chessed*-חסד, and is thus called a one who is kind-*Chassid*-חסיד toward his Master.

is He. By acting kindly toward *HaShem*'s יהו"ה Indwelling Presence, he is acting kindly toward *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He.

When Israel sinned, the Holy One, blessed is He, wanted to punish them, but their “Mother” – the *Shechinah* – protected them. Because of this, they descended into evil ways. What did the Holy One, blessed is He, do? He banished the children of the King, along with the Queen [the *Shechinah*] and He swore that He would not return to His place until the Queen returns to Her place. Thus, whosoever repents with the sole intention of liberating the *Shechinah* through Torah and *mitzvot*; such a person acts kindly toward his Master. It is as if he liberates *HaShem*-יהו"ה, His *Shechinah* and His children from exile.

Eliyahu and all the heads of the upper academies declared, ‘*Raaya Mehemna*-Faithful Shepherd [Moshe], you are such a person. You are the son of the King and Queen. Actually, your manner of toil for the Holy One, blessed is He, is even beyond one who acts kindly toward his Master. Rather, you are like a son who invests his whole being and strength into liberating his father and mother; who is willing to give up his very life for their sake. However, a person who is not in the category of being the son of the King, but who, nonetheless, does a kindness to the King and Queen, such a person is considered to be kindly toward his Master.’

Raaya Mehemna-the Faithful Shepherd (Moshe) stood up and bowed before the Holy One, blessed is He. He wept and said, ‘May it be *HaShem*'s יהו"ה will to regard me as a son. May

it be that He will consider my actions on behalf of the Holy One, blessed is He and His *Shechinah*, like a son who toils on behalf of his father and mother because he loves them more than his own body, soul [*Nefesh*], spirit [*Ruach*] and super-soul [*Neshamah*], who regards all his possessions as worthless, except for the purpose of serving the will of his Father and Mother and liberating them. Though I realize that [in reality] everything is *HaShem* 'יהו"ה"-s possession [and that I have nothing of my own], nonetheless, the Merciful One desires the heart.”

Now, the above is as Scripture states,⁷⁵ “You have disregarded The Rock that bore you.” Moreover, it states,⁷⁶ “Give strength to God.” This is in accordance to the statement,⁷⁷ “Rabbi Yochanan says, ‘Happy is he who toils in Torah and brings satisfaction to the One who formed him.’ – meaning that he does not toil in the study of Torah in order to receive reward at all. Rather, his intent is solely to bring satisfaction to the One who formed him, about Whom it is written,⁷⁸ “In all their suffering, He suffered.” That is, wherever Israel were exiled, the *Shechinah* went with them. She is our Mother, about whom it says,⁷⁹ “Thus says *HaShem*-יהו"ה-, ‘Where is your Mother’s bill of divorce [as proof] that I have banished her? To which of my creditors did I sell you? Truly, you were sold through your sins and through your

⁷⁵ Deuteronomy 32:18

⁷⁶ Psalms 68:35

⁷⁷ Talmud Bavli, Berachot 17a

⁷⁸ Isaiah 63:9

⁷⁹ Isaiah 50:1

transgressions, and she was banished with you.” [It is, specifically, the *Shechinah* that] is called “The One Who formed us,” as in the verse,⁸⁰ “You have disregarded The Rock who bore you.” [The word for rock here is *Tzoor* (צור), which also means the “source of form,” just as a child is formed in its mother’s womb.] This is why Rabbi Yochanan said that such a person brings satisfaction “to The One who formed him,” rather than saying “to The Holy One, blessed is He.”

From this we see that when a *Chassid* is occupied in the study of Torah or in performing the *mitzvot* or in good character traits; if even a hint of motivation to receive a reward is mixed into it, he is a *Chassid* for himself, as in the verse,⁸¹ “A man of kindness (*Ish Chessed*) brings goodness upon himself.” This is because when he fulfills the *mitzvot*, he brings goodness upon himself. Therefore, he is called a “Man of *Chessed*” rather than a “*Chassid*,” because he does himself the kindness. Only a person whose sole motivation is to do a kindness for his Master can be truly called a “*Chassid*” and a “Holy Man.” This is because he has become purified from all impurities and has sanctified himself in *HaShem*’s יהו"ה holiness, blessed is He. We find that the term קדושה-*Kedushah* (holiness) means “preparation,” as in the verse,⁸² “Prepare⁸³ yourselves for tomorrow and you shall eat meat.” This is because such a person makes himself the vehicle for *HaShem*’s יהו"ה holiness,

⁸⁰ Deuteronomy 32:18

⁸¹ Proverbs 11:17

⁸² Numbers 11:18

⁸³ The word here for “prepare yourselves” is “*Hitkadshoo*-sanctify yourselves” (התקדשו).

blessed is He. As mentioned above, rather than caring about his own glory, he only cares about his Master's glory.

When Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair said,⁸⁴ “Caution brings to zeal, zeal brings to cleanliness, cleanliness brings to separateness, separateness brings to purity, purity brings to holiness, holiness brings to fear of sin, fear of sin brings to humility, humility brings to *Chassidut*, *Chassidut* brings to the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit brings to resurrecting the dead” – he was referring to this. This, specifically, is the perfect *Chassidut* that follows holiness and leads to the Holy Spirit. Because he totally cleaves to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, he will merit to attain the revelation of the secrets of Torah and to prophesy about the future.

This is as Rabbi Meir said,⁸⁵ “Whosoever is occupied in Torah for the sake of its name (that is, for its sake, rather than for his own sake) merits many things. Moreover, the existence of the whole world is worthwhile because of him. He is called friend, beloved, a lover of God, a lover of the creatures, the delight of God and the delight of the creatures. The Torah garbs him in humility and awe. It prepares him to be a *Tzaddik*, a *Chassid*, upright and trustworthy. It distances him from sin and brings him close to merit. He benefits others with counsel and wisdom, understanding and strength, as it says,⁸⁶ ‘Mine is counsel and wisdom; I am understanding, strength is mine.’ The Torah gives him kingship, governance and penetrating

⁸⁴ Mishnah Sotah 9:15

⁸⁵ Pirkei Avot 6:1

⁸⁶ Proverbs 8:14

judgment. The secrets of the Torah are revealed to him. He becomes like an overflowing spring and like an ever-flowing river. He becomes modest, long-suffering and forgiving of insults. The Torah magnifies him and elevates him above all things.”

Moreover, when Rabbi Meir said, “For its name (*Lishmah*-לשממה),” he meant for the “Name” of the Torah, in that it is the Torah of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, that is, the name of the Holy One, blessed is He, in that the entire Torah is composed of the names and titles of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, the Holy One, blessed is He.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ See Zohar Mishpatim 124a; Zoharei Chamah there; Ramban’s introduction to his commentary to Torah; Also see Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as HaShem is One, as well as Shaarei Orah of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, and elsewhere.

Part One

Gate Four

The detailed explanation of the level of *Tzaddik*

To be a *Tzaddik*, (that is, someone who successfully battles his evil inclination-*Yetzer HaRa* and keeps it in check), one must be zealous in fulfilling all the *mitzvot* that apply in our times, with all his might. Now, since there are several opinions regarding how to enumerate the 613 *mitzvot*, I will present them first according to Rambam (Maimonides), of blessed memory. Following this I will present additional *mitzvot* according to the count of other Torah authorities and the *Zohar*, including the enumeration of the positive *mitzvot* of the Torah, as well as the positive *mitzvot* of the Scribes. These will be divided into five sections:

- 1) *Mitzvot* that are applicable during the prayers of the regular weekdays.
- 2) *Mitzvot* that are dependent on time-factors.
- 3) *Mitzvot* that are applicable when the opportunity arises.

4) *Mitzvot* that a person must pursue to fulfill them.

5) *Mitzvot* that are not within a person's ability to pursue. Rather, the Holy One, blessed is he, brings about the opportunity to fulfill them. They are as follows:

1) To realize *HaShem*'s יהו"ה existence⁸⁸ when reciting the verse,⁸⁹ "Listen Israel, *HaShem*-יהו"ה is our God;" to realize *HaShem*'s יהו"ה unity when completing the verse with the words, "*HaShem*-יהו"ה is One;"⁹⁰ to put fringes (*Tzitzit*) upon a four-cornered garment and to wrap oneself in it;⁹¹ to don the head *Tefillin*⁹² according to the opinions of Rashi, Rabbeinu Tam, Shimoosha Rabba [and Raavad], to don the arm *Tefillin* in like manner;⁹³ to recite the *Shema Yisrael* twice daily;⁹⁴ to pray the *Amidah* prayer every day; to remember what *Amalek* did to us every day when answering, "*Amen, Yehei Shmei Rabbah*" during *Kaddish* and when reciting,⁹⁵ "Draw us close to Your Great Name, [*HaShem*-יהו"ה] our King," as scripture says,⁹⁶ "For a hand is [raised in oath] by the throne of God, '*HaShem*-יהו"ה will wage war against *Amalek* from generation

⁸⁸ Sefer HaMitzvoth, positive mitzvah 1

⁸⁹ Deuteronomy 6:4 – The *Shema Yisrael*.

⁹⁰ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 2

⁹¹ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 14

⁹² Ibid. pos. mitzvah 12

⁹³ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 13

⁹⁴ Ibid. pos mitzvah 10

⁹⁵ In the blessings of the *Shema* recital

⁹⁶ Exodus 17:16

to generation;”⁹⁷ to confess every day⁹⁸ after the *Amidah* prayer and during the prayer of, “*Shema Koleinu*,” and that the *Cohanim* should bless the congregation of Israel every day.⁹⁹

2) To recite *Kiddush* on wine at the commencement of Shabbat and *Havdalah* at its conclusion;¹⁰⁰ to cease all activity that is forbidden on Shabbat;¹⁰¹ to nullify *Chametz* in his heart on the fourteenth of the month of *Nissan*.¹⁰² To recite the story of the exodus from Egypt from the *Hagadah* on the first night of Passover (*Pesach*);¹⁰³ to cease all activity that is forbidden on the first day of Passover;¹⁰⁴ to eat *Matzah* on the first night of Passover;¹⁰⁵ to cease all forbidden activity on the seventh day of Passover;¹⁰⁶ to rejoice on the three holidays of Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot, and to gladden his wife, his children and the poor, each in the appropriate fashion;¹⁰⁷ to count *Sefirat HaOmer* for forty-nine full days, beginning with the evening of the sixteenth of the month of *Nissan*;¹⁰⁸ to cease all forbidden activity on the holiday of *Shavuot*;¹⁰⁹ to cease all forbidden activity on *Rosh HaShanah*;¹¹⁰ to hear the sound of the *shofar*

⁹⁷ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 189

⁹⁸ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 73

⁹⁹ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 26

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 155

¹⁰¹ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 154

¹⁰² Ibid. pos. mitzvah 156

¹⁰³ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 157

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 159

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 158

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 160

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 54

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 161

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 162

¹¹⁰ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 163

on *Rosh HaShanah*;¹¹¹ to cease all forbidden activity on *Yom Kippur*;¹¹² to fast on *Yom Kippur*;¹¹³ to cease all forbidden activity on the first day of *Sukkot*;¹¹⁴ to cease all forbidden activity on *Shemini Atzeret*;¹¹⁵ to dwell in a *Succah*-booth for the seven days of *Sukkot*;¹¹⁶ to wave the four species on the first day of *Sukkot*.¹¹⁷

3) To write a *Sefer Torah*;¹¹⁸ to affix a *mezuzah* on the doorposts of the house;¹¹⁹ to recite grace after meals;¹²⁰ to learn and teach Torah every day;¹²¹ to be fruitful and multiply;¹²² to marry by way of *Kiddushin*;¹²³ to circumcise one's male-child;¹²⁴ to separate *challah* from dough in the land of Israel;¹²⁵ to give charity;¹²⁶ to lend to the poor;¹²⁷ to return a deposit on time;¹²⁸ to make a hand-rail on one's roof;¹²⁹ to honor the

¹¹¹ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 170

¹¹² Ibid. pos. mitzvah 165

¹¹³ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 164

¹¹⁴ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 166

¹¹⁵ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 167

¹¹⁶ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 168

¹¹⁷ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 169

¹¹⁸ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 18

¹¹⁹ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 15

¹²⁰ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 19

¹²¹ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 11

¹²² Ibid. pos. mitzvah 212

¹²³ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 213

¹²⁴ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 215

¹²⁵ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 133

¹²⁶ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 195

¹²⁷ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 197

¹²⁸ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 199

¹²⁹ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 184

Cohanim;¹³⁰ to honor Torah scholars;¹³¹ to honor one's father and mother;¹³² to respect one's father and mother;¹³³ to love one's fellow Jews;¹³⁴ to love converts;¹³⁵ to pay one's employees on time;¹³⁶ to feed one's employees;¹³⁷ to check for the signs of kosher domesticated and undomesticated animals;¹³⁸ to check for the signs of kosher fowl;¹³⁹ to check for the signs of kosher fish,¹⁴⁰ and locust;¹⁴¹ to mourn upon the death of one's close relatives;¹⁴² to rebuke one's fellow if he strays from the ways of Torah and *mitzvot*;¹⁴³ to keep your word by fulfilling that which you have uttered to fulfill;¹⁴⁴ to adhere to *HaShem*-יהו"ה,¹⁴⁵ and to go in His ways,¹⁴⁶ to fear *HaShem*-יהו"ה,¹⁴⁷ to distance oneself from sin, to love¹⁴⁸ *HaShem*-יהו"ה in all the ways that our sages, of blessed memory, mentioned.

¹³⁰ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 32

¹³¹ Ibid. pos mitzvah 209

¹³² Ibid. pos. mitzvah 210

¹³³ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 211

¹³⁴ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 206

¹³⁵ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 207

¹³⁶ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 200

¹³⁷ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 201

¹³⁸ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 149

¹³⁹ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 150

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 152

¹⁴¹ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 151

¹⁴² Ibid. pos. mitzvah 37

¹⁴³ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 205

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 94

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 6

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 8 (To imitate His good and upright ways.)

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 4

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 3

4) To separate the “Big *Terumah* offering;¹⁴⁹ to separate the tithed *Terumah*;¹⁵⁰ to separate the first tithing,¹⁵¹ to separate the second tithing,¹⁵² to separate the tithing for the poor,¹⁵³ to leave the harvest of the corner of the field or orchard for the poor (*Peah*);¹⁵⁴ to leave the gleanings of the harvest for the poor (*Lekket*);¹⁵⁵ to leave the forgotten sheaves for the poor (*Shichechah*),¹⁵⁶ to leave the single grapes of the vineyard for the poor (*Perret*),¹⁵⁷ and to leave the gleanings of the vineyard for the poor (*Oleloth*);¹⁵⁸ to redeem a firstborn donkey,¹⁵⁹ to break the neck of a firstborn donkey if you do not wish to redeem it,¹⁶⁰ that the fruit of fruit-bearing trees be sanctified (*Kodesh*) in the fourth year of their planting (*Neta Revae*);¹⁶¹ to give the priest the due portions of the carcass of cattle, the shoulder, the two cheeks, and the maw (*Zroa Lechayaim VeKeibah*);¹⁶² To give the first fleece of the shearing to the *Cohen*;¹⁶³ to return a lost object;¹⁶⁴ to return a stolen object;¹⁶⁵

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 126 – *Terumah Gedolah*

¹⁵⁰ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 129 – *Terumat Ma’aser*

¹⁵¹ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 127 – *Ma’aser Rishon*

¹⁵² Ibid. pos. mitzvah 128 – *Ma’aser Sheini*

¹⁵³ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 130 – *Ma’aser Ani*

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. pos mitzvah 120

¹⁵⁵ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 121

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. pos mitzvah 122

¹⁵⁷ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 124

¹⁵⁸ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 123

¹⁵⁹ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 81

¹⁶⁰ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 82

¹⁶¹ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 119

¹⁶² Ibid. pos. mitzvah 143

¹⁶³ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 144

¹⁶⁴ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 204

¹⁶⁵ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 194

To lend to non-Jews with interest;¹⁶⁶ to compel non-Jews to pay their debts;¹⁶⁷ to destroy idolatry;¹⁶⁸ to correct scales, weights and measures;¹⁶⁹ to help unload an animal that is buckling under its load,¹⁷⁰ and to help reload it;¹⁷¹ to swear in *HaShem* 's-יהו"ה name at court;¹⁷² to send away the mother bird;¹⁷³ to properly slaughter domesticated and undomesticated animals and fowl;¹⁷⁴ to cover the blood of the slaughtered undomesticated animal and fowl;¹⁷⁵ to cry out and plead to *HaShem*-יהו"ה during prayer;¹⁷⁶ to blast trumpets or ram horns in times of public emergency;¹⁷⁷ to cease working the land every seventh year;¹⁷⁸ not to sell the fruits of the seventh year,¹⁷⁹ although there is a controversy as to whether this is of biblical or rabbinic origin; To divorce with a bill of divorce (*Get*);¹⁸⁰ that the Nazarite permit his hair to grow;¹⁸¹ to save the pursued;¹⁸² that the rapist marry the raped,¹⁸³ and that he not be permitted to divorce her for the duration of his life;¹⁸⁴ to sanctify the Name *HaShem*-

¹⁶⁶ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 198

¹⁶⁷ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 142

¹⁶⁸ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 185

¹⁶⁹ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 208

¹⁷⁰ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 202

¹⁷¹ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 203

¹⁷² Ibid. pos. mitzvah 7

¹⁷³ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 148

¹⁷⁴ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 146

¹⁷⁵ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 147

¹⁷⁶ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 5

¹⁷⁷ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 59

¹⁷⁸ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 135

¹⁷⁹ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 134

¹⁸⁰ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 222

¹⁸¹ Ibid. pos mitzvah 92

¹⁸² Ibid. pos. mitzvah 247

¹⁸³ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 218

¹⁸⁴ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 219

יהו"ה, blessed is He, with self-sacrifice;¹⁸⁵ to appoint judges and marshals;¹⁸⁶ to regard both sides of a litigation equally;¹⁸⁷ to testify at court;¹⁸⁸ to convict false witnesses;¹⁸⁹ to interrogate the witnesses;¹⁹⁰ that a groom remain with his bride for the first full year of marriage;¹⁹¹ to decide in cases of annulment of vows according to the rules set forth in Torah;¹⁹² to pay damages for destroyed or damaged property,¹⁹³ to pay for damages caused by one's animal,¹⁹⁴ and damages caused by the tooth,¹⁹⁵ pit¹⁹⁶ or fire,¹⁹⁷ damages of an unpaid keeper,¹⁹⁸ a paid keeper¹⁹⁹ and a borrower;²⁰⁰ business laws,²⁰¹ laws of claims²⁰² and inheritance;²⁰³ payments for theft;²⁰⁴ to render and pass judgment according to the majority of judges.²⁰⁵

¹⁸⁵ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 9

¹⁸⁶ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 176

¹⁸⁷ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 177

¹⁸⁸ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 178

¹⁸⁹ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 180

¹⁹⁰ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 179

¹⁹¹ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 214

¹⁹² Ibid. pos. mitzvah 95

¹⁹³ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 236

¹⁹⁴ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 237

¹⁹⁵ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 240

¹⁹⁶ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 238

¹⁹⁷ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 241

¹⁹⁸ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 242

¹⁹⁹ Ibid. pos mitzvah 243

²⁰⁰ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 242

²⁰¹ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 245

²⁰² Ibid. pos. mitzvah 246

²⁰³ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 248

²⁰⁴ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 194

²⁰⁵ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 175

5) To redeem the first-born son;²⁰⁶ levirate marriage;²⁰⁷ to perform the *Chalitzah* ceremony thereby exempting one from levirate marriage.²⁰⁸

The following *mitzvot* are of Rabbinic origin:

Lighting the Shabbat candles;²⁰⁹ lighting the Chanukah lights;²¹⁰ hearing the reading of the book of Esther;²¹¹ washing one's hands when waking from sleep and before meals;²¹² the laws of enclosures (*Eruvin*),²¹³ including enclosures of courtyards (*Eiruv Chatzeirot*), enclosures of localities on Shabbat for the purpose of a *mitzvah* (*Eiruv Techumin*), enclosures for the purpose of cooking on a holiday for Shabbat (*Eiruv Tavshilin*), enclosures between alleyways (*Shitoopei Mevouoth*); The four fast days²¹⁴ of the 17th of Tammuz, the 9th of Av, the 3rd of Tishrei, the 10th of Tevet, as well as the fast of Esther, and fasting on special decreed fast days of public emergency.²¹⁵

²⁰⁶ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 80

²⁰⁷ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 216

²⁰⁸ Ibid. pos. mitzvah 217

²⁰⁹ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 25b; Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Shabbat 5:1

²¹⁰ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 21b; Mishneh Torah, Megillah v'Chanukah 3:3;

²¹¹ Talmud Bavli, Megillah 3a; Mishneh Torah, Megillah v'Chanukah 1:1

²¹² Talmud Bavli, Brachot 60b; Shabbat 108b; Chullin 106a; Mishneh Torah, Brachot Ch. 6.

²¹³ See Talmud Bavli, Tractate Eruvin; Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Eruvin

²¹⁴ See Talmud Bavli, Tractate Ta'anit

²¹⁵ The seventh *mitzvah* of Rabbinical origin is the recitation of blessings on things from which one derives benefit (*Birchat HaNehenin*), which is mentioned later in Part Three, Gate Eight. See Talmud Bavli, Brachot 35a; Menachot 43b and elsewhere.

The following are Torah *mitzvot* according to other Torah authorities and according to the Holy Zohar:

To recall the exodus from Egypt while reciting the verses about *Tzitzit* day and night;²¹⁶ to remember the Shabbat day every day;²¹⁷ to remember the day of the giving of the Torah;²¹⁸ to remember that we angered *HaShem*-ה"ה in the desert;²¹⁹ to remember the incident involving Miriam;²²⁰ to make a special blessing before reading the Torah;²²¹ to look upon the *Tzitzit* while reciting “and you shall look upon it;”²²² to fully repent;²²³ to have fear of *HaShem*-ה"ה when reciting the order of the sacrifices in the morning and when reciting the *Pesookei D'Zimra* which follow them; to love *HaShem*-ה"ה during the blessing of “An eternal love etc.,”²²⁴ and during the verse,²²⁵ “And you shall love *HaShem*-ה"ה your God” etc., to bless Him with “*Yishtabach*” and in “*Yotzer Ohr*” and in “*Yotzer HaMeorot*” and during the seven blessings that accompany the “*Shema*” morning and evening; to sanctify *HaShem*'s-ה"ה name by potentially giving over one's soul unto death when reciting the verse,²²⁶ “Listen Israel, *HaShem*-

²¹⁶ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 12b; Exodus 13:3; Deuteronomy 16:3

²¹⁷ Exodus 20:7

²¹⁸ Deuteronomy 4:9

²¹⁹ Deuteronomy 9:7

²²⁰ Deuteronomy 24:9

²²¹ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 21a

²²² Numbers 15:39; Talmud Bavli, Brachot 12b; Menachot 43b

²²³ Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Teshuvah

²²⁴ In the liturgy of the blessings of the *Shema*

²²⁵ Deuteronomy 6:5, the first paragraph of the *Shema* recital

²²⁶ Deuteronomy 6:4, the *Shema*

יהו"ה is our G-d, *HaShem*-יהו"ה is one;” to sanctify His name when reciting “*Nakdeeshach*;” to give one’s soul over unto death and to adhere to Him when reciting the verse, “To You *HaShem*-יהו"ה, I give over my soul;”²²⁷ to know that *HaShem*-יהו"ה is God when reciting the verse, “*Shema Yisroel* – Listen Israel, *HaShem*-יהו"ה is our God, *HaShem*-יהו"ה is one,” to delight on Shabbat;²²⁸ to do the *Havdalah* ceremony at the end of the Holidays, to say the *Hallel* prayers at their specific times; to swear in His Name to fulfill a mitzvah; to recite special blessings when enjoying anything of the world;²²⁹ to afflict oneself with the five afflictions of the day of atonement-*Yom Kippur*;²³⁰ to burn the leavening on the 14th day of Nissan;²³¹ to honor those who are advanced in years or in wisdom;²³² to be modest in the lavatory;²³³ to praise Divine justice on all occasions;²³⁴ to give offerings to *HaShem*-יהו"ה from the choicest of our goods; to build a house of prayer;²³⁵ to destroy the name of idolatry,²³⁶ to only mention them for disgrace, to chop down an *Asherah* grove,²³⁷ to burn an *Asherah* grove,²³⁸

²²⁷ Zohar II 200b, 202b; Zohar III 120b – The *Nefilat Apayim* prayer

²²⁸ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 118a; Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Shabbat Ch. 30

²²⁹ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 35a

²³⁰ Mishnah Yoma 8:1; Taanit 1:6; Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Shevitat Asor 1

²³¹ Mishnah Pesachim 2:1

²³² Leviticus 19:32; Talmud Bavli, Kiddushin 32b and on; Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Talmud Torah, Ch. 6; Sefer HaMitzvot pos. mitzvah 209; Zohar HaRakia, pos. mitzvah 24

²³³ Sefer Mitzvot Katan pos. mitzvah 57; Mishneh Torah, Hilchot De’ot, 5:6

²³⁴ Sefer Mitzvot Gadol pos. mitzvah 17; Sefer Mitzvot Katan pos. mitzvah 5

²³⁵ Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Tefilah 11:1

²³⁶ Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Avoda Zarah 7:1

²³⁷ Sefer Mitzvot Katan pos. mitzvah 39

²³⁸ Sefer Mitzvot Katan pos. mitzvah 40

to break their idols,²³⁹ to destroy their high places,²⁴⁰ to destroy their alters,²⁴¹ to destroy instruments used for idolatry;²⁴² to separate from one's wife before her menstrual period;²⁴³ to refrain from marital relations during her menstrual period;²⁴⁴ to have awe and fear of Torah scholars;²⁴⁵ to circumcise one's heart;²⁴⁶ to love being rebuked;²⁴⁷ to go beyond the letter of the law in keeping the *mitzvot*;²⁴⁸ to walk wholeheartedly with *HaShem*-יהוה your God, and not go in the ways of the Chaldeans;²⁴⁹ to love one's fellow Jew;²⁵⁰ especially to always judge others favorably even when they are not before you;²⁵¹ to try to make peace between people;²⁵² to give charity to the poor;²⁵³ To return any fixed interest charged to a Jew;²⁵⁴ to fulfill the laws that relate to saving a life and the perpetuation

²³⁹ Sefer Mitzvot Katan pos. mitzvah 38

²⁴⁰ Sefer Mitzvot Katan pos. mitzvah 41

²⁴¹ Sefer Mitzvot Katan pos. mitzvah 42

²⁴² Sefer Mitzvot Katan pos. mitzvah 43

²⁴³ Talmud Bavli, Niddah 63b; Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Issurei Bi'ah 4:12

²⁴⁴ Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Issurei Bi'ah 4

²⁴⁵ Talmud Bavli, Pesachim 22b; Bechorot 6b; Bava Kamma 41b; Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Talmud Torah 5:1; Sefer HaYirah 200 and elsewhere.

²⁴⁶ Deuteronomy 10:16; Sefer Mitzvot Katan pos. mitzvah 9

²⁴⁷ Talmud Bavli, Tamid 28a; Sefer Mitzvot Katan pos. mitzvah 9

²⁴⁸ Talmud Bavli, Bava Metziya 30b; Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah 5:11; Hilchot De'ot 1:5

²⁴⁹ Deuteronomy 18:13; Sefer Mitzvot Katan, pos. mitzvah 10

²⁵⁰ Leviticus 19:18; Mishneh Torah, Hilchot De'ot 6:3; Sefer HaMitzvot pos. mitzvah 206; Sefer Mitzvot Gadol pos. mitzvah 9; Sefer Mitzvot Katan pos. mitzvah 8 and elsewhere.

²⁵¹ Mishnah Avot 1:6; Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 127b; Sifra Kedoshim Ch. 4; Orchot Tzaddikim 25

²⁵² Mishnah Pe'ah 1:1; Avot 1:12; Mishneh Torah, Hilchot De'ot 5:7

²⁵³ Leviticus 25:36; Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Matnot Aniyyim 7:1

²⁵⁴ Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Malveh v'Loveh 4:6-7

of life;²⁵⁵ to annul the vows of one's wife and children;²⁵⁶ to instruct, render, and teach Torah law;²⁵⁷ that a judge must fulfill the verse,²⁵⁸ "Distance yourself from a false word;"²⁵⁹ to render proper Torah judgments in the laws that govern partnerships, divisions of land and inheritances, and all other types of legal claims and suits.

The following positive *mitzvot* are of rabbinical origin:

To make vessels kosher through boiling them;²⁶⁰ to ritually immerse new vessels in a ritual bath (*Mikvah*);²⁶¹ to search for any leavened bread (*Chametz*) on the night of the fourteenth of Nissan;²⁶² to eat the bitter herb (*Maror*) on the first night of Passover;²⁶³ to recite blessings on all the *mitzvot*, and to bless *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, for all the miracles and occurrences that happen to him;²⁶⁴ to read from the Torah scroll at the times that were affixed by Moshe, peace be upon him, on the Shabbat and festivals etc.²⁶⁵

²⁵⁵ Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah 5:1 and elsewhere.

²⁵⁶ Mishneh Torah, Nedarim 3; Tur and Shulchan Aruch 341 and elsewhere.

²⁵⁷ Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Talmud Torah 4-5

²⁵⁸ Exodus 23:7

²⁵⁹ Sefer HaMitzvot neg. mitzvah 281; Sefer Yereim 235

²⁶⁰ Sefer Mitzvot Katan, pos. mitzvah 198

²⁶¹ Sefer Mitzvot Katan, pos. mitzvah 199

²⁶² Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Chametz u'Matzah 2:3

²⁶³ Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Chametz u'Matzah 7:12

²⁶⁴ Sefer Mitzvot Katan pos. mitzvah 150

²⁶⁵ Talmud Bavli, Bava Kamma 82a

Part One

Gate Five

The Level of a Chassid

In explanation of matters that are constant, are very important and need great caution, as clarified from the words of our sages of blessed memory, in Talmud, Midrash, in the Tractate on fear of sin (*Yirat Cheit*), the Tractate on upright behavior (*Derech Eretz*) and in Zohar:

It was explained in previous chapters that there are three levels:

- 1) The acquisition of good character traits in one's elemental soul until they become completely natural to him.
- 2) Desisting from the evil of the 365 negative *mitzvot*, in the intellectual soul.
- 3) Fulfilling the 248 positive *mitzvot* that are called, "Do good."²⁶⁶

Now, there also is an intermediate level, which is the acquisition of character traits that are close to desisting from

²⁶⁶ Psalms 34:15 – "Turn away from evil, and do good (סור מרע ועשה טוב)."

doing the negative commandments. These are gleaned from the words of the Prophets and the words of Scripture.

- A) Character traits that are particularly serious and despicable, which obstruct a Jew from cleaving to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, are arrogance, anger, impatience, depression, hatred, jealousy, lust, covetousness, lording over others, seeking honor, and boasting. Their opposites are lowliness to the endth degree, to never become angered even with members of your household, to never be pedantic and demanding of others, to be insulted without returning insults, to always be happy even in times of trouble, to love everyone including non-Jews, to not be jealous over anything, since after all, our days on earth are like a passing shadow, to despise all the vanities of this world, to live a life of Torah and *mitzvot* even if it means eating bread with salt and only drinking water, not to desire any of the vanities of this world, to flee from a position of power, which puts a person into an early grave. Also, do not be demonstrative of your righteousness, for by doing so, not only will you lose your reward in the coming world, but you also will be punished over it in purgatory.
- B) Desisting from forbidden character traits. These are speaking badly of others, gossiping, embarrassing others, calling your fellow by a negative nickname, mockery, speaking lies, flattery, deceit, idle chatter,

pointing out a person's faults to others, delighting in the downfall of others, causing strife amongst brothers, profiting from the honor of the Torah, and looking at nakedness.

- C) Desisting from committing severe negative *mitzvot* that are accompanied by the cutting off of the soul, death by the hands of heaven or death by the hands of the earthly court. Of these, profaning the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה is the worst of all. It is written,²⁶⁷ "You shall be clean to *HaShem*-יהו"ה and to Israel," specifically clean of marital relations with a menstruating woman or any type of physical closeness to her. Keeping Shabbat with all its details, cleaning the forbidden sinews and fats from meat, avoiding seminal emission, even involuntary emission, not making use of *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה holy names, for whosoever who makes use of the crown will be destroyed, not to disgrace a Torah scholar, for a person such as this is called a heretic ("Apikorus"), to desist from incriminating and slandering others, especially to non-Jews. Other severe prohibitions are swearing in the Name of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, even about the truth, false testimony and any type of oath, and desisting from eating any forbidden food.
- D) Fulfilling the positive *mitzvot* of Tzitzit, Tefillin, reciting the Shema twice daily, honoring the Shabbat in all its details, circumcision of male offspring, doing acts

²⁶⁷ Numbers 32:22

of lovingkindness, visiting the sick, welcoming guests into your home, bringing peace between people, praying the Amidah prayer with complete focus and joy, bringing merit to those who are unmeritorious, conducting one's business affairs honestly, giving charity to the poor, giving charity in an unpretentious and hidden manner, and setting of times for the study of Torah day and night, for the study of Torah is commensurate to them all.

- E) Fulfilling Torah customs; reciting the Shema before retiring to bed at night, rising at midnight to mourn for the exile of the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*-יהו"ה (the *Shechinah*) and the destruction of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem and to be occupied in the study of Torah until dawn, the fear of *HaShem*-יהו"ה should always be upon your face and keep you far from sin, know *HaShem*-יהו"ה in all your ways, your soul should always cleave to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, without stopping for even a moment.

Part One

Gate Six

A short summary of everything that was mentioned in the previous gates, within which the order of conduct of a Chassid is briefly explained in all his deeds throughout the days of his life, so that he will not stumble

Now my son, listen to my voice in all that I instruct you. Prepare yourself to greet your God, Israel. Every night before going to sleep remember that sleep is a foretaste of death and remind yourself of the great and true death.²⁶⁸ Contemplate all your deeds of that day. If any were bad, confess them before *HaShem*-יהו"ה, as is the custom of all who are sentenced to death.

During the recital of Shema before going to sleep, accept the yoke of heaven upon yourself so that your soul will be uplifted to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, with the word *One-Echad*-אחד. After this, put your soul into His hand, blessed is

²⁶⁸ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 4b, 5a, 57b and elsewhere.

He, with the verse,²⁶⁹ “I place my spirit into Your hands.” This is similar to true death, about which it states,²⁷⁰ “And the spirit returns to God etc.” However, since sleep is just a foretaste of true death, give your soul over to Him as a temporary deposit, with the understanding that in the morning it will be returned to you revitalized and refreshed. Then, with fear and trepidation, lay down on your bed, for now your spirit will ascend to give an accounting of all your deeds, words and thoughts during that day, before the Creator, blessed is He and blessed is His Name. Then quiet your heart and mind from thinking idle thoughts until you fall asleep in fear of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

When you wake up for the midnight prayers (*Tikkun Chatzot*) be as light as an eagle to rise quickly from your bed. Properly wash your hands to remove the spirit of impurity from your flesh. Bless and praise *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, for although you are guilty of many sins, in His faithfulness He did not delay your spirit from returning to you. Be thankful that it was not real death, but that instead, *HaShem*-יהו"ה returned your soul to a lifeless body, renewed and refreshed with new vigor and energy.

Moreover, do not be unappreciative of all this, but instead, agonize over the exile of *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Indwelling Presence and the destruction of His Holy Sanctuary. For your sins and the sins of your forefathers caused all this, and as of yet, His Indwelling Presence (*Shechinah*) is still in her fallen state. Nevertheless, *HaShem*-יהו"ה paid no heed to your evil

²⁶⁹ Psalms 31:6

²⁷⁰ Ecclesiastes 12:7

deeds and though you went to bed tired and weary, He returned your soul renewed and invigorated. Moreover, through mourning for the exile of the *Shechinah* you will merit beholding the redemption of Zion, along with all those who mourn for her. After this, if you are able, occupy yourself with the study of the oral Torah until dawn. Through this you draw down influence upon the *Shechinah* and strengthen her from her great fall.

At dawn, run to the house of prayer to receive the *Shechinah* - the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, for she has already preceded you there to listen to your prayers that she be uplifted and returned to Zion, where she formally was. Moreover, even though you cannot accomplish this singlehandedly, nonetheless, you actually help in uplifting her to some degree. As recompense, she will listen to your prayer and fulfill your requests for goodness. Therefore, my son, when you pray, do so with joy and align your thoughts to *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Supernal intent.

When you pray, your intention should be for the *Shechinah* to be uplifted and to do a kindness to your Maker, rather than merely praying for your own needs, and then the prayers for your needs become like the request of a servant who has no source of livelihood other than from his master. If you truly call out to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, He too will be close to you, as it states,²⁷¹ “*HaShem*-יהו"ה is close to all who call Him, to all who call Him in truth,” and,²⁷² “For *HaShem*-יהו"ה seeks all hearts

²⁷¹ Psalms 145:18

²⁷² Chronicles I 28:9

and He understands the inclination of all thoughts and knows all who take refuge in Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you.”

This is particularly so when you confess your sins before Him after the *Amidah* prayer, or if you say the blessing, “Who listens to prayer” of the *Amidah* prayer with all your heart, with the resolve to never revert to sin. For *HaShem*-יהו"ה knows all hidden and revealed matters. He beholds the kidneys and the heart. Likewise, during the *Nefilat Apayim* prayer, when you reach the verse,²⁷³ “*HaShem*-יהו"ה, I give my soul over to You,” resolve with all your heart to sacrifice yourself unto death, if necessary, for the sake of *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה Torah and *mitzvot*. On condition that your mouth and heart are truly one, all your sins will be forgiven.

After concluding your prayers, go from strength to strength by establishing set times to study the Torah of *HaShem*-יהו"ה for the sake of its Name (particularly right after the morning prayers). Do not change or postpone these set times under any circumstances. Afterwards, eat your meal of bread with salt and a measure of water, for,²⁷⁴ “a Tzaddik eats to satisfy his soul,” that is, just enough to maintain his health. This too, should be done for the sake of heaven, to have the strength to properly serve *HaShem*-יהו"ה, as written,²⁷⁵ “In all your ways, know Him.”²⁷⁶ Approach your table, which is

²⁷³ Psalms 25:1

²⁷⁴ Proverbs 13:25

²⁷⁵ Proverbs 3:6

²⁷⁶ Mishneh Torah, Hilchot De’ot, Ch. 3

compared to an altar, with awe, for you are eating at the table of the King.

Now, so that your table will be an altar that atones for your sins, eat little and thereby weaken the power of the external husk of the food that nourishes you, and while eating, occupy yourself in Torah by learning a Mishnah or a Psalm. Through this, your table will be declared to be an altar to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He,²⁷⁷ as it states,²⁷⁸ "This table is in the presence of *HaShem*-יהו"ה." This weakens your evil inclination, whereas your intellectual soul becomes strengthened and nourished by your Torah study.

After you finish your meal and have been physically and spiritually nourished through eating and studying, do not be unappreciative. Bless *HaShem*-יהו"ה for all the goodness He has sustained you with, by reciting the blessings after meals with great joy, like a person who has just received a precious gift,²⁷⁹ as we say in the blessing,²⁸⁰ "for the Torah that you taught us and for the consumption of food that you sustain us with." In the merit of doing this, *HaShem*-יהו"ה will open His treasury of goodness²⁸¹ to you and will sustain you always.

After this, see to either doing a new *mitzvah*, in order to perfect the 248 organs of your soul, or do an old *mitzvah* to add to your merit before the Holy One, blessed is He. After this, go to your occupation or business, and conduct them faithfully and

²⁷⁷ Zohar II 153b

²⁷⁸ Ezekiel 41:22

²⁷⁹ Zohar II 218

²⁸⁰ In the grace after meals (*Birkhat HaMazon*)

²⁸¹ Deuteronomy 28:12

honestly, without deceit or price gouging. Do not approach your business affairs with the intent of becoming wealthy, but rather, to meet your physical needs. Make your study of Torah essential and your business affairs non-essential,²⁸² for as Torah tells us regarding the manna,²⁸³ “The one who gathered more had no leftovers and the one who gathered less had no lacking; each person gathered according to his eating needs.”

Also, never accept gifts, for whosoever despises receiving gifts will live,²⁸⁴ for it is *HaShem*-יהו"ה who impoverishes or gives wealth.²⁸⁵ It is He who gives you the strength to accomplish.²⁸⁶ Therefore, cast your needs upon *HaShem*-יהו"ה with all your heart and He will sustain you.²⁸⁷ May the fear of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, be upon your face, so as not to commit any of the 365 Torah prohibitions.²⁸⁸ Take particular care not to fall into bad character traits, which are like sourdough²⁸⁹ that causes physicality to rise, especially those bad character traits that are readily found and therefore trampled upon.²⁹⁰

²⁸² Mishnah Avot 1:15; Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Talmud Torah, 3:7

²⁸³ Exodus 16:18

²⁸⁴ Proverbs 15:27

²⁸⁵ Samuel I 2:7

²⁸⁶ Deuteronomy 8:18

²⁸⁷ Psalms 55:23

²⁸⁸ Sefer Yere'im 352

²⁸⁹ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 17a

²⁹⁰ Talmud Bavli, Avodah Zarah 18a; Rashi to Deuteronomy 7:12

Matters that should be avoided in the extreme

Beware of every kind of anger, pedantry and arrogance, even in relation to the members of your household. If someone insults you do not answer him. Rather, when insulted, do not respond in kind, for about this it is written,²⁹¹ “Those who love Him are like the sun coming out in its full strength.” Pass over your feelings towards whoever sinned against you and do not be anguished over it, even in your heart, because, in actuality, it is for your good, in that whosoever passes over his feelings, all his intentional sins are likewise passed over,²⁹² and this certainly also applies to unintentional sins. On the contrary, it would be wise to seek out someone who causes you anguish, for by doing so you seek life.

Greet every person with joy, even if he hates you, for by doing so, he will be transformed into your friend and this will be to your merit. Let all your words be calm and speak in a low voice, lest you enter into the domain of anger. Rid your heart of sorrow and worry and thus remove negativity from yourself, for negativity is a trap that removes the Holy Spirit from being upon you. Moreover, flee from a position of power, for it shortens one’s life.

Distance yourself from idle chatter, falsehood, flattery, jesting and speaking badly of others (*Lashon HaRa*), for whoever engages in these will not greet the face of the *Shechinah* – the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*-יהו"ה – in the

²⁹¹ Judges 5:31

²⁹² Talmud Bavli, Rosh HaShanah 17a

coming world. Rather, take hold of humility, which brings one to receiving the Holy Spirit and be like a threshold that is stepped on by young and old. Block your ears from listening to gossip, the evil tongue and idle chatter, and make yourself like a deaf person who cannot hear.²⁹³ Moreover, make yourself as if you are mute²⁹⁴ and do not speak except in matters of Torah, *mitzvot* and necessary business matters. Greet everyone with a smile and soft words. Do not boast about your good deeds to others, for by doing so you lose the reward and moreover, you will be punished for boasting.

Be very careful with the afternoon prayers, for Eliyahu the prophet was specifically answered in the afternoon prayers.²⁹⁵ Moreover, it is a time of complete judgment, because at noon, the day begins to wane and the shadows of evening begin to form.²⁹⁶ Be even more careful with the evening prayers, when darkness already covers the earth and all the destructive forces awaken and are arrayed against the body and soul of man, when it ascends in sleep, to give an accounting before its Creator, blessed is He.

Also keep to the additional matters that I already have included in the fifth Gate. For the sake of brevity, I have not repeated them here.

We now will prepare a general remedy, comprising of three things that save a person from all maladies of the soul.

²⁹³ Isaiah 42:19; Psalms 38:14

²⁹⁴ Psalms 38:14

²⁹⁵ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 6b

²⁹⁶ Zohar I 95b; Zohar II 36b

This is because there are three things that cause a person to stray and damage his soul.

- 1) Physicality causes a person to forget goodness and brings him to sin.
- 2) He has it in his heart to seek pleasure in life as long as he can.
- 3) Even if he sets his heart to remember goodness, he could be beset with worry about providing for his physical needs throughout the seventy years of his physical life. This is actually worse than the two above-mentioned matters.

Therefore, my son, do the following and save yourself from these three transgressions of Israel:

To combat the first problem, always think deeply whether you should do or speak even the smallest thing or whether you should desist from doing so, for regret is the produce of rushing into something, and once a word is said or a deed is done, there is no taking it back.

To combat the second problem, place the fear of *HaShem*-יהו"ה before you. Let not the fear of the day of death pass from your eyes, when you will go down into the grave and become the food of worms and maggots and suffer decomposition and the judgment of purgatory, nor should you forget the great and awesome day of judgment for all mankind,

which even Samuel the prophet, who is equated to both Moshe and Aharon, was fearful of.²⁹⁷

To combat the third problem, acquire the quality of true trust in *HaShem*-יהו"ה, for *HaShem*-יהו"ה sees all man's ways and recompenses him accordingly. Moreover, man's actions and schemes are ineffectual in this, for "the race is not won by the swift."²⁹⁸ Rather, give your needs over to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, as we say,²⁹⁹ "Happy is the man who does not forget You, and a person who strengthens in You, for those who seek You will never falter and those who find shelter in You will never be shamed."

Until this point, we have provided explanations on how a person should conduct himself to be a Tzaddik or a Chassid. From this point on, we will engage in matters of rebuke that bring one to submission to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, and the consequences of persisting on the wrong path, as well as the bountiful reward for greatly desiring *HaShem*'s-יהו"ה Torah and *mitzvot*.

²⁹⁷ Talmud Bavli, Chagigah 4b

²⁹⁸ Ecclesiastes 9:11

²⁹⁹ In the Rosh HaShanah liturgy

Part Two

Gate One

Words of Rebuke

Now, son of man, open your eyes from your blindness and realize that all the pleasures and goodness of this world are vanity and error.³⁰⁰ Why be prideful over others? If you are proud of your tall and upright stature, others too were created in the image of God, just like you. If you are proud of your family lineage, are we not all the children of one man and are not all Jews children of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov? If you are proud of your wealth, are there not many empty-headed and reckless people who are wealthier than you? Moreover, it is *HaShem*-יהו"ה who impoverishes and enriches.³⁰¹ Therefore, if you are wealthy, do not glorify in your wealth,³⁰² for it could be wealth kept for its possessor to his detriment.

If you are proud of your authority and honor over others, are there not many despicable people who have power over others in this world, as proverbs states,³⁰³ “because of a slave who reigns.” Furthermore, wealth and honor are in *HaShem*'s-

³⁰⁰ Jeremiah 10:15

³⁰¹ Samuel I 2:7

³⁰² Jeremiah 9:22

³⁰³ Proverbs 30:21

יהו"ה control³⁰⁴ and He brings the haughty down to the ground.³⁰⁵ If you are proud of your intelligence, there were many people who were more intelligent than you, such as Doeg, Achitophel and Yeravam, who lost their lives, both in this world and the coming world. For it is in *HaShem* 's-יהו"ה power to distort the utterances of the trustworthy and take reason away from the elders.³⁰⁶ Therefore, let not the wise glory in his wisdom,³⁰⁷ for how can you be haughty if from your very inception you were born of a putrid drop,³⁰⁸ and you entered and exited by way the birth canal.

Moreover, during your lifetime you are shameful and disgraceful, and in death, you are worms and maggots,³⁰⁹ for from dust you came and to dust you shall return³¹⁰ and will be as if you never were. How then can you be angered at others, but not at yourself, being that by your anger you destroy your very soul and serve idolatry, thus angering your Maker who will exact punishment from you.

How then can a person place importance on the vanities of this world when his end is to perish. “The spirit passes over him and he is gone, and his place no longer recognizes him,”³¹¹ “and whoever has seen him will say, ‘where is he?’”³¹² Why then, will you be saddened at the loss of a world that is not

³⁰⁴ Proverbs 3:16

³⁰⁵ Liturgy of the morning blessings of the *Shema* recital.

³⁰⁶ Job 12:20

³⁰⁷ Jeremiah 9:22

³⁰⁸ Mishnah Avot 3:1

³⁰⁹ Mishnah Avot 3:1 *ibid.*

³¹⁰ Genesis 3:19

³¹¹ Psalms 103:16

³¹² Job 20:7

yours, but are not saddened about the departure of your soul from your body with trembling, quaking, sudden fear and great darkness falling upon you?³¹³

Why do you lust for material wealth, in amassing gold and building great houses and storerooms, for in the end, you will be carried to the grave emptyhanded and all your wealth will be left in the hands of others? Why then do you labor so greatly to amass wealth, when in reality, it all depends on *HaShem*'s יהו"ה Divine providence, even a Torah scroll in the sanctuary?³¹⁴ Why are you concerned with a world that is not yours, for in the blink of an eye, you will be transported to a different world? Then all your efforts will be as nothing, because all your energy was spent in acquiring worthless vanity and nothingness. Why do you reject the Torah of eternal life for the sake of amassing the possessions of transient life? For everything that God has decreed upon you, whether for poverty or for wealth, cannot be added to nor subtracted from, for it is *HaShem*-יהו"ה who impoverishes and enriches.³¹⁵ You thus lose your eternal life, without having accomplished even half of what you lusted for, but tomorrow you will lay in the dust. Maggots will be beneath you and worms will cover you. Why then do you seek power and high position when the hope of man is maggots?

Moreover, one kingdom does not overlap another kingdom even by a hairsbreadth, for kingship is *HaShem*'s-

³¹³ Genesis 15:12

³¹⁴ Zohar III 134a

³¹⁵ Samuel I 2:7

יהו"ה.³¹⁶ It is in His power to strengthen and make great. It is He who lowers one person and elevates another. How then can you speak wickedly of your fellow, who is better than you, when there are many accusing angels who tell of your wickedness and point out your sins before He who spoke and the world was?

Why do you hate your enemy, when in reality you have no greater enemy than yourself, in that you bring evil upon yourself by oppressing and damaging your eternal soul and pleasuring your body, which is nothing but a clump of earth that is here today and gone tomorrow? Why do you love your true enemy, the evil inclination-*Yetzter HaRa* that is within you, though he seeks your downfall and desires to kill you? You are like a bird hurrying to the trap, unaware that it's life will be lost as the arrow splits it liver!³¹⁷

Why do you flatter one such as you, born of woman, and are embarrassed from him, but are not embarrassed before the great and awesome King who is the judge over all, and whose glory fills the earth? The souls of all living creatures are in His hands and from His abode He supervises all who dwell on earth. Why do you sin in secrecy though all your deeds and words are recorded in the book? For *HaShem's* יהו"ה eyes scan all the ways of man on earth. He takes account of all your steps and will bring you to judgment over every hidden thing.³¹⁸ Why would you waste your time on things that exist today but are

³¹⁶ Psalms 22:29, 145:13

³¹⁷ Proverbs 7:23

³¹⁸ Ecclesiastes 12:14

gone tomorrow, for the span of your life is short. When will you prepare for your eternal abode if you are preoccupied by these things, for as known, whosoever does not toil on the eve of Shabbat will not eat on Shabbat.³¹⁹

Look and see how many people died in their youth and how many miscarriages and suckling infants passed away and were cut off from life, like a stalk whose produce is cut off. No man knows his appointed time, when he will die and his name will be lost from the world. If so, how can you forget the day of death, the judgment of purgatory and the great and awesome day of judgment of the coming future? Who can withhold it, to give you refuge from these? For nothing is as sure as death and no man is saved from the grave. In the end you will groan for the gates of repentance, but they will be locked before you and there will be no remedy for your afflictions and sins.

All this being so, how can your eyes avoid the reality of death when, in fact, it is coiled like a snake around your heel. Every night you lay upon your bed like a corpse, as a reminder of actual death. Death is tied like frontlets between your eyes and like deep slumber upon your eyelids. This knowledge protects you when you sleep, but when you wake up, you look away at all the vanities of the world, at wealth that is not yours, at pleasures that are not yours, at power over others that is not yours, and at a world that is not yours.

³¹⁹ Talmud, Avodah Zara 3a

Part Two

Gate Two

Words of rebuke gleaned from the words of our sages, of blessed memory

Our sages, of blessed memory, stated³²⁰ that a person should always be in a state of fear of Heaven, privately as well as openly. Happy is he who sets all his words and all his ways for the sake of Heaven. Let your eyes and heart always be directed toward your Creator, so that you will be saved from every type of sin and transgression. Let the fear of He who formed you always be upon you, and let the awe of Him be constantly present in your heart and mind, and before your eyes, so that they are never removed from before your eyes for even a moment.

Let the day of death never depart from before your eyes, and the day of your burial and the day of great judgment. It should be for you as if you actually see it, and as if it actually is upon you, as though you are about to enter into judgment, so that thoughts of sin do not even come upon your heart. For, all your limbs shall testify about you, and against your will you

³²⁰ Tanna d'Vei Eliyahu Rabba, Ch. 21

will be forced to give an accounting before the King, King of kings, the Holy One, blessed is He.³²¹

Each and every day you should lament to yourself that you did not adequately give charity to Torah scholars or properly study Torah, for every day that has passed shall never be returned to you.

Our sages stated³²² that at the time of a person's passing from this world, the angel of death asks him, "Did you engage in Torah study and acts of kindness? Did you crown your Maker over you every morning and evening? Did you crown your fellows over you as your superiors and with a pleasant spirit?" If he has these qualities, his soul will then depart from his body as with a kiss, but if not etc.

The second judgment is the judgment of the grave. The day of entering the grave is even more arduous than the judgments of purgatory.³²³ Even the perfectly righteous *Tzaddikim* who have never sinned are judged by it. What then shall a person do to be saved from the torments of the grave (*Chibut HaKever*)? He should engage in Torah study, love charity, rebuke, and acts of kindness, and he should welcome Torah scholars and guests into his home, and provide them with delight in his belongings, and he also should pray with devotion. He will then be saved from the torments of the grave and even the judgments of purgatory will not be visited upon him.

³²¹ Mishnah Avot 4:22

³²² Reishit Chochmah, Shaar HaYirah, Ch. 12

³²³ Mesechet Chibut HaKever 3; Reishit Chochmah ibid.

The third judgment is the judgment of purgatory. At the time of his judgment, the Holy One, blessed is He, asks him, “Did you engage in Torah study and acts of lovingkindness?” If he has these qualities, he then is exempted from the judgments of purgatory.³²⁴ Happy is the man who subjugates himself like an ox to a yoke and like a donkey to a burden,³²⁵ so that he sits and studies and reviews the words of Torah every day constantly, reading the words of the Torah, the Prophets and the Scriptures, and reviewing the laws and teachings. If he does so, increasing his engagement in Torah study and minimizing his engagement in the pursuit of wealth, the Holy Spirit (*Ru’ach HaKodesh*) will immediately rest upon him.³²⁶

Eliyahu, who is remembered for good, stated:³²⁷ “As the heavens and earth are my witnesses, any man or woman, whether they are Gentile or Jew, even if they are a servant or a maid, the Holy Spirit (*Ru’ach HaKodesh*) will dwell upon each person according to his actions!”³²⁸ Happy is he who places all these matters before his face at all times, meriting to perfect himself in these ways all the days of his life, and conducting himself according to these manners throughout his life and with all these deeds. If only he guards himself, keeping his limbs and body far from all sin and transgression, he will merit all the glory that is hidden for the righteous *Tzaddikim*, glory that is

³²⁴ Mesechet Chibut HaKever 4; Reishit Chochmah ibid.

³²⁵ See Talmud Bavli, Avodah Zarah 5b; Tanna d’Bei Eliyahu Rabba, Ch. 2

³²⁶ Tanna d’Bei Eliyahu Rabba, Ch. 2 ibid.

³²⁷ Tanna d’Bei Eliyahu Rabba, Ch. 9

³²⁸ Also see the very first Chassidic discourse (*Maamar*) of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, entitled “*Bati LeGani* – I have come to My garden,” translated in The Teachings of The Rebbe, 5711, Discourse 1.

incalculable and beyond measure, such that no physical eye can behold it, and the physical ear is incapable of grasping the great glory that is apportioned to the righteous *Tzaddikim* and the pious *Chassidim*. It is about this that the verse states,³²⁹ “Such things have never been heard or noted, no eye has seen them God, but You, that which He will do for those who have awaited Him!”

³²⁹ Isaiah 64:3

Part Two

Gate Three

The reward for fulfilling Torah and Mitzvot

In order that you know the reason for the fulfillment of the *mitzvot*, as they are founded upon their roots in the manner that I revealed to you in Part One, I will quote what the sages stated in the Book of Repairs (Sefer HaTikkunim), in Tikkun 18,³³⁰ and in Tikkun 70,³³¹ and will compile the explanations of their roots and organize them into a very brief summary. They stated as follows:

Every prophet and all human beings are bound to and ascend to the particular [spiritual] limb to which their soul is included and bound. There are those who stem from the head of the King, and there are those who stem from the hairs of the head, some are bound to the eyes, some to the ears, and some to the nose, the mouth, the neck and throat, and the hands. There are those who stem from the stature of the torso which is the body, some from the thighs, from the legs or feet, and some

³³⁰ Tikkunei Zohar 32a

³³¹ Tikkunei Zohar 130b and on. (This gate is a summary of the cited sections of the Tikkunei Zohar in the original Aramaic).

from the organ that is the sign of the covenant,³³² some from the brain and some from the heart. Each of these limbs possesses a corresponding known *Sefirah* of the ten *Sefirot*, and all these limbs and organs are what is known as the form of the body of the King (*Goofa d'Malka*). There also are those whose souls stem from the garments (*Levushin*) of the King.

All six-hundred and thirteen commandments of the Torah are tied to these limbs of the body of the King (*Goofa d'Malka*). There are *mitzvot* that are tied to the head of the King, and those that are tied to the eyes etc. For each of the *mitzvot* that dwell upon each particular limb, there is a known name, and within that name is the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, which is the soul of that limb. All the limbs are called the particular titles (*Kinuyim*) for the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, for it is He who is within each particular limb. Each of those names and titles for each of the particular limbs only has dominion over its particular limb. However, the Holy One, blessed is He, whose Name is *HaShem*-יהו"ה, His rule and dominion is over them all, just as the soul has dominion and rule over all of the particular limbs and organs. About this the verse states,³³³ "The whole earth is filled with His glory."

Those commandments that a person fulfills without any ulterior motive of receiving reward,³³⁴ are tied to the form of the King in the world of Emanation-*Atzilut*. However, those commandments that a person fulfills for the ulterior motive of

³³² The male reproductive organ

³³³ Isaiah 6:3

³³⁴ Mishnah Avot 1:3

receiving reward, are tied to the form of he who is called a lad (*Na'ar*) above in Godliness.

Now, there are also hosts of angels that are bound to each and every limb of the form of the King. There are angels that are called “the eyes of *HaShem*-יהו"ה,” those who are called “the ears of *HaShem*-יהו"ה,” and those who are called “the hands of *HaShem*-יהו"ה” etc. They all are bound to the body of the King (*Goafa d'Malka*) like the strands of hair that are attached to the head. That is, each strand is a single angel.

The 613 limbs and organs of man are thus all ordered according to the order of the whole of creation, and it is for this reason that man is called a “microcosm of the world” (*Olam Katan*).³³⁵ With every *mitzvah* that a person fulfills, he causes the coronation of the Holy One, blessed is He, over that limb or organ of his soul, according to what that particular *mitzvah* is. The same applies to each particular limb and organ of his soul, each of which are called flames (*Neirot*-נרות), as it states,³³⁶ “The soul of man is the flame of *HaShem*-יהו"ה,” and it is with that limb that he performs that particular commandment, which likewise is called a flame (*Ner*-נר), as it states,³³⁷ “The commandment (*mitzvah*) is a flame (*Ner*-נר).”

It is necessary for a person to eradicate all impure and vile thoughts and impurities from each of these limbs and organs. For, they stem from the extraneous husks (*Kelipot*) which dwell in man. He therefore must repair and prepare the

³³⁵ Tikkunei Zohar 100a, 130b; Also see Sefer HaMashalim of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla (translated as The Book of Allegories 1-4), and elsewhere.

³³⁶ Proverbs 20:27

³³⁷ Proverbs 6:23

place, to refine and cleanse it, thus making it is a fitting receptacle within which the flame of *HaShem*-יהו"ה can dwell. For, when any limb or organ becomes blemished through the iniquities and transgressions that a person does, the Holy One blessed is He does not dwell in that limb. This is as stated,³³⁸ “For any man in whom there is a blemish shall not approach.” Any person who causes blemish to a particular commandment, it is as if he has transgressed against the form and body of the King. A person must therefore burn those external husks (*Kelipot*) that dwell there in each of those limbs, and must eradicate them from within him. For, those extraneous husks are called sourdough (*Se'or*), leaven (*Chametz*), chaff (*Motz*), and straw (*Teven*), and he must eradicate them from those flames about which it states,³³⁹ “The commandment (*mitzvah*) is a flame (*Ner*-נר),” and,³⁴⁰ “The soul of man is the flame of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, נר, Who searches all the chambers of one's innards.” By doing so, the Holy One, blessed is He, dwells there, meaning, the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, and His titles, which are called His limbs, along with His myriads of camps and troops, which are the angels that are tied to that particular limb, and which guard that particular limb from all evil forces and extraneous husks of *Kelipah* that were residing there.

Different commandments are tied to different limbs. The commandments of love and fear of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed

³³⁸ Leviticus 21:18

³³⁹ Proverbs 6:23

³⁴⁰ Proverbs 20:27

is He, are dependent upon the brain and the heart.³⁴¹ All commandments that relate to travel are dependent upon the feet, such as going to the house of prayer, to a circumcision, to perform the *mitzvah* of burying the dead, and any other travel associated with fulfilling a *mitzvah*. Similarly, there are commandments that one fulfills by standing upon his feet, such as standing during the *Amidah* (standing) prayer, which is tied to his two thighs and legs.

The commandment of circumcision (*Brit Milah*) is bound to the Tzaddik, who is the rainbow and sign of the covenant. The eighteen blessings of the *Amidah* prayer are tied to the eighteen vertebrae of the spine with which one bows and prostrates, and are bound to the Tzaddik who is called the eighteen worlds and statures of the body that prostrate to the Divine Presence of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, the *Shechinah*, during prayer.³⁴² That is, they are bound to the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, so that the four corresponding prostrations of the *Amidah* prayer are bound to the center column.

The Tefillin of the hand are bound to the left hand. All of the commandments that relate to action are bound to the hands, such as giving charity, tying the Tefillin, which utilizes the right hand to tie it onto the left, and acts of righteousness (*Tzedakah*) to the Holy One, blessed is He. The term for charity and righteousness is *Tzedakah*-צדקה. The *Tzadi*-צ-90 of *Tzedakah*-צדקה refers to the ninety times that a person responds

³⁴¹ See Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah 2:2

³⁴² For a lengthier explanation of this, see Kuntres Inyan Tefilah of Rabbi DovBer of Lubavitch, translated as Praying With Passion.

“amen” daily. The *Dalet*-ד-4 refers to the four sanctifications (*Kedusha*) that one recites daily. The *Kof*-כ-100 refers to the 100 blessings that one recites daily. The *Hey*-ה-5 refers to the five books of the Torah that one should study every day. About this charity and righteousness (*Tzedakah*-תְּצַדִּיק) Torah states,³⁴³ “You shall surely open your hand,” and,³⁴⁴ “You shall surely give,” and,³⁴⁵ “You shall surely furnish him,” which hints at the ten types of gifts etc.

The Tzitzit are worn on the shoulders. The delight of Shabbat is through eating and drinking, and similarly, the sacrificial offerings (*Korbanot*) are consumed through the eating and drinking of the Holy One, blessed is He, as it states,³⁴⁶ “My offering, My food.” The prayers that were established corresponding to the sacrificial offerings,³⁴⁷ and over which one makes a blessing to the Holy One, blessed is He, for all that he eats and drinks, should be consumed after one concludes his prayers and not before, and they all are bound to the neck.

The commandment to study and teach Torah, as well as the recitation of the prayers are all related to the voice and speech, through which one calls out to the Holy One, blessed is He. The same is true of the *Shema*, which is to be recited twice daily, as well as all the songs, praises, and hymns of thanks to *HaShem*-יְהוָה, all of which are tied to the mouth. The blowing

³⁴³ Deuteronomy 15:11

³⁴⁴ Deuteronomy 15:10

³⁴⁵ Deuteronomy 15:14

³⁴⁶ Numbers 28:2

³⁴⁷ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 26b

of the *Shofar* is tied to the lungs which blow the air and spirit through the mouth, and it is that air and spirit which activates the voice. Likewise, the rendering of all judgments is tied to speech, and also are tied to the eyes, as it states,³⁴⁸ “A judge can only render judgment based upon that which his eyes see.”

The sacrificial offerings, which are called³⁴⁹ “a pleasing aroma to *HaShem*-יהו"ה,” as well as the aromatic spices over which one makes the *Havdalah*, are tied to the nose. The recitation of the *Shema*, the commandment to hear the *Shofar*, and all other *mitzvot* about which it states that they must be heard by one’s ears to be fulfilled, are all tied to the ears. The *Tefillin* are also tied upon the head, and all of the *mitzvot* are thus intertwined with one another.

In the book of *Zohar* on *Parshat Naso*, it states,³⁵⁰ “Even when a person only fulfills a single *mitzvah* with love and fear of the Holy One, blessed is He, on account of this *mitzvah* the ten *Sefirot* dwell upon him. Whoever fulfills even a single *mitzvah* as fitting, it is as if he has fulfilled all 248 positive *mitzvot* of the Torah. This is because there is not a single *mitzvah* that is not intertwined with and includes all two-hundred and forty-eight positive *mitzvot* within it.”

The reward a person receives for crowning the Holy One, blessed is He, over each of his limbs, is that it is considered as if he crowned the Holy One, blessed is He, over the entire world, for man is called a microcosm of the world. Permission

³⁴⁸ Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 6b

³⁴⁹ Leviticus 1:9 and elsewhere

³⁵⁰ *Zohar* III 124a

was not granted to reveal the reasons for the commandments-*mitzvot*, in order that a person should not come to serve *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, for the ulterior motive of receiving reward.³⁵¹ Nevertheless, come and see how meritorious is the soul that is rooted in the form of her Master, and fulfills all His commandments. When such a soul ascends, all the hosts of angels ascend with her. For they are all tied to and dependent upon those commandments, fixtures, and camps of the body of the King (*Goofa d'Malka*). Thus, they all ascend with her and descend with her, and this soul is called the ladder (*Sulam*) about which it states,³⁵² "There was a ladder set on the ground and its top reached the heavens, and the angels of God were ascending and descending upon it." When that soul ascends, a voice comes down and proclaims in all the firmaments and to all the hosts and camps that are tied to that soul, "Grant honor to the form of the King."

Regarding the *mitzvah* of the covenant of circumcision (*Brit Milah*), just as he removes all the husks and membranes from that organ, thus fixing it to be an abode for the *Shechinah* – Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He – so likewise does his soul ascend above to the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה. All extraneous husks are removed from it and all angels of destruction are prevented from approaching him.

Similarly, just as he toils in the study of Torah and the fulfillment of the commandments-*mitzvot*, which are likened to the light of a candle, this is likewise the case when he goes to

³⁵¹ Mishnah Avot 1:3

³⁵² Genesis 28:12

that world. About this the verse states,³⁵³ “*HaShem*-יהו"ה went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them on the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light.” The word “them” in the plural, refers to the *Neshamah*, *Ru'ach* and *Nefesh* levels of one’s soul, which are guided by the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire to lead them on the way and give them light.

Likewise, just as he honored the Shabbat, by resting and delighting in it in honor of the Holy One, blessed is He, so likewise he is granted a place to rest above, and he rests there from all that he toiled in this world.

Whoever unifies the Holy One, blessed is He, with His Indwelling Presence – the *Shechinah* – the Holy One, blessed is He, likewise unites him with his spouse in that world. Just as man brings the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, close to himself, so likewise, he is brought close to his spouse. Similarly, whoever makes his place of dwelling into a Holy Temple, the Holy One, blessed is He, makes a dwelling place for him in the coming world, which is the Holy of Holies, and this is where he will dwell.

Whoever makes a *Sukkah* (סוכה) for the Holy One, blessed is He, the Holy One, blessed is He, shelters him in His shade in that world, and when he departs from this world, the Holy One, blessed is He, shelters and protects him from all angels of destruction and from all accusers.

Whoever recites the seven blessings of the *Shema* recital, sanctifying *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, when he

³⁵³ Exodus 13:21

recites “Holy, Holy, Holy is *HaShem Tzva'ot*-יהו"ה צבאו"ת,” and whoever unifies Him in the *Shema* recital, he will be blessed and sanctified with ten canopies of Holy matrimony (*Kiddushin*) in the Garden of Eden, and will be unified with his bride.

When a man wraps himself in the *mitzvah* of the Tallit, dons Tefillin and calls to the Holy One, blessed is He, in the *Shema* recital, he affixes a throne for the Holy One, blessed is He, upon which He sits. So likewise, the Holy One, blessed is He, affixes a throne and crown for him in the coming world, granting him the crown of kingship (*Keter Malchut*), and crowns him as king over all of the angels and ministers there. Just as he brings satisfaction to his Maker with songs, praises, and gratitude, so likewise when his soul ascends above, all the angels that carry the Supernal Chariot (*Merkavah*) and all the camps of the Chayot, Ophanim and Seraphim angels spread their wings to receive his soul with great delight, rejoicing and song.

In conclusion, it is beyond the capacity of the mouth to express the full extent of his eternal reward in that world, for generation after generation. Happy is he who causes the Holy One, blessed is He, to dwell in all of his limbs and organs. For, even if a person is missing only one limb, in that it is vacant of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, in that He does not dwell upon it, because of that one limb, he will be required to return to this world and reincarnate until he has perfected all of his limbs and has the full form (*Tzelem*) of *HaShem*-יהו"ה. For, even if he only lacks one, he is not in the form of *HaShem*-יהו"ה.

In conclusion, commensurate to a person's toil in fulfilling the *mitzvot* of the Holy One, blessed is He, for the sake of unifying the Holy One, blessed is He, with the *Shechinah* – His Indwelling Presence – so likewise, the Holy One, blessed is He, will reciprocate measure for measure with him and his spouse in the coming world.

Part Two

Gate Four

Regarding the punishments for bad character traits, and the reward for the acquisition of good character traits

Pride is the root of many sins, whether they are between man and *HaShem*-יהו"ה, the Ever Present One, blessed is He, or whether they are between man and his fellow. In regard to man and his fellow, this is because his arrogance will bring him to harm his fellow, in disdain for him and speak badly of him, amongst many other negative matters. Or whether between man and *HaShem*-יהו"ה, as written,³⁵⁴ “and your heart will become haughty and you will forget *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God.” That is, because of conceit he forgets *HaShem*-יהו"ה his God, greatly damaging his relationship with *HaShem*-יהו"ה, the Ever Present One, blessed is He. Our sages, of blessed memory, stated,³⁵⁵ “Whoever is haughty is called an abomination, as it states,³⁵⁶ ‘Every haughty person is an abomination to *HaShem*-יהו"ה.’” They also stated,³⁵⁷ “Whoever is arrogant should be

³⁵⁴ Deuteronomy 8:14

³⁵⁵ Talmud Bavli, Sotah 5a

³⁵⁶ Proverbs 16:5

³⁵⁷ Sotah 5a *ibid.*

excommunicated,” and, “it is fitting to hew him down as like an *Asherah* tree that has been designated for idolatry,” and, “his dust will not stir at the time of the resurrection of the dead,” and, “the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, the *Shechinah*, wails for him.” Moreover, they stated that a haughty person is equal to an idolater and to one who denies the fundamental principle of existence, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. Moreover, it is as if he transgressed every kind of forbidden relationship, and as if he built a personal altar to idolatry within himself. They further stated that even if, like our forefather Avraham, he attributes the possession of the entire heavens and earth to the Holy One, blessed is He, a haughty person will not be cleansed of the judgements of purgatory (Gehinnom). In the end he will be diminished from his haughty position and will depart from the world before his time.

Even about Yeravam, our Sages taught³⁵⁸ that all the Torah scholars of the generation were like the grass of the field next to him and there were no imperfections his Torah teachings. Moreover, he could expound upon Torah from one-hundred and fifty angles. Nonetheless, he was punished with excision from both this world and the coming world, only because of his arrogance.

Our Sages, of blessed memory, stated³⁵⁹ that it is as if a haughty person pushes away the feet of the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, thus causing Him to withdraw

³⁵⁸ Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 101a-b

³⁵⁹ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 43b

from the world, as the Holy One, blessed is He, said,³⁶⁰ “He and I cannot dwell together in the world.” Such a person rebels against the Kingdom of Heaven by wrapping himself in the *Tallit* that belongs only to the King, King of kings, the Holy One, blessed is He, as it states,³⁶¹ “*HaShem*-יהוה is King, He is clothed in pride.”

After all, what does man have to be proud of? His very existence is from a putrid drop and he was formed in menstrual blood. His lifetime is one of filth and stench and upon his death he is covered with worms and maggots, until his body decays and becomes a pile of dust and his soul descends to hell.

In contrast, there is no greater quality than humility and a sense of lowliness. We learn this³⁶² from our teacher Moshe, peace be upon him, the father of all the prophets in Torah, *mitzvot* and fear of sin. Even so, Torah only praised him for his humility, as it states,³⁶³ “The man Moshe was exceedingly humble.” Go and learn the quality of humility from the Holy One, blessed is He, who set aside the loftiest heavens to dwell with the despondent and the lowly of spirit, as written,³⁶⁴ “I abide with exaltedness and in holiness, but I am with the despondent and the lowly of spirit.” Similarly, it is written,³⁶⁵ “*HaShem*-יהוה is close to the broken hearted and He saves those who are crushed in spirit.” It likewise states,³⁶⁶ “Who

³⁶⁰ Talmud Bavli, Sotah 5a ibid.

³⁶¹ Psalms 93:1

³⁶² Also see Reishit Chochmah, Gate of Humility, Ch. 7

³⁶³ Numbers 12:3

³⁶⁴ Isaiah 57:15

³⁶⁵ Psalms 34:19

³⁶⁶ Psalms 15:1

may sojourn in Your tent? One who is lowly and contemptible in his own eyes.”

Now, although it is true that about fear of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, the verse states,³⁶⁷ “The fear of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, that is wisdom,” and similarly,³⁶⁸ “Fear of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, that is His treasure,” nevertheless, our sages, of blessed memory, stated,³⁶⁹ “What wisdom proclaimed to be the crown of its head, humility made into a heel (*Eikev*-עקב) for its sandal, as it states,³⁷⁰ ‘The heel (*Eikev*-עקב) of humility is fear of *HaShem*-יהו"ה.’”

A person whose opinion of himself is that he is lowly, is as if he has offered all the sacrificial offerings, as it states,³⁷¹ “The sacrifices that God desires are a broken spirit.” Moreover, his prayer is not despised or rejected, for,³⁷² “the prayers of a person are heard only if he casts his heart like flesh, as written,³⁷³ ‘It shall be that at every New Moon and on every Shabbat, all flesh shall come and prostrate themselves before Me.’” It similarly is written,³⁷⁴ “It is to this that I look, to the poor and broken-spirited.”

Whoever is humble causes the *Shechinah* – the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*-יהו"ה – to dwell upon man on

³⁶⁷ Job 28:28

³⁶⁸ Isaiah 33:6

³⁶⁹ Talmud Yerushalmi, Shabbat 1:3; Midrash Tanchuma BeHa'alotcha

³⁷⁰ Proverbs 22:4 – This verse is usually translated, “The result of humility is fear of *HaShem*-יהו"ה.”

³⁷¹ Psalms 51:19

³⁷² Talmud Bavli, Sotah 5a

³⁷³ Isaiah 66:23

³⁷⁴ Isaiah 66:2

earth, as it states,³⁷⁵ “Moshe approached the thick cloud where God was.” What brought him to this? His humility, as it states,³⁷⁶ “The man Moshe was exceedingly humble.”³⁷⁷

It is taught,³⁷⁸ “Rabbi Pinchas ben Ya’ir would say: “The study of Torah study leads to caution. Caution leads to zeal. Zeal leads to cleanliness from sin. Cleanliness from sin leads to abstinence from indulgence. Abstinence from indulgence leads to purity. Purity leads to separation from worldliness. Separation from worldliness leads to humility etc.” Moreover, they concluded, “Humility is greatest of all, since it leads to the Holy Spirit (*Ru’ach HaKodesh*), as it states,³⁷⁹ ‘The spirit of My Lord *HaShem/Elohi*’ *m-יהוה*” אדני is upon me, because *HaShem-יהוה* has anointed me to bring tidings to the humble.”

It is related,³⁸⁰ “They sent a message from there:³⁸¹ Who is destined for the coming world (*Olam HaBa*)? One who is humble and kneels down, bowing when he enters and bowing when he exits, and reviews the words of Torah constantly without giving credit to himself.”³⁸² About such a person it states,³⁸³ “In the future, the Holy One, blessed is He, will be a crown on the head of every single righteous man, as it states,³⁸⁴

³⁷⁵ Exodus 20:18

³⁷⁶ Numbers 12:3

³⁷⁷ Also see Reishit Chochmah, Gate of Humility, Ch. 3

³⁷⁸ Talmud Bavli, Avodah Zarah 20b

³⁷⁹ Isaiah 61:1

³⁸⁰ Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 88b

³⁸¹ From the Sanhedrin in Eretz Yisroel

³⁸² Also see Mishnah Avot 2:8

³⁸³ Talmud Bavli, Megillah 15b; Sanhedrin 101b

³⁸⁴ Isaiah 28:5

‘On that day, *HaShem of Hosts-HaShem Tzva*’ot-יהו"ה צבאו"ת will be a crown of delight and a diadem of glory.’ One might think this extends to everyone who is righteous. The verse therefore continues, ‘for the remnant of his people,’ meaning, for whoever sees himself as a remnant.”

In Zohar Parshat Shelach it states,³⁸⁵ “The head of the academy began and said: Happy is he who makes himself small in this world. How great will he be in the coming world! One who is small in his own eyes is great, and one who is great in his own eyes is small!” It similarly states in Zohar Terumah,³⁸⁶ “Why is he called Yechezkel the son of Buzi (בוזי)?³⁸⁷ Because [for the sake of *HaShem*-יהו"ה] he was willing to disgrace himself (*Mevazeh*-מבזה) in relation to those greater than himself and on account of this, he is called, “Son of man-*Ben Adam*- בן אדם,” a term indicating his perfection over all others of his generation. He thus is also called “exalted-*Ram*-רם,” as it states [about Elihu],³⁸⁸ “The son of Barachel, the Buzi (הבוזי) from the house of Ram (רם),” indicating his greatness over everyone because of his great humility.”

Our sages, of blessed memory, stated,³⁸⁹ “Why are the words of Torah compared to water? To teach us that just as water comes from a high place and only descends to a lower place, so too, Torah only dwells upon one who is lowly of

³⁸⁵ Zohar III 168b

³⁸⁶ Zohar II 166a-b

³⁸⁷ The term “*Boz*-בוז” means “scorn” as in the verse (Song of Songs 8:7), “He would be scorned to the extreme-*Boz Yavozu Lo*-בוז יבוזו לו.” The Zohar thus negates the implication that the prophet Yechezkel was from a scornful family.

³⁸⁸ Job 32:2

³⁸⁹ Talmud Bavli, Taanit 7a

spirit.” Happy is the man who does not become agitated and whose spirit is very lowly and humble, as the verse states,³⁹⁰ “The sacrifices that God desires are a broken spirit.” Happy is the man who is long-patient and bears everything for the will of his Creator, and who makes himself like a remnant, as the verse states,³⁹¹ “Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity and overlooking transgression for the remnant of His heritage,” meaning, for whoever sees himself as a remnant. Happy is the man who makes himself like the dust that is trampled by everyone, who is like the lower stoop that is stepped on by all, and like the lowest peg upon which all depend.

Anger is a branch of pride and is equal to it. Our sages, of blessed memory, stated,³⁹² “Whoever is angry, all kinds of punishments of purgatory (Gehinnom) rule over him.” Similarly, our sages, of blessed memory, stated,³⁹³ “A person who rends his garments in anger, or breaks his vessels in anger, or scatters his money in his anger, should be regarded like an idolator in your eyes, as it states,³⁹⁴ ‘You shall not have an alien god within you.’”

Our sages, of blessed memory, stated,³⁹⁵ “Whoever is angry, indicates that he has no thought of *HaShem*’s יהו"ה-s Indwelling Presence (the *Shechinah*) and he forgets his Torah

³⁹⁰ Psalms 51:19

³⁹¹ Micah 7:18

³⁹² Talmud Bavli, Nedarim 22a

³⁹³ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 105b

³⁹⁴ Psalms 81:10

³⁹⁵ Talmud Bavli, Nedarim 22b

learning and increases in folly. Moreover, it is known that his sins are more numerous than his merits, as it states,³⁹⁶ ‘A man of wrath is full of iniquity.’” Our sages, of blessed memory, similarly stated,³⁹⁷ “Anyone who becomes angry; if he is a scholar, his wisdom departs from him, as we learn from Moshe and Elisha.” Likewise, Eliyahu who is remembered for good, told Rabbi Yehudah,³⁹⁸ “Do not get angry and you will not sin.”

Similarly, Zohar states in Parshat Tetzaveh,³⁹⁹ “An angry person uproots his holy soul and replaces it with the opposite of holiness (*Sitra Achara*). Such a person rebels against his Maker and it is forbidden to come close and attach oneself to him. About him the verse states,⁴⁰⁰ ‘You who rips your soul apart in your anger,’ and he causes an alien god to dwell within him. Such a person is considered as if he built a personal altar to idolatry within himself, and therefore, whoever adheres to him, it is considered as if he has attached himself to actual idolatry, since idolatry dwells within this person. It is forbidden to look at the face of a person who is angry and about this the verse states,⁴⁰¹ ‘Do not turn to gods that are nothingness,’ and,⁴⁰² ‘You shall not make molten gods for yourselves.’”

This sin is worse than all others, for all other sins and contaminations, except for this, are refinable and reparable. It

³⁹⁶ Proverbs 29:22

³⁹⁷ Talmud Bavli, Pesachim 66b

³⁹⁸ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 29b

³⁹⁹ Zohar II 182a-b

⁴⁰⁰ Job 18:4

⁴⁰¹ Leviticus 19:4

⁴⁰² Exodus 34:17

is the worst because through it, he contaminates his body, both from within and without, and his soul becomes entirely contaminated. Even when such a person completely repents and uproots this alien contamination from himself forever, and then comes to purify himself and become holy, may it only be that he should merit to draw forth his holy soul in himself and become holy again. For, no matter how much he toils in good deeds, he can never return his soul to its original perfection and holiness.⁴⁰³

Pedantry is a branch of arrogance and anger. Our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁴⁰⁴ “Whoever is intolerant, they are intolerant with him.” Such a person is not forgiven for his sins, as they taught,⁴⁰⁵ “It is written,⁴⁰⁶ ‘He pardons iniquity and overlooks transgression.’ For whom does He pardon iniquity and overlook transgression? For a person who overlooks his reckonings with others, for the slights and injustices that they perpetrated against him.”

Our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁴⁰⁷ “One should plead for mercy every day, and that he should have no enemies.” It is written,⁴⁰⁸ “Let him put his mouth to the dust... Let him offer his cheek to he who smites him, let him be filled

⁴⁰³ Zohar II 182b – That is, he cannot fully undo the damage that he wrought in his state of anger. Nevertheless, as will be stated at the end of Section 2, Shaar 8, he still can and must repent in full *Teshuvah* while he is still in this world and able to do so.

⁴⁰⁴ Talmud Bavli, Pesachim 110b

⁴⁰⁵ Talmud Bavli, Rosh HaShanah 17a (also see Rashi)

⁴⁰⁶ Micah 7:18

⁴⁰⁷ Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 44b

⁴⁰⁸ Lamentations 3:29-30

with disgrace.” Happy is he who hears his disgrace and does not respond.⁴⁰⁹ Isaiah the Prophet thus stated,⁴¹⁰ “I submitted my body to those who smite and my cheeks to those who pluck; I did not hide my face from humiliation and spit.”

Our sages, of blessed memory, thus stated,⁴¹¹ “Whoever overlooks his reckonings with others for slights and injustices that were perpetrated against him, is himself forgiven for all his sins, as written,⁴¹² ‘He pardons iniquity and overlooks transgression.’”

In Chupat Eliyahu⁴¹³ it states, “There are three that the Holy One, blessed is He, loves: One who does not get angry; one who does not get drunk; and one who is forgiving.” Rabbi Akiva asked Rabbi Nechunya the Great,⁴¹⁴ “In the merit of what virtue were you blessed with longevity?” He replied, “In all my days I never accepted gifts, nor was I inflexible and intolerant by exacting retribution against those who wronged me.”

Our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁴¹⁵ “Rav Huna, the son of Rav Yehoshua, became sick etc. Upon his recovery they asked him, ‘What did you see when you were hovering between life and death?’ He replied, ‘I was indeed close to death, but the Holy One, blessed is He, said: Since he does not insist on his rights, do not be exacting with him, as written,⁴¹⁶ ‘He

⁴⁰⁹ Sefer Mitzvot Gadol, Prohibitive Commandment 12

⁴¹⁰ Isaiah 50:6

⁴¹¹ Talmud Bavli, Rosh HaShanah 17a

⁴¹² Micah 7:18

⁴¹³ Chupat Eliyahu, Shaar 3 (end of Reishit Chochmah) citing Talmud Bavli, Pesachim 113b

⁴¹⁴ Talmud Bavli, Megillah 28a

⁴¹⁵ Talmud Bavli, Rosh HaShanah 17a *ibid.*

⁴¹⁶ Micah 7:18

pardons iniquity and overlooks transgression.’” Our sages, of blessed memory, related⁴¹⁷ that there were diggers who were digging on Rav Nachman’s land and came upon the grave of Rav Achai bar Yoshiya, who was fully preserved, and he rebuked them. When Rav Nachman came and asked him how it was that he was preserved, he answered that it was because in all his days he did not stand on his rights against those who trespassed against him, and he never was begrudging or envious of his fellows, as the verse states,⁴¹⁸ “Envy causes the rotting of bones.”

Similarly, our sages, of blessed memory, related,⁴¹⁹ “There was an incident in which Rabbi Eliezer descended before the ark to serve as the prayer leader, but he was not answered. Rabbi Akiva descended before the ark after him, and was answered. The sages whispered amongst themselves about this, and a Supernal voice (*Bat Kol*) emerged and said, ‘It is not because this one is greater than that one, but because this one is tolerant and forgiving and that one is intolerant and unforgiving.’”

The sages, of blessed memory, also said,⁴²⁰ “The world is only sustained in the merit of those who muzzle (*Bolem*-בולם) their mouths in a time of quarrel, as written,⁴²¹ ‘He hangs the earth upon nothingness (*Blimah*-בלִימָה).’ Rabbi Avahu said, this refers to a person who makes himself as if he is

⁴¹⁷ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 152a

⁴¹⁸ Proverbs 14:30

⁴¹⁹ Talmud Bavli, Taanit 25b

⁴²⁰ Talmud Bavli, Chullin 89a (See Rashi)

⁴²¹ Job 26:7

nothingness.” The Rabbis taught,⁴²² “Regarding those who are insulted but do not insult, who hear themselves shamed but do not respond, the verse states,⁴²³ ‘Those who love Him are like the sun as it goes forth in its might.’”

Father Eliyahu, who is remembered for good, said,⁴²⁴ “The knowledge of Torah is revealed only to one who is not intolerant, and I too will not be revealed except to one who is not intolerant.”

Depression obstructs one’s service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, and the fulfillment of His *mitzvot*. It obstructs one’s involvement in Torah study and having proper devotional intent in prayer and negates his good and positive thoughts to serve *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. It is the gateway through which the evil inclination entices and turns a person away from serving *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, even if he is a righteous *Tzaddik*, by making it appear to him, that because of his suffering, his service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is ineffectual.

Moreover, the evil inclination will even come under the guise of piety and tell him, “How can it even enter your mind that you, who are nothing but dust, worms and maggots, can come close and be sanctified in the holiness of the King of the world! Does not the verse state,⁴²⁵ ‘For a fool wisdom is unattainable?’” Moreover, the evil inclination says, “Even if

⁴²² Talmud Bavli, Yoma 23a

⁴²³ Judges 5:31

⁴²⁴ Tractate Kallah Rabbati Ch. 5

⁴²⁵ Proverbs 24:7

you attain righteousness, does it not say,⁴²⁶ ‘If you are righteous, what have you given Him?’” In addition, depression causes the Holy Spirit (*Ru’ach HaKodesh*) to depart from him.

The opposite is true when one serves *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, with joy, as it states,⁴²⁷ “Serve *HaShem*-יהו"ה with joy.” For joy increases one’s desire and love of adhering to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, as written,⁴²⁸ “Because you did not serve *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God with joy and gladness of heart etc.” For, a person who serves *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, with melancholy, is likened to a servant who serves his master with a sullen and annoyed face.

It is likewise written,⁴²⁹ “The blessing of *HaShem*-יהו"ה is what enriches, and sadness (*Etzev*-עצב) does not increase it.” For, sadness is drawn from the contamination of *Sama’el*⁴³⁰ and the snake, who infected Adam and Chavah with it, as it states about Adam,⁴³¹ “With sadness (*Eetzavon*-עצבון) you shall eat of it all the days of your life,” and about Chava it states,⁴³² “I will greatly increase your sadness (*Eetzavon*-עצבון)... with sadness (*b’Etzev*-בעצב) you shall bear children.”⁴³³

⁴²⁶ Job 35:7

⁴²⁷ Psalms 100:2

⁴²⁸ Deuteronomy 28:47

⁴²⁹ Proverbs 10:22 – The root *Etzev*-עצב of this verse is explained to mean “suffering” or “burdensome toil” (see Rashi), however, the simple meaning of the root *Etzev*-עצב is “sadness” or “melancholy,” as in the verse (Isaiah 54:6), “For like a wife who is forlorn and melancholy (*Atzoovah*-עצובה), *HaShem*-יהו"ה has called you. Can one cast off the wife of his Youth? Said your God.” (See Radak to Isaiah 54:6 *ibid.*)

⁴³⁰ This is the angelic name of *Satan*-the Accuser.

⁴³¹ Genesis 3:17

⁴³² Genesis 3:16

⁴³³ As explained in the prior note, the root *Etzev*-עצב can mean “suffering” or “sadness.” In context to the subject being explained here, it means “sadness.”

On account of this, the Holy One, blessed is He, and His Indwelling Presence, the *Shechinah*, withdraw from him. Proof of this is our forefather Yaakov, the choicest of the forefathers,⁴³⁴ from whom the Holy Spirit (*Ru'ach HaKodesh*) departed for a period of twenty-two years when Yosef was separated from him and he assumed that he had been devoured by a wild animal. However, when he rejoiced over the tidings that Yosef was alive, the verse states,⁴³⁵ “The spirit of Yaakov was revived,” that is, the Holy Spirit (*Ru'ach HaKodesh*) returned and rested upon him.⁴³⁶

Similarly, our sages,⁴³⁷ of blessed memory, taught that the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem-יהוה*, blessed is He, (the *Shechinah*) and the spirit of Prophecy, do not dwell in a place of sadness. We thus find that it says about Elisha and the students of the prophets,⁴³⁸ “As the musician played, the spirit of *HaShem-יהוה* came upon him,” and it states,⁴³⁹ “When you arrive at the city, you will encounter a group of prophets coming down from the high place, and leading them will be players of lyre, drum, flute and harp, and they will be prophesying.”

Even when serving *HaShem-יהוה*, blessed is He, in the performance of any *mitzvah* or in prayer, one must be in an ultimate state of joy. This can be seen from Abaye,⁴⁴⁰ who was

⁴³⁴ Midrash Rabba 76:1 and elsewhere.

⁴³⁵ Genesis 45:27

⁴³⁶ Avot d'Rabbi Natan 30:4; Midrash Tanchuma, Veyeishev 2:7; Rashi to Genesis 45:7 *ibid.*, and elsewhere.

⁴³⁷ Talmud Bavli, Pesachim 117a; Zohar I 217b

⁴³⁸ Kings II 3:15

⁴³⁹ Samuel I 10:5

⁴⁴⁰ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 30b

sitting before his teacher Rabbah and was excessively joyful, and when questioned about his joy, he said, “I now am donned in *Tefillin*.” It is similarly related⁴⁴¹ that, “Rav Bruna was a great man who rejoiced in the *mitzvot*. Once, through juxtaposing the blessing of redemption (*Ge’ulah*) to the Amidah prayer, a smile did not depart from his mouth for that entire day.”

Hatred brings a person to sin against his fellow man, by inflicting all types of evil upon him. Our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁴⁴² “Hating the creatures removes a person from the world,” for by doing so, it is as if he harbors hatred of their Creator, the Holy One, blessed is He, who created him, for are we not all children to *HaShem*-יהו"ה our God?⁴⁴³ Moreover, by hating another Jew, it is as if he also hates Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov, from whom this person came forth. All souls are bound to the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, and each has an extremely lofty purpose, namely that through them *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, will be glorified.⁴⁴⁴ This being so, how can anyone hate his fellow?

Our sages, of blessed memory, related⁴⁴⁵ that during the period of the second Holy Temple, there were many righteous *Tzaddikim* and Torah Scholars. Nonetheless, the Holy Temple was destroyed only because of the sin of baseless hatred. They

⁴⁴¹ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 9b

⁴⁴² Mishnah Avot 2:11

⁴⁴³ Deuteronomy 14:1

⁴⁴⁴ Isaiah 49:3

⁴⁴⁵ Talmud Bavli, Yoma 9b

likewise said that the exile was lengthened and its end was concealed solely due to baseless hatred. Furthermore, in regard to all other sins, a person is only in a state of transgression when he actively violates them, whereas baseless hatred is a constant transgression that one carries in his heart. Therefore, he is in violation of the negative *mitzvah*,⁴⁴⁶ “You shall not hate your brother in your heart” and negates the positive *mitzvah* of,⁴⁴⁷ “You shall love your fellow as yourself,” at every moment.

Furthermore, about the *mitzvah* of loving one’s fellow Jew, they stated,⁴⁴⁸ “This is a great principle that includes the entire Torah in it,” for everything depends on it. Our teacher Moshe only merited attaining all of his wondrous and exalted levels because of his great love of Israel and because he was pained by their suffering, as our sages, of blessed memory,⁴⁴⁹ said about the verse,⁴⁵⁰ “He saw their burdens,” and about the verse,⁴⁵¹ “Now, if You would but forgive their sin – but if not, erase me now from Your book that You have written.” On account of this, he was equated to the entire Jewish people, as written,⁴⁵² “They remembered the days of old, of Moshe, His people.”

Envy brings a person to hatred and is actually even worse than hatred, since by being envious, he rebels against the

⁴⁴⁶ Leviticus 19:17

⁴⁴⁷ Leviticus 19:18

⁴⁴⁸ Rashi to Leviticus 19:18, citing Sifra; Torat Kohanim, and elsewhere.

⁴⁴⁹ See Rashi to Exodus 2:11, citing Midrash Shemot Rabba 1:27

⁴⁵⁰ Exodus 2:11

⁴⁵¹ Exodus 32:32

⁴⁵² Isaiah 63:11; Also see Rashi to Exodus 18:1 citing Mechilta.

Holy One, blessed is He, by saying to himself, “Why has the Holy One, blessed is He, bestowed more goodness to my fellow than to me?” Our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁴⁵³ “Envy, lust, and [the desire for] honor, remove a person from the world.”

Study and you will see that all the ancients were punished solely on account of their envy. Cain, who spoke with *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, mouth to mouth, was excised from the world along with his descendants, because he was envious of his brother Abel’s twin sister.⁴⁵⁴ As a result of his jealousy he came to transgress all his sins. Similarly, the ten tribes of Israel were exiled to Egypt because Joseph’s brothers envied him.⁴⁵⁵ Ultimately, they were further punished with the incident the ten martyrs.⁴⁵⁶ Yeravam, before whom all the Torah scholars of the generation were like grass of the field,⁴⁵⁷ was excised from the world solely because he envied the kingdom of the House of David.

Even Shaul, the chosen one of *HaShem*-יהוה, who as taught by our sages, of blessed memory, was as pure as a one-year-old child who has never tasted sin⁴⁵⁸ and whose ancestry and kingship were free of flaw,⁴⁵⁹ was excised from his kingship and killed along with his three sons, for having caused the people of Nov, the city of the Priests, to be killed, for having

⁴⁵³ Mishnah Avot 4:21

⁴⁵⁴ Midrash Bereishit Rabba 22:1; Pirkei d’Rabbi Eliezer, Ch. 21

⁴⁵⁵ Genesis 37:11; Also see Tanchuma Veyeishev 18 and elsewhere.

⁴⁵⁶ Midrash Eileh Ezkera and elsewhere.

⁴⁵⁷ Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 101a-b

⁴⁵⁸ Talmud Bavli, Yoma 22b

⁴⁵⁹ See Yoma 22b *ibid*.

caused the exile of the Jewish people amongst the Philistines, and for having caused the destruction of the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*) at Shiloh, all of which were brought about because he envied David regarding the matter of Goliath.⁴⁶⁰ This caused the Holy Spirit (*Ru'ach HaKodesh*) to withdraw from him, which was replaced by a spirit of distortion (*Ru'ach Eeveem*)⁴⁶¹ that rested upon him.

Moshiach, the son of David, will not come until the spirit of envy is removed, as written,⁴⁶² “The jealousy of Ephraim shall cease and the oppressors of Yehudah shall be cut off; Ephraim shall not be jealous of Yehudah and Yehudah will not harass Ephraim.”

Moreover, even the Supernal angels fell from their holiness as the result of envy, as written in Pirkei d’Rabbi Eliezer,⁴⁶³ that the angel *Sama’el* was greater than all the *Seraphim* angels, in that they only had six wings, whereas he had twelve wings. He nonetheless was uprooted from the side of holiness because he was envious of man. The same is said of the *Nefillim* angels, *Aza* and *Aza’el*, who were excised from the world because they were jealous of man.⁴⁶⁴

The bones of whoever possesses envy shall rot.⁴⁶⁵ It therefore is appropriate for a person to be happy with his lot,⁴⁶⁶ even if it is small. For, he is certainly no better than Hillel the

⁴⁶⁰ Samuel I 18:7 and on.

⁴⁶¹ Samuel I 18:12; 16:14-15 and elsewhere; Isaiah 19:14

⁴⁶² Isaiah 11:13

⁴⁶³ Pirkei d’Rabbi Eliezer, Ch. 13-14

⁴⁶⁴ Pesikta Rabbati 34:1; Yoma 67b and Rashi there; Zohar I 37a.

⁴⁶⁵ Proverbs 14:30; Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 152b

⁴⁶⁶ Mishnah Avot 4:1

Elder, Rabbi Chaninah ben Dosa, Rabbi Yehuda bar Ila'i, Rabbi Elazar ben Pedat, and others like them.⁴⁶⁷

Greed is the father of all impurity. It brings to hatred and envy, as well as theft, false oaths and even murder. This prohibition is the last of the Ten Commandments and is equal to them all, since⁴⁶⁸ “his eye is never sated with wealth,” like the eye of the snake, about whom it states,⁴⁶⁹ “The food of the snake shall be dust.” Similarly, it is written,⁴⁷⁰ “One who is overeager for wealth has an evil eye, he does not know that want may befall him.”

Our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁴⁷¹ “Lust removes a person from the world,” since it causes his mind to be preoccupied and distracted, thus uprooting him from studying *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה Torah and fulfilling His *mitzvot*. Moreover, he denies *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה Divine Providence, in that he does not believe that everything comes about according to *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה Supernal will and supervision, blessed is He. As our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁴⁷² “Whoever has bread in his basket and says to himself, ‘What will I eat tomorrow,’ has little faith. About such a person the verse states,⁴⁷³ ‘For who wastes the day? Small things.’ That is, what is it that causes the reward

⁴⁶⁷ All of whom were materially poor. (See Yoma 35b; Brachot 17b; Nedarim 49b; Taanit 25a, and elsewhere.)

⁴⁶⁸ Ecclesiastes 4:8

⁴⁶⁹ Isaiah 65:25

⁴⁷⁰ Proverbs 28:22

⁴⁷¹ Mishnah Avot 4:21

⁴⁷² Talmud Bavli, Sotah 48b

⁴⁷³ Zachariah 4:10

of the righteous to be wasted from the coming future? It is their small-mindedness and their smallness of faith in the Holy One, blessed is He.”

In contrast, there is no greater quality than trust in *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, as written,⁴⁷⁴ “Happy are all who trust in Him.” A person who has this quality is faithful that there is a God in the world, who is all-capable and supervises over everything. It thus is written,⁴⁷⁵ “Blessed is the man who trusts in *HaShem*-יהו"ה, *HaShem*-יהו"ה will be his security.” Such a person is certain that he will not lack sustenance, as written,⁴⁷⁶ “Cast your burden upon *HaShem*-יהו"ה and He will sustain you.” However, this applies on condition that his trust in *HaShem*-יהו"ה is truly sincere, with all his heart and without doubt. This is evident by the fact that if he truly trusts in *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, he will occupy himself in studying His Torah and fulfilling His *mitzvot* with all his heart and without any misgivings.

Lust for pleasure is worse than all the negative traits mentioned above. For, if a person is gluttonous, he will come to fall to greed, theft, false oaths, hatred of the creatures and envy. Such a person is like Esav, who said,⁴⁷⁷ “Please pour some of that red red stuff into me.” About such a person it states,⁴⁷⁸ “If you care for your soul, it would be better for you

⁴⁷⁴ Psalms 2:12

⁴⁷⁵ Jeremiah 17:7

⁴⁷⁶ Psalms 55:23

⁴⁷⁷ Genesis 25:30

⁴⁷⁸ Proverbs 23:2 (See Rashi)

to put a knife to your throat.” For out of gluttony he will eventually come to eat the meat of an animal that died without being slaughtered (*Neveilah*) or that has been slaughtered improperly (*Treifah*) and all other kinds of forbidden foods. Similarly, it is written,⁴⁷⁹ “All man’s toil is for his mouth,” and it states,⁴⁸⁰ “The stomach of the wicked will always be lacking.”

It likewise is written,⁴⁸¹ “Yeshurun became fat and kicked. You became fat, you became thick, you became corpulent. He deserted God, his Maker and scorned the Rock of his salvation.” That is, this negative trait brings a person to deny *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, as the verse states,⁴⁸² “Lest I become sated and deny, saying, ‘Who is *HaShem*-יהו"ה?’”

Furthermore, in regard to all other sins, a minor is not punished, however, in the case of the rebellious son, if he steals and eats a *tartimer* of meat and a half *log* of wine, he is stoned to death.⁴⁸³ Our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁴⁸⁴ “The wicked are accustomed to eat meat and drink wine, saying,⁴⁸⁵ ‘Come, I will fetch wine and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and tomorrow will be like today etc.’” However, about this it is written,⁴⁸⁶ “Until the day of your death you will not be

⁴⁷⁹ Ecclesiastes 6:7

⁴⁸⁰ Proverbs 13:25

⁴⁸¹ Deuteronomy 32:15

⁴⁸² Proverbs 30:9

⁴⁸³ Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 70a; Rashi to Deuteronomy 21:18

⁴⁸⁴ Talmud Bavli, Taanit 11a

⁴⁸⁵ Isaiah 56:12

⁴⁸⁶ Isaiah 22:14 – The prior verse states, “Yet behold! There is joy and gladness, slaying of cattle and slaughtering of sheep, eating meat and drinking wine, [saying,] ‘Eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.’”

atoned of this sin.” Eliyahu, who is remembered for good, said to Rabbi Yehudah,⁴⁸⁷ “Do not get drunk and you will not sin.”

In contrast, a person who suffices with what is necessary for him is called a righteous *Tzaddik*, as scripture states,⁴⁸⁸ “A righteous person eats to satisfy his soul.” Similarly, King David said,⁴⁸⁹ “It is good for me that I was afflicted, so that I might learn Your statutes.” We likewise find that our forefather Yaakov only requested the following,⁴⁹⁰ “Give me bread to eat and clothes to wear.” It is likewise written,⁴⁹¹ “Yissachar is a strong-boned donkey... he bent his shoulder to bear.”

Our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁴⁹² “Such is the way of [the life] of Torah: You shall eat bread with salt and drink rationed water; you shall sleep on the ground and your life will be one of privation, and you shall labor in Torah. If you do this,⁴⁹³ ‘You shall be happy and it shall be good for you.’ That is, ‘You shall be happy’ in this world, ‘and it shall be good for you’ in the coming world.” Similarly, our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁴⁹⁴ “The words of Torah are only sustained in one who kills himself over them.” They also said,⁴⁹⁵ “Whoever increases his flesh, increases his maggots.”

⁴⁸⁷ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 29b

⁴⁸⁸ Proverbs 13:25

⁴⁸⁹ Psalms 119:71

⁴⁹⁰ Genesis 28:20

⁴⁹¹ Genesis 49:14

⁴⁹² Mishnah Avot 6:4

⁴⁹³ Psalms 128:2

⁴⁹⁴ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 63a

⁴⁹⁵ Mishnah Avot 2:

Our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁴⁹⁶ “A person should always consider himself as if holiness dwells in his bowels, as written,⁴⁹⁷ ‘Holiness is in your innards.’” Our teacher, Moshe, peace be upon him, only merited receiving the Torah after having fasted for forty days and forty nights.⁴⁹⁸ Similarly, Eliyahu the Prophet, who is remembered for good, only merited ascending the heights after he fasted for forty days and forty nights.⁴⁹⁹ Likewise, Rabbi Elazar, Rabbi Akiva, and Rabbi Yishmael only merited all the wondrous wisdom and prophecy they attained when they ascended to the Pardes, after having fasted for many days and through all kinds of self-flagellation and abstention.⁵⁰⁰ Similarly, King Solomon, about whom it states that,⁵⁰¹ “He was wiser than all men,” only merited to such wisdom after fasting for forty days and forty nights, as our Sages explained about the large letter *Mem-*⁵⁰² of the opening word of Proverbs-*Mishlei*-משלי.⁵⁰³

It states in Zohar⁵⁰⁴ that when Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai came out of the cave, Rabbi Pinchas ben Ya’ir saw that his body was completely covered with blisters. He cried and said, “Woe is me, that I have seen you in such agony!” Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai answered him, “Great is your merit that you have seen

⁴⁹⁶ Talmud Bavli, Taanit 11a-b

⁴⁹⁷ Hosea 11:9

⁴⁹⁸ Exodus 34:28

⁴⁹⁹ Kings I 19:8

⁵⁰⁰ Heichalot Rabbati and Heichalot Zutradi

⁵⁰¹ Kings I 5:11

⁵⁰² The numerical value of the letter *mem*-מ is forty.

⁵⁰³ Yalkut Shimoni Mishlei, Remez 929

⁵⁰⁴ Zohar I 11a-b (See Ramak and the other commentaries.)

me in such agony, for had you not seen me like this, I would not have merited to all that I merited.”

In Zohar Terumah it states,⁵⁰⁵ “The spirit of impurity has no dominion over the bodies of the righteous *Tzaddikim* who, in this world, were not drawn after the pleasures and lusts of that extraneous husk (*Kelipah*). For, they have not pleased themselves in this world at all, except for fulfilling the *mitzvah* of pleasure on Shabbat and Biblical Festivals. The spirit of impurity thus has no dominion or hold on them at all, since they have not derived any pleasure whatsoever from that which is the opposite Holiness (*Sitra Achara*). However, about a person who did derive pleasure from the opposite the Holiness (*Sitra Achara*) during the mundane days of the week, the verse states,⁵⁰⁶ ‘I will smear dung upon your faces, the dung of your festive offerings, and you shall be carried out to its heap.’”

It was taught in the School of Eliyahu,⁵⁰⁷ “If a person has not yet merited to plead for mercy from *HaShem*-יהו"ה that Torah should be in his innards, he should at least plead for mercy that excess food and drink should not enter his innards.”

Power and honor are extremely problematic, as they bring a person to haughtiness, which is worse than all the above-mentioned negative qualities. As a result of it, he becomes a leader who casts excessive fear on the community, in a manner that is not for the sake of the Name of *HaShem*-יהו"ה. As our

⁵⁰⁵ Zohar II 141a

⁵⁰⁶ Malachi 2:3

⁵⁰⁷ Tanna d’Vei Eliyahu Rabba, Ch. 26; Also see Ketubot 104a, Tosefot entitled “*Lo Neheneiti* – I did not derive any pleasure from even my pinky.”

sages, of blessed memory said, in the end he will be uprooted from the world and his children will be completely unsuccessful after him.⁵⁰⁸

We find this about the great sage, Yeravam, that because he sought power, both he and his descendants were uprooted from this world, nor does he have a portion in the coming world. Similarly, when Shaul, the chosen one of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, began his reign, he was as pure as a one-year-old child who has never tasted sin.⁵⁰⁹ Moreover, as the verse attests, when they sought to crown him as king,⁵¹⁰ "He hid amongst the baggage," in that he fled from power. Nevertheless, he was ultimately caught in its net and pursued it, as he said to the Prophet Shmuel,⁵¹¹ "Please honor me in the presence of the elders of my people." In the end he lost the kingdom and he was killed along with three of his sons, as mentioned before in the section on envy.

Our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁵¹² "Envy, lust, and [the desire for] honor, remove a person from the world." Similarly, our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁵¹³ "Authority shortens the life of those who possess it and buries them." This is because it causes one's heart to be haughty with his Maker, as the verse states,⁵¹⁴ "So that his heart should not become exalted above his brethren and so that he will not depart from

⁵⁰⁸ See Talmud Bavli, Rosh HaShanah 17a

⁵⁰⁹ Talmud Bavli, Yoma 22b

⁵¹⁰ Samuel I 10:22

⁵¹¹ Samuel I 15:30

⁵¹² Mishnah Avot 4:21

⁵¹³ Talmud Bavli, Yoma 86b; Pesachim 87b; Avot d'Rabbi Natan Ch. 39

⁵¹⁴ Deuteronomy 17:20

the commandment, neither to the right nor to the left, so that his years will be prolonged over his kingdom, he and his sons in the midst of Israel.”

Our sages, of blessed memory, said,⁵¹⁵ “When Rava would go out to judge, he would say, ‘I willingly go out to die etc.’” Our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁵¹⁶ “The verse states,⁵¹⁷ ‘My son, if you have been a guarantor for your fellow etc.’ Rav Huna explained that this refers to a person who was appointed to a position of authority over the masses. However, the next verse continues,⁵¹⁸ ‘You have been trapped by the words of your mouth, snared by the words of your mouth. Do this, therefore, my child, and be rescued; for you have come into your fellow’s hand. Go humble yourself etc.’” However, if he does not, about him the verse states,⁵¹⁹ “One who commits adultery with a married woman lacks an understanding heart, he who destroys his own soul will do this,” and they have no mercy upon him in purgatory (Gehinnom).

The Holy One, blessed is He, said,⁵²⁰ “I am holy, I am pious, I am upright etc. If you possess all these qualities, you can accept a position of power and authority, but if not, do not accept it.” King David, peace be upon him, said,⁵²¹ “*HaShem-יהוה*, my heart was not proud and my eyes were not haughty, nor did I pursue matters too great and too wondrous for me. I

⁵¹⁵ Talmud Bavli, Yoma 86b *ibid.*; Sanhedrin 7b

⁵¹⁶ See Midrash Shemot Rabba 27:9, and elsewhere

⁵¹⁷ Proverbs 6:1

⁵¹⁸ Proverbs 6:2

⁵¹⁹ Proverbs 6:32

⁵²⁰ See Midrash Bamidbar Rabba 22:1; Tanchuma Matot 1:1

⁵²¹ Psalms 131:1

swear that I stilled and silenced my soul, like a suckling child at his mother's side, my soul is like a suckling child."

Therefore, flee from power and authority to the opposite extreme, as I explained at length when discussing the quality of pride. For, Zohar states,⁵²² "One who makes himself small in this world is meritorious." Is there anyone greater than Moshe, the teacher of all Israel, who for seven days refused the authority placed upon him by the Holy One, blessed is He, and did not desire it, saying,⁵²³ "Please, my Lord, send through whomever You will send!" About him the verse attests,⁵²⁴ "The wrath of *HaShem*-יהוה burned against Moshe," to the point that he was adversely affected by it, as our sages, of blessed memory, explained.⁵²⁵ He subsequently assumed the responsibility, but in the end was punished because of the Jewish people at the waters of strife,⁵²⁶ and all of his merits did not suffice to help him.

For, whoever exerts power and authority over the congregation, even if it is for the sake of Heaven, like Moshe, will ultimately be punished. For, he is responsible for all their deeds, as our sages, of blessed memory, stated⁵²⁷ in explanation of the verse,⁵²⁸ "I will place them upon your heads." How much more so does this certainly apply to orphans such as ourselves, for whom there would be no hope of salvation, God forbid.

⁵²² Zohar III 168a

⁵²³ Exodus 4:13

⁵²⁴ Exodus 4:14

⁵²⁵ Talmud Bavli, Zevachim 102a; Also see Rashi to Exodus 4:14 *ibid*.

⁵²⁶ Deuteronomy 3:26 (see Rashi); Psalms 106:32

⁵²⁷ Midrash Dvarim Rabba 1:10

⁵²⁸ Deuteronomy 1:13

Boastfulness is a quality about which our sages, of blessed memory, related about the woman who was punished in purgatory (*Gehinnom*) because she told her friend, “Today I fasted etc.” That is, when a person boasts of his righteousness, not only does he not receive reward, but on the contrary, he is judged with the punishments of purgatory (*Gehinnom*). For, by boasting, he reveals his true intentions and that his actions are not at all for the sake of Heaven. He is counted amongst the seven categories of the pseudo-righteous (*Parushim*) who erode the world, such as those who practice self-flagellation and blood-letting etc.⁵²⁹

Our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁵³⁰ “A person should always be in a state of fear of Heaven, even in private, and all his ways should be for the sake of Heaven.” If a person is able, he should conduct himself in all his deeds and ways for the sake of Heaven, without revealing any of it to the creatures. His reward will be doubled and quadrupled, as the verse states,⁵³¹ “It is the honor of God to conceal a matter.”

⁵²⁹ See Talmud Bavli, Sotah 22b

⁵³⁰ Tanna d’Vei Eliyahu Rabba, Ch. 21; Also see Mishnah Avot 2:12

⁵³¹ Proverbs 25:2

Part Two

Gate Five

Forbidden Traits

Evil speech is a quality about which our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁵³² “There are three transgressions that bring retribution against the one who perpetrates them in this world and disinherit him from a share in the coming world. These are idolatry, forbidden relations, and murder, but evil speech outweighs them all.” Our sages, of blessed memory, also stated,⁵³³ “Whoever speaks with an evil tongue denies the fundamental principle of the existence of *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, as written,⁵³⁴ ‘Because of our tongues we shall prevail, our lips are with us, who is master over us?’”

Gossip kills three people and is equal to murder, and on account of it, one is barred from entry into the Garden of Eden. This is as written,⁵³⁵ “*HaShem*-יהוה, who may sojourn in Your tent? Who may dwell on Your Holy Mountain? One who walks in perfect innocence and does what is right, and who speaks the

⁵³² Talmud Bavli, Arachin 16b; Mishneh Torah, Hilchot De’ot 7:3

⁵³³ Talmud Bavli, Arachin 15b

⁵³⁴ Psalms 12:5

⁵³⁵ Psalms 15:1

truth from his heart; who has no gossip on his tongue etc.” We see that Doeg the Edomite was one of the mighty shepherds of Israel and the head of the Sanhedrin.⁵³⁶ However, because of his gossip he was excised from the coming world, was killed having lived only half his days, and caused the people of Nov, the city of the Priests, to be killed, as well as the death of Shaul and his household.

Causing embarrassment, calling one’s fellow by a negative nickname and glorying in the downfall one’s fellow cause a person to descend to purgatory and never ascend, having no share in the coming world. These are included in the commandment,⁵³⁷ “You shall not murder.” This is as our sages, of blessed memory, taught,⁵³⁸ “Whoever humiliates another in public, it is as though he is spilling his blood. Over what *mitzvah* are they particularly vigilant in the West?⁵³⁹ In refraining from causing the color to leave a person’s face, so that his face becomes pale.”

Levity is one of the four classes of traits that prevent a person from receiving the countenance of the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He – the *Shechinah*.⁵⁴⁰ Our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁵⁴¹ “Whoever acts with

⁵³⁶ Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 106b

⁵³⁷ Exodus 20:13

⁵³⁸ Talmud Bavli, Bava Metziya 58b

⁵³⁹ The land of Israel

⁵⁴⁰ Talmud Bavli, Sotah 42a

⁵⁴¹ Talmud Bavli, Avodah Zarah 18b

levity falls into purgatory (*Gehinnom*).” Likewise, our sages, of blessed memory, stated⁵⁴² that even if a person sits idly and not engaging in Torah study, it is considered as if he is sitting with the frivolous who have contempt for Torah, as it states,⁵⁴³ “Praiseworthy is the man who did not walk in the counsel of the wicked and did not stand in the path of the sinful and did not sit in the gathering of the frivolous.” The very next verse continues and states,⁵⁴⁴ “But his desire is in the Torah of *HaShem*-יהוה, and in His Torah he meditates day and night.” It continues,⁵⁴⁵ “He shall be like a tree planted alongside brooks of water, that yields its fruit in its season and whose leaf never withers; and everything that he does will succeed. Not so the wicked; Rather they are like the chaff that the wind drives away etc.”

Our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁵⁴⁶ “Every day, a Heavenly voice (*Bat Kol*) goes forth from Mount Chorev and proclaims, ‘Woe to the creatures for their contempt of Torah.’ For, whosoever does not occupy himself in the study of Torah is called censured-*Nazuf*, meaning excommunicated from Heaven. Our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁵⁴⁷ “The following verse applies to such a person,⁵⁴⁸ ‘For he had contempt the word of *HaShem*-יהוה and violated His commandment, that soul shall surely be cut off – his sin is upon him.’ Rabbi Nechemiah says: This refers to anyone who is able

⁵⁴² Mishnah Avot 3:2

⁵⁴³ Psalms 1:1

⁵⁴⁴ Psalms 1:2

⁵⁴⁵ Psalms 1:3-4

⁵⁴⁶ Mishnah Avot 6

⁵⁴⁷ Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 99b; Yalkut Shimoni Remez 749

⁵⁴⁸ Numbers 15:31

to engage in Torah study but fails to do so.” Similarly,⁵⁴⁹ “Rav said: “Whoever excuses himself from studying the words of Torah, a fire consumes him.” Likewise, our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁵⁵⁰ “Whoever weakens or stops his study of words of Torah to engage in idle chatter, will be fed the hot coals of a Juniper tree, as written,⁵⁵¹ ‘They pluck saltwort and the leaves of wormwood and the roots of the Juniper tree is their bread.’” Our sages, of blessed memory, likewise stated,⁵⁵² “One who turns his heart to idle matters is mortally guilty,” as written,⁵⁵³ “Only beware for yourself and greatly beware for your soul, lest you forget the words⁵⁵⁴ that your eyes have beheld and lest you remove them from your heart all the days of your life etc.”

Our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁵⁵⁵ “The beginning of a person’s judgment is that he is judged only concerning the study of Torah, as written,⁵⁵⁶ ‘Exemption from waters is the beginning of judgment.’”⁵⁵⁷ Similarly, it is

⁵⁴⁹ Talmud Bavli, Bava Batra 79a

⁵⁵⁰ Talmud Bavli, Chagigah 12b; Ketubot 111b; Brachot 63a and elsewhere.

⁵⁵¹ Job 30:3

⁵⁵² Mishnah Avot 3:4

⁵⁵³ Deuteronomy 4:9

⁵⁵⁴ The word “*Dvarim*-דברים” is generally translated as “things” but also means “words” and in the above verse refers to the words of Torah and the Ten Commandments (which are called (Exodus 34:28) “*Aseret HaDvarim*-עשרת הדברים”), as stated in the continuing verse (Deuteronomy 4:10), “The day that you stood before *HaShem*-יהוה, your God, at Chorev.”

⁵⁵⁵ Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 7a

⁵⁵⁶ Proverbs 17:14

⁵⁵⁷ The term “release-*Poter*-פטר” here means that he exempts himself from the waters, which refers to Torah study. The term “*Madon*-מדין” which means “strife,” is also of the root “judgement-*Din*-דין” as the Talmud here indicates. Thus, the verse is understood to mean, “Excusing oneself from the waters of Torah study is the beginning of judgment.” (See Rashi to Talmud Bavli, Kiddushin 40b.)

written,⁵⁵⁸ “This Book of the Torah shall not leave from your mouth; you shall contemplate it day and night, so that you may guard yourself to do according to all that is written in it; for then your way will be successful, and then you will be wise.” About each moment, hour or day that a person is idle from studying the words of Torah, it is written,⁵⁵⁹ “Crookedness that cannot be straightened, lacking that is incalculable.”

On the other hand, our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁵⁶⁰ “These are the things, the fruits of which a person enjoys in this world, while the principle remains for the coming world; honoring one’s father and mother, doing deeds of kindness, early attendance in the house of study morning and evening, welcoming guests, visiting the sick, dowering a bride, escorting the dead, concentration in prayer, bringing peace between man and his fellow and between husband and wife. But the study of Torah is equal to them all.” Moreover, whoever is engaged in Torah study is exempt from all the commandments, since it equals all the commandments.⁵⁶¹

It was taught in the school of Eliyahu, who is remembered for good,⁵⁶² “Happy is the man who subjugates himself to Torah study, like an ox to a yoke and like a donkey to a burden, sitting and studying and reviewing Torah every day constantly. The Holy Spirit (*Ru’ach HaKodesh*) will

⁵⁵⁸ Joshua 1:8

⁵⁵⁹ Ecclesiastes 1:15 (See Rashi)

⁵⁶⁰ Mishnah Pe’ah 1:1

⁵⁶¹ Talmud Bavli, Sukkah 25a-26b; Brachot 11a, 16a; Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Ishut (Laws of Marriage) 15:2, and elsewhere.

⁵⁶² Tanna d’Bei Eliyahu Zuta, Ch. 1; Talmud Bavli, Avodah Zarah 5b

immediately rest upon him.” If this is the case, that when a person sits idly he is punished to such a great degree, then how much greater is the punishment of a person who actually behaves with levity and disdain toward Torah.

Idle chatter leads to very great sins. For, even when he merely sits idly it is considered as though he sits with the frivolous who have contempt for Torah, and he is punished with very great punishments, as we mentioned before regarding the matter of levity and mockery. This being so, how much more is this true of one who actually engages in empty chatter. Moreover, this brings him to come to speak badly of others, to gossip, slander and mock others.

Our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁵⁶³ “One who engages in idle chatter violates a positive commandment, as written,⁵⁶⁴ ‘You shall speak of them,’ referring to words of Torah, rather than other matters.” It was said about Rabbi Yochanan ben Zachai,⁵⁶⁵ that in all his days he never engaged in idle conversation. Our sages, of blessed memory, likewise coined this adage,⁵⁶⁶ “If a word is worth one *selah*, silence is worth two.” Similarly, our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁵⁶⁷ “In all my days I grew up among the sages and I found nothing better for a person than silence.” It is written,⁵⁶⁸ “Let one sit in

⁵⁶³ Talmud Bavli, Yoma 19b

⁵⁶⁴ Deuteronomy 6:7

⁵⁶⁵ Talmud Bavli, Sukkah 28a

⁵⁶⁶ Talmud Bavli, Megillah 18a

⁵⁶⁷ Mishnah Avot 1:17

⁵⁶⁸ Lamentations 3:28

solitude and be silent,” and it states,⁵⁶⁹ “Death and life are in the hands of the tongue.” Our sages, of blessed memory, also said,⁵⁷⁰ “The guardrail of wisdom is silence.” King Solomon said,⁵⁷¹ “Be not rash with your mouth, and let not your heart be hasty in uttering a word before God; for God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few.”

Our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁵⁷² “The verse states,⁵⁷³ ‘Is there truly (*HaUmnam*-האמנם) silence (*Eilem*-אלם) when you should be speaking righteousness?’ That is, in what skill (*Umanut*-אמנות) should a person toil in this world? He should toil in making himself as if he is mute (*Eelem*-אלם).” Similarly, our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁵⁷⁴ “When the Master would read the following verse, he would cry. The verse states,⁵⁷⁵ ‘For behold, He Who forms the mountains and creates the wind, and declares to man what is his speech.’ This even includes the lighthearted and frivolous speech between a man and his wife before engaging in relations. Even if they are completely insignificant, they nevertheless written into a person’s ledger and read before him at the time of his death.”

Our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁵⁷⁶ “One’s silence leads to humility,” and humility the chief quality that leads to

⁵⁶⁹ Proverbs 18:21

⁵⁷⁰ Mishnah Avot 3:13

⁵⁷¹ Ecclesiastes 5:1

⁵⁷² Talmud Bavli, Chullin 89a

⁵⁷³ Psalms 58:2

⁵⁷⁴ Talmud Bavli, Chagigah 23a

⁵⁷⁵ Amos 4:13

⁵⁷⁶ Mishnah Sotah 9:15; Also see Tanchuma Vayeitze 6; Tzava’at HaRivash, translated as The Way of The Baal Shem Tov, Ch. 49.

fear of Heaven.⁵⁷⁷ Thus, when engaging in the study of Torah, he should be silent and glue his lips together, like two millstones that sit upon each other. This is because all the righteousness and meritoriousness a person accrues are insufficient from saving him from what comes out of his lips. Happy is he who makes himself as if mute and like a deaf person, like a cripple and one who is blind! Why is it imperative to take such great care? So that he should not come to sin and obligate himself and his limbs, thus condemning himself to purgatory (*Gehinnom*). Similarly, King David said,⁵⁷⁸ “I am like a deaf man, I do not hear, like a mute who does not open his mouth.”

In Zohar it states,⁵⁷⁹ “There is not a single breath that does not possess a voice and create a spirit. All the words that a person speaks which are not for the sake of serving the Holy One, blessed is He, create a spirit that carries and travels around in the world and when the soul leaves him upon death, that spirit is hurled at him in the torments of the grave, like a stone flung from a slingshot (*Kaf HaKela*). This is the meaning of the verse,⁵⁸⁰ ‘may He hurl away the soul of your enemies as one shoots a stone from a slingshot (*Kaf HaKela*).’” It also states in Zohar,⁵⁸¹ “From the verse,⁵⁸² ‘And Esther donned royal garments,’ we learn that any person who guards his mouth and

⁵⁷⁷ Talmud Bavli, Avodah Zarah 20b

⁵⁷⁸ Psalms 38:14

⁵⁷⁹ Zohar II 59a

⁵⁸⁰ Samuel I 25:29

⁵⁸¹ Zohar III 183b

⁵⁸² Esther 5:1

tongue, merits to don the garment of the spirit of holiness and Divine Inspiration (*Ru'ach HaKodesh*).”⁵⁸³

One who gazes at women,⁵⁸⁴ even if he literally is equal in stature to Moshe, he will not be cleansed of the judgments of purgatory (*Gehinnom*). In the end he will come to sin with forbidden relations. He rouses the lusts of his evil inclination within himself, and will ultimately come to wasteful seminal emissions, the gravity of which will be explained in the sixth gate.

One who derives benefit from the honor of the Torah removes his life from the world and is liable of the death penalty. The incident with Rabbi Tarfon proves this.⁵⁸⁵ Namely, “A certain man found Rabbi Tarfon eating figs when most of the knives had already been set aside.⁵⁸⁶ He placed Rabbi Tarfon in a sack, lifted him up and carried him to throw him into the river. Rabbi Tarfon cried out and said, ‘Woe to Tarfon, for this man is killing him.’ When the man heard that it was Rabbi Tarfon, he left him and ran away. Rabbi Abahu said in the name of Rabbi Chananiyah ben Gamliel: All the days of that righteous man he was distressed over this matter, saying, ‘Woe is me, for I made use of the crown of Torah.’” As

⁵⁸³ Just as Esther guarded her mouth (Esther 2:20) “and did not reveal her kindred or her people, as Mordechai had instructed her.”

⁵⁸⁴ See Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 92a; Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Teshuvah 4:4

⁵⁸⁵ Talmud Bavli, Nedarim 62a

⁵⁸⁶ That is, Rabbi Tarfon assumed that the figs were abandoned. (Rashi to Nedarim 62a *ibid.*)

our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁵⁸⁷ “Do not make them into a crown for self-exaltation, nor a spade with which to dig... Whoever derives worldly benefit from the words of Torah, removes his life from the world.” In the end, such a person inherits purgatory (*Gehinnom*).

Falsehood. A person who speaks falsehood denies the God of Israel, giving credence to another god, called falsehood. A person such as this is in the category of those who shall not greet the countenance of the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, the *Shechinah*. This is as stated,⁵⁸⁸ “One who tells lies shall not be established before My eyes.” A person such as this is not considered to be included amongst the Jewish people, about whom it is written,⁵⁸⁹ “The remnant of Israel will not commit corruption, they will not speak falsehood, and a deceitful tongue will not be found in their mouth,” and the lifespan of such a person will be shortened.

In contrast, one who speaks truthfully lengthens his lifespan, as stated in Tractate Sanhedrin⁵⁹⁰ about Rav Tavyomee that, “Even if they were to give him the entire world, his words would not deviate from the truth. Rava said: “Once, I happened to come to a certain place called Truth, the inhabitants of which never deviated from truth in their words, and no one ever died prematurely there. I married a woman there and she bore me two sons.” One day his wife was sitting

⁵⁸⁷ Mishnah Avot 4

⁵⁸⁸ Psalms 101:7

⁵⁸⁹ Zephaniah 3:13

⁵⁹⁰ Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 97a

and washing her hair and her neighbor came and knocked on the door. He thought, ‘It is improper to say that she is bathing,’ and he instead said, ‘She is not here.’ Because of this, his two sons died. The people of the place came and asked him, “What is the meaning of this?” He answered, explaining the nature of the incident. They said, “Please leave our place and do not provoke premature death upon these people.”

It is written,⁵⁹¹ “Each man lies to his fellow and they do not speak truth; they train their tongue to speak falsehood, striving to be iniquitous. Your dwelling is amid deceit; because of their deceit they refuse to know Me – the word of *HaShem*-יהו"ה. Therefore, thus said *HaShem Tzva* צבאו"ת-יהו"ה, I shall smelt them and I shall test them – for what [else] can I do for the daughter of My people? Their tongue is like a drawn arrow, speaking deceit; with his mouth a person speaks peace with his fellow, but within himself, he lays his ambush. Shall I not punish them for these things? – the word of *HaShem*-יהו"ה. From a nation such as this, shall My soul not exact vengeance?”

The spies and the generation of the desert were only punished because of false testimony. Our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁵⁹² “Whoever speaks deceitfully, it is as though he worships idolatry.” It is written,⁵⁹³ “*HaShem*-יהו"ה hates these six, but the seventh is the abomination of His soul. Haughty eyes, a false tongue and hands that spill innocent blood. A heart that plots iniquitous thoughts, feet that run to do

⁵⁹¹ Jeremiah 9:4-8

⁵⁹² Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 92a (See Rashi)

⁵⁹³ Proverbs 6:16-19

evil, a false witness who spouts lies, and one who stirs up strife among brothers.” The verse states,⁵⁹⁴ “They do not speak truth... Shall I not punish them for these things?” It also is written,⁵⁹⁵ “Who is the man who desires life, who loves days of seeing good? Guard your tongue from speaking evil, and your lips from speaking deceit.”

Gechazi was only punished because he lied in the name of Elisha.⁵⁹⁶ Amnon deceived Tamar, which led to him being killed.⁵⁹⁷ The spirit of Navot was sent out from before the Presence of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, because he spoke deceitfully,⁵⁹⁸ as it states,⁵⁹⁹ “And *HaShem*-יהו"ה said, ‘Who will lure Achav to go up [to war] that he may fall in Ramoth-Gilead?’ This one said, ‘Like this’ and this one said, ‘Like this!’ Then a spirit came forward and stood before *HaShem*-יהו"ה and said, ‘I shall lure him!’ And *HaShem*-יהו"ה said, ‘How?’ [The spirit] replied, ‘I will go out and be a spirit of falsehood in the mouths of all his prophets.’ He said, ‘You will lure him and you will succeed. Go out (*Tzei*-צא) and do so!’” What is the meaning of the term “Go out-*Tzei*-צא?” It means, “Get out of My presence!”⁶⁰⁰

⁵⁹⁴ Jeremiah 9:4-8

⁵⁹⁵ Psalms 34:13

⁵⁹⁶ Kings II 5:20-27; Midrash Tanchuma, Metzora 1:1

⁵⁹⁷ Samuel II 13:1-29

⁵⁹⁸ Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 102b; Zohar I 192b (Kings I 21:1-13)

⁵⁹⁹ Kings I 22:20-22

⁶⁰⁰ Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 102b *ibid.*; Zohar I 192b *ibid.* – That is, he was a liar in the first instance, and was thus expelled from the presence of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

Rav Huna said,⁶⁰¹ “The Jewish people were only exiled from their land because they transgressed the verse,⁶⁰² ‘Distance yourself from a false word.’” Similarly, our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁶⁰³ “Jerusalem was not destroyed until trustworthy men ceased to exist in it, as it states,⁶⁰⁴ ‘Walk about in the streets of Jerusalem, see now and know, and seek in its plazas; if you will find a man, if there is one who dispenses justice and seeks truth, then I will forgive her.’”

It states in Zohar,⁶⁰⁵ “About a time in which the Jewish people speak falsely about the Torah of Truth, the verse states,⁶⁰⁶ ‘Truth was hurled to the ground.’ It is about such a time of exile that the verse states,⁶⁰⁷ ‘Truth became lacking,’ and falsehood reigns in the world. What is falsehood? That is *Sama’el*. This is what caused the destruction of both the first and second Holy Temples.”

Our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁶⁰⁸ “The world stands on three things: On Justice, Truth and Peace.” It is written,⁶⁰⁹ “Who may sojourn in Your tent? One who speaks the truth in his heart.” That is, even when it comes to matters that he only thought in his heart, he must bring forth into action

⁶⁰¹ Reishit Chochmah, Shaar HaKedushah, Ch. 12

⁶⁰² Exodus 23:7

⁶⁰³ Talmud Bavli, Chagigah 14a

⁶⁰⁴ Jeremiah 5:1

⁶⁰⁵ Tikkunei Zohar, Tikkun 63, 95a

⁶⁰⁶ Daniel 8:12

⁶⁰⁷ Isaiah 59:15

⁶⁰⁸ Mishnah Avot 1:18

⁶⁰⁹ Psalms 15:1-2

and actualize them truthfully, in accordance what our sages,⁶¹⁰ of blessed memory, taught regarding the incident with Rav Safra. It is written,⁶¹¹ “The Torah of Truth was in his mouth, and injustice was not found on his lips... for he is an angel of *HaShem Tzva*’ot-יהוה צבאו”ת.”

The flatterer is amongst the four classes of people who shall not greet the countenance of the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He (the *Shechinah*).⁶¹² This is because he denigrates the honor of the Ever Present One, *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, when he cajoles and flatters the wicked. This is as written,⁶¹³ “One who tells a wicked person, ‘You are righteous,’ – the peoples shall curse him, the nations shall despise him.” Even if he flatters and cajoles a person who is not wicked, it nevertheless is as if he fears man and places his trust in man, as it is written,⁶¹⁴ “Accursed is the man who puts his trust in people.” Regarding such a person the verse states,⁶¹⁵ “The flatterer shall not come before Him.”

⁶¹⁰ Talmud Bavli, Bava Batra 88a; Makkot 24a, and Rashi there, citing She’eltot d’Rav Acha (She’ilta 36) – The incident with Rav Safra is that he had placed an object for sale. A man came before him to purchase it when he was in the middle of reciting the *Shema*. The man named his price, but Rav Safra did not respond because he was in the middle of the *Shema*. The man thought that Rav Safra was not interested in selling it at that price, so he raised his purchase price. When Rav Safra concluded the *Shema*, he told the man that he would accept the original price, for that is the price that he was originally satisfied with. It is about him that the verse states (Psalms 15:2), “One who speaks the truth in his heart” is applied.

⁶¹¹ Malachi 2:6

⁶¹² Talmud Bavli, Sotah 42a

⁶¹³ Proverbs 24:24

⁶¹⁴ Jeremiah 17:5

⁶¹⁵ Job 13:16; See Talmud Bavli, Sotah 42a *ibid*.

This accords with what our sages, of blessed memory, stated⁶¹⁶ about the incident with King Yanai, that because the sages of the court of the Sanhedrin flattered and yielded to him in a minor way by not forcing him to stand during judgment, the angel Gavriel came and struck them to the ground and they died.⁶¹⁷ Similarly, when they flattered King Agrippa, who was righteous, the enemies of the Jewish people⁶¹⁸ were sentenced to destruction.⁶¹⁹

Our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁶²⁰ “The Holy One, blessed is He, hates three types of people: One who says one thing with his mouth but thinks another in his heart etc.” Similarly, our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁶²¹ “Any person

⁶¹⁶ Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 19a-19b

⁶¹⁷ A slave of King Yanai killed someone. The court sent word to him and he sent them the slave. They sent word back to him that he himself must come in person, as per the verse (Exodus 21:29), “He should be testified against, with his owner.” Yannai came and sat down. Shimon ben Shetach said to him: Yannai the King, stand on your feet and witnesses will testify against you. It is not before us that you will be standing, but it is before He who spoke and the world was, as it states (Deuteronomy 19:17), “Then both people, between whom the controversy is, shall stand.” Yannai answered: “I will not stand if you alone say this, but only according to what your colleagues say.” Shimon ben Shetach turned to his right, but the other judges lowered their faces to the ground and said nothing out of fear. He turned to his left, and they too forced their faces to the ground and said nothing out of fear. Shimon ben Shetach said to them: You are masters of thought! May the Master of thoughts come and punish you. Immediately, Gavriel came and struck those judges to the ground and they died. (Sanhedrin 19a-19b *ibid.*)

⁶¹⁸ This is a euphemism for the Jewish people.

⁶¹⁹ Talmud Bavli, Sotah 41a-b – King Agrippa rose and read from the Torah while standing, and the sages praised him for it (though a king can read while sitting). When he came to the verse (Deuteronomy 17:15), “You may not appoint a foreigner over you,” tears flowed from his eyes (since it excluded him from Kingship, being that he was a descendent of Herod). The assembled said to him: Fear not, Agrippa, for you are our brother. It was taught in the name of Rabbi Natan that in that moment, they were sentenced to destruction for having flattered Agrippa.

⁶²⁰ Talmud Bavli, Pesachim 113b

⁶²¹ Talmud Bavli, Sotah 41b

who has flattery in him falls into purgatory (*Gehinnom*), as written,⁶²² ‘Woe to those who call evil good and good evil,’ the continuation of which states,⁶²³ ‘Therefore, as the tongue of fire devours straw, and as chaff is consumed by the flame, so will their root become rot and their flower will be blown away like dust etc.’”

Our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁶²⁴ “Any congregation in which there is flattery is as repulsive as a menstruating woman, as is stated,⁶²⁵ ‘A flattering congregation will be forlorn.’” Our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁶²⁶ “Any Torah scholar whose inside is not like his outside is not a Torah scholar and is called a loathsome abomination.” Our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁶²⁷ “Any person who has flattery in him brings wrath to the world, as stated,⁶²⁸ ‘Those with flattery in their hearts bring about wrath.’ Moreover, his prayers are despised and are not heard.” Our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁶²⁹ “Any person who has flattery in him, even fetuses in their mothers’ wombs curse him.” Our sages, of blessed memory, stated about the sin of flattery, that it will cause a person to fall into the hands of his enemies,⁶³⁰ as it states,⁶³¹ “I shall send them against a flattering people.”

⁶²² Isaiah 5:20

⁶²³ Isaiah 5:24

⁶²⁴ Talmud Bavli, Sotah 42a

⁶²⁵ Job 15:34

⁶²⁶ Talmud Bavli, Yoma 72b

⁶²⁷ Talmud Bavli, Sotah 41b

⁶²⁸ Job 36:13

⁶²⁹ Sotah 41b *ibid.*

⁶³⁰ Sotah 41b *ibid.*; Reishit Chochmah, Shaar HaKedushah 12:32

⁶³¹ Isaiah 10:6

Flattery and hypocrisy are just as bad as idolatry, forbidden relations, adultery and murder. From where do we learn that it is equal to idolatry? From the verse,⁶³² “For the vile person speaks villainy and his heart plans iniquity, to act with hypocrisy and to speak falsehood about *HaShem*-יהוה.” From where do we learn that it is equal to forbidden relations and adultery? From the verse,⁶³³ “If a man divorces his wife and she goes from him and is with another man, can he return to her again? Would that not surely bring the profound guilt of hypocrisy upon the land?” From where do we know that it is equal to murder? From the verse,⁶³⁴ “They spilled innocent blood... and the land was polluted by the blood of hypocrisy.”

It is on account of the sin of flattery and hypocrisy that the rains are withheld.⁶³⁵ On account of the sin of flattery and hypocrisy, one is judged in purgatory (*Gehinnom*) eternally, as it states,⁶³⁶ “Sinners were afraid in Zion; trembling seized hypocrites, [saying], ‘Which of us can live with the consuming fire? Which of us can live with the never-dying blaze?’” Our sages, of blessed memory, stated⁶³⁷ that the only reason Yeravam merited kingship was because he did not flatteringly yield to Solomon.

⁶³² Isaiah 32:6

⁶³³ Jeremiah 3:1

⁶³⁴ Psalms 106:38

⁶³⁵ See Talmud Bavli, Taanit 7b

⁶³⁶ Isaiah 33:14

⁶³⁷ Talmud Bavli, Sanedrin 101b

Fraud has two great evils. The first is that it is similar to the matter of falsehood and hypocrisy, and the second is that it is like theft and deception. In doing so, he denigrates the Name of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, and thinks to himself that the Holy One, blessed is He, does not see his deception, God forbid. It is written,⁶³⁸ "Each of you shall not defraud his fellow, and you shall fear your God, for I am *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God," and it is written,⁶³⁹ "You shall not commit a perversion of justice, in measures of length, weight, or volume. You shall have correct scales, correct weights, correct dry measures, and correct liquid measures – I am *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God." At the beginning of one's judgement after passing from this world, he is asked, "Did you conduct your business faithfully?"⁶⁴⁰

One who defrauds is amongst the four classes of people who do not receive the countenance of the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He (the *Shechinah*).⁶⁴¹ This is as stated,⁶⁴² "In the midst of My house shall not dwell a practitioner of deceit; one who tells lies shall not be established before My eyes." As stated before, in the section on falsehood,⁶⁴³ "Jerusalem was not destroyed until trustworthy men ceased to exist in it."

In contrast, regarding one who conducts himself faithfully, with honesty and integrity, it is written,⁶⁴⁴ "*HaShem*-

⁶³⁸ Leviticus 25:17

⁶³⁹ Leviticus 19:35

⁶⁴⁰ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 31a – That is, with honesty and integrity.

⁶⁴¹ Talmud Bavli, Sotah 42a; Sanhedrin 103a

⁶⁴² Psalms 101:7

⁶⁴³ Talmud Bavli, Chagigah 14a

⁶⁴⁴ Psalms 15:1

יהו"ה, who may sojourn in Your tent? Who may dwell on Your holy mountain? One who walks in perfect innocence, who does what is right and speaks the truth from his heart.” Similarly, our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁶⁴⁵ “The verse,⁶⁴⁶ ‘A man of integrity will increase blessings,’ refers to one who conducts his business in good faith. Such a person’s possessions will be increased, and the Holy One, blessed is He, will arrange his financial sustenance.” Moreover, such a person is called a righteous *Tzaddik*,⁶⁴⁷ as it states,⁶⁴⁸ “The righteous (*Tzaddik*) shall live by his faith.” Our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁶⁴⁹ “There are six-hundred and thirteen commandments, but Chabakkuk came and established them upon one, as it states,⁶⁵⁰ ‘The righteous (*Tzaddik*) shall live by his faith.’”

⁶⁴⁵ See Rashi and the other commentators to Proverbs 28:20; Shemot Rabba 51:1; Zohar I 199b; Reishit Chochmah, Masa uMatan b’Emunah Ch. 2; Also see Mechilta d’Rabbi Yishmael 15:26; Ramban to Exodus 15:26; Sefer Chassidim 1062, and elsewhere.

⁶⁴⁶ Proverbs 28:20

⁶⁴⁷ Reishit Chochmah, Masa uMatan b’Emunah, Ch. 2 *ibid.*

⁶⁴⁸ Habakkuk 2:4

⁶⁴⁹ Talmud Bavli, Makkot 24a

⁶⁵⁰ Habakkuk 2:4 *ibid.*

Part Two

Gate Six

The punishments for transgressing the negative commandments

Causing a desecration of the Name of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is worse than all sins.⁶⁵¹ Our sages, of blessed memory, stated in regard to the matter of the four categories of atonement,⁶⁵² “One who has caused a desecration of the Name of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, his repentance has no power to suspend punishment, nor does Yom Kippur atone for his sin, nor does suffering have the power to absolve him. Rather, it is only by his death that he will be cleansed, as written,⁶⁵³ ‘This sin will never be atoned for you until you die.’”

Relations with a menstruating woman, is punished with excision (*Karet*).⁶⁵⁴ Aside for that, it states in *Zohar*,⁶⁵⁵ “There are three types of people who push the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He (the *Shechinah*) from

⁶⁵¹ Leviticus 22:32; Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah, Ch. 5

⁶⁵² Talmud Bavli, Yoma 86a

⁶⁵³ Isaiah 22:14

⁶⁵⁴ Leviticus 18:19; Leviticus 20:18; Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Issurei Biyah, Ch. 1, Ch. 4

⁶⁵⁵ *Zohar* II 3a-b

the world. When such people cry out in prayer, their voices are not heard. These are them: One who has relations with a menstruating woman, for there is no greater impurity in the world than the impurity of relations with a menstruating woman.”

Shabbat is known to be equal to all of the *mitzvot*.⁶⁵⁶ Even the wicked are granted respite on Shabbat and the fires of purgatory (*Gehinnom*) are dimmed for them. However, when it comes to those who transgress Shabbat, their fires are not dimmed even on Shabbat.⁶⁵⁷ Our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁶⁵⁸ “If only the Jewish people would keep two [consecutive] Shabbats in accordance with the *Halachah*-Torah law, they would be immediately redeemed.” Our sages, of blessed memory, also stated,⁶⁵⁹ “Anyone who observes Shabbat in accordance with its laws, even if he is an idolater like the generation of Enosh, he is forgiven, as it states,⁶⁶⁰ ‘Praiseworthy is the man (*Enosh*-אנוש) who does this and the person who grasps it tightly, who guards the Shabbat against desecration (*Meichalelo*-מחללו-לוי.)’ Do not read it ‘against desecration (*Meichalelo*-מחללו-לוי),’ but rather, ‘he is forgiven (*Machul Lo*-מחול לו-).” It likewise is written,⁶⁶¹ “If you restrain your foot because it is the Shabbat, refrain from accomplishing

⁶⁵⁶ Midrash Shemot Rabba 25:12

⁶⁵⁷ Tikkunei Zohar, Tikkun 24, 69b

⁶⁵⁸ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 118b; Also see Shemot Rabba 25:12 *ibid*.

⁶⁵⁹ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 118b *ibid*.; Also see Tzava’at HaRivash translated as The Way of The Baal Shem Tov, Section 18.

⁶⁶⁰ Isaiah 52:6

⁶⁶¹ Isaiah 58:13

your own desires on My holy day; If you proclaim the Shabbat ‘a delight,’ and the holy [day] of *HaShem*-יהו"ה ‘honored,’ and you honor it by not engaging in your own affairs, from seeking your own needs or discussing the forbidden – then you will delight in *HaShem*-יהו"ה, and I will mount you astride the heights of the world; I will provide you the heritage of your forefather Yaakov, for the mouth of *HaShem*-יהו"ה has spoken.”

The consumption of forbidden fats and blood are known to be amongst the transgressions that are punished with excision (*Karet*),⁶⁶² and cause the soul to become detestable.

With regard to one who makes use of the Holy Names, our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁶⁶³ “One who makes use of the Crown, shall perish,” in that either he or his offspring will become apostates, or he and his offspring will die, or he and his offspring shall become impoverished.⁶⁶⁴

One who treats a Torah scholar with contempt, and one who is an informer, are amongst those that have no portion in the coming world, and who shall not rise in the resurrection of the dead.⁶⁶⁵

⁶⁶² Leviticus 7:25-27; Mishneh Torah, Ma’achalot Asurot, Ch. 6-7.

⁶⁶³ Mishnah Avot 1:13; 4:5

⁶⁶⁴ Also see Avot d’Rabbi Natan, Ch. 12; Sefer Mitzvot Gadol, Positive Commandment 12 and the citations there.

⁶⁶⁵ Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 99b; Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Mishpat 388:10

Wasteful seminal emissions are worse than spilling the blood of others,⁶⁶⁶ for in doing so, he is spilling not only their blood, but the blood of all their future generations without end.⁶⁶⁷ In Zohar to Parshat Vayechi it states,⁶⁶⁸ “One is able to repent for all transgressions except for this.” Moreover, when it comes to all other transgressions, a minor is exempt from punishment, except for this. For, Er and Onan were minors who were only about seven years old,⁶⁶⁹ and yet they died at the hands of Heaven on account of this sin,⁶⁷⁰ even though they were not yet commanded regarding the *mitzvot*. The same is likewise true of the generation of the flood, about which it states,⁶⁷¹ “For all flesh destroyed its ways upon the earth.” Because of this sin, all creatures were blotted out, everything from man to beast, birds of the sky and insects,⁶⁷² and even the first three handbreadths of the earth were destroyed⁶⁷³ – something that had not occurred from the beginning of creation until that point, and which shall not occur again.⁶⁷⁴ Moreover,

⁶⁶⁶ Since in this case he is spilling the blood of his own offspring (Zohar I 219b).

⁶⁶⁷ Talmud Bavli, Niddah 13a; Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Issurei Biyah 21:18; Shulachan Aruch, Even HaEzer, Siman 23

⁶⁶⁸ Zohar I 219b *ibid*.

⁶⁶⁹ Seder HaDorot, Year 2217

⁶⁷⁰ Genesis 38:7-10; Yevamot 34b; Midrash Bereishit Rabba 85:5; Tractate Kallah 4:6

⁶⁷¹ Genesis 6:12 – The words “For all flesh destroyed its ways upon the earth” refers to their wasteful seminal emissions (Zohar I 62a).

⁶⁷² Genesis 7:23

⁶⁷³ Midrash Bereishit Rabba 31:7

⁶⁷⁴ Genesis 8:21

this took place even though they were commanded only a mere seven *mitzvot*.⁶⁷⁵

The consumption of forbidden foods is known to cause the soul to become abominable, as is written,⁶⁷⁶ “Do not make your souls abominable by means of any teeming thing; do not contaminate yourselves through them, lest you become contaminated through them.” One who stays away from the consumption of forbidden foods is called holy (*Kadosh*-שׁוֹדוֹשׁ), as written in the continuing verses,⁶⁷⁷ “You are to sanctify yourselves and you shall be holy, for I am Holy; and you shall not contaminate yourselves through any teeming thing that creeps on the earth. For I am *HaShem*-יְהוָה Who elevates you from the land of Egypt to be a God unto you; you shall be holy, for I am Holy.” You have already been informed to know that it is holiness (*Kedushah*) that brings to the Holy spirit of Divine Inspiration (*Ru'ach HaKodesh*).

Regarding oaths that are taken in vain or in falsehood, our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁶⁷⁸ “When the Holy One, blessed is He, said at Sinai,⁶⁷⁹ ‘You shall not bear the Name of *HaShem*-יְהוָה your God, in vain,’ the entire world trembled.” This is as stated,⁶⁸⁰ “Who shakes the earth from its place, and

⁶⁷⁵ Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 56a; Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Melachim u’Milchamot 8:11

⁶⁷⁶ Leviticus 11:43

⁶⁷⁷ Leviticus 11:44-45

⁶⁷⁸ Talmud Bavli, Shevuot 39a

⁶⁷⁹ Exodus 20:7

⁶⁸⁰ Job 9:6

its pillars tremble,” and the waters of the abyss wish to ascend and flood the entire world etc. Our sages,⁶⁸¹ of blessed memory, stated about this sin, “In regard to all other transgressions in Torah, it states that it is possible to be cleansed (*v’Nakeh*-נִקְיָה), whereas here, it is stated that he ‘will not be cleansed (*Lo Yenakeh*-לֹא יִנְקֶה).’ Moreover, for all other transgressions in Torah, punishment is exacted only from the transgressor, whereas here, punishment is exacted from him and from his family, and from the entire world,”⁶⁸² even if it is in truth. Our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁶⁸³ “King Yannai had six-hundred thousand towns on the King’s Mountain, and they were all destroyed because of oaths that were taken in truth, even though they fulfilled them.”

Our sages, of blessed memory, stated about Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi,⁶⁸⁴ that “The Holy One, blessed is He, told the angel of death, see if in all his days he requested dissolution of an oath, and if he has, then you may take him out of the

⁶⁸¹ Talmud Bavli, Shevuot 39a *ibid*.

⁶⁸² See also Rif to Shevuot 18a-b; Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 87:20

⁶⁸³ Talmud Bavli, Gittin 57a; Midrash Bamidbar Rabba 22:1

⁶⁸⁴ Talmud Bavli, Ketubot 77b – When Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi was on the verge of dying, they said to the angel of death, “Go and do his bidding.” When the angel of death appeared to him, he said, “Show me my place in the Garden of Eden.” The angel of death responded, “Very well.” Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said to him, “Give me your knife, lest you frighten me on the way,” and he gave it to him. When he arrived there, he lifted Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi so he could see his place, and he jumped and fell into that place. The angel of death grabbed onto him by the corner of his cloak. Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said to him, “I swear that I will not come with you.” The Holy One, blessed is He, said to the angel of death, “If he ever requested dissolution of an oath, then he must return with you, but if not, then he need not return.” The angel of death said to Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi, “At least give me back my knife,” but he did not give it to him. A Supernal voice came forth and said to him, “Give it to him, as it is necessary to the created beings.”

Garden of Eden, but if not, then leave him. They checked and found that not only did he never ask for dissolution of an oath, but in all his days, he never took an oath.”

Part Two

Gate Seven

The fulfillment of the positive commandments, and good practices

Tzitzit: You already are aware that the *mitzvah* of Tzitzit (צִיצִית) is equal to all the *mitzvot* of the Torah.⁶⁸⁵ The word Tzitzit (צִיצִית) has the numerical value of 600, and together with the 8 threads and 5 knots, equals 613.⁶⁸⁶ Similarly, it is written,⁶⁸⁷ “You will see it and remember all of the commandments of *HaShem*-יהוה,” thus teaching us that Torah equates the Tzitzit to all the *mitzvot*.

Tefillin: Whoever does not fulfill this *mitzvah* is called “A skull that has not donned Tefillin,” and will not rise in the resurrection of the dead.⁶⁸⁸ However, all destructive forces and the nations of the world are in fear of one who dons them, and about him the verse states,⁶⁸⁹ “Then all the peoples of the earth will see that the Name *HaShem*-יהוה is proclaimed over you,

⁶⁸⁵ Talmud Bavli, Nedarim 25a

⁶⁸⁶ Rashi to Numbers 15:39 and elsewhere.

⁶⁸⁷ Numbers 15:39

⁶⁸⁸ See Talmud Bavli, Rosh HaShanah 17a

⁶⁸⁹ Deuteronomy 28:10

and they will fear you,” as Rabbi Eliezer says,⁶⁹⁰ “This verse refers to the Tefillin of the head.” Regarding the coming future it states about such people,⁶⁹¹ “In the coming world the righteous sit with their crowns upon their heads, delighting in the radiance of the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*-יהוה (the *Shechinah*).”

The *Shema* recital: You already are aware that this is the *mitzvah* of *HaShem*’s-יהוה unity, blessed is He, which is the root of all of the commandments.⁶⁹² The *Shema* recital consists of 248 words, for through its recital, the 248 limbs and organs of one’s soul undergo repair.⁶⁹³ Our sages, of blessed memory, also stated,⁶⁹⁴ “Whoever recites the *Shema* twice every day, it is as if he fulfills the entire Torah, as stated,⁶⁹⁵ “You shall contemplate it day and night.”

Prayer: Our sages, of blessed memory, said about prayer,⁶⁹⁶ “These are matters that ascend to the loftiest heights of the world, and yet people treat them as unimportant and insignificant.” You already are aware that prayer is greater than all the sacrificial offerings,⁶⁹⁷ as it states,⁶⁹⁸ “Why do I need your numerous sacrifices?” The continuation is, “Even if you

⁶⁹⁰ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 6a, 56a, and elsewhere.

⁶⁹¹ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 17a

⁶⁹² Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah, Ch. 1

⁶⁹³ Zohar Chadash Ruth 95a; Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 61:3

⁶⁹⁴ Midrash Tehillim 1:15; Also see Talmud Bavli, Menachot 99b

⁶⁹⁵ Joshua 1:8 (See Rashi)

⁶⁹⁶ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 6b

⁶⁹⁷ Midrash Tanchuma, Vayera 1:6

⁶⁹⁸ Isaiah 1:11

were to increase your prayers etc.,” indicating that prayer is greater than them all. Just as the sacrificial offerings bring atonement, so likewise, prayer brings atonement for a person’s transgressions.⁶⁹⁹ In Zohar to Parshat Vayakhel it states,⁷⁰⁰ “Serving the Creator in prayer is greater and more precious than all other forms of service, including all the sacrificial offerings.”

Bringing merit to the guilty: Our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁷⁰¹ “Elkana merited having his son Shmuel – who was equal to Moshe and Aharon⁷⁰² – because he would go up [to the Tabernacle at Shiloh] for every Festival, and would bring multitudes of people with him, thus bringing merit upon them.” His son Shmuel followed this practice, as written,⁷⁰³ “He would travel year after year, circling to Beth-El, Gilgal and Mitzpah, and judging Israel in all these places. He then would return to Ramah, for his home was there, and there he would judge Israel. And there he built an altar to *HaShem*-יהו"ה.” Similarly, our forefather Avraham, peace be upon him, only merited all his exalted levels on account of what is written,⁷⁰⁴ “The souls that they made in Chorán.” Similarly, it is written,⁷⁰⁵ “Avraham shall surely be a great and mighty nation and all the nations of the world will be blessed in him. For I know him,

⁶⁹⁹ See Talmud Bavli, Brachot 26b

⁷⁰⁰ Zohar II 201a-b

⁷⁰¹ Tanna d’Bei Eliyahu Rabba, Ch. 8

⁷⁰² Talmud Bavli, Brachot 31b

⁷⁰³ Samuel I 7:16-17

⁷⁰⁴ Genesis 12:5

⁷⁰⁵ Genesis 18:18-19

that he will command his children and his household after him, to keep the way of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, doing charity and justice etc.” Moreover, the leaders of every generation are either rewarded or punished only in regard to this matter.

The Zohar at the beginning of Parshat Terumah, greatly lauds the praise of this *mitzvah*, stating,⁷⁰⁶ “The righteous and meritorious must chase after the guilty and acquire them at full price, to remove the contamination of their sins from them, thus restraining and humbling the opposite of holiness (*Sitra Achara*). He must toil to repair the soul of the guilty, and this will be considered as if he created them. This brings praise to the glory of the Holy One, blessed is He, over and above all other praises and causes Him to be elevated more than anything else. Regarding this the verse states about Aharon,⁷⁰⁷ ‘He returned many from iniquity,’ and it is written,⁷⁰⁸ ‘My covenant was with him, life and peace; I gave these to him for the sake of the fear with which he feared Me, for he was in awe of My Name.’ Such a person is caused to be uplifted in three elevations, which other’s do not attain by virtue of the other *mitzvot*. About such a person the verse states,⁷⁰⁹ ‘My covenant was with him, life and peace,’ and he merits to see his children and children of his children. He is meritorious both in this world and the coming world. No accusing forces can judge him in this world, and he enters into the twelve portals of the firmament in the coming world, and none can restrain his hand.

⁷⁰⁶ Zohar II 128b

⁷⁰⁷ Malachi 2:6

⁷⁰⁸ Malachi 2:5

⁷⁰⁹ Malachi 2:5 *ibid*.

About him the verse states,⁷¹⁰ “His offspring will be mighty in the land, a generation of the upright who shall be blessed. Wealth and riches are in his house and his righteousness endures forever. Even in darkness, light shines for the upright.’ The Holy One, blessed is He, blesses the form of such a righteous person with all seven blessings that He blessed Avraham with, when he did this and rectified the wicked of his generation. Such a person enters into the seven hidden worlds, which no one, except for those who do this and repair the souls of the guilty, merit. If only people would know the beneficence of such deeds and the merit they bring to the righteous-*Tzaddikim* for bringing merit to the guilty, they would pursue this as one pursues life itself.”

Doing one’s business in good faith has already been discussed before regarding the matter of fraud.⁷¹¹ Review that section in depth. As has already been explained, know that upon death, at the beginning of one’s judgement he is asked,⁷¹² “Did you conduct your business faithfully?”

Charity is explained by the prophet Yishayahu,⁷¹³ “Surely, you should break your bread for the hungry and bring the moaning poor to your home; when you see a naked person, clothe him; and do not hide yourself from your kin. Then your light will burst out like the dawn and your healing will speedily

⁷¹⁰ Psalms 112:2-4

⁷¹¹ In the fifth gate of this section.

⁷¹² Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 31a – That is, with honesty and integrity.

⁷¹³ Isaiah 58:7-9

sprout; your righteous deed will precede you and the glory of *HaShem*-יהו"ה will gather you in. Then you will call and *HaShem*-יהו"ה will answer; you will cry out and He will respond, 'Here I am!'" Similarly, it is written,⁷¹⁴ "You shall surely give him, and let your heart not feel bad when you give him, for because of this matter, *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God, will bless you in all your deeds and in your every undertaking." Similarly, it is written,⁷¹⁵ "An anonymous gift will cover over anger," and,⁷¹⁶ "Charity rescues from death." Likewise, it is written,⁷¹⁷ "His charity endures forever." That is, there is no sin that can extinguish it, as with the other *mitzvot*, and it brings life to a person, as in the incident of Binyamin the righteous, mentioned by our sages, of blessed memory.⁷¹⁸

Honoring the Shabbat: As you know, Shabbat is equal to the entire Torah,⁷¹⁹ as explained at the beginning of this gate. Review that section in depth. It is written,⁷²⁰ "If you restrain

⁷¹⁴ Deuteronomy 15:10

⁷¹⁵ Proverbs 21:14

⁷¹⁶ Proverbs 10:2

⁷¹⁷ Psalms 111:3; 112:3

⁷¹⁸ Talmud Bavli, Bava Batra 11a – It was said about Binyamin the righteous, who was appointed over the charity fund: Once, a woman came before him during the years of drought and said to him, "My master, sustain me." He said to her, "I swear by the Temple service that there is nothing left in the charity fund." She said to him, "My master, if you do not sustain me, a woman and her seven sons will die." He arose and sustained her with his own funds. A while later he fell deathly ill. The ministering angels said to the Holy One, blessed is He, "Have You not said that anyone who saves a single life in Israel, is regarded as if he has saved the entire world? Should Binyamin the righteous, who saved a woman and her seven sons, die after only having lived a few years?" They immediately tore up his death sentence, and it was taught that twenty-two years were added to his lifespan.

⁷¹⁹ Midrash Shemot Rabba 25:12

⁷²⁰ Isaiah 58:13

your foot because it is Shabbat, refrain from accomplishing your own desires on My holy day; If you proclaim the Shabbat ‘a delight,’ and the holy [day] of *HaShem*-יהוה ‘honored,’ and you honor it by not engaging in your own affairs, from seeking your own needs or discussing the forbidden – then you will delight in *HaShem*-יהוה, and I will mount you astride the heights of the world; I will provide you the heritage of your forefather Yaakov, for the mouth of *HaShem*-יהוה has spoken.”

You are familiar with the well-known story of Yosef who cherishes Shabbat (*Yosef Mokir Shabbat*),⁷²¹ who on account of honoring Shabbat, merited inheriting the great wealth of his gentile neighbor. Similarly, there is the story⁷²² of Rabbi Chiya bar Abba, who was the guest of a certain man in Laodicea who would eat his Shabbat meals on a table made of gold, affixed with sixteen chains of silver. This table was so heavy that sixteen people were needed to carry it, and it was laden with bowls, cups, pitchers and flasks, and every kind of food, delicacy and fragrant spice created in the six days of creation. When Rabbi Chiya bar Abba asked him what he had

⁷²¹ Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 119a – The Talmud related a story of Yosef who cherishes Shabbat: There was a gentile on his property was extremely plentiful. The astrologers told him that all of his property would be consumed by Yosef who cherishes Shabbat. He went and sold all his property, bought a precious pearl, and placed it in his hat. When he was crossing a river in a ferry, the wind blew off his hat and cast it into the water, and a fish swallowed it. The fish was caught and brought to shore right before Shabbat eve. The fishermen said, “Who buys fish at a time like this?” The people said, “Go bring it to Yosef who cherishes Shabbat, as he regularly purchases delicacies for Shabbat.” They brought it to him and he purchased it, and when he opened the fish, he found the pearl inside. He later sold it for thirteen vessels filled with golden dinars. An elderly man encountered him and said, “One who lends to Shabbat, Shabbat repays him.”

⁷²² Shabbat 119a *ibid*.

done to merit all of this, he responded, “I was a slaughterer, and from the choicest parts of the finest animals I would say, ‘This will be for Shabbat!’” Our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁷²³ “By what virtue do the wealthy who live outside of the Land of Israel merit their wealth? Because they honor and delight in the Shabbat!”

Circumcising one’s son: If you understood our explanation of the greatness of bringing merit to the guilty and the limitless reward brought about by such deeds, then how much more so is this the case regarding bringing one’s own son under the wings of the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*-יהו"ה (the *Shechinah*), in that one’s responsibility toward his family, takes precedence over others.

Acts of loving-kindness, visiting the sick, bringing peace, and welcoming guests, are amongst the *mitzvot* that a person eats of their fruits in this world, while the principal remains for him in the coming world.⁷²⁴ About anyone who engages in Torah study and acts of lovingkindness, the Holy One, blessed is He, says,⁷²⁵ “I ascribe him credit as if he redeemed Me and My children from among the nations of the world.” This is the character trait of Avraham, as it states,⁷²⁶ “Give truth to Yaakov, kindness to Avraham.” It is written,⁷²⁷

⁷²³ Shabbat 119a *ibid.*

⁷²⁴ Mishnah Pe’ah 1:1

⁷²⁵ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 8a

⁷²⁶ Micah 7:20

⁷²⁷ Proverbs 21:21

“One who pursues charity and kindness will find life, righteousness and honor.”

It is taught⁷²⁸ that Rabba bar Nachmeinee and Abaye both came from the house of Eli.⁷²⁹ Rabba bar Nachmeinee who engaged almost exclusively in Torah, lived for forty years, whereas his student, Abaye, lived twenty years longer because he engaged both in Torah study and acts of lovingkindness. Acts of goodness and kindness save a person from the judgments of purgatory (*Gehinnom*) as well as the judgments of the torments of the grave (*Chibut HaKever*), as mentioned before in the second gate.

Set times for Torah study: In the fifth gate, we already explained the sin of frivolity, and as well known, the study of Torah is equal to all the *mitzvot*.⁷³⁰ Additionally, our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁷³¹ “The beginning of a person’s judgment is only that he judged concerning the study of Torah, as written,⁷³² ‘The exemption from waters is the beginning of judgment.’”⁷³³

⁷²⁸ Talmud Bavli, Rosh HaShanah 18a (See Rashi)

⁷²⁹ The House of Eli was subject to a curse that its members would die young and would not be atoned for through sacrificial offerings (Samuel I 3:11-14). The Talmud discusses other means by which members of the House of Eli were able to bring about atonement and prolonged their lives, such as through the study of Torah and acts of lovingkindness.

⁷³⁰ Mishnah Pe’ah 1:1

⁷³¹ Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 7a

⁷³² Proverbs 17:14

⁷³³ The term “release-*Poter*-פּוֹטֵר” here means that he exempts himself from the waters, which refers to Torah study. The term “*Madon*-מַדוֹן” which means “strife,” is also of the root “judgement-*Din*-דִּין” as the Talmud here indicates. Thus, the verse is understood to mean, “Excusing oneself from Torah study is the beginning of judgment.” (See Rashi to Talmud Bavli, Kiddushin 40b.)

Good Practices:

Reciting the *Shema* upon retiring to sleep: Know what our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁷³⁴ “One who recites the *Shema* upon his bed kills myriads of destructive forces found at night, particularly when his soul ascends above. This is as stated,⁷³⁵ ‘Let the pious (*Chassidim*) exalt in glory, let them sing joyously upon their beds. The praises of exaltation of God are in their throats, and a double-edged sword is in their hand.’”

Arising after midnight:⁷³⁶ Firstly, by engaging in this practice he is counted among those who mourn for Zion and Jerusalem, about which it states,⁷³⁷ “Be glad in Jerusalem and rejoice in her, all you who love her, exult with her in jubilation, all you who mourn for her.” For, it is at that hour that the Holy One, blessed is He, also mourns and roars like a lion.⁷³⁸ Moreover, in regard to one’s study of Torah at that hour, our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁷³⁹ “The exaltation in the Torah is only at night.” Additionally, our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁷⁴⁰ “Whoever occupies himself with Torah study at night, the Holy One, blessed is He, extends a thread of kindness upon him by day.” Our sages, of blessed memory,

⁷³⁴ Zohar III 212a-b

⁷³⁵ Psalms 149:5-6

⁷³⁶ To pray the *Tikkun Chatzot* prayer and to study Torah.

⁷³⁷ Isaiah 66:10

⁷³⁸ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 3a

⁷³⁹ Midrash Shemot Rabba 47:5; Vayikra Rabba 19:1

⁷⁴⁰ Talmud Bavli, Avoda Zarah 3b; Midrash Mishlei 31:3; Tanna d’Bei Eliyahu Zuta, Pirke Derech Eretz 2

also stated,⁷⁴¹ “Anyone who occupies himself with Torah study at night, the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*-יהו"ה (the *Shechinah*), is opposite him. The verse states,⁷⁴² “Arise! Exalt in the night, at the beginning of the watches!” King David, peace be upon him, only merited to live in this world and in the coming world on account of this practice,⁷⁴³ as written,⁷⁴⁴ “At midnight I arise to thank You for Your righteous ordinances.” The book of *Zohar* is filled with explanations praising this *mitzvah* to no end, and the Holy Spirit of Divine Inspiration (*Ru'ach HaKodesh*) dwells upon such a person, as mentioned there in Parshat Shemot.⁷⁴⁵

⁷⁴¹ Talmud Bavli, Tamid 32b

⁷⁴² Lamentations 2:19 – In reference to Torah study (Shemot Rabba 47:5).

⁷⁴³ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 3b-4a and elsewhere.

⁷⁴⁴ Psalms 119:62

⁷⁴⁵ *Zohar* II 18b

Part Two

Gate Eight

The Gate of Repentance

Which divides into three sections:

Section One:

The Positive Commandments

The gravest of the positive commandments are the *mitzvah* of offering the Paschal Lamb (*Korban Pesach*) and the *mitzvah* of circumcision. The nullification of either of these two commandments results in excision (*Karet*). Even more severe is the nullification of positive commandments that are punished with excision (*Karet*) and also violate a negative commandment, such as the *mitzvah* to fast and desist from all prohibited forms of labor on Yom Kippur (The Day of Atonement). Higher than this is the *mitzvah* of resting from all prohibited forms of labor on Shabbat, as nullifying this *mitzvah* is both a negative prohibition and is punishable by stoning (*Skilah*). Higher than this is the *mitzvah* to procreate, that is, to be fruitful and multiply. For even if a person is full of Torah and *mitzvot*, like King Chizkiyahu,⁷⁴⁶ he will die in this world

⁷⁴⁶ See Kings II 18:5 – The Torah attests about King Chizkiyahu, “He trusted in *HaShem-יהוה*, the God of Israel; after him there was not anyone like him among all the kings of Yehudah, nor among those who preceded him.”

and not live in the coming world, because he abstained from procreating.⁷⁴⁷ This is also the case in regard to the *positive mitzvah* of donning Tefillin. That is, a skull that has never donned Tefillin shall not rise in the time of the resurrection and is called a rebellious Jew who sins with his body.⁷⁴⁸ Greater than all these is a person who abrogates the covenant of the circumcision⁷⁴⁹ in order to cause anger.

It is a positive commandment to know that there is a God, and one who denies this primary foundation has no share in the coming world.⁷⁵⁰

There are also *mitzvot* that one eats of the fruit in this world, while the principal remains for the coming world.⁷⁵¹ These include honoring one's father and mother, acts of kindness for the poor and the rich, both through physical action and with one's money, bringing joy to a bride and groom, visiting the sick, burying the dead and comforting mourners, clothing the naked, welcoming guests, praying with concentration and devotional intent, bringing peace between one person and another and certainly between himself and his fellow, as well as judging one's fellow favorably. The study of

⁷⁴⁷ See Talmud Bavli, Brachot 10a – Notwithstanding his greatness, he was told (by *HaShem*-ה' through His prophet Yishayahu) that because he did not bear children (since he saw with the Holy Spirit (*Ru'ach HaKodesh*) that his children would not be virtuous), (Isaiah 38:1), “You shall die and shall not live,” meaning, “You will die in this world and will not live in the coming world.” He indeed repented and rectified this, and thus fifteen years were added to his life.

⁷⁴⁸ Talmud Bavli, Rosh HaShanah 17a

⁷⁴⁹ Talmud Bavli, Yoma 85b; Shevuot 13a; Sanhedrin 99a; Avot d'Rabbi Natan, Ch. 26, and elsewhere.

⁷⁵⁰ Mishneh Torah, Yesodei HaTorah (Foundations of the Torah), 1:1-6

⁷⁵¹ Mishnah Pe'ah 1:1; Also see Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 127a and elsewhere.

Torah is equal to them all. Included in this category is rising early to the house of prayer, and raising one's sons by guiding them to study Torah.

Section Two:

Regarding the punishments for forbidden character traits, and punishments for transgressing the negative commandments

There are two character traits that are the gravest of all. The first is anger, which is equal to idolatry,⁷⁵² about which it states,⁷⁵³ “You who tears his soul apart in his anger,” causing his soul to be uprooted and to depart, and to be replaced with another evil soul.

The second is arrogance and haughtiness which is higher and worse than anger. It is equal to idolatry, and he is compared to an *Ashera* tree,⁷⁵⁴ and is like one who stands in denial of the fundamental truth of *HaShem*'s-יהוה existence, and it is as if he violated every one of the forbidden sexual relations, and his dust will not stir at the time of the resurrection of the dead.⁷⁵⁵ Nevertheless, when it comes to the punishment for the negative commandments, these are prohibitions for which one does not receive lashes, similar to a prohibitive

⁷⁵² Mishneh Torah, Hilchot De'ot 2:3; Zohar I 27b; Zohar II 182b; Zohar III 179b, 234b; Tikkunim 89b; Zohar Chadash Noach

⁷⁵³ Job 18:4

⁷⁵⁴ This was a grove used for the ancient idolatry of tree worship.

⁷⁵⁵ Talmud Bavli, Sotah 5a

commandment that has no action and that is transformable through a positive commandment.⁷⁵⁶

These two categories, as well as the nullification of all positive commandments except for those severe ones that we previously mentioned, are called minor transgressions (*Aveirot Kalot*). All of the severe positive commandments that we mentioned before, and all of the negative commandments except for these two categories that we mentioned, are called severe transgressions, in which there are many levels. They are all the sins for which one is liable for excision (*Karet*) and death by the hands of Heaven or death administered by the court.

However, when it comes to the transgression of the commandment,⁷⁵⁷ “You shall not bear the Name of *HaShem*-יהוה your God, in vain,” even though it is not punishable by excision (*Karet*), in a different respect it is more severe than all other commandments. This is because retribution is exacted on him as well as his family and the entire world, even including those who are not in a position to admonish him.

About the matter of desecrating the Name of *HaShem*-יהוה, our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁷⁵⁸ “To what extent

⁷⁵⁶ An example of this is the negative commandment (Deuteronomy 2:6), “Do not take the mother [bird] together with the young.” If he violates this and takes the mother with the young, it is repairable by (Deuteronomy 22:7), “You shall surely send the mother,” which is a positive commandment. One is thus not administered lashes by the violation of the prohibition when he is still able to fulfill the positive commandment. (See Me’iri to Talmud Bavli, Makkot 13a and elsewhere.)

⁷⁵⁷ Exodus 20:7

⁷⁵⁸ Talmud Bavli, Yoma 87a - “His repentance does not have the power to suspend his judgment, nor does the day of Yom Kippur have the power to atone for his sin, nor does suffering alone have the power to absolve him. Rather, all these suspend punishment and death absolves him, as is written (Isaiah 22:14), ‘And

does the desecration of the Name of *HaShem*-יהו"ה go? Rav said: For me, it would be if I would take meat from a butcher and not pay him immediately. Rabbi Yochanan said: For me, it would be if I would walk four cubits without the Torah and without wearing Tefillin due to bodily weakness, for those who would see me would not know that it is due to my weakness. They would learn from my behavior, causing a nullification of Torah study and the fulfillment of the *mitzvah* of Tefillin.⁷⁵⁹ Rabbi Yanai said: Anything that causes one's friends to become embarrassed because of his reputation, this is a desecration of the Name of *HaShem*-יהו"ה. Abaye said: It is as taught about the verse,⁷⁶⁰ 'And you shall love *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God,' that the Name of Heaven should become beloved by your hand. This means that a person should read Torah, study Mishnah, serve and study from Torah scholars, conduct his business transactions faithfully and be pleasant with people. However, if he does all the above, except not conduct his business dealings in good faith, and does not speak pleasantly with others, the Name of Heaven is desecrated by his hand."

In regard to all of the above, if he died without repenting, he is judged in purgatory (*Gehinnom*). However, in the end, he rises and ascends from there, is reparable and has a portion in the resurrection of the dead and in the coming world.⁷⁶¹

HaShem Tzva 'ot-צבאו"ת יהו"ה revealed Himself to my ears: This sin will never be atoned for you until you die."

⁷⁵⁹ See Rashi to Yoma 87a *ibid*.

⁷⁶⁰ Deuteronomy 6:5

⁷⁶¹ Tosefta Sanhedrin 13

Higher and worse than this, are those who are called rebellious Jews who sin with their bodies (*Poshei Yisroel b'Gufam*), such as a skull that has never donned Tefillin because he is too lazy to don them, even though he can.⁷⁶² For, if his intention was to cause anger, then he is said to be in the category of the atheist (*Min*), or at the very least an apostate (*Mumar*).⁷⁶³ If such a person dies without repentance, he is judged in purgatory (*Gehinom*) for twelve months, after which his body is destroyed and his soul is burned and becomes ashes under the souls of the feet of the righteous in the coming world.⁷⁶⁴

Higher and worse than this are those who have no portion whatsoever in the coming world. Even when purgatory (*Gehinom*) itself ceases, their punishment does not cease.⁷⁶⁵ This applies even if they possess Torah and good deeds, but died without repenting, like Doeg the Edomite, the mighty of the shepherds.⁷⁶⁶ This category includes the atheists (*Minim*), and students who alter the words of Torah to fit their atheism.⁷⁶⁷ The same applies to one a person who is an apostate (*Mumar*) with only the single transgression of idolatry, even though he acknowledges the truth of all the *mitzvot* and is known to fulfill them all constantly.

⁷⁶² Talmud Bavli, Rosh HaShanah 17a

⁷⁶³ For the distinctions as to these classifications, see Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Teshuvah (Repentance), Ch. 3, and elsewhere.

⁷⁶⁴ Talmud Bavli, Rosh HaShanah 17a *ibid*.

⁷⁶⁵ Rosh HaShanah 17a *ibid.*, and elsewhere.

⁷⁶⁶ Samuel I 21:8

⁷⁶⁷ Mishnah Avot 3:11; Yoma 85b, and Rashi there.

The category of apostates (*Minim*) also includes the following:⁷⁶⁸ This category includes even a person who is only an apostate in regard to a single commandment and transgresses only that one commandment as an act of rebellion; or even if he only does so to satisfy his lust; and similarly, one who casts off the yoke of Heaven, meaning that he denies the fundamental truth of *HaShem's* יהוה's existence and states that there is no God; and likewise, one who says that the Torah is indeed from Heaven, but "I cannot stand it," meaning "I do not fulfill it;" or alternatively, one who says that the Torah is not from Heaven, even if he only is referring to a single verse, or a single grammatical aspect, such as missing letters or additional letters, or denies even one exegetical matter, such as a single *Kal VaChomer* or a single *Gzeira Shava* transmitted by our sages; Some also include those who deny the Oral Torah or matters that are established by the Sages;⁷⁶⁹ This category also includes one who says that the resurrection of the dead is not from the Torah, meaning that it is not hinted at in the Torah, even though he believes both in the Torah and the resurrection of the dead; Also, one who interprets Torah falsely, such as Menasheh, who would expound the Torah scornfully and falsely, saying things like "There was no reason for Moshe to write the verse,⁷⁷⁰ 'And Lotan's sister was Timna,'" and the like;⁷⁷¹ Also, one who publicly violates the commandments of the Torah high-

⁷⁶⁸ See Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Teshuvah, Ch. 3 *ibid.*; Mishnah Sanhedrin 10:1; Tamud Bavli, Sanhedrin 90a; Talmud Yerushalmi, Pe'ah 1:1; and elsewhere.

⁷⁶⁹ Like Chanukah and Purim

⁷⁷⁰ Genesis 36:2

⁷⁷¹ Mishnah Avot 3:11; Sanhedrin 99b; Yoma 85b, and Rashi there.

handedly, like Yehoyakim;⁷⁷² One who abrogates the covenant of circumcision (*Brit Milah*), meaning that as an act of rebellion, he does not circumcise himself, or alternately, he stretches his foreskin to look uncircumcised; One who himself sins and also causes others to sin such as Yeravam, which even includes transgressing minor prohibitions;⁷⁷³ Also, infidels (*Apikorsim*), that is, those who treat a Torah scholar with contempt, to their faces;⁷⁷⁴ and also one who sits before his master and says, “this thing is forbidden,” or “this thing is permissible,” in the form of a statement, rather than in the form of a question; Also one who ridicules his master when he expounds something that seems to be an exaggeration, and he does not believe his words; Also one who treats Torah scholars with contempt, even not to their face, such as those who say “Those Rabbis...” in a degrading manner, or similarly, those who say, “With what have the Rabbis benefited us? They read the Torah for their own benefit, and study the Mishnah for their own benefit etc.”⁷⁷⁵ or like those who say, “With what have the Rabbis benefited us? Never have they permitted a raven for us, nor have they prohibited a dove for us.”⁷⁷⁶ Also included is one who addresses his master by name, and does not respectfully address him as “my master and teacher;” Likewise, one who disgraces his fellow before a Torah scholar; and those who

⁷⁷² Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 103b; Mishneh Torah, Teshuvah, Ch. 3 *ibid.*

⁷⁷³ Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 107b

⁷⁷⁴ Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 99b

⁷⁷⁵ Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 99b *ibid.*

⁷⁷⁶ Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 100a – That is, they say, “Of what benefit is their Torah study, if they merely tell us matters explicitly stated in Torah.” (Rashi)

betray others to the Gentile authorities, whether they turned a Jew into the hands of the Gentile authorities to be beaten, or whether they only betrayed him monetarily to the Gentile authorities; Likewise, a communal leader who imposes excess fear upon the community out of pride, rather than for the sake of the Name of *HaShem*-יהו"ה;⁷⁷⁷ One who disgraces the Festivals, in that he intentionally performs labor during *Chol HaMo'ed* as a show of disgrace and that he does not believe that it is forbidden, rather than for personal benefit;⁷⁷⁸ One who publicly embarrasses his fellow in his presence; One who derives honor from the shame of his friend, and it seems to me, that this too is if it is his presence; One who reads extraneous literature, such as the book of Ben Sira and the books of Ben La'anah, which are nonsensical books that draw a person's heart and cause him to neglect his Torah study;⁷⁷⁹ The same applies to books of apostasy, such as those of the priests and ministers of the nations; However, books such as that written by Homer⁷⁸⁰ and other similar books, are considered to be mundane, and are as if he is merely reading a correspondence,

⁷⁷⁷ See Talmud Bavli, Rosh HaShanah 17a

⁷⁷⁸ Mishnah Avot 3:11

⁷⁷⁹ The indication by the commentaries is that these are books that were written by apostates in the style of Torah, and other books of that nature, which may lead the reader to think that they are Torah, yet they are not Torah, and are completely contrary to Torah.

⁷⁸⁰ The indication by the commentaries is that this refers to literature that is like that of the Greek writer and poet Homer, which are either clearly known fiction or the natural scientific wisdoms of the nations, and are considered mundane, like one who reads a letter, and are thus not in this same category of grave transgression as the false and misleading literature mentioned before. They therefore are not cause for loss of the coming world, as with the prior category. Even so, as the Talmud there concludes citing King Solomon (Eccl. 12:12), "Beyond these my son, be warned," – "They are given to develop reason, but not for toiling in."

as stated in the Jerusalem Talmud,⁷⁸¹ One who whispers incantations over an injury, or even if he recites a verse over it and spits,⁷⁸² irrespective of whether it is the verse,⁷⁸³ “I will not bring any of the diseases upon you,” or whether it has any other mention of illness, healing, or the Name of Heaven, but even if it is a verse such as,⁷⁸⁴ “*HaShem*-יהו"ה called to Moshe etc.”,⁷⁸⁵ One who pronounces the Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה according to its letters outside the Temple,⁷⁸⁶ which the Jerusalem Talmud⁷⁸⁷ explains means that he does not mention Him by His title, in accordance to the verse,⁷⁸⁸ “This is My Name forever, and this is My remembrance from generation to generation.” However, in our Talmud⁷⁸⁹ we learn that this is specifically if he does so publicly; One who disgraces the word of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, meaning that he recalls words of Torah in a filthy place,⁷⁹⁰ Likewise, one who reads the written Torah, but pays no heed to the words of the Mishnah, which explain the written Torah; Similarly, one who studies Torah but does not teach it, the exception being the secrets of the Torah, about which it states,⁷⁹¹ “The lambs (*Kvasim*-כבש"ים) shall be for your clothing,” meaning,⁷⁹² “Matters that are the secrets of the world

⁷⁸¹ Talmud Yerushalmi, Sanhedrin 10:1

⁷⁸² Mishnah Sanhedrin 10:1; Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 90a

⁷⁸³ Exodus 15:26

⁷⁸⁴ Leviticus 1:1

⁷⁸⁵ Mishneh Torah, Avodah Zarah 11:12; Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh De'ah 179:8

⁷⁸⁶ Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 101b

⁷⁸⁷ Talmud Yerushalmi, Sanhedrin 10:1 – His title Lord-*Adona*”אדני”י

⁷⁸⁸ Exodus 3:15

⁷⁸⁹ Talmud Bavli, Avodah Zarah 18a

⁷⁹⁰ Talmud Yerushalmi, Sanhedrin 10:1 and elsewhere.

⁷⁹¹ Proverbs 27:26

⁷⁹² Talmud Bavli, Chagigah 13a

(*Kivshono shel Olam*-כבשונו של עולם) should be hidden under your clothing.” It is only fitting to teach them to the pious (*Chassidim*) of the generation, who are worthy of being taught; Similarly, one who is capable of engaging in Torah study but does not engage in it, and instead engages in business and other worldly matters; One who gossips (*Rechilus*), meaning that he takes the words of one friend and brings them to another, and this applies even if they are not words that cause any shame or ill repute, and even if they are true, like what occurred with Doeg the Edomite and David;⁷⁹³ One who speaks evil speech (*Lashon Hara*), in that he speaks of his fellow’s shamefulness, even if it is true; The slanderer (*Motzi Shem Ra*) who relates false matters about his fellow to disgrace his name; Anyone who violates these three, that is, the gossip, one who speaks evil speech and the slanderer, it is considered as if they have denied the primary foundation of *HaShem*’s יהוה’s existence, and these are so severe that they are equal to the three cardinal sins of the Torah, these being idolatry, forbidden relations, and murder; One who lends to his fellow Jew with interest and did not return the interest to him will not rise upon the resurrection of the dead;⁷⁹⁴ One who transgresses the Shabbat is judged in purgatory (*Gehinom*) for all generations;⁷⁹⁵ One who intentionally does not bear children and dies childless is excised from this world and will not have life in the coming world.⁷⁹⁶

⁷⁹³ Samuel I 22:9-10; Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 106b

⁷⁹⁴ See Baal HaTurim to Leviticus 25:36

⁷⁹⁵ Tikkunei Zohar, Tikkun 24, 69b

⁷⁹⁶ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 10a

There are three categories of people who descend to purgatory and never ascend: One who has relations with a married woman; One who calls his fellow by a derogatory nickname, and this applies even if he has become accustomed to being called by that name instead of his real name and does not become embarrassed by it, but the perpetrator intends to insult him; One who speaks evil speech (*Lashon Hara*), which is equal to all three, in which case he too has no share in the coming world.

Greater than all sins, is the transgression of wasteful seminal emissions,⁷⁹⁷ in that he spills the blood of his own offspring for all generations until the end of the world. Even though all other sins are reparable through repentance, there is no repentance for this sin, as mentioned in Zohar to Parshat Vayechi.⁷⁹⁸ However, there are those who have a version that states that repentance can be effective if he truly repents strongly and constantly.

Sins between man and his fellow are minor in comparison to transgressions between man and *HaShem*-יהו"ה, the Ever Present One, blessed is He. However, from a different angle, they are worse, since they have no repair except by appeasing the fellow who he sinned against and that his fellow forgives him, and by making restitution, either through words or financially.

⁷⁹⁷ See Part II, Gate Six

⁷⁹⁸ Zohar I 219b *ibid*.

Section Three:

Repentance for sins between man and the Creator

There is not a single sin that stands in the way of repentance, even the sin of denying the primary foundation of *HaShem*'s יהו"ה existence, and even if he only repented at the moment of death.

There are four categories of atonement.⁷⁹⁹ If a person transgressed a minor positive commandment and repented, he does not move from there until he is forgiven.⁸⁰⁰ If he transgressed a minor prohibitive commandment, repentance as well as Yom Kippur affect atonement for him.⁸⁰¹ If he transgressed grave sins, be they positive commandments or prohibitions, such as those for which one is punished by excision (*Karet*) or is liable for the death penalty at the hands of Heaven, or whether he is liable for the death penalty at the hands of the court, with the exception being a desecration of the Name of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, repentance, Yom Kippur, as well as suffering, affect his atonement. If he caused a desecration of the Name of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, or if he violated the gravest of commandments, such as rebellious Jews who sin with their bodies (*Poshei Yisroel b'Gufam*), and all who descend to purgatory (*Gehinom*) and do not ascend, as

⁷⁹⁹ Talmud Bavli, Yoma 86a; Talmud Yerushalmi Yoma 8:7; Sanhedrin 10:1; Tosefta Yoma 4:9 and elsewhere.

⁸⁰⁰ Talmud Bavli, Shevuot 12b – That is, he is immediately forgiven upon his repentance.

⁸⁰¹ Talmud Bavli, Yoma 85b and on; Mishneh Torah, Hilehot Teshuvah (Repentance) Ch. 1 and on.

well as all those who will not rise upon the resurrection of the dead and all those who have no portion in the coming world, as previously discussed at length in the two preceding sections - repentance, Yom Kippur, suffering, and death, affect his atonement.

The sufferings that affect atonement include every manner and type of suffering. To what extent is something considered suffering? To the point that even if he accidentally puts his garment on backward and must take it off to put it on correctly, or if he reached into his pocket to take out two coins and only one coin came up and he must put his hand into his pocket a second time, this is considered suffering.⁸⁰²

Repentance (*Teshuvah*) means that the opportunity to commit the same sin that he transgressed presented itself to him, but he does not transgress it a second or third time. For example, he has the opportunity to transgress with the same woman, at around the same time period, and in the same place, and the like, but he does not do so.⁸⁰³ If he repents out of love of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, or even if only out of fear of punishment, then the sin is entirely uprooted from him, as if it never was. However, if he repents because suffering came upon him, the sin is not completely healed, and he is called a "*Baal Moom*" – a blemished person.

Repentance (*Teshuvah*) requires repentance with words.⁸⁰⁴ The primary words of confession are thus,⁸⁰⁵ "Please,

⁸⁰² Talmud Bavli, Arachin 16b

⁸⁰³ Talmud Bavli, Yoma 86b; Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Teshuvah 2:1

⁸⁰⁴ Numbers 5:6-7; Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Teshuvah 1:1

⁸⁰⁵ Mishnah Yoma 3:8; Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Teshuvah 1:1

HaShem-יהו"ה, I have sinned, I have done wrong, I have rebelled against You... but we and our fathers have sinned." The words of the confessional presented in our Talmud⁸⁰⁶ as well as the Jerusalem Talmud⁸⁰⁷ is as follows, although I shall both summarize and add some words:

“Master of the universe, I have sinned, I have done wrong, I have rebelled against You, and have done evil in Your eyes, and I was in a state of mind of wickedness, and I went in errant ways. I hereby regret my sins. If only it could be that I had not done them, but I shall no longer act and no longer do as I previously did. May it be desirable before You, *HaShem*-יהו"ה my God, and the God of my fathers, that you atone me of all my rebellious deeds, and pardon me of all my transgressions, and forgive me for all my sins, that I sinned, transgressed, and rebelled before you, from the day that I was created in the world until this day, whether I did so in this incarnation or in any other incarnation, whether I transgressed prohibitions of the Torah or Rabbinic prohibitions, including their enactments, safe-guards, or customs, for You are He who desires repentance. May the expressions of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart find favor before You, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, my Rock and Redeemer.”

⁸⁰⁶ Talmud Bavli, Yoma 87b

⁸⁰⁷ Talmud Yerushalmi, Yoma 8:7

Part Three

The conduct of attaining the Holy Spirit of Divine Inspiration (*Ru'ach HaKodesh*)

This section is divided into eight gates:

1. The existence of the worlds.
2. The existence of man.
3. The hindrances to prophecy.
4. The conditions to prophecy.
5. The nature of prophecy and its substance.
6. The levels of prophecy.
7. The conduct of the Holy Spirit of Divine Inspiration (*Ru'ach HaKodesh*) in our times.
8. A short introduction to the manner of its attainment.

Part Three

Gate One

The Existence of the Worlds

This matter shall be explained with the utmost brevity, solely to the extent necessary to understand the matter of prophecy.⁸⁰⁸ Now, the Supernal Emanator, blessed is He, who emanated all the worlds, is called the Unlimited One (*Ein Sof*), blessed is He. He has no image whatsoever, neither in the form of a name, nor in the form of a letter, nor even in the thorns of the letters.⁸⁰⁹ We thus are incapable and therefore barred from all thought of Him.

He emanated five worlds, one world being the soul for the next, and the next world being the soul for the next. These are: Primordial Man-*Adam Kadmon*, as mentioned in Sefer Tikkunim,⁸¹⁰ which in the nomenclature of the Ge'onim is called, "Exceedingly Brilliant-*Tzachtzechoot*." The second is the world of Emanation-*Atzilut*. The third is the world of Creation-*Briyah*. The fourth is the world of Formation-*Yetzirah*. The fifth is the world of Action-*Asiyah*. These five

⁸⁰⁸ The expansive details of the chaining down of the worlds (*Seder Hishtalshelut*) is the subject of Etz Chayim of the Arizal written by Rabbi Chayim Vital, and is explained in a manner of grasp and comprehension by Rabbi DovBer of Lubavitch in Shaar HaYichud, translated as The Gate of Unity.

⁸⁰⁹ See at length in Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as HaShem Is One, Vol. 1, The Gate of Intrinsic Being (*Shaar HaHavayah*);

⁸¹⁰ Tikkunei Zohar, Tikkun 19 (42a), and Tikkun 70 (120a), and elsewhere.

worlds are considered as One Being-*Havayah Achat*-הו"י אחת. For, the thorn of the letter *Yod*-ד"י (י) is Primordial Man-*Adam Kadmon*, the *Yod*-ד"י (י) itself is the world of Emanation-*Atzilut*, the first *Hey*-א"ה (ה) is the world of Creation-*Briyah*, the *Vav*-ו"א (ו) is the world of Formation-*Yetzirah*, and the final *Hey*-א"ה (ה) is the world of *Action*.

Now, because Primordial Man-*Adam Kadmon* is so concealed from us, to the point that it does not even have the form of a letter, but only the thorn of the *Yod*-ד"י (י) – whereas the Unlimited One Himself, blessed is He, does not even have the simple image or form of the thorn of a letter⁸¹¹ – we therefore generally only discuss the four worlds of Emanation-*Atzilut*, Creation-*Briyah*, Formation-*Yetzirah*, and Action-*Asiyah*. This is because they are complete letters, and together, the four are called, The Name of Being-הו"י שם.

These four further subdivide into nine levels, these being wisdom-*Chochmah*, understanding-*Binah*, the six directions of beauty-*Tiferet* and kingship-*Malchut*. For, these four are called the four Supernal foundations, which are the four worlds of Emanation-*Atzilut*, Creation-*Briyah*, Formation-*Yetzirah*, and Action-*Asiyah*, and they divide into nine *Sefirot*. However, the thorn of the *Yod*-ד"י (י), which is Primordial Man-*Adam Kadmon*, is the fifth world, which is higher than them all and includes them all. It alone is the root of all four foundations, which are the four worlds of Emanation-*Atzilut*, Creation-*Briyah*, Formation-*Yetzirah*, and Action-*Asiyah*. We

⁸¹¹ See Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as HaShem Is One, Vol. 1, The Gate of Intrinsic Being (*Shaar HaHavayah*).

thus find that there are never more than four foundations, and the general principle that arises, is that the Unlimited One (*Ein Sof*), blessed is He, is not included in any calculation whatsoever.⁸¹²

Subsequently, the worlds were initially included as one complete Name of Being-*Shem Havayah* שם הוי"ה. Afterwards, they were divided into four foundations, except for their root, which is Primordial Man-*Adam Kadmon* and is the thorn of the letter *Yod*-יוד (י) which is the tenth *Sefirah* that is higher than them all, and is therefore called the crown-*Keter*. Afterwards, the four foundations were divided into nine *Sefirot*, as mentioned.

Now, it all includes two categories; the Emanator and all the Emanated. About this, it states in *Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer*,⁸¹³ “Before the creation of the world” – the intention being to this world – “He and His Name were One.” The Unlimited One (*Ein Sof*), blessed is He, is referred to here as, “He-*Hoo*-הוא,” and the emanated are included in, “His Name-*Shmo*-שמו,” which is One Being-*Havayah Achat* הוי"ה אחת, and all of it is One, because⁸¹⁴ “the flame was concealed within the coal.”⁸¹⁵

⁸¹² See *Shaar HaYichud* of Rabbi DovBer of Lubavitch, translated as *The Gate of Unity*, Ch. 10-11.

⁸¹³ *Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer*, Ch. 3

⁸¹⁴ See *Sefer Yetzirah* 1:7

⁸¹⁵ Note from the Chida: I have seen an explanation written as to why, in truth, the Unlimited One (*Ein Sof*) is called by the title “He-*Hoo*-הוא,” whereas the emanated are called, “His Name-*Shmo*-שמו,” all of which has already been discussed at length by the commentaries, of blessed memory. What is important for you to know is that all things below in the worlds, meaning, all that is actualized, formed

and created, have a refined and concealed root above in the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic Being of the Unlimited One (*Ein Sof*), blessed is He.

Now, it is known that the nature of a thing that is hewn from another, is that within itself, it always possesses the power of that which it was hewn from. For example, within the branch of a tree is the power of the root, and necessarily, in the same manner, within the root of the tree is the power of the branch. If this was not the case, it would be impossible for the branch to come from the root. This being so, the ten *Sefirot* of the world of Emanation-*Atzilut* [which are the branch] necessarily possess a very hidden and concealed root in the Essential Self of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Essential Being of the Unlimited One (*Ein Sof*), blessed is He. However, in Him, they actually are not recognizably differentiated, God forbid to think so. In other words, it is impossible for us to differentiate and say that, “this is the crown-*Keter*” or “this is wisdom-*Chochmah*” etc., but it rather is like a *Heyulie*, similar to what we say below, in the world of Action-*Asiyah*, that the *Heyulie* is the root of the four elemental foundations.

Now, the words of the Ari”zal are well known, namely, that “when it arose in His simple will to create the worlds, the Unlimited One, blessed is He, estimated within Himself, in the aspect and level of His Kingship-*Malchut*, as in the verse (Psalms 145:13), “Your Kingship (*Malchutcha*) is the kingship (*Malchut*) of all the worlds.” (By way of analogy, this is called the aspect of Kingship within Kingship-*Malchut sh’bMalchut* of the Unlimited One (*Ein Sof*), even though this is not truly the case. For, in reality, we are incapable, and therefore barred from ascribing any form whatsoever to the Unlimited One (*Ein Sof*), blessed is He, neither any image nor any *Sefirah* whatsoever, God forbid to think so. Rather, it only is in order to satisfy the ear that we speak in such terms, as the author writes in Etz Chayim, Drush ABY”A, Ch. 1.) All the lower worlds that are emanated from the Unlimited One (*Ein Sof*), blessed is He, receive from Him, similar to the fact that biologically, the female receives from the male, so to speak. It is for this reason that the verse, “Your Kingship is the Kingship of all worlds,” begins by specifying, “Your Kingship-*Malchutcha*-מלכותך,” in the masculine, indicating that relative to the construct of the worlds, He is the giver, and it is only in relation to the other *Sefirot* that are above her, that she is called by the title kingship-*Malchut*-מלכות. This then, is the meaning of the continuation of the verse, “is the Kingship-*Malchut*-מלכות of all the worlds,” meaning that all worlds are emanated into her.

Now, it is known that the male is called by the term “He-*Hoo*-הוא,” and this term “He-*Hoo*-הוא” includes all ten *Sefirot* from below to above, as follows: The *Hey*-ה of the word “He-*Hoo*-הוא” hints at the feminine aspect, which is included in the *Sefirah* of foundation-*Yesod*, and is the mystery of the corona-*Atarah*-עטרה. The *Vav*-ו of the word “He-*Hoo*-הוא” hints at the six directions of the *Sefirah* of beauty-*Tiferet*. The *Aleph*-א of the term “He-*Hoo*-הוא” hints at the crown-*Keter*, wisdom-*Chochmah*, and understanding-*Binah*. For, as known, the first three *Sefirot* are considered as one, like the form of the letter *Aleph*-א. That is, the *Yod*-י above is wisdom-*Chochmah*, the *Yod*-י below is understanding-*Binah*, and the *Vav*-ו in between is the mystery of knowledge-*Da’at*, which mediates between wisdom-*Chochmah* and understanding-*Binah*, and as known, knowledge-*Da’at* is at times

Now, it was explained that all the worlds are included in the Name of Being-*Shem Havayah*-ה"י"י, which is divided into four foundations and ten *Sefirot*. In the same manner, this is likewise the case with each of the worlds, in the same manner, that each of them also divides into particulars. That is, the world of Emanation-*Atzilut*, which is the letter *Yod*-י"י (י) and is called wisdom-*Chochmah*, divides into each of the

entitled the crown-*Keter*, in that it is the middle line that is called (Ex. 26:28) “The center bar that goes from end to end,” from above to below, as known.

We should also point out an additional reason that the *Aleph*-א hints at the first three *Sefirot*. Namely, as known, the title of the first three *Sefirot* is the name *Ya”H*-ה"י". That is, the thorn of the *Yod*-י is the crown-*Keter*, the *Yod*-י itself is wisdom-*Chochmah*, and the *Hey*-ה is understanding-*Binah*. When the Name *Ya”H*-ה"י" is spelled out according to the name of *Ma”H*-ה"י" 45 [the Name *HaShem*-ה"י" spelled with *Aleph*'s-א], that is, *Yod Hey*-ה"י" 26, it has the numerical value of 26, which is the same numerical value as the *Aleph*-א, which has a *Yod*-י 10 above, a *Yod*-י 10 below, and *Vav*-ו 6 in between, in a way of complete Oneness-א. Thus, the first three *Sefirot* are called the *Aleph*-א of the word “He-*Hoo*-א”ה.” Also, as known, *Malchut*, which is the feminine aspect, is called, “His Name-*Shem*-שם.” This then, is what our sages, of blessed memory, meant when they said, “Before the creation of the world there was He-*Hoo*-א”ה,” meaning all the aforementioned aspects as they are in the Essential Self of the Unlimited One (*Ein Sof*), blessed is He, “and His Name-*Shmo*-שמו,” meaning the aspect of Kingship-*Malchut* of the Unlimited One (*Ein Sof*), which includes all the emanated, who are the recipients of the Unlimited One (*Ein Sof*), blessed is He, and are feminine, in that they are recipients relative to He who is above. All of it is included in the mystery of His Oneness (*Echad*-אחד), meaning that they are in a state of absolute unity, “like a flame that is bound to the coal.”

It may thus also be said that this is the meaning of the verse (Psalms 33:9), “He-*Hoo*-א”ה spoke and it came to be, He-*Hoo*-א”ה commanded and it stood firm.” This is to be understood as mentioned above, that the term “He-*Hoo*-א”ה” refers to the Unlimited One (*Ein Sof*), blessed is He, according to the order of the levels of the roots in ascending order from below to above. This is likewise the meaning of the verse (Psalms 132:13), “For *HaShem*-ה"י" has chosen Zion, Desiring it (*Eevah*-ה"י"א) as His habitation.” That is, the letters of the word, “Desiring it-*Eevah*-ה"י"א” are the same letters as the levels of the aforementioned roots, but in descending order, from Above to below. That is, the *Aleph*-א is the crown-*Keter*, wisdom-*Chochmah*, and understanding-*Binah*, the *Vav*-ו is the six directions of Beauty-*Tiferet*, and the *Hey*-ה is kingship-*Malchut*. The distinction between these two orders, is the distinction between the direct, forward light (*Ohr Yashar*) and the rebounding, returning light (*Ohr Chozer*), however, it all is an absolute Unity and Oneness. This should suffice for the understanding.

aforementioned aspects. It too possesses one complete Name of Being-*Havayah Achat*-אחת הוי"ה that is divided into four foundations and ten complete *Sefirot*, literally in the same manner that we mentioned in regard to the worlds in general. The same is likewise so of each of the five aforementioned worlds. The same is likewise the case that each further divides into its further particulars to the utmost specificity, until we find that even in this lowly world, even the most minor creation contains the totality of the four letters of Being-*Havayah*-הוי"ה and all the ten *Sefirot* within itself. All this is to show that everything is created by the power of the Emanator, *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, and aside for Him, nothing exists.⁸¹⁶

Another introductory matter that you must know, is that all these aspects and levels, from the exalted level of Primordial Man-*Adam Kadmon*, until the depths of the abyss of this lowly world, are all one above the other, and one within the other. For, the one that is higher manifests within the one that is below it, like the soul to the body. However, it is not all of the upper aspect that manifests within the lower aspect. Rather, it only is a specific aspect, which is the lowest level of the upper level, that manifests within each lower level, and the same is true in succession, until this lowest of all worlds. That is, such is the case with all the worlds, whether we are discussing the worlds in general, or whether we are discussing each particular aspect of them, including even in this world – in every particular detail in them, it is in this manner. That is, there is one that is higher

⁸¹⁶ This is explained at length in *Ginat Egoz* of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*.

than another, and one that is inner to the other, to the point that they all are like garments for one another, and ultimately, they all are garments of the Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, who is the Soul of all souls.

However, in each of these five worlds, there is a separation in the spreading forth of their lights and the extent of their spreading forth, so that there should be a distinction between them. Similarly, there is another separation in the particulars of the four foundations of each world, as well as in the particulars of the particulars, but this is not the place for the explanation of this matter.

What we find is that in the manner of the spreading forth of lights and illuminations from Above to below, there is no *Sefirah* that does not include all ten *Sefirot* within it, and each particular *Sefirah* further subdivides into thousands and tens of thousands of *Sefirot*. The same is likewise so of the spreading forth of the lights from inner to outer. It also is in this manner. For, the innermost of the *Sefirot* is called the crown-*Keter*, and the outer *Sefirah* that is upon it, is wisdom-*Chochmah*, and the outer *Sefirah* that is upon it, is understanding-*Binah*, and the outer *Sefirah* that is upon it, are the six directions of beauty-*Tiferet*, and the outermost of them all, is kingship-*Malchut*. The same is likewise so with each particular aspect, that it divides in this manner into thousands and tens of thousands of particular details.

However, because we have already provided the complete explanations of this matter,⁸¹⁷ as it is in all the worlds – except for the matter of Action-*Asiyah* – we will therefore only explain this subject in great brevity here, to the extent that it is necessary to understand the desired subject that we seek in this book.

Now, there are seven firmaments. The uppermost is called *Aravot*, because it includes the first three *Sefirot* of the world of Action-*Asiyah* within it. These are the Sphere of the Intellect (*Galgal HaSechel*), the Surrounding Sphere (*Galgal HaMakif*), and the Sphere of the Constellations (*Galgal HaMazalot*). The five spheres of Saturn (*Shabtai*), Jupiter (*Tzeddek*), Mars (*Ma'adim*), the Sun (*Chamah*), and Venus (*Nogah*), are the *Sefirot* of kindness-*Chessed*, Judgment-*Gevurah*, beauty-*Tiferet*, conquest-*Netzach* and majesty-*Hod*. The sixth sphere is foundation-*Yesod*, and includes both Mercury (*Kochav*) and the Moon (*Levanah*). The last firmament, which is called *Veelon*, has nothing of her own with which to serve,⁸¹⁸ and is the *Sefirah* of kingship-*Malchut* of the world of Action-*Asiyah*.

Nevertheless, it too is divided into the ten *Sefirot* that are within it, which are as follows: The firmament *Veelon* is the crown-*Keter* within it. The four elemental foundations of fire (*Aish*), air (*Ru'ach*), water (*Mayim*), and earth (*Affar*) of this

⁸¹⁷ In the book *Etz Chayim*

⁸¹⁸ Talmud Bavli, Chagigah 12b; *Etz Chayim*, Shaar 38, Ch. 3 (See also *Ohev Yisroel*, Vayechi 4); Also see *Ginat Egoz* of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 2, Section entitled, “The seven letters בג"ד כפ"ר"ת correspond to the seven firmaments-*Raki'im* רַקִּיעִים.”

lowly world, are the aspects of wisdom-*Chochmah*, understanding-*Binah*, the six-directions of beauty-*Tiferet*, and kingship-*Malchut*. We thus find that kingship of kingship – *Malchut* of *Malchut* – that is within the world of Action-*Asiyah* is the foundational element of earth (*Affar*), which is the receptacle and substance-matter of this entire world. It is in this foundational element of earth (*Affar*) that all of its offspring are included, as it includes within it all four fundamental elements that were mentioned, as per the explanation of the verse,⁸¹⁹ “All originate from the earth (*Affar*).”

We have thus explained the matter from Above to below, as well as from the inner to the outer. For, the elemental foundation of earth (*Affar*) contains ten *Sefirot*. Their crown-*Keter* is the innermost, and is called the aspect of the *Yechidah* essence of the foundational element of earth (*Affar*). External to it is wisdom-*Chochmah*, which is the aspect of the *Chayah* of the earth (*Affar*). External to that is the aspect of understanding-*Binah*, which is the aspect of the *Neshamah* of the earth (*Affar*). External to that is the aspect of the six-directions of beauty-*Tiferet*, which is the *Ru'ach* of the earth (*Affar*). External to that is kingship-*Malchut*, which is the *Nefesh* of the foundational element of earth (*Affar*). This external aspect of kingship-*Malchut* itself divides into ten *Sefirot* that are within it, and their kingship-*Malchut* is the foundational element of the gross physical earth (*Affar*) itself, which contains no spirituality at all, but only gross substance,

⁸¹⁹ Ecclesiastes 3:20

which is called inanimate (*Domem*), whereas that which is inner to it, is called the soul-*Nefesh* of the inanimate (*Domem*).

The same applies to the foundational element of water (*Mayim*). For, the aspect of kingship-*Malchut* is the most external of its aspects, which is called water that brings forth growth and vegetation, and it thus is called the vegetative (*Tzome'ach*), and all the aspects that are inner to it, are called the soul-*Nefesh* of the vegetative (*Tzome'ach*). The same is so of the elemental foundations of air (*Ru'ach*) and fire (*Aish*), which are the animate (*Chay*) and speaking beings (*Medaber*), respectively. Together, the four are as follows: The inanimate (*Domem*) is the *Nefesh*; the vegetative (*Tzome'ach*) is the *Ru'ach*; the animate (*Chay*) is the *Neshamah*; the speaking being (*Medaber*) is the *Chayah*; and *Veelon* is the *Yechidah*. As already explained, each of these aspects includes them all.

These aspects are referred to by the philosophers as “powers.” For example, they stated that the soul (*Nefesh*) of the vegetative (*Tzome'ach*) possesses the power to sustain, the power to draw sustenance, the power to absorb and the power to expel. Similarly, they stated about the soul of the animate living being (*Chay*) that it possesses the power of motion, the power of movement and the sensory powers, and that it possesses the power of consciousness, the power of imagination and the power of imagery etc. The same principle applies to them all.

What arises from all this, is that even though kingship-*Malchut* is the most external of all the levels of whatever aspect it may be, nevertheless, it is the body of that aspect. However,

it is not a body of actual coarse and gross physical substance. Rather, that is only the case with the final most external aspect of kingship-*Malchut* of the world of Action-*Asiyah*, from above to below and from inner to outer. Only that level, which is the foundational element of completely gross material earth (*Affar*), is the coarsest and most gross body in all the world.

Part Three

Gate Two

The Existence of Man

In this section we shall explain wondrous mysteries, teachings that were never openly revealed by the ancients,⁸²⁰ and were they not necessary in order to explain the matter of prophecy, I would never have explained them. I therefore shall write them with the utmost brevity, and may they be as,⁸²¹ “lambs (*Kvasim*-כבשים) for your clothing,” meaning that,⁸²² “Matters that are the secrets of the world (*Kivshono shel Olam*-כבשונו של עולם) should remain hidden under your clothing.”

I shall ask several deep questions as follows:

1. Why was it necessary for man to be created in this world, with a soul and a body?
2. Why, was man bestowed two additional forms when he was formed, these being the good inclination (*Yetzer Tov*) and the evil inclination (*Yetzer Hara*) that are within him?

⁸²⁰ A play on Deuteronomy 32:17 (see Rashi there)

⁸²¹ Proverbs 27:26

⁸²² Talmud Bavli, Chagigah 13a

3. Since both are equally balanced within him, what is it that gives man the strength to choose and tip the scales to one or the other? Moreover, if he indeed has the ability to tip the scales to one or other, why then were they created altogether?
4. We must explain the matter of these two inclinations and what they are.
5. We must know whether the soul of man is greater than the angelic beings or not. If we say that man is greater than the angels, then why did the angels not also descend into this physical world to manifest in a soul and a body? On the other hand, we cannot say that angels are greater than man. For, in all the teachings of our sages, of blessed memory, we find the opposite to be true. For example, along with many other teachings, they stated,⁸²³ “Who is greater, the guard or the guarded?” Moreover, even Scripturally, the verses themselves indicate the opposite to be true, as written,⁸²⁴ “You weakened-יָשַׁח the Rock who bore you,” and,⁸²⁵ “Give strength to God, whose pride is over Israel,” and,⁸²⁶ “You are children to *HaShem*-ה' יהוה your God,” and,⁸²⁷ “You are My servant Israel, in whom I take pride.” Moreover, the angels do not recite “Holy, Holy,

⁸²³ Midrash Bereishit Rabba 78:1

⁸²⁴ Deuteronomy 32:18

⁸²⁵ Psalms 68:35

⁸²⁶ Deuteronomy 14:1

⁸²⁷ Isaiah 49:3

Holy,” until the Jewish people below recite it first.⁸²⁸ We find no such things whatsoever stated about the angels.

6. Even if we submit that man is greater than the angels, it nevertheless remains entirely questionable to call them “His children,” or to say that they weaken (מתִּיּשִׁים) or strengthen Him, or that He takes pride in them, for a person could possibly fall into heresy from this.
7. In regard to the matter of prophecy, how is it applicable that the King, King of kings, the Holy One, blessed is He, would speak to lowly man, even through the agency of an angel, especially since man is manifest in the grossest and coarsest substance in all the worlds?

Now, in the preceding gate we explained the matter of the existence of the worlds and how they all are One Being-*Havayah Achat* אַחַת הַיְיָ that includes them all, and that they are divided into five worlds. We explained that these are called the *Yechidah*, *Chayah*, *Neshamah*, *Ru'ach*, and *Nefesh*. We also explained that this physical world is the body and substance to them all. That is, each of the worlds are in the form of man, and each possesses substance and form, and each are divided into five spiritual levels, as explained. You also know that when the Name of *HaShem*-יְהוָה is spelled out with the

⁸²⁸ Talmud Bavli, Chullin 91b; Midrash Shemot Rabba 23:7

letter *Aleph*-א [י"ד ה"א וא"ו ה"א] it has the same numerical value as “man-*Adam*-אדם-45.” The same is likewise so of each particular detail in all their various levels. Each of them is called a particular man (*Adam*-אדם), which includes One Being-*Havayah Achat*-אהת ה"ה that divides into four foundations and ten *Sefirot*.

There is another division that was not explained in the preceding gate, which is that the ten *Sefirot* also subdivide further into 613 aspects, as will be explained. Nevertheless, it is understood that all the worlds as a whole, as well as each particular world, in and of itself, is created in the form of the lower man. This is the mystery of the verse,⁸²⁹ “Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness.” Understand this well.

Now, it has already been explained⁸³⁰ that everything from the world of Creation-*Briyah* and down, is called the Tree of Knowledge, in that it includes both good and evil. Additionally, it has been explained that with the successive descent of their levels, there is a diminishment of the good and an increase of the evil, to the point that we find that this lowly world is mostly evil with very little good. It also is explained that “the wicked surrounds the righteous,”⁸³¹ and therefore the good is called the fruit, whereas the evil is called the peel or shell (*Kelipah*) that covers over the fruit. Moreover, the same is likewise true that the good lights and illuminations are also in this manner, that is, the more refined and spiritual among

⁸²⁹ Genesis 1:26

⁸³⁰ In Etz Chayim, Shaar 47, Ch. 4

⁸³¹ Habakkuk 1:4

them are manifest within the remaining lights and illuminations. The same is true of them all, according to the order of their levels. In the preceding gate it was also explained how the Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, is the innermost of them all, and that the *Sefirot* are external to Him, according to the order of their levels, with the crown-*Keter* being the most inner and kingship-*Malchut* being the most external.

We now shall begin explaining what has yet to be explained. Namely, just as this unique light, which is called the world of the Ten *Sefirot*, is in the image of a single man, so likewise, there is another light of man (*Adam*-אדם) that is called the source of the souls of all people. It too includes all the particulars that were explained in regard to the man (*Adam*-אדם) of the Ten *Sefirot*, literally. That is, the man (*Adam*-אדם) of the Ten *Sefirot* is considered to be completely Godly, and it manifests within the light and illumination which is the source of the souls, in all their particular details.

There is also another light in the form of man (*Adam*-אדם) which is called the source of the angels. That is, all the angels are hewn from this light, and it too includes all the above-mentioned details. It is the outer garment over the light that is the source of the souls.

There is yet another lesser light, which is called dark light, that consists entirely of harsh judgments. It is from this light that all the shells of the *Kelipot* of that particular world emanate from. This light, garbs the light that is the source of the souls, and it too possesses the image of man (*Adam*-אדם). Outside all these lights that we have mentioned, are the

firmaments (*Raki'im*) themselves, as they are in that particular world. They are called the body (*Guf*) of that particular world, and within them, the five above-mentioned lights are manifest. That is, the light of the Unlimited One (*Ohr Ein Sof*), blessed is He, as it manifests according to the capacity of that particular world, is innermost. Upon Him, like a garment, is the light of the source of the souls. Upon it, like a garment, is the light of the source of the angels. Upon it, like a garment, is the light of the source of the shells of *Kelipah*. Upon it, like a garment, is the world itself, which are the firmaments (*Raki'im*) that are the body (*Guf*), together with the above-mentioned inner lights. Subsequently, from this body (*Guf*), which is called the firmaments (*Raki'im*), the offspring of that world are created, each of which includes all these aspects. For, each of them has a power drawn to it from the firmament, which is its body. That is, within it are the lights of the judgments, and within it are the lights of the angels, and within it is the light from the source of the souls, and within it are the lights of the Ten *Sefirot*, that rides upon them and enlivens them all.

Now, that power that is drawn to it from the light of the source of the souls is called the Upper Flow (*Mazal HaElyon*) of that soul of lower man. Understand this very well, and also realize that this aspect, as it exists in the world of Creation-*Briyah*, is called the Flow (*Mazal*) of the *Neshamah*, whereas this aspect in the world of Formation-*Yetzirah*, is called the Flow (*Mazal*) of the *Ru'ach*, and in the world of Action-*Asiyah* it is called the Flow (*Mazal*) of the *Nefesh*.

We shall now explain the matter of man's existence and will begin by explaining his existence starting from kingship-*Malchut* of the world of Action-*Asiyah* and going up in ascending order.

We already explained each world in general and the offspring of that world and their substance. Now, in the world of Action-*Asiyah*, the first and lowest aspect that we shall discuss, is the aspect of the kingship-*Malchut* within it, which is called the four foundational elements of the lowly world. All of its offspring are constructed of the body (*Guf*) within these aspects, which is the foundational element of physical earth (*Affar*). They are divided into four categories, as follows:

The lowest level is the category of precious stones and metals, which consist only of the foundational element of earth (*Affar*). These receive from the four elemental foundations (*Yesodot*) as they are composed in their bodies and intermingled to form that particular metal. However, there is one power within each of them which is the cause of the particular admixture that we mentioned, and is called the soul (*Nefesh*) of the foundational element of earth (*Affar*), and it itself is composed of its five powers and levels, as previously mentioned.

Afterwards, vegetative plants (*Tzome'ach*) were created, such as trees and grasses. Their bodies also are from the foundational element of earth (*Affar*), and they too have the soul (*Nefesh*) of the inanimate (*Domem*). However, they also have an additional soul, which is the soul (*Nefesh*) of the vegetative (*Tzome'ach*) and includes its five powers and levels.

Afterwards, the animate beings (*Chay*) were created, referring to animals and birds etc. They have the body (*Guf*) and soul (*Nefesh*) of the inanimate (*Domem*), as well as the soul (*Nefesh*) of the vegetative (*Tzome'ach*), and in addition, they also have the soul (*Nefesh*) of the animate (*Chayah*), which is called the animalistic soul (*Nefesh HaBehamit*) and includes the power of movement and the sensory powers.

Afterwards, man the speaker (*Medaber*) was created. He has all the above-mentioned powers, but in addition, he also has a speaking soul (*Nefesh HaMedaberet*), which is from the elemental foundation of fire (*Aish*).

However, know with certainty that all these aspects of body and soul as they are in man, are much more refined than they are in the animate (*Chay*) and that the animate (*Chay*) are more refined than the vegetative (*Tzome'ach*), and that the vegetative (*Tzome'ach*) more refined than the inanimate (*Domem*). This should be clear based on what has already been explained. For, in each of these aspects, all of the other aspects are included, each one being more inner than the other.

Afterwards, He created the Jewish man, who is much more refined in all his aspects than all other created beings, both in his body and in the four aspects of his soul, these being the inanimate (*Domem*), the vegetative (*Tzome'ach*), the animate (*Chay*) and the speaking (*Medaber*). That is, he is of the innermost and most refined aspect of each of the four foundational elements within them, as well as their form (*Tzurah*), meaning, the soul (*Nefesh*) that is within them.

Now, because he is more refined than all other creatures of the earth, he is elevated to a greater extent, since he also includes and is bound to all the worlds in all their particular details, from below to above. That is, initially a soul manifests within him from the firmament of *Veelon*, and that level of soul and above, until even the highest firmament of the world of Action-*Asiyah*, is all called the soul-*Nefesh* of the world of Action-*Asiyah*. This aspect of the soul is called the holy intellectual soul (*Nefesh HaSeechleet HaKedoshah*) within man. However, this level of soul itself is divided into the five powers of *Yechidah*, *Chayah*, *Neshamah*, *Ru'ach* and *Nefesh*.

It also divides into two categories in a different manner. For, all the aspects that it takes from the four elemental foundations are called the soul of the elements (*Nefesh HaYesodot*) and are taken from the above-mentioned powers of the inanimate (*Domem*), vegetative (*Tzome'ach*), animate (*Chay*) and speaker (*Medaber*), and the soul-*Nefesh* from *Veelon* is the crown-*Keter* over them all, and is called the intellectual soul (*Nefesh HaSeechleet*). The aspects that are from the other nine firmaments, are divided into the *Ru'ach*, *Neshamah*, *Chayah* and *Yechidah* of the *Nefesh*, and altogether, they are called one soul-*Nefesh* of the world of Action-*Asiyah* of the general worlds.

Afterwards he obtains a *Ru'ach* from the world of Formation-*Yetzirah*, and it too is divided into a number of levels in the same manner mentioned before. Nevertheless, in relation to the aspect of the general worlds, it is called a *Ru'ach*. The same is likewise so with the *Neshamah* from the world of

Creation-*Briyah*, as well as with the *Chayah* from the world of Emanation-*Atzilut*, and with the *Yechidah* from Primordial Man-*Adam Kadmon*.

We thus have clearly explained the nature of the existence of man, and that he includes all the worlds within himself, whether generally or particularly. In contrast, this is not the case with all the other creatures, be they supernal creatures or lower creatures. For, all the offspring of a particular world, only include within themselves that particular world within which they were created.

Now, everything we have stated to this point explains the matter in a way of ascent from below to above. However, man also includes all the worlds within himself from inner to outer, as follows: In the world of Action-*Asiyah*, he has a body of earth (*Affar*) which is called the lowly world. Within it are the elemental souls from the external husks (*Kelipot*), and within that are the aspects of the angels of this world, which were created for the purpose of maintaining this world, such as causing the plants to grow etc. Within all of that, he possesses an aspect of a *Neshamah* level of soul from the souls of man. All these aspects are made to be a chariot (*Merkavah*) for the light and illumination that is drawn from the lights of the ten *Sefirot* of the world of Action-*Asiyah*, which manifest in the four elemental foundations in order to vitalize them, and they are the most inner of them all. The same likewise applies to the aspects within man that stem from the celestial spheres of the world of Action-*Asiyah*, as well as from the three worlds of Formation-*Yetzirah*, Creation-*Briyah*, and Emanation-*Atzilut*.

With the above in mind, we now can explain the answers to all the questions written at the beginning of this gate. For, the light of the source of souls, is more inner and loftier than the light of the source of the angels, and this is why the angels are in the service of the souls. For, it is through the souls that light and vitality is drawn to the angels from the ten *Sefirot*.

This is the meaning of the verse,⁸³² “Behold, the heralding angels cried out from outside.” For, when sustenance is not drawn to the souls that are more inner than them, they too lack sustenance, being that they are external to them. This is why they cried out and mourned during the time of the destruction, since they are external to the souls. Moreover, this explains why the angels did not descend to manifest in a physical body in this world, because they necessarily would be destroyed by the judgements and shells of the *Kelipot*. This is because even the souls do not have the power to withstand the shells of the *Kelipot*. How much more is this so in regard to the angels. Proof of this is from the *Nefillim*⁸³³ who requested to descend to this world and were thus destroyed from the world and are wiped out of the coming future. An even greater reason is that because of their lesser state, they would be incapable of drawing influence to all the worlds, but could only do so from their level and out. Moreover, even this itself would not be

⁸³² Isaiah 33:7 – The “heralds-*Erelam*-אֲרָאִלִּים” referred to in this verse are the *Erelim*-אֲרָאִלִּים angels, which stem from the higher archangel *Ariel*-אֲרִיאֵל. (See Radak to Isaiah 33:7; See Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah 2:7)

⁸³³ Genesis 6:4 and Targum Yonatan ben Uziel; Pesikta Rabbati 34:1; Yoma 67b and Rashi there; Zohar I 37a. The word *Nefillim* means “the fallen ones” and refers to the fallen angels.

possible, since they cannot draw sustenance to themselves except through the medium of the souls. Nevertheless, it is indeed true that a soul of the world of Formation-*Yetzirah* is lesser than an angel from the world of Creation-*Briyah*, and the same applies to all the worlds. However, a soul of the world of Creation-*Briyah* is greater than an angel of the world of Creation-*Briyah*, and the same applies to each of the worlds themselves.

Thus, the greatness of the soul has also been explained, since the soul is a light that is born of and drawn from the light of the ten *Sefirot* themselves, rather than through the medium of an intermediary. This is why the Jewish people are called,⁸³⁴ “the children to *HaShem*-יהוה our God.” For, they are in the aspect of a child who is entirely one with his father and is drawn forth from Him. About this, our sages, of blessed memory, said,⁸³⁵ “The forefathers [Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov] are the Supernal Chariot (*Merkavah*),” meaning that they are the vehicle for the light of the ten *Sefirot*, that rides directly upon them, rather than through the medium of any lesser light. This is the meaning of the verse,⁸³⁶ “You are My servant Israel, in whom I take pride.” For, a person’s garments are his pride, as written,⁸³⁷ “Like a bridegroom who adorns himself with pride, like a bride who bedecks herself with her jewelry.”

⁸³⁴ Deuteronomy 14:1

⁸³⁵ Midrash Bereishit Rabba 47:6; 69:3, 82:6 and elsewhere.

⁸³⁶ Isaiah 49:3

⁸³⁷ Isaiah 61:10

Now the light of the souls is a garment for the ten *Sefirot*. This is the meaning of the verse,⁸³⁸ “My Beloved has gone down to His garden,” referring to this world. The verse concludes, “To graze His sheep in the gardens, and to pick roses-*Lir’ot BaGaneem v’Leelkot Shoshanim*- לרעות בגנים וללקוט שושנים,” which forms the acrostic (*Notarikon*) “garment-*Levush*- לבוש.” For, he picks the souls of the righteous, who are as fragrant as roses because of their good deeds in this world.⁸³⁹ He picks them to manifests His light within them. This is the meaning of the verse,⁸⁴⁰ “You who adhere (*HaDveikim*-הדבקים) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה are all alive today,” referring to complete and direct adhesion (*Dveikut*) to the light of the ten *Sefirot*, which does not apply to any other creatures. This is as is written,⁸⁴¹ “For just as a belt is fastened to a man’s loins, so I fastened the entire house of Israel to Myself.”

With all the above in mind, the matter of the good inclination (*Yetzer HaTov*) and the evil inclination (*Yetzer HaRa*) within man, has also been explained and understood. For, these are two forms (*Yetzirot*) that were added to man in addition to his soul-*Neshamah*. The good inclination (*Yetzer HaTov*) is a radiance that comes from the light of the angels, whereas the evil inclination (*Yetzer HaRa*) is a radiance that comes from the light of the external shells (*Kelipot*), and

⁸³⁸ Song of Songs 6:2

⁸³⁹ Talmud Yerushalmi, Brachot 2:8

⁸⁴⁰ Deuteronomy 4:4

⁸⁴¹ Jeremiah 13:11

constitutes the external shell (*Kelipah*) of the good inclination (*Yetzer HaTov*).

However, the soul (*Neshamah*) of man is itself the innermost of them all. Thus, because it is innermost and also is called the essential self (*Atzmut*) of man, he therefore possesses the free choice to turn them to whichever place he desires, since he is greater than them all. His soul primarily leans toward the good inclination (*Yetzer HaTov*), since the good inclination is holy like himself. Moreover, it also is juxtaposed in close proximity to him. However, his body, primarily leans toward the evil inclination (*Yetzer HaRa*), since both the body and the evil inclination are juxtaposed in close proximity to each other. Thus, it is primarily here that there is a battle between the substance (*Chomer*) and the soul (*Neshamah*). For, since the soul (*Neshamah*) can only fulfill the *mitzvot* through the medium of the body (*Guf*) which, in and of itself, primary leans toward the evil inclination (*Yetzer HaRa*), it is here that there is great difficulty in subduing it.

We thus have explained that it is within the free choice of the soul (*Neshamah*) to lean toward the good inclination (*Yetzer HaTov*). However, because the soul requires the body (*Guf*) to act, great toil is necessary to subdue the evil inclination (*Yetzer HaRa*). Understand all this very well. Also understand that after a person passes from this world, neither the soul (*Neshamah*) nor the body (*Guf*) are judged until they manifest together, as they were when he was alive, as our sages, of

blessed memory, explained with the analogy of the lame man on the shoulders of the blind man.⁸⁴²

We now will explain the answer to the first two questions, namely, why was it necessary for man to be created in this world with a soul and a body, and why are there two forms in him, the good inclination (*Yetzer HaTov*) and the evil inclination (*Yetzer HaRa*). We also will answer the questions that arise from the verses,⁸⁴³ “Give strength to God,” and,⁸⁴⁴ “You have weakened the Rock who bore you,” and the like.

Now, at the outset of creation, all the worlds were created in the order mentioned above, and were brought into

⁸⁴² Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 91a-b; Midrash Vayikra Rabba 4:5; Zohar Chadash Ruth 38b; Sefer HaMashalim of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as The Book of Allegories, 110 – When the body and soul are judged on account of sin, they are like a blind man and a lame man who the king gave the responsibility of guarding an orchard, but they blundered and did not properly guard it. When *HaShem*, blessed is He, brings about judgment, the soul declares, “It was not I who blundered. It was the body, that possesses an evil inclination that makes it sin.” On the other hand, the body declares, “Were it not for the soul I could not have sinned, for a body without a soul is as lifeless as an inanimate stone. Without the soul who moves me, I cannot make even the slightest move.” The two are analogous to a blind man and a lame man who the king charged with guarding his orchard, but they transgressed and ate of its fruits. When the king brought them to judgment the blind man said, “I couldn’t have eaten them, for I could not see where they were,” and the lame man said, “I couldn’t have eaten them, for I could not go to where they were.” What did the king do? He put the lame man on the blind man’s shoulders and said, “The two of you joined in partnership to transgress my will, for you provided the eyes and you provided the legs and both of you ate of the fruits. Therefore, you will be punished together.” In the same manner, *HaShem*, blessed is He, joined the soul to the body and advised them that if they sin before Him, they will be regarded as a partnership. Regarding this, the Psalmist stated (Psalms 50:4), “He calls to the heavens above and to the earth, that He may judge His people.” The words “He calls to the heavens above” refer to the soul, as we see that the numerical value of the heavens-*HaShamayim*-השמים-395 is equal to the soul-*Neshamah*-נשמה-395. The words, “And to the earth” refer to the body, which was taken from the earth. We thus see that both the soul and the body are brought as one in judgement before *HaShem*, blessed is He.

⁸⁴³ Psalms 68:35

⁸⁴⁴ Deuteronomy 32:18

being by the power of the Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, by the power of His simple will, as an altruistic act of kindness. However, it subsequently is also necessary to continually draw forth sustenance, vitality and influence to all the worlds, in order to sustain their existence just as they were when they were created, and no more. This is like the verse,⁸⁴⁵ "I realized that whatever God does will endure forever: Nothing can be added to it and nothing can be subtracted from it." It similarly states,⁸⁴⁶ "There is nothing new under the sun," and,⁸⁴⁷ "On the seventh day God completed His work which He had done etc.," all of which refer to the matter of creation itself.

Nevertheless, from that point forward, their deeds are necessary to draw forth their vitality, so that they can sustain themselves, similar to the matter of how when a child matures, he sustains himself and no longer eats at the table of his father. However, the ten *Sefirot* do not require man's deeds, since all the influence that is necessary to sustain them when they were emanated, is constantly drawn to them from the Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. For, about the ten *Sefirot* the verse states,⁸⁴⁸ "Evil shall not abide with You," in that they require no additional rectification through man's deeds. However, this is not so of the created beings, including the aspect of the souls (*Neshamot*) and everything external to them, which are intermingled with good and evil. They therefore require deed and rectification.

⁸⁴⁵ Ecclesiastes 3:14

⁸⁴⁶ Ecclesiastes 1:9

⁸⁴⁷ Genesis 2:2

⁸⁴⁸ Psalms 5:5

Even so, from another angle, namely, when there is a diminishment in the bestowal of influence to the created beings, this gives the appearance that the power and ability of the ten *Sefirot* is diminished,⁸⁴⁹ God forbid to think that there is any actual diminishment, for one might err and think that this is why they do not bestow influence. Because of this the verse states,⁸⁵⁰ “You have weakened The Rock who bore you,” and the opposite,⁸⁵¹ “Give strength to God.”

There is yet another reason, as follows: If a person is health and clean, he wants his garments to be as nice and luxurious as his stature and greatness.⁸⁵² In the same manner, when the creatures are in a state of disrepair, the *Sefirot* themselves are reflected poorly and appear as if they are weakened, so to speak.⁸⁵³ This then, explains the verse, “Give strength to God,” or the verse,⁸⁵⁴ “You are My servant Israel, in whom I take pride,” mentioned above. We thus have answered the third question.

Now, in regard to why it was necessary to create man, who includes all the creations and emanations and binds all the worlds together until the very depth of the earth, this is because, as mentioned above, he is the closest being to receive influence from the ten *Sefirot*, and thus, through rectifying his deeds, he

⁸⁴⁹ Also see Sefer HaMashalim of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as The Book of Allegories 1-4.

⁸⁵⁰ Deuteronomy 32:18

⁸⁵¹ Psalms 68:35

⁸⁵² If his garments are not so, then are seen to be a reflection of his own state.

⁸⁵³ Note from the Chida: The words here are somewhat ineligible in the manuscript.

⁸⁵⁴ Isaiah 49:3

draws influence from the ten *Sefirot* to himself, and from him to the angels, and from the angels to the husks of *Kelipah*, so that he can rectify whatever is refinable in them, as will be explained regarding the matter of the evil inclination (*Yetzer HaRa*), and from them he draws influence to the worlds themselves, which are the vessels and bodies of each particular world. On the other hand, if he sins, he then ruins all the worlds, God forbid.

We thus have clearly explained why man must be created in this lowly world, with a body and a soul, and with both a good inclination (*Yetzer HaTov*) and an evil inclination (*Yetzer HaRa*). Another related reason regarding the matter of the evil inclination, is that this inclination is essential to man, in that he must procreate and eat etc., all of which must be done in purity. This also is necessary to each and every world, to draw down influences that becomes tangible within them for the purpose of the vessels of that world, which are the actual worlds themselves. For, these influences are more refined than the vessels, and are themselves part and parcel of the levels of creation. Understand this well.

We thus find that it was necessary for man to be composed of all the worlds, and that they assist him in his deeds, to draw down influence, both to himself and to them. This is because, in and of themselves, they are powerless to draw down influence. Therefore, if man sins, all the worlds are ruined and punished by a diminishment of influence in them, being that they did not assist him in desisting from evil. Understand this

well. This is the meaning of,⁸⁵⁵ “Evil will be entirely consumed in smoke,” being that the shells of *Kelipah* are the cause of sin more than any other levels. Therefore, their punishment is greatest. However, about the goodness that is extracted from them, the verse states,⁸⁵⁶ “And you shall love *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God with all your hearts (לבבך),” in the plural, meaning,⁸⁵⁷ “with both your inclinations.” This is because even the evil inclination can be refined. Nevertheless, about its dross, which is necessarily evil, the verse states,⁸⁵⁸ “As smoke is dispersed, so disperse them, as wax melts before a fire, so may the wicked perish from before God.”

We thus have explained that man includes all the worlds within himself, about which it is written,⁸⁵⁹ “For this is the whole of man.” This is also the inner meaning of the verse,⁸⁶⁰ “Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness,” and is why the word, “Let us make-*Na'aseh*-נעשה,” is in the plural form, since all worlds are partners, both in his making and in his deeds. Because of this, he includes the form of man (*Adam*-אדם) of all the worlds within himself, for they all are in need of his deeds. This is also the meaning of the verse,⁸⁶¹ “*HaShem*-יהו"ה God took the man and placed him in the Garden of Eden, to work it and to guard it,” referring to the fulfillment of the

⁸⁵⁵ Rosh HaShanah liturgy, *Musaf* prayer.

⁸⁵⁶ Deuteronomy 6:5

⁸⁵⁷ Mishnah Brachot 9:5; Talmud Bavli, Brachot 54a; See Rashi to Deuteronomy 6:5 *ibid*.

⁸⁵⁸ Psalms 68:3

⁸⁵⁹ Ecclesiastes 12:13; See Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 30b

⁸⁶⁰ Genesis 1:26

⁸⁶¹ Genesis 2:15

positive commandments (to work it) and the negative commandments (to guard it).⁸⁶² This is also the meaning⁸⁶³ of the verse,⁸⁶⁴ “For *HaShem*-יהו"ה God had not yet sent the rain upon the earth,” after which the verse continues and gives the reason, “because there was yet no man to work the earth.” This also is the meaning of the verse,⁸⁶⁵ “And I have placed My words in your mouth, and have covered you with the shadow of My hand, to implant the heavens and to set a foundation for the earth, and to say to Zion, ‘You are My people.’” For, it is man who draws life to the heavens and the earth through his deeds, and it therefore is as if he planted and founded them. This is why the verse concludes with the words, “You are My people (*Ami Atah*-אתה-עמי),” which can be read, “You are with Me (*Eemei Atah*-אתה-עמי),” which as our sages, of blessed memory stated,⁸⁶⁶ means “My partner.” That is, “I create them and you sustain them.”

With the above in mind, it should not be difficult for you to understand the matter of prophecy. This is in line with what our sages, of blessed memory, stated about the verse,⁸⁶⁷ “and to adhere to Him (*L’Davkah Bo*-לדבקה בו),” and the verse,⁸⁶⁸ “to Him you shall adhere (*u’Vo Tidbak*-ובו תדבק).” For, a prophet adheres to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, by drawing down

⁸⁶² Targum Yonatan ben Uziel to Genesis 2:15 *ibid.*; Pirkei d’Rabbi Eliezer, Ch. 12 and elsewhere.

⁸⁶³ See Talmud Bavli, Chullin 60b; Midrash Bereishit Rabba 13:3, 13:8

⁸⁶⁴ Genesis 2:5

⁸⁶⁵ Isaiah 51:16

⁸⁶⁶ See introduction to Zohar; Tikkunei Zohar, Tikkun 69 and elsewhere.

⁸⁶⁷ Deuteronomy 11:22

⁸⁶⁸ Deuteronomy 10:20

prophecy and influence to the lower worlds, as stated by the Ramban⁸⁶⁹ and all the commentators, of blessed memory. Thus, this in no way is astonishing, since as explained, no light has greater adhesion to the light of the ten *Sefirot* than the light of the source of the souls, and this is the meaning of the verse,⁸⁷⁰ “You who adhere (*Dveikim*-דבקים) to *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God are all alive today.”

⁸⁶⁹ Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman

⁸⁷⁰ Deuteronomy 4:4

Part Three

Gate Three

The Hindrances to Prophecy

In the previous gate it was explained that it should be easy for a person to prophecy, since he includes all the worlds within himself and they all are sustained by his deeds. In fact, what arises from everything we said, is that contrary to popular belief, prophecy must necessarily be found in the world, so that man will straighten and repair his deeds and thus draw beneficence to all worlds, so that they will not be nullified out of existence, God forbid. This is as written,⁸⁷¹ “In a dream, a vision of the night, when a deep sleep falls over people, during slumbers on the bed, then He uncovers people’s ears and seals their affliction, to divert a person from his planned action and to suppress pride from man.”

All these worlds would not exist were it not for the spirit of prophecy that rested upon our teacher Moshe, peace be upon him, who brought the Torah, which sustains the worlds, down from heaven. This is as written,⁸⁷² “Thus says *HaShem*-יהוה: Were it not for My Covenant⁸⁷³ day and night, I would not have established the laws of heaven and earth,” meaning that without

⁸⁷¹ Job 33:15-17

⁸⁷² Jeremiah 33:25

⁸⁷³ The Torah

the Torah, the worlds would have been destroyed, God forbid.⁸⁷⁴ All the prophets followed in his path, to straighten the nation and to illuminate their eyes with the wisdom of Torah and its secrets, through the Holy Spirit (*Ru'ach HaKodesh*) of Divine inspiration that manifested in them.

We thus find that prophecy (*Nevuah*) and the Holy Spirit (*Ru'ach HaKodesh*) must necessarily be found in the world, and are easy to attain, on condition that there are people who are fitting for it. However, this is impossible for a blemished soul. We therefore must explain what obstructs this.

When the influence of the Holy Spirit (*Ru'ach HaKodesh*) is roused to descend to man and dwell upon him, if he is a sinner, the evil inclination (*Yetzer*) causes there to be a dark veil that separates between his intellectual soul (*Nefesh HaSeechleet*) and the source of the Holy Spirit (*Ru'ach HaKodesh*). About this the verse states,⁸⁷⁵ “Rather, only your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your transgressions have caused Him to hide His face from you etc.” Thus, the Holy Spirit (*Ru'ach HaKodesh*) of Divine Inspiration does not rest upon him, because of transgressing the 365 prohibitions that blemish the intellectual soul (*Nefesh HaSeechleet*), as discussed in section of one of this book.

Moreover, even if the blemish is only caused by not fulfilling any of the 248 positive commandments, which he could have done, but did not do, he is a “*Baal Moom* – a blemished person,” and Supernal beneficence is not drawn to

⁸⁷⁴ See Talmud Bavli, Avoda Zarah 3a and elsewhere.

⁸⁷⁵ Isaiah 59:2

his intellectual soul (*Nefesh HaSeechleet*), being that there is a limb or organ that is ruined and he is a blemished person. However, if the blemish is below, in the elemental soul (*Nefesh HaYesodeet*), whether because of the bad character traits of his animate soul (*Nefesh Chayah*) or whether because of having eaten forbidden foods, which cause his vegetative soul (*Nefesh HaTzomachat*) to be repulsive and the like, then the lower power will not be roused to draw down Supernal beneficence, and itself becomes a separating veil there. There then will be no arousal from below to ascend and draw down beneficence from Above to below.

We thus find that there are various kinds of separating veils. There could be a separating veil between the vegetative soul (*Nefesh HaTzomachat*) and that which is above it, because of the blemish of having eaten forbidden foods, which gave vitality to his vegetative soul (*Nefesh HaTzomachat*). It could be because of bad character traits or sins that are motivated by lust that arouses and blemishes the animate soul (*Nefesh HaChayah*). If they are sins of speech, they blemish the speaking soul (*Nefesh HaMedaberet*) from which they stem, and if they are sins of thought, they blemish the intellectual soul (*Nefesh HaSeechleet*). Now, understand that as we already explained, all these blemishes are only in that particular spark of that particular soul, in each particular level of each particular world. At times, if the blemishes have become strengthened by force of habit, because of the above-mentioned separating veil, the bond of that soul can become cut off from the body of the tree, which is called, “the light of the source of the souls.” This

is the inner meaning of what our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁸⁷⁶ “The wicked are called ‘dead’ even while they are alive.”

Now, as already explained, not all blemishes are equal. There are blemishes that effect the vegetative soul (*Tzomachat*), there are blemishes that effect the animate soul (*Chayah*), there are blemishes that effect the speaking soul (*Medaberet*) and there are blemishes that effect the intellectual soul (*Seechleet*). However, regarding the matter of drawing down the Holy Spirit (*Ru'ach HaKodesh*) and receiving Divine inspiration, it makes no difference where the blemish is. As long as there is blemish, the Holy Spirit (*Ruach HaKodesh*) will not be drawn down and he will have no Divine inspiration at all. Therefore, whosoever comes to purify himself, must ensure that all levels of his soul are as clean and pure as clear glass, free of any sicknesses of the evil inclination (*Yetzer HaRa*) in all levels of his soul. About this Moshe was told,⁸⁷⁷ “Remove your shoes from your feet.” That is, he was told that all the limbs of his body and all the powers of his soul, on all the above-mentioned levels, down to the soles of his feet, must be refined and pure, empty of any dross of the coarse and gross substance, as mentioned in Sefer Tikkunim.⁸⁷⁸ That is, there should not remain any of the contamination of the evil inclination (*Yetzer HaRa*) in him whatsoever, but rather, only its good portion, which has been extracted and refined, should remain, meaning, that which is

⁸⁷⁶ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 18b

⁸⁷⁷ Exodus 3:5

⁸⁷⁸ See Zohar Tikkunim, Tikkun 12 and Tikkun 21

necessary to sustain the body and nothing more. There then is no obstruction or hinderance to separate between the powers of the soul and their source in the light of the source of the souls, which adheres to the source of the Holy Spirit (*Ru'ach HaKodesh*) in the light of the ten *Sefirot*.

We have thus explained that blemish causes two evils. The first is that the yearning and desire of the lower being cannot ascend to the source of the Holy Spirit (*Ru'ach HaKodesh*), and as a result, the Supernal Holy Spirit (*Ru'ach HaKodesh*) also cannot spread down to the lower being. All this comes about because of the veil caused by transgression, as mentioned before. Now, the blemish is caused by force of the strong bond between the inanimate body of the inanimate soul (*Nefesh HaDomem*) which is extremely bonded to the body itself, since the body is the vessel and vehicle through which the soul manifests all its various powers. However, it is not necessarily so that all the powers of the soul are found in every blemish. That is, there are blemishes that damage the vegetative aspect (*Tzomachat*), there are those that damage the animate aspect (*Chayah*), there are those that damage the speaking aspect (*Medaberet*) and those that damage the intellectual aspect (*Seechleet*), as mentioned before. However, since they all come about through the agency of the powers of the inanimate soul (*Nefesh HaDomemet*) and the body (*Guf*), therefore every kind of sin in the world involves and blemishes the inanimate soul and the body.

Part Three

Gate Four

The Conditions to attaining Prophecy

We will now explain the conditions to attaining prophecy with great brevity. It was already explained that there are blemishes that damage the vegetative soul (*Tzomachat*), those that damage the animate soul (*Chayah*), those that damage the speaking soul (*Medaberet*) and those that damage the intellectual soul (*Seechleet*), and that one must refine them all. This being so, the first thing he must do is repent from every kind of sin or negative character trait, with complete repentance, and never return to them whatsoever. Afterwards, he must be careful in fulfilling all the 248 positive commandments that are possible to fulfill in our days, as explained in the first part of this book. Most particularly, he must set fixed times for the study of Torah, day and night, and should not diminish or depart from them, even for a single day. He should pray three times daily with complete devotional intent (*Kavanah*). He must honor the Shabbat in all its details. He should fulfill the *mitzvah* of loving his fellow Jew wholeheartedly and should fulfill the *mitzvot* of reciting the *Shema* and don *Tzitzit* and *Tefillin* when he prays.

Afterwards, he should be cautious not to sin in any of the 365 prohibitive *mitzvot*, even in the stringencies enacted by

the sages. He must especially avoid the transgression of any sins for which the punishment is excision (*Karet*), death by the hands of heaven, or death by the hands of the earthly court. He certainly must guard himself from transgressing any negative commandments, but should be especially careful with the following: Gossip, evil speech, idle chatter, mockery and frivolity, gazing at women, any manner of forbidden seminal emission, distancing himself from his wife during her menstrual period, any oaths even if they are true, and above all, keeping the Shabbat.

He likewise should guard himself from any indecent character traits, for they contaminate his elemental soul. He should particularly guard himself from haughtiness and arrogance to the utmost degree, to the point that he should be like the lower stoop upon which everyone treads. Lowliness should literally be embedded in his heart, to the point that he neither feels any joy when honored, nor any disgrace when shamed. The two should literally be equal in his eyes. Moreover, he should utterly distance himself from anger, to the point that even if someone slaps his face, he does not become angered. This is because nothing obstructs the Holy Spirit (*Ru'ach HaKodesh*) more than anger. He likewise should utterly distance himself from pedantry, even in relation to members of his own household. Similarly, he should utterly avoid sadness and depression, being that prophecy cannot rest upon a person who is sad and depressed, even if he is worthy of it. He should rather be happy with his lot, even when suffering

befalls him,⁸⁷⁹ as explained about the verse,⁸⁸⁰ “And you shall love *HaShem*-יהו"ה your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your being.”

After all this, he should engage in the study of Torah completely for its sake (*Lishmah*),⁸⁸¹ doing so with all his strength, solely to bring delight to the One who formed him. When engaging in the study of Torah and the fulfillment of the *mitzvot*, he should be joyous to the ultimate extreme, as written,⁸⁸² “I rejoice in Your words like one who has discovered vast treasure,” for, through this, he draws down beneficence to all the worlds. Of primary importance over everything, is to fear *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. This should be constant, at every moment, and he thus will be free of sin. This is accomplished by literally placing *HaShem*-יהו"ה before his very eyes at every moment, as written,⁸⁸³ “I have set *HaShem*-יהו"ה before me always.” He should actively focus his thoughts on *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, adhering them to Him unceasingly, without stopping for even a moment. This is the meaning of the verse,⁸⁸⁴ “to adhere to Him (*L'Davkah Bo* (לדבקה בו),” and the verse,⁸⁸⁵ “to Him you shall adhere (*u'Vo Tidbak*-רבו תדבק).”

⁸⁷⁹ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 54a

⁸⁸⁰ Deuteronomy 6:5

⁸⁸¹ As explained at the conclusion of Part 1, Gate 3, this means, for the sake of the Name of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

⁸⁸² Psalms 119:162

⁸⁸³ Psalms 16:8

⁸⁸⁴ Deuteronomy 11:22

⁸⁸⁵ Deuteronomy 10:20

Part Three

Gate Five

The Nature of Prophecy and what it is

We already explained that there is one light, in the form of man (*Adam-אדם*), that spreads forth in all four worlds of Emanation, Creation, Formation, and Action (*Atzilut, Briyah, Yetzirah, Asiyah*), until the end of the four foundational elements of this lowly world. This light adheres to the lights of Supernal Man, which is called the ten *Sefirot*, and they manifest within the light that is called, “the light of the source of the souls,” within which all the lower souls are included. When they descend to this world to manifest in bodies, they leave their roots, from where they were hewn, which remain in a state of adhesion above, and only the branches of those roots alone descend in a manner of spreading down. These aspects alone manifest in bodies in this world. This is compared to the branches of a tree that are bound to the tree and adhere to it, and are literally rooted in the trunk of the tree. Nonetheless, they extend and bend down, to the point that even though they are attached to the trunk of the tree, they touch the ground. When a person commits a sin for which he is liable of excision (*Karet*), that branch becomes severed from the body of the tree and remains separate from it. It thus remains fixed in this world

like the spirit of an animal. This is the meaning of the verse,⁸⁸⁶ “For he scorned the word of *HaShem*-יהו"ה and broke His commandment; that person will surely be cut off, his sin is upon him.” This is also the inner meaning of the words,⁸⁸⁷ “For man is the tree of the field.”

This is also the meaning of those verses that relate to the righteous, in which their name is doubled. For example,⁸⁸⁸ “Avraham, Avraham,” and,⁸⁸⁹ “Yaakov, Yaakov,” and⁸⁹⁰ “Moshe, Moshe.” That is, one of these names corresponds to the aspect of the root that remains above in adhesion to the tree, and this aspect is called the flow from above (*Mazal*) of a person. This is as our sages, of blessed memory, related,⁸⁹¹ that Moshe saw the flow from above (*Mazal*) of Rabbi Akiva sitting and expounding the thorns of the letters. For, it is from there that the beneficence flows to the branch that descended to manifest in the body.

Now, the root is very lofty and is at the very beginning and heights of the world of Emanation-*Atzilut*. The branch is very long and spreads down through all the worlds, until its end manifests within the body. In each level of each world, it sets a root, so that there is not a single soul that does not have roots to no end, one above the other, in all levels of all the worlds, and through man’s deeds he merits to elevate them all. That is,

⁸⁸⁶ Numbers 15:31

⁸⁸⁷ Deuteronomy 20:19

⁸⁸⁸ Genesis 22:11

⁸⁸⁹ Genesis 46:2

⁸⁹⁰ Exodus 3:4

⁸⁹¹ Talmud Bavli, Menachot 29b

all the levels of the world of Action-*Asiyah*, the roots that he leaves there, are altogether called a single, complete soul-*Nefesh* of the world of Action-*Asiyah*. The same likewise applies to all the other levels.

With the above in mind, the matter of prophecy (*Nevuah*) becomes understood. For, when a person is in a refined state, free of the contamination of the evil inclination (*Yetzer HaRa*) and the powers of his elemental soul (*Nefesh HaYesodeet*) are completely unaffected by the evil inclination, nor does he have any sins that blemish any of the roots of his soul, if he then prepares himself to adhere to the most supernal root of his soul, he has the ability to do so. Nevertheless, even though he may be fitting that the spirit of prophecy (*Nevuah*) should rest upon him, he nonetheless must utterly divest and separate himself from all matters of gross substance and physicality. He will then be able to adhere to his spiritual soul root.

Now, this divestment, as discussed in holy books on the matter of prophecy and the Holy Spirit (*Ru'ach HaKodesh*), is not a literal divestment, in that his soul does not actually depart from his body as it does during sleep, for if so, it is not prophecy (*Nevuah*), but merely a dream, like any other dream. In contrast, when the Holy Spirit (*Ru'ach HaKodesh*) rests upon man, his soul is manifest within his body in a conscious waking state, and does not depart from him.

Rather, what is meant by divestment here, is that he removes all of his own thoughts completely. That is, though he has the power of imagination (*Ko'ach HaMedameh*) in him,

which is drawn from his animate soul (*Nefesh HaChayah*), he causes this power to stop imagining, thinking or ruminating over any matters of this lowly world, as if his soul has left him. He then transforms the power of imagination (*Ko'ach HaMedameh*) of his thoughts and directs it to depict his ascent, as though he is ascending in the roots of his soul in the upper worlds, ascending from one level to the next, until his power of depiction arrives at its Supernal source. The forms of all these lights should be engraved in his thoughts, just as he sees when his power of imagination (*Ko'ach HaMedameh*) pictures matters of this world in his mind. That is, though he does not actually see them, he sees them in his mind, as known in the natural sciences.

He should then have intention to receive light and illumination from the ten *Sefirot*, particularly from that point where his soul is bound, which is the root of his soul. He also should have the intention of elevating the ten *Sefirot*, causing them to ascend one to the other, until they reach the Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהוה Himself, blessed is He, and then draw illumination from there, in a manner of descent, all the way down until they reach the very end, here below. When light is drawn down to the *Sefirot* by his hand, they greatly rejoice, and become illuminated by the light that he drew down from the root of his soul, which is bound with them, according to the measure that is appropriate to it.

He then should intend to descend from level to level until the light and bestowal of influence reaches his intellectual soul (*Nefesh HaSeechleet*) in his body, and from there, it

reaches his animate soul (*Nefesh HaChayah*) and his power of imagination (*Ko'ach HaMedameh*). His power of imagination (*Ko'ach HaMedameh*) will then depict these matters in physical form and he will understand them as though he literally saw them with his physical eyes.

At times, this light will descend and be depicted in his power of imagination (*Ko'ach HaMedameh*) as the appearance of an angel who speaks to him, and he sees him or hears his voice and the like, with one of the known refined senses of the power of imagination (*Ko'ach HaMedameh*) of the soul. From there, they will be transferred and copied by the five external senses, since they too are part of the animate soul (*Nefesh HaChayah*), as known. At such times he will see, hear, smell or speak with his actual physical senses, as written,⁸⁹² “The spirit of *HaShem*-יהוה spoke within me and His word is upon my tongue.” For, that light will materialize and be given form by the physical senses. At other times, his prophecy may solely be through the five spiritual senses of the power of imagination (*Ko'ach HaMedameh*) alone. All these matters happen when the power of imagination becomes completely divested and emptied of coarse material thoughts, as mentioned above.

We thus find that prophecy, though different, is similar to a dream, in which one's intellectual soul departs from him and ascends above, going from level to level, and from there he sees and gazes, after which he returns to descend and bestow this light to the animate soul (*Nefesh HaChayah*), this being the

⁸⁹² Samuel II 23:2

soul that has the power of imagination (*Ko'ach HaMedameh*). It is there, in the animate soul (*Nefesh HaChaya*) that the matters that he perceived become further materialized and depicted. Then, when a person awakens, the soul recalls those matters through the power of retention (*Ko'ach HaShomer*) and the power of memory (*Ko'ach HaZocher*), which also are part of the animate soul (*Nefesh HaChayah*), as known in the natural sciences.

We thus have clearly explained the matter of prophecy and the matter of dreams. That is, prophecy occurs while the soul is still conscious within his body, whereas dreams occur when the soul departs and is not conscious within the body. Nevertheless, in prophecy itself, there are two types.

The first type is the prophecy of all prophets other than our teacher Moshe. Namely, when the light is bestowed, and in its descent, reaches the intellectual soul (*Nefesh HaSeechleet*) of the prophet, and from there descends to his animate soul (*Nefesh HaChayah*), and there to depict with the five inner senses of his power of imagination (*Ko'ach HaMedameh*), his external senses would shudder and tremble, causing him to collapse. This is because his external physical senses do not have the capacity to receive such a light or to depict it in physical form. Such prophecy is called a dream (*Chalom*), even though, as we mentioned above, it actually is not a dream. An example of such prophecy is the verse,⁸⁹³ “And a deep sleep fell upon Avram.”

⁸⁹³ Genesis 15:12

The second type of prophecy is complete and perfected, in which one's physical senses do not shudder or collapse at all. Rather, the matter is depicted within him in a settled manner. This was the level of prophecy of our teacher Moshe, peace be upon him. The reason is because, due to the holiness of his deeds, since his physical substance was so completely refined, it was actually transformed and ascended to the level of the soul (*Nefesh*). This is because he entirely removed contamination from himself and all that remained was the refined and good aspect of both his elemental soul and his body, being that it is only in them that there is an aspect of physicality, which is not so of the intellectual soul and higher.

Now, we already explained that the soul of man possesses roots to no end. Thus, according to the level from where his soul was hewn, will be his power to draw down the beneficence of his prophecy. Nevertheless, even if the root from where his soul was hewn is extremely lofty, if he has not rectified and refined all of the levels from there down, he only will be able to draw the influence of his prophecy from that level that he has rectified and refined, and no higher. This being the case, it should be clearly understood that there are many levels, to no end, amongst the prophets.

However, do not think that since we explained that the soul of a prophet does not depart from his body, then what grasp can he possibly have in his thought of the intangible, to ascend and be able to open the gates etc., for this is understood according to what I wrote above. Namely, that the soul is like a very long branch that spreads down from its root where it

adheres to the tree, and from there it descends all the way down to one's body, and by way of that line, which is always drawn down, he can ascend. That is, when a person yearns to ascend to his root, then the light of his thought – which is called the comprehended intellect (*Mooskal*) – ascends from the thinker (*Maskeel*), which is the intellectual soul (*Nefesh HaMaskelet*), to the intellect itself (*Sechel*), which is the upper root of his soul. Through the thought and conceptualization, itself, which is the influence that is drawn down from the intellect (*Sechel*) to the thinker (*Maskeel*), they adhere to each other and become one. We thus find that the comprehended intellect (*Mooskal*) is the light and influence itself, which descends from the intellect (*Sechel*) to the intellectual soul (*Nefesh HaMaskelet*). This tangible influence and light itself, is the matter called thought (*Machshavah*). Understand this well, for I am not telling you this in vain. For, if you think that this is not so, you thereby have rendered everything that relates to the devotional intentions that one is meant to have during prayer meaningless, as well as rendering all the thoughts and ruminations of man meaningless, be they good or evil.

We thus have explained that prophecy is both necessary and possible, and that it is like a person who holds on to the end of a branch of a tree that is bent down, shaking it strongly, so that the whole tree shakes. However, know that the Supernal aspects are not shaken by the thoughts of man, except if he is fitting to draw down an even the higher light to them. In which case, by virtue of their great joy, they too draw down light to him from that supernal light. If, however, he is unfitting and

does not have the ability to draw down the Supernal light to them, then they take no consideration of him whatsoever, nor do they desire to come close to him and assist him by drawing his thoughts Above, being that his thoughts are empty and of no benefit.

Part Three

Gate Six

The Levels of Prophecy

We now must understand the matter of the prophecy (*Nevu'ah*) in earlier generations, and the matter of the Holy Spirit (*Ru'ach HaKodesh*) and Divine inspiration that can be attained even in our times.

The explanation of the matter is that the prophecy of the prophets was as follows: We explained before that the four worlds are called Emanation, Creation, Formation and Action (*Atzilut, Briyah, Yetzirah, and Asiyah*), and that below them all is this lowly world, which is divided into the four elemental foundations, including the elemental foundations themselves and their elemental soul powers, and that they are divided in a manner similar to the ten *Sefirot*.

We also explained that in each world there is an inner light, which is their ten *Sefirot*, and that external to them is the light of the source of the souls, and external to that is the light of the source of the angels, and external to that is the dark light, which is the source of the shells (*Kelipot*), and external to that is the world itself, which are the firmaments of that world. We explained that the same is so of this lowly world, literally. For, the substance of the four elemental foundations constitutes the

body of the world, and within it are the other lights, each one of which includes the four aspects of the elemental soul.

We also explained that there are numerous levels to no end, since each *Sefirah* includes ten, and each of those include ten etc., so that each world has innumerable levels to no end.

The manner of prophecy itself was also explained in the fifth gate. Namely, it was explained that the thoughts of the prophet become divested of matters of the world and ascend from level to level, from below to above, until he reaches the place where the root of his soul adheres. He then intends to elevate the light of the *Sefirot* to the Unlimited One, *HaShem* יהוה"ה, blessed is He, and to draw down light from there. He then returns and brings it down from above to below, within the levels by which he ascended, until it reaches down to his intellectual soul (*Nefesh HaSeechleet*), which takes its portion of that light according to the measure of the bond of the root of his soul above. Then, from there, he draws it down further to the power of imagination (*Ko'ach HaMedameh*) of his animate soul (*Nefesh Chayah*). There the matter becomes depicted in the inner senses of the power of imagination (*Ko'ach HaMedameh*) or in its external, physical senses.

Now, in regard to the drawing down of that thought, it certainly did not ascend by itself, but only through known intentions (*Kavanot*) and unifications (*Yichudim*) that were transmitted to him by the prophet who is his teacher in prophecy. This is the matter of the students of the prophets, as we find with Shmuel, Eliyahu and Elisha, who are remembered for good. That is, the students of the prophets were trained, so

that through the unifications (*Yichudim*) that they would make, they would draw down light and influence according to *HaShem*'s יהו"ה will, which is the ultimate aspect of prophecy.

There also were two additional things that they taught them. These were prayers and the names of the angels who guard the gates of the firmaments and chambers of each world, from the very lowest of all worlds, which are the four elemental foundations and their atmospheres, all the way to the uppermost heights of the world of Emanation-*Atzilut*. This is as discussed in *Zohar to Parshat Vayakhel* 201b, regarding the matter of the ascent of prayers, and is also mentioned in *Pirkei Heichalot* and their *Beraitot*. They first would use these names to open the gates of that level, and would then make the unification (*Yichud*) and pray the prayer appropriate to that level, thus ascending from level to level, until they reached their upper root, where they would rest. They would then draw their thoughts to the Unlimited One, *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, and then draw the influence down below, as mentioned before.

The explanation of the matter of the gates and names, is that they would use the power of a holy name that relates to the *Sefirah* of that level, to bind by oath, the angel that is rooted to that level. That angel is appointed to guard the gate of that firmament itself, which is the substance (*Chomer*) of that level, and the gate also has a known name, which the angel would open. The thought of that prophet would then ascend by way of that gate from one light to the next light, until it reached the inner light of the *Sefirah* of that level itself. He would then pray

and make the unification (*Yichud*) needed for that level, and in this manner, he would ascend from level to level.

This itself is the explanation of the visions of Yechezkel, which are called the Act of the Chariot (*Ma'aseh Merkavah*-מעשה מרכבה), in that the levels are compositions (*Harkavot*-הרכבות) that are composed (*Murkavot*-מורכבות) one upon the other. At the beginning of his prophecy “the heavens opened,”⁸⁹⁴ these being the gates of the firmaments, which are the lights that are manifest within the substance (*Chomer*) and vessels (*Keilim*) of that world. From there, he entered into the realm of the external shells of *Kelipah*, as written,⁸⁹⁵ “I saw, and behold! There was a stormy wind coming from the north, a great cloud with flashing fire, and a brilliance surrounding it.”

This is similar to what is written in Hoshea,⁸⁹⁶ “The initial speech of *HaShem*-יהו"ה with Hoshea,” meaning, at the beginning of the revelation of the speech of prophecy, there first was a revelation of the external shells of *Kelipah* and her powers. They are the, “wife of harlotry and the children of harlotry,” as mentioned in the continuation of the verse.

Nevertheless, because he was “in heaven” he was also in a state of adhesion and prophetic gazing, as written,⁸⁹⁷ “The heavens opened and I saw visions of God.” However, when he

⁸⁹⁴ Ezekiel 1:1 – It is also noteworthy that the prophecy of Yechezkel begins “by the river *Kvar*-כבר,” which has the root letters of *Merkavah*-מרכבה-the chariot.

⁸⁹⁵ Ezekiel 1:4 – It is noteworthy that these four classifications refer to the three completely impure husks of *Kelipah*, and the fourth, which is “a brilliance surrounding it (*Nogah Lo Saveev*-נגה לו סביב)” and is the husk of *Kelipat Nogah* which is not as impure and can be purified.

⁸⁹⁶ Hosea 1:2

⁸⁹⁷ Ezekiel 1:1

arrived at the place of the external shells of *Kelipah*, he had no pleasure in adhering to them, but rather tore through and passed them by, without adhering to them, but only seeing them in passing, to the extent necessary. This is the meaning of what it states about Eliyahu, who is remembered for good,⁸⁹⁸ “And behold, *HaShem*-יהו"ה was passing, and a great powerful wind, smashing mountains and breaking rocks, went before *HaShem*-יהו"ה. ‘*HaShem*-יהו"ה is not in the wind!’ [Eliyahu was told]. After the wind came an earthquake. ‘*HaShem*-יהו"ה is not in the earthquake!’ After the earthquake came a fire. ‘*HaShem*-יהו"ה is not in the fire.’”

From there he entered into the realm of the light of the angels, as known. For, between each light there is a screen (*Pargod*) that separates them. This is a hidden mystery that relates to “the *Chashmal*-ל"חשמל-378,”⁸⁹⁹ which shares the same numerical value as “garment-*Malbush*-מלבוש-378,” and refers to the vessel (*Klee*) and substance (*Chomer*) of the lights of the angels. May *HaShem*-יהו"ה bring me atonement for revealing this hidden secret.

He then saw the ten classes of angels, all of which are divided into the four *Chayot* (animal) angels, and the four camps of the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*-יהו"ה (the *Shechinah*). About this the verse states,⁹⁰⁰ “In their midst there was a likeness of four *Chayot* (animals).” He then entered further until he reached the light of the ten *Sefirot* themselves,

⁸⁹⁸ Kings I 19:11-12

⁸⁹⁹ Ezekiel 1:4

⁹⁰⁰ Ezekiel 1:5

as it states,⁹⁰¹ “Upon the likeness of the throne, there was the likeness of the appearance a man (*Adam*-אדם) upon it from above.”⁹⁰² The throne⁹⁰³ itself is the light of the source of the souls, and is the meaning of the teaching, “Our forefathers are themselves the chariot (*Merkavah*).” This is why the soul is called “glory-*Kavod*,”⁹⁰⁴ as written,⁹⁰⁵ “So that my soul (*Kavod*) might sing to You and not be stilled, *HaShem*-יהוה my God,” and similarly,⁹⁰⁶ “How long will my soul (*Kvodi*) be mocked etc.”

Behold, I have revealed a very deep secret to you that includes the whole matter of the Chariot (*Merkavah*) in general, something that the earlier generations did not merit us with. Now, it was already explained before in the fifth gate, that not all prophets draw from the same root, since there are roots to no end; six-hundred thousand in each world. About this our sages, of blessed memory, said,⁹⁰⁷ “Six hundred thousand prophets

⁹⁰¹ Ezekiel 1:26

⁹⁰² As mentioned before, the numerical value of “man-*Adam*-45” is equal to the Name *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, spelled out with *Aleph*'s-א, which is called the Name of *Ma”H*-מ”ה-45, as such - יו”ד ה”א ו”א”י ה”א - and consists of ten letters. These ten letters are the vitality of the ten *Sefirot* of the world of Emanation-*Atzilut*.

⁹⁰³ The numerical value of “the throne-*HaKeeseh*-הכסא-86” is equal to *HaShem*'s-יהוה title “God-*Elohi*”m-אלהים-86,” which refers to the *Sefirah* of Kingship-*Malchut* of the world of Emanation-*Atzilut*, and is the light of the source of the souls.

⁹⁰⁴ The numerical value of “glory-*Kavod*” is 32, and refers to the thirty-two times that the words, “And God said-*Vayomer Elohi*”m-אלהים” appear in the Act of Creation (Genesis 1).

⁹⁰⁵ Psalms 30:13 – See Radak there.

⁹⁰⁶ Psalms 4:3 – See Radak there.

⁹⁰⁷ Midrash Shir HaShirim Rabba 4:11, 4:1; Ruth Rabba, Petichta 2; Dvarim Rabba 11:9; Midrash Mishlei 31:5; Tanchuma Beshalach 10:8; Mechilta d’Rabbi Yishmael 15:1 and elsewhere.

arose amongst the Jewish people, and our teacher Moshe, peace be upon him, includes them all and is equal to them all.”

Nevertheless, I will explain their levels in general. Our teacher Moshe, peace be upon him, would ascend all the way to the world of Emanation-*Atzilut*, and from there he saw. However, even his perception was only of the world of Emanation-*Atzilut* as it becomes garbed in the world of Creation-*Briyah*, and this too, he only saw in a passing manner. For, to grasp the world of Emanation-*Atzilut* itself is impossible, which is the inner meaning of the verse,⁹⁰⁸ “For no man can see Me and live.” The other prophets, on the other hand, would only see the world of Emanation-*Atzilut* through its complete manifestation within the lights of the world of Creation-*Briyah*.

However, the prophecy of Yechezkel⁹⁰⁹ was after the destruction of the Temple, and therefore his prophecy was of the world of Emanation-*Atzilut*, after its manifestation in the world of Creation-*Briyah* and the world of Creation-*Briyah*, as it was completely manifest within the world of Formation-*Yetzirah*. From that point on, the light of the worlds of Emanation-*Atzilut* and Creation-*Briyah* were not revealed at all. About this our sages, of blessed memory, said⁹¹⁰ that after Chagai, Zachariah, and Malachi, prophecy ceased altogether. Rather, all that remains is the Holy Spirit (*Ru'ach HaKodesh*) of Divine inspiration, which is only the drawing down of the lights of the world of Formation-*Yetzirah* themselves, and from

⁹⁰⁸ Exodus 33:20

⁹⁰⁹ Ezekiel

⁹¹⁰ See Talmud Bavli, Sotah 48b

there down. In the language of the Talmud,⁹¹¹ this is called, “ascending to the Pardes,” which is the world of Formation-*Yetzirah* and is called the world of Metatron-מטטרון. For this too, there were known methods of opening the gates that exist between the lowly world of Action-*Asiyah* and the world of Formation-*Yetzirah*, and there were unifications (*Yichudim*) and prayers (*Tefillot*) appropriate to the world of Formation-*Yetzirah* and its ten *Sefirot*.

Now, these are the methods of Pirkei Heichalot, used by Rabbi Nechunia, Rabbi Akiva, Rabbi Yishmael, and the Men of the Great Assembly (*Anshei Knesset HaGedolah*). However, the manner of these methods was subsequently forgotten as well. Additionally, in the time of Rava and Abaye, who were *Amora'im*, they also lost the ability to become purified through the ashes of the Red Heifer, as mentioned in Talmud.⁹¹² Thus, from that point on, they no longer made use of the methods of ascending into the Pardes.

From then on, they only made use of the methods of ascending to the world of Action-*Asiyah*, and nothing more. However, because Action-*Asiyah* is the lowest of the four world, and additionally, because the angels of the world of Action-*Asiyah* themselves are composed of a majority of evil with a minority of good, and moreover, because the good and evil in them greatly adhere to each other, therefore there is no Godly comprehension and grasp in the world of Action-*Asiyah*, being that it is impossible to only grasp the good in it.

⁹¹¹ Talmud Bavli, Chagigah 14b

⁹¹² See Tamud Bavli, Sanhedrin 65b

Therefore, whatever grasp there is, is an admixture of good and evil, truth and false.⁹¹³

⁹¹³ [The following passage from the Zohar, which is included as a note in this section, appears to either be an addition from an alternate manuscript, or added by the Chida]: This is similarly stated in Tikkunei Zohar, Tikkun 66 (97a), as follows: Rabbi Shimon said, “Woe to those people who set aside engagement in the study of the Torah, about which it states (Genesis 3:22), ‘And he shall take also of the Tree of Life,’ and engagement in the *mitzvot*, which are the fruit of the tree, about which it states (Gen. 3:22 *ibid.*), ‘and he shall eat and live forever.’ Woe to those who instead follow after those who entice them, who are from the side of the primordial snake (*Nachash HaKadmoni*). They entice them, telling them, “Come and learn how to command the angels who rule over the stars and the sun and the moon, and those who are appointed over the evil spirits and demons, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” It is about such people that it states (See Deuteronomy 17:3; Kings II 23:5; Jeremiah 44), “So says *HaShem*-יהוה to those who sacrifice and offer incense to the stars and constellations, to the sun and moon, and to all the hosts of the heavens; something that I never commanded.” The engagement in such matters is forbidden by the Holy One, blessed is He, as He commanded Adam (Genesis 2:17), “But as for the tree of knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it etc.” Yeshu the wicked one, made use of this knowledge, and the same is so of the generation of Enosh, the generation of the flood, and the generation of the dispersion. The Holy One, blessed is He, uprooted them all from this world and from the coming world, as it states (Genesis 2:17), “On the day that you eat of it, die you shall surely die (*Mot Tamut*-מורת תמות).” That is, “you shall die” (*Mot*-מורת) in this world and “you shall surely die” (*Tamut*-תמות) in the coming world. This sin of making use of the holy names to command angels and demons is what brought about the destruction of the first Holy Temple and the exile of the Jewish people among the nations of the world, through which many were killed. For, each man sacrificed and offered incense to angels and demons, and drew the powers of impurity upon themselves. When the prophets would come and chastise them, the verse (Kings II 17:13-14) attests that they did not listen to the voice of the prophets and the seers. How would the prophet chastise them? He would tell them, “Repent and do *Teshuvah*, and if not, there will be the fulfillment of the verse (Deuteronomy 11:17), ‘He will restrain the heaven so that there will be no rain, and the ground will not yield its produce, and you will be swiftly banished from the goodly Land that *HaShem*-יהוה gives you.’” They, however, made light of the words of the prophet, and ridiculed him, saying, “We need not be concerned with your words, as we will command the angels who are appointed over the rain, and we will force them to bring forth the rain.” However, because of them, the Holy One, blessed is He, exchanged His appointed angels in their tasks, and they were instead killed and the Holy Temple was destroyed because of them, and it is because of them that the Jewish people were exiled. This was the sin of Adam, through which the snake caused death to him and his wife. He enticed them with that tree, as written (Genesis 3:5), “God knows that on the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God etc.” For

This refers to the secrets of the Kabbalah of Action (*Kabbalah Ma'aseet*).⁹¹⁴ (This is written about in various books, and is called the Kabbalah of Action-*Kabbalah Ma'aseet* because it is in the world of Action-*Asiyah*.) It is specifically because of this that it is forbidden to make use of it. For, in doing so, one necessarily also comes to adhere to the evil that adheres to the good. Thus, though in his mind he thinks he is coming to purify his soul, in actuality, he causes his soul to become dirty and soiled on account of the evil. Moreover, even if he does come to have some grasp, in reality, he grasps an admixture of truth mixed with error. This is especially so nowadays, when we do not have the ashes of the Red Heifer, and the impurities of the shells of *Kelipah* adhere to whoever attempts to come close by way of the Kabbalah of Action (*Kabbalah Ma'aseet*). Therefore, whoever cares about his soul will distance himself from this. For, aside for the fact that he will contaminate himself and cause impurity upon his soul, he will also be punished in Purgatory (*Gehinom*). Moreover, he will even be punished in this world, as we have a received tradition in our hands, that either he or his offspring will become impoverished, or he or his offspring will be afflicted with

this reason, the Holy One, blessed is He, commands man and tells him to contemplate that which is permitted to be contemplated, but not engage in hidden matters (See Deuteronomy 29:28).

⁹¹⁴ Others often referred to this as “Practical Kabbalah.” However, the more appropriate and proper translation would be “The Kabbalah of Action,” and it is called so because it relates to the world of Action-*Asiyah*, as stated above by Rabbi Chaim Vital, of righteous memory.

illness, or he or his offspring will become apostates, heaven forbid.⁹¹⁵

Take reproof from the case of Rabbi Yosef de la Reina and Rabbi Shlomo Molcho, who made use of the Kabbalah of Action (*Kabbalah Ma'aseet*). In the end they were lost from the world, all because of the above-mentioned reason, that in the world of Action-*Asiyah* there cannot be a grasp of good that is not accompanied by evil. Moreover, they made them take oaths against their will, and then enticed and deceived them into paths that are the opposite of goodness, to the point that their souls were destroyed.

Beyond all these reasons, the early sages concealed the manner of how to bind the angels by oaths, and as a result, we are not expert in them or in their usage. It therefore is appropriate for a person to distance himself from such matters to the ultimate degree.

⁹¹⁵ As written at the end of Sefer Chassidim and in Brit Menuchah.

Part Three

Gate Seven

The conduct of the holy spirit of Divine Inspiration (*Ru'ach HaKodesh*) in our times

After having warned you in the preceding gate regarding all the above-mentioned methods of Godly grasp, do not give up hope. For, about the verse,⁹¹⁶ “Devorah, the wife of Lapidot, was a prophetess,” it states in Tana d’Bei Eliyahu,⁹¹⁷ “I take the heavens and the earth as my witnesses; any person, be they man or woman, be they Jew or gentile, even if they are a servant or a maid, depending on that person’s deeds, the Holy Spirit (*Ru'ach HaKodesh*) of Divine inspiration will rest upon him.”

Moreover, we ourselves have heard with our ears and have seen with our own eyes, that there are singular individuals who have grasped the level of the Holy Spirit (*Ru'ach HaKodesh*) in our own times. They could tell the future and had wisdom that was not revealed even in generations that preceded ours. Thus, in order not to forsake those who are coming to the holy for the sake of sanctifying themselves, I will

⁹¹⁶ Judges II 4:4

⁹¹⁷ Tanna d’Bei Eliyahu, Ch. 9 and 25.

explain various matters and I shall make an opening the size of the eye of a needle. *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, who is good, will not withhold His goodness from those who go in purity and wholeheartedness. With the help of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, I will first write several matters regarding the paths of grasping Godliness, and in the eighth gate I will write a regimen of how to conduct oneself in their attainment.

Now, the choicest of all paths is what we wrote about above, citing Tanna d'Bei Eliyahu, who is remembered for good. This is the path that the ancient Chassidim and hermits followed. Namely, one should return to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, with a very great repentance-*Teshuvah* over everything that he ruined. Afterwards, he should perfect his soul through fulfilling the positive commandments and should have the utmost devotional intent (*Kavanah*) in his prayers. Moreover, he should study Torah for its own sake (*Lishmah*),⁹¹⁸ doing so with zeal and like an ox to the yoke, to the point that his strength is weakened. Moreover, he should minimize his pleasures, such as only eating and drinking enough to maintain his health. He should rise from his bed at midnight or slightly earlier, and also distance himself from any unbecoming character traits. Likewise, he should separate himself from others, so as to not engage in mundane matters such as idle chatter. Subsequently, he should work to purify his body, regularly immersing himself in the ritual bath (*Mikvah*). Afterwards, he should occasionally go into seclusion, and at such times, contemplate specifically

⁹¹⁸ As explained at the conclusion of Part 1, Gate 3, this means, for the sake of the Name of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

on matters that bring to fear of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. He should set *HaShem*-יהו"ה before his eyes constantly, and should take care to ensure that his thoughts remain entirely empty of all of vanities of this lowly world. Instead, he should adhere to love of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, with great yearning and desire. Through this, he can possibly merit the Holy Spirit (*Ru'ach HaKodesh*) and be Divinely inspired in one of the following ways.⁹¹⁹

The first is that he may draw a supernal light upon himself from the upper root of his soul, which becomes revealed to him, as mentioned in the fifth gate. This is the complete manifestation of the Holy Spirit (*Ru'ach HaKodesh*) of Divine inspiration.

The second is through engaging in Torah study or fulfilling a particular *mitzvah*, about which our sages, of blessed memory, explained,⁹²⁰ "Whoever fulfills one commandment, acquires one advocate for himself," meaning that an angel is formed by it, in the most literal sense. However, this is on condition that he fulfills it constantly and does so with much devotional intent (*Kavanah*), being careful to fulfill it meticulously according to Torah law (*Halachah*). In such a case, the angel that was formed through the *mitzvah* or the Torah study can come and be revealed to him. This explains the matter found in various holy books about angels who are

⁹¹⁹ Also see Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah (Foundations of the Torah) 7:1, and Hilchot Teshuvah (Repentance) 10:6.

⁹²⁰ Mishnah Avot 4:11

revealed to the righteous and are called *Maggidim* (talkers).⁹²¹ The caveat to this, is that if the *mitzvah* was not fulfilled meticulously, precisely according to its laws (*Halachah*), the *Maggid* angel will have a mixture of good and evil, truth and false.

The third is that through conducting himself in the above-mentioned path of great piety (*Chassidut*), Eliyahu the prophet, who is remembered for good, will be revealed to him. To the extent of the growth and development of his piety (*Chassidut*) will be the extent and growth of the frequency and constancy of his revelation.

The fourth, and the greatest of them all, is when he merits that the soul of one of the early righteous-*Tzaddikim* comes to be revealed to him. As known, this *Tzaddik* could possibly be of the same root as his soul, or even if he is from another root, he becomes revealed to him because he fulfilled a particular *mitzvah* in a perfected manner, similar to how this *Tzaddik* fulfilled it. Whoever merits this level will grasp in a wondrous manner, in that deep wisdom and hidden secrets of Torah will be made known to him to the point of wondrousness. All this is according to his deeds.

The fifth and the lowest of them all, is that he will have dreams in which matters of the future and other supernal wisdom will be revealed to him, in a manner that is close to the Holy Spirit (*Ru'ach HaKodesh*) of Divine inspiration.

⁹²¹ For example, Rabbi Yosef Karo, the author of the *Shulchan Aruch*, wrote a diary entitled “*Maggid Meisharim*,” in which he records the revelations and teachings of the *Maggid* angel that regularly came to him, and taught him. This angel was formed by his devotion to the study of *Mishnah*.

Now, the path we have set forth is a straightforward path, being that one is not engaging in any oaths, nor is he attempting to force matters Above. Rather, they are attained solely through the power of good deeds and holiness. It thus is certain that if one follows this path, the pure and Holy Spirit of *Ru'ach HaKodesh* will rest upon him, without any admixture of good and evil whatsoever. However, this is not so if a person attempts to force matters Above, or seeks to make use of oaths or prayers and unifications (*Yichudim*), wherein if he even makes the slightest error, he can possibly be inviting external matters to become intermingled.

There indeed are additional methods that are accomplished through action, which will be explained in Part Four. However, their purpose is to awaken and draw one of the five above-mentioned types of revelation upon himself, even if they have not come of their own accord. However, these methods require tremendous holiness and purity, in order to avoid any of the above-mentioned intermingling. However, know that it is the first path that the ancient Chassidim trod upon, even in the early generations. This is as written by the Ramban, of blessed memory, in explanation of the scriptural words,⁹²² “to adhere to Him,” as well as in the Holy Letter that he composed, in the fifth chapter, in explanation of the statement that, “Ben Azai would sit and study surrounded by flaming fire.”

⁹²² Deuteronomy 11:22

Part Three

Gate Eight

A short summary of the conducts that bring to the Holy Spirit (*Ru'ach HaKodesh*) of Divine Inspiration in our times

One must refine himself in five levels of refinement:

The first is to repent of all of his sins, whether he violated commandments that are prohibitions, whether he abstained from fulfilling positive commandments, whether he violated any Rabbinic ordinances, or whether he has undesirable character traits, and he should never again return to them. He should especially repent and distance himself from all matters for which one is liable with excision (*Karet*) or the death penalty, and from desecrating the Name of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. He should keep the Shabbat meticulously, distance himself from his wife during her menstrual period (*Nidah*) and guard himself from any manner of seminal emission.⁹²³ He should distance himself from all oaths, even if they are true, from gazing at women, from evil speech and

⁹²³ That is, both conscious wasteful seminal emissions, or anything that may lead to unconscious nocturnal seminal emission.

gossip, and from frivolity and idle chatter. Moreover, he should distance himself from arrogance, anger, pedantry and melancholy, and should instead conduct himself with humility and lowliness, and be happy in his lot.

The second refinement is in his fulfillment of all 248 positive Torah commandments, as well as the Rabbinic enactments. He should be especially scrupulous in setting times for the study of Torah, pray with devotional intent (*Kavanah*), and recite grace after meals and all blessings for things from which one derives benefit (*Birchat HaNehenin*) with devotional intent. He should love every Jew like the apple of his eye, and honor Shabbat in all its details. Every night, he should rise after midnight to mourn for Jerusalem and the Holy Temple, and engage in the study of Torah. Moreover, all his deeds should be for the sake of Heaven, with love of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

The third refinement is that he should affix times to prepare and sanctify himself for the Holy Spirit (*Ru'ach HaKodesh*).

The fourth refinement is to purify his body through regular immersion in the ritual bath (*Mikvah*), and to wear clean garments.

The fifth refinement is that at such times that he prepares himself to receive the Holy Spirit (*Ru'ach HaKodesh*), after having engrained all the good character traits within himself, to the point that he has acquired them as his own, he should enter into solitude in a secluded house, where he will be undisturbed by the voices of other people or by the chirping of

the birds, and he should do so in a state of purity and holiness, The most preferable and auspicious time for this is after midnight. He should then close his eyes and divest his thoughts of all matters of this world, as though his soul has left him, so that he is like a dead person who no longer has any feelings for this world at all. He should then strengthen himself with great yearning and desire to think about matters of the upper world, and to bring his soul to adhere to the roots of his soul and the supernal upper lights of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. He should picture it to himself as if his soul has left him and is ascending above, and he should picture the upper worlds as though he is actually present within them. If he makes a unification (*Yichud*), he should think about it in such a manner, that through it, he draws down Godly light and influence to all the worlds, and he should have in mind that he too should receive his portion of it, lastly. He should seclude himself in thought, as though the spirit has somewhat rested upon him.

If he took all these measures, following this path, but did not come to any feeling, this indicates that he is not yet fully fitting and prepared for it. He therefore should continue to strengthen himself from that point forward to an even greater degree, both in his service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, as well as in his sanctity, and then after a period of time, he should again return to seclude himself as before, until he merits that the spirit rests upon him.

Now, when it indeed rests upon him, he must be very discerning to determine whether indeed is a refined and pure spirit, or whether he has been visited by spirit from the opposite

of goodness (*Sitra Achara*), or at the very least, whether there is an admixture of good and evil in it. The incident that happened when Ben Azai and Ben Zoma ascended to the Pardes⁹²⁴ attests to this. This may be determined based on what is revealed to him, whether all the words of the spirit are true, or whether there is an intermingling of truth and false in his words, whether his words are idle matters relating to the vanities of this world, or whether his words are not in accordance to Torah and the like. In such cases, he must push off the spirit from upon himself, and strengthen himself even more in his service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, until all his words are true and faithful and he has true fear of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He.

Know, that initially, the spirit will rest upon him in a way that seems like happenstance and only on rare occasions. Moreover, the words of the spirit will initially be on simple matters that are not very deep. Furthermore, his words will be few. However, the more one continues in this way, the more he will be strengthened in all of the above-mentioned matters. Moreover, know that it is a critically important general principle to refine the materiality of his body to the utmost degree. The same applies to uprooting all alien thoughts and ruminations from his mind, as well as completely uprooting the power of imagination (*Ko'ach HaMedameh*) from himself.⁹²⁵

⁹²⁴ Talmud Bavli, Chagigah 14b – Ben Azai glimpsed and died, and Ben Zoma was harmed, in that he lost his mind.

⁹²⁵ That is, rather than seeking delusions and vain imaginations of the lowly world, he should instead immerse his mind in the Godly intellect of the “completely pure Torah of *HaShem*-יהו"ה” (Psalms 19:8) and study and contemplate the Supernal

He should rather focus his mind on matters of the upper worlds with the utmost adhesion (*Dveikut*). It is also necessary to contemplate everything that was written in the sixth gate of Part One, for there the order of how to conduct oneself in a way of piety (*Chassidut*) was more fully explained.

wisdom of His Throne of Glory – the chaining down of the worlds (*Seder HaHishtalshelut*) – in a way of detail, depth, and understanding. He should gaze upon the wisdom of the Holy One, blessed is He, from the very first and most ethereal spiritual form, until the lowest being of the depths of the earth. Through doing so he will come to realize and know the greatness of the Singular Preexistent Intrinsic and Essential Being of *HaShem*-יהו"ה Himself, blessed is He. Then the Holy Spirit will automatically and immediately dwell upon him. (See Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah 2:2 & 7:1; Hilchot Teshuvah 10:6.)

Part Four

The ways of activating and attaining the Holy Spirit (*Ru'ach HaKodesh*) of Divine Inspiration

In the seventh gate of the third section, we already explained that there are five levels of attainment of the Holy Spirit (*Ru'ach HaKodesh*), which are:

1. The Holy Spirit (*Ru'ach HaKodesh*)
2. Revelations of souls of the righteous *Tzaddikim*
3. Revelations of angels called *Maggidim*
4. The revelation of the prophet Eliyahu, who is remembered for good.
5. Dreams

We explained that each of these levels can be attained automatically, through a person sanctifying himself and engaging in the study of Torah, without need of any other actions. It is, however, also possible for these levels to be attained through specific courses of action, provided that the one who does so is fitting and prepared for its attainment. It is this second manner of attainment of the Holy Spirit (*Ru'ach HaKodesh*) that will be explained in this section of the book,

which is a compendium of the methods already found written in the works of earlier sages.

This section is divided into three gates. The first gate discusses the ways that one should approach and conduct himself in action. The second discusses the manners of attaining the Holy Spirit (*Ru'ach HaKodesh*). The third discusses the conditions and methods required for the attainment of the Holy Spirit (*Ru'ach HaKodesh*). It should be noted, however, that in my main book called *Etz Chayim*, I already have written a number of unifications (*Yichudim*) and various different wondrous paths in regard to the matter of attaining and grasping the Holy Spirit (*Ru'ach HaKodesh*). If *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, shall allow it, I shall write them with more extended explanations in a volume unto itself.

Note from the original printer: This fourth section was not copied and not included in this printed version. The reason is because it is filled with Holy Names and their permutations and many hidden secrets, that were not deemed appropriate to be printed.⁹²⁶

⁹²⁶ However, the fourth section of *Shaarei Kedushah* has subsequently been printed in its entirety in *Sefer Ktavim Chaddashim M'Rabbeinu Chayim Vital* (Jerusalem 5748 [1988]). In the first gate, he cites various teachings from earlier Kabbalists, such as the Ramban (Nachmanides), Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, *Sefer Brit Menuchah*, *Sefer HaChassidim*, *Pardes Rimonim* of Rabbi Moshe Cordovero, *Reishit Chochmah* of his student, Rabbi Eliyahu Vidas, and Rabbi Yitzchak of Acco. This section primarily consists of the manner and humility in which one should conduct oneself, so as to be a fitting receptacle for the Holy Spirit (*Ru'ach HaKodesh*), to the extent that no other practices may be necessary. The second section consists of instructional guides and practices, also cited from the earlier Kabbalists. Primarily, this section includes further instructions on complete repentance, self-purification and the attainment of holiness, seclusion, the attainment of equanimity (*Hishtavut*), as well as some introductions to the matter and manner of the divestment of the physical, and additional introductions regarding the matters

of prophecy, the Holy Spirit (*Ru'ach HaKodesh*), and the *Sefirot*. The third and final gate is almost entirely excerpted from the teachings of Rabbi Avraham Abulafia, of blessed memory, and are the methods of adhesion to and contemplation of the Name of *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, primarily as it is manifest in the seventy-two names that arise from the three verses “*VaYeasa*-ויסע,” “*VaYavo*-ויבא,” and “*VaYeit*-ויט” (Exodus 14:19-21). However, as Rabbi Chayim Vital wrote in his introduction, “I will reveal only a hands-breadth while concealing two thousand cubits.” That is, to attain a proper understanding and approach to this section of the book, necessarily requires prerequisite knowledge of other important foundations, which were not included in this work. Nevertheless, as Rabbi Chayim Vital instructs us in his introduction, this entire work is knowledge that he received from his master and teacher, the Godly Rabbi Yitzchak Luria, the Arizal, and about this fourth section he states, “I have personally tried and tested these and have found them to be effective. However, I will only enumerate their details briefly, by way of signposts that point the way.” He indeed provides such sign-posts. For, although it is well known that the teachings of Rabbi Avraham Abulafia are mostly locked gates, it is well-known that the Arizal already pointed to the student of Rabbi Avraham Abulafia, namely, Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, as having graced us with the keys to these gates, and to the secrets of the Torah, in his famed work *Shaarei Orah*. Moreover, Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla himself writes of his *Ginat Egoz*, which preceded his *Shaarei Orah*, that it includes all of the critically necessary introductions and is foundational to all his other works, and to all of Torah. In it, he elucidates the true teachings of the Kabbalah that he received from his master and teacher, Rabbi Avraham Abulafia, illuminating them in a clear and simple manner, so that they may be understood by every intelligent person. In his work *Otzar Eden HaGanuz*, Rabbi Avraham Abulafia himself refers to his student, Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, in the greatest of terms, stating that he succeeded in that which he was taught with the greatest success, and that he attained the most wondrous success beyond even that which he was expressly taught, applying to him the words of the verse (Samuel I 16:18), “*HaShem*-יהוה was with him,” which the Talmud (Sanhedrin 93b) explains to mean that “the *Halachah* is like him in all areas.” Nevertheless, until our generation, this work *Ginat Egoz* remained hidden in manuscript form, possessed by only the righteous few. Prior to this generation, there was only one limited printing of *Ginat Egoz* that was brought into print by the saintly Rabbi Yishayah HaLevi Horowitz, the famed author of the *Shnei Luchot HaBrit* (known as the *ShLaH*). Nevertheless, in our generation, *Ginat Egoz* has already been printed and made fully available to the public, and has also been translated and adapted into English under the title *HaShem is One*. It is our hope and prayer to *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He and blessed is His Name, that the publication and dissemination of these teachings will bring about the fulfillment of the prophecy (Isaiah 40:5), “The glory of *HaShem*-יהוה will be revealed and all flesh, as one, will see that the mouth of *HaShem*-יהוה has spoken.”

Appendix

Iggeret HaRamban – The Letter of Ramban⁹²⁷

Hear, my son, the instruction of your father, and do not forget the teaching of your mother.⁹²⁸ Habituate yourself to always speaking calmly to every person. This will prevent you from anger, a serious character flaw that brings people to sin. As our sages, of blessed memory, stated,⁹²⁹ “Whoever flares up in anger is subject to the discipline of purgatory (*Gehinnom*), as it states,⁹³⁰ ‘Cast out anger from your heart, and [thus] remove evil from your flesh.’” The “evil” referred to in this verse means purgatory (*Gehinnom*), as written,⁹³¹ “the wicked are destined for the day of evil.” Once you have distanced yourself from anger, the quality of humility will enter your heart. This radiant quality is the finest of all admirable traits,⁹³² because,⁹³³ “The result of humility is fear of *HaShem*-יהו"ה.”

Through humility you will also come to fear *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He. It will cause you to always consider where you came from and where you are going, and that during your

⁹²⁷ This letter of the Ramban (Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman, known as Nachmanides) was written to his eldest son, Nachman, with the instruction to read it on a weekly basis. It was copied and appended to this work by Rabbi Chayim Vital himself, and is therefore included here. (It also is paraphrased in short form in the beginning of the first gate of the fourth section of this book.)

⁹²⁸ Proverbs 1:8

⁹²⁹ Talmud Bavli, Nedarim 22a

⁹³⁰ Ecclesiastes 12:10

⁹³¹ Proverbs 16:4

⁹³² Talmud Bavli, Avodah Zarah 20b

⁹³³ Proverbs 22:4

lifetime you are only like a maggot and a worm, and the same applies after death.⁹³⁴ It will also remind you before Whom you will be judged, before the King of Glory,⁹³⁵ as it states,⁹³⁶ “Even the heavens and the heavens of heavens cannot contain You” – “How much less the hearts of man!” It similarly is written,⁹³⁷ “Do I not fill the heavens and the earth? – Says *HaShem*-יהו"ה!”

When you think about all these things, you will come to fear *HaShem*-יהו"ה, your Creator, blessed is He, and will guard yourself from sinning. You therefore will be happy with whatever happens to you. Also, when you act humbly and modestly before everyone and are in fear of *HaShem*-יהו"ה and of sin, the radiance of His glory and the Holy Spirit of the Indwelling Presence of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He – the *Shechinah* – will rest upon you, and you will live the life of the Coming World (*Olam HaBa*).

And now my son, understand and observe that whosoever feels that he is greater than others, is rebelling against the Kingship of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, because by doing so, he adorns himself in His garments, as written,⁹³⁸ “*HaShem*-יהו"ה is King, He is clothed in pride.” Why should one feel proud? Is it because of wealth? *HaShem*-יהו"ה makes one poor or rich.⁹³⁹ Is it because of honor? Honor belongs to *HaShem*-יהו"ה, as we read,⁹⁴⁰ “Wealth and honor come from

⁹³⁴ See Mishnah Avot 3:1

⁹³⁵ Avot 3:1 *ibid*.

⁹³⁶ Kings I 8:27; Proverbs 15:11

⁹³⁷ Jeremiah 23:24

⁹³⁸ Psalms 93:1

⁹³⁹ Samuel I 2:7

⁹⁴⁰ Chronicles I 29:12

You.” So how could a person adorn himself with *HaShem*’s-יהו"ה honor? Moreover, one who is proud of his wisdom must surely know that *HaShem*-יהו"ה “takes away the speech of assured men and reasoning from the sages.”⁹⁴¹ We thus see that everyone is equal before *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, being that with His anger He lowers the proud and when He wishes, He raises the lowly. Therefore lower yourself and *HaShem*-יהו"ה will uplift you!

I will therefore now explain to you how to always behave humbly. Speak gently at all times, with your head bowed, your eyes looking to the ground and your heart focusing on *HaShem*-יהו"ה above, blessed is He. Do not look at the face of the person you are speaking to. Consider everyone as greater than yourself. If he is wise or rich, give him respect. If he is poor and you are wealthier, or if you are wiser than he is, consider yourself as being more guilty than him and that he is more worthy than you are, since when he sins it is through error, whereas your sins deliberate, in that you should know better!

In all your actions, words and thoughts, always regard yourself as standing before *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, which is His *Shechinah* above you, for His glory fills the whole world. Speak with fear and awe, like a servant standing before his master. Act with restraint in front of everyone. When someone calls you, do not answer loudly, but gently and softly, as one who stands before his master.

⁹⁴¹ Job 12:20

Always diligently learn Torah, so you will be able of fulfilling its commands. When you rise from learning, carefully reflect upon what you have just learned, to discern what of it can be put into practice, and do so. Examine your actions every morning and evening. In this way all your days will be spent in repentance (*Teshuvah*).

Concentrate on your prayers by removing all worldly concerns from your heart. Prepare your heart before *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, by purifying your thoughts and thinking about what you are about to say. If you follow this in all your daily actions, you will never come to sin. In this way everything you do will be proper and your prayers will be pure, clear, clean, devout and accepted by *HaShem*-יהו"ה, as written,⁹⁴² “*HaShem*-יהו"ה, You have heard the desire of the humble; when their heart is directed to You, let Your ear be attentive.”

Read this letter at least once a week, and neglect none of it. Fulfill it, and in so doing, walk with it forever in the ways of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, so that you will be successful in all your ways. You thus will succeed and merit the Coming World (*Olam HaBa*) which lies hidden away for the righteous *Tzaddikim*. Every day that you read this letter, Heaven will answer the desires of your heart. Amen, Selah!

⁹⁴² Psalms 10:17