





THE WAY  
OF THE  
BAAL SHEM TOV

*A Guide to Living in HaShem's Presence*

A Translation and adaptation  
into English of

*Tzavat HaRivash*

By

Our Master and Teacher  
The Holy and Godly Tzaddik

Rabbi Yisroel Ben Eliezer  
The Baal Shem Tov

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## The Letter of The Baal Shem Tov<sup>1</sup>

On Rosh Hashanah of the year 5507 (1746), I made an oath and elevated my soul in the manner known to you. I saw wondrous things in a vision, the likes of which I had never witnessed from the day I attained my standing. What I saw and learned when I ascended there is impossible to communicate, even when speaking face to face.

When I returned to the lower Garden of Eden, I saw many souls, of both the living and the dead, some known to me and others unknown to me. They were beyond number and reckoning. They were hastening to and fro, in order to ascend from world to world by way of the pillar known to those who know the hidden wisdom. Their joy was too great for the mouth to express or for the physical ear to hear. Also, many evil-doers repented and their sins were forgiven, since it was an auspicious time of Divine favor and acceptance. Even I was greatly amazed by how many of them were accepted in their penitence, some of whom you also knew. Amongst them too, there was great joy and they too ascended in the same manner.

All as one, they begged and implored of me saying, “Because of the great level and glory of your Torah, *HaShem* has granted you an additional measure of understanding to grasp and know these matters. Ascend with us and be our help and support.” Because of the great joy I beheld amongst them,

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<sup>1</sup> This letter is the only document verified to have been personally written by the famed Rabbi Yisroel Ba'al Shem Tov, peace be upon him, reprinted in the beginning of Keter Shem Tov. It is a letter to his brother-in-law, Rabbi Gershon Kitover.

I agreed to go up with them and asked my master and teacher (The prophet Achiyah HaShiloni) to accompany me, for the ascent to the Supernal Worlds is fraught with danger.

From the day I attained my standing until now, I never experienced such a great ascent as this. I ascended from level to level until I entered the Palace of Moshiach, where Moshiach studies Torah with all the Tana'im<sup>2</sup> and Tzaddikim, as well as with the Seven Shepherds.<sup>3</sup> There I beheld incredibly great rejoicing, but I did not know the purpose of this delight. At first, I thought the joy was about my departing from the physical world, God forbid. However, I was informed later that I had not yet died, for they have great pleasure on high when I effect unifications in the world below through their holy Torah. However, to this day, I do not know the reason for the joy.

I asked Moshiach, "Master, when will you come?" And he replied, "By this shall you know; It shall be at a time when your teachings will become famous and revealed in the world and your wellsprings will spread out; that is, what I have taught you and you grasped, so that they too will be able to effect unifications and ascents like you. In that time, all the husks of evil (*klipot*) will cease to be and it will be a time of grace and salvation."

I was bewildered and greatly distressed about the length of time involved, and asked myself, "When could this possibly be?" However, while I was there, I learned three beneficial methods (*segulot*) and three Holy Names that are easy to learn

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<sup>2</sup> The sages of the Mishnah

<sup>3</sup> Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Moshe, Aharon, Yosef and David.

and explain.<sup>4</sup> My mind was then set at ease, and I thought that with these teachings, the people of my own generation might ascend and learn and attain the same level as me, to be able to ascend and to learn and perceive as I do. However, I was not granted permission to reveal this during my lifetime. I pleaded for your sake, to be allowed to teach you; but I was denied all permission and remain bound by this ban.

However, I will tell you the following and may *HaShem* assist you: Place *HaShem* before you in all your ways and do not stray from Him. Whenever you pray or study and with every utterance of your lips, intend to unify yourself to Him. For every letter contains worlds, souls and Godliness and they ascend and combine and unite with one another. Then the letters combine and unite to form a word and become unified with Godliness, and in all these aspects your soul is bound to them. All become unified as one and ascend, bringing great joy and delight without measure. Consider the joy of a bridegroom and bride in this lowly physical world and realize how much greater the joy is on such a lofty spiritual level.

*HaShem* will surely help you and wherever you turn, you will succeed and become enlightened, as it states<sup>5</sup> “Give wisdom to the wise, and he will become all the wiser.”

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<sup>4</sup> See Ginat Egoz by the wondrous sage and universally authoritative *Rishon*, Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla of righteous memory, translated as *HaShem Is One, the Gate of the Sanctuary – Shaar HaHeichal*.

<sup>5</sup> Proverbs 9:9



# 1

Rabbi Yisroel Baal Shem, peace be upon him, taught us to be wholehearted in our service of *HaShem*, blessed is He, and to serve Him with simplicity.<sup>6</sup> Of primary importance is not to forget the Commandments we received directly from *HaShem* at *Chorev*<sup>7</sup> (*Aseret HaDvarim*-עשרת הדברים),<sup>8</sup> and to study teachings of *Mussar*, that deal with developing good character traits and right conduct, on a daily basis, whether one studies a little or a lot.

Make sure to always adhere to good character traits and right conduct and do not let a day go by without doing a *mitzvah*-commandment, be it a minor *mitzvah* or a major one. The mnemonic by which to remember this is the verse,<sup>9</sup> “Be as radiant-*Zahir*-זהיר from a minor *mitzvah* as from a major one.” The word *Zahir*-זהיר, which is usually translated as “careful,” is related, in its root, to the terminology of the verse,<sup>10</sup> “And they that are wise will be radiant-*Yazhiru*-יזהירו as the radiance-*Zohar*-זהר of the firmament.” This is to say that the soul should be as radiant and illuminated by the performance of a minor

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<sup>6</sup> Deuteronomy 18:13 and Rashi there.

<sup>7</sup> Mount Sinai

<sup>8</sup> Deuteronomy 4:9-10 – “Only beware for yourself and greatly beware for your soul, lest you forget the things that your eyes have beheld and lest you remove them from your heart all the days of your life, and make them known to your children and your children’s children – the day that you stood before *HaShem*, your God, at *Chorev* etc.”

<sup>9</sup> Mishnah Avot 2:1

<sup>10</sup> Daniel 12:3

*mitzvah* as from a major one, for “the Merciful One desires the heart.”<sup>11</sup>

## 2

The Psalmist states,<sup>12</sup> “I have set *HaShem* before me always.” The term, “I have set-*Shiviti*-שׁוִיִּתִי,” is of the same root as the term, “equanimity-*Hishtavut*-הִשְׁתַּוּוּת.” That is, everything that happens should be equal to you, whether people praise or shame you. This applies to all other matters as well. Likewise, all foods, whether they are delicacies or other things, should all be equal in your eyes. This matter applies if you have removed the evil inclination completely from yourself.

Whatever happens to you, say to yourself, “Is this not from *HaShem*, blessed is He? If it is proper in His eyes, it certainly is proper in mine.” That is, your motivation should be entirely for the sake of *HaShem*, blessed is He, but from your own perspective, it makes no difference. This is a very lofty level.<sup>13</sup>

## 3

Every person must serve *HaShem*, blessed is He, with all his strength and all his aspects. For, *HaShem* desires that we

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<sup>11</sup> Zohar Vol. 2, 162b; Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 106b.

<sup>12</sup> Psalms 16:8

<sup>13</sup> See the Chassidic discourse entitled “*Shiviti*-שׁוִיִּתִי” of the year 5720 by the Lubavitcher Rebbe, as well as Tanya, Igeret HaKodesh, Epistle 11.

serve Him with all aspects of our being, in every manner, for it all has profound purpose.

The meaning is that sometimes you may need travel or speak with others. At such times, you cannot study *HaShem's* Torah. Nonetheless, you must adhere to *HaShem*, blessed is He, in thought, and unify yourself to Him. (This is called *Yichudim*). Thus, if you are travelling and are unable to pray or study as you are accustomed, you must serve *HaShem* in other ways.

Moreover, do not become upset by this, for *HaShem*, blessed is He, desires to be served in all manner of service, at times in one way and at times in another way. *HaShem* therefore arranged that you would need to travel or speak with others, so that you could serve Him in a different way.

## 4

An important principle is as follows,<sup>14</sup> “Turn your deeds toward *HaShem*, and your thoughts will be set aright.” In other words, know that everything that comes about is from *HaShem*, blessed is He. See to it, to always request of *HaShem*, blessed is He, to bring about what He knows is for your good, rather than what appears to be good according to human intellect. For it is possible that what you think is good for you is actually bad. Instead, cast all your affairs and needs upon *HaShem*, blessed

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<sup>14</sup> Proverbs 16:3

is He, as the verse states,<sup>15</sup> “Cast your burden upon *HaShem* and He will sustain you.”

## 5

Bond your thoughts to *HaShem* above. Do not eat or drink excessively, nor eat for pleasure, but solely to maintain your health.<sup>16</sup> Do not look into the matters of this world at all, nor think about them altogether.<sup>17</sup> On the contrary, in all things endeavor to separate yourself from physicality. For by gazing at the matters of this world you become gross and spiritually callous, as our sages, of blessed memory, said,<sup>18</sup> “Seeing leads to remembering, which leads to lust,” as written about the Tree of Knowledge, that it was,<sup>19</sup> “Pleasing to the sight and good to eat,” that is, its appearance is what made it desirable.

## 6

Consider yourself to be a member of the Supernal World and all the inhabitants of this world will be insignificant in your eyes. For the totality of the world is like a mustard seed compared to the Supernal World. It thus should be equal in

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<sup>15</sup> Psalms 55:23

<sup>16</sup> Mishneh Torah, Hilchot De’ot, 3:2 & Ch. 4.

<sup>17</sup> Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah 7:1; Hilchot Teshuvah 10:6

<sup>18</sup> Talmud Bavli Menachot 53b; Midrash Tanchuma 15; Rashi Numbers 15:39.

<sup>19</sup> Genesis 2:9

your eyes whether people love or hate you, because their love and hate is of no significance.

Likewise, pay no heed to the lusts of your body, which is gross and is the “leprous skin of the snake.”<sup>20</sup>

## 7

It states in Zohar,<sup>21</sup> “One should always strive to be like a pauper.” Thus, always think of yourself as being destitute and speak soft words and supplications, like a pauper.

## 8

Seclude your thoughts constantly with the *Shechinah*, the Divine Presence of *HaShem*. That is, think of nothing but your undying love for her and your desire that she will adhere to you. Always think to yourself, “When will I merit that the light of the Divine Presence of *HaShem* will dwell with me?”

## 9

If an extraneous thought of the lusts of this world comes upon you, distance it from your thoughts. Scorn the lust until it becomes hateful and despicable to you. Moreover, incite your

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<sup>20</sup> See Zohar Tikkunim, Tikkun 21, 48b.

<sup>21</sup> Zohar Vol. 3, 195a. It is explained there that the prayers of a pauper always ascend and are favorably received.

good inclination against your evil inclination and its lusts. Through this you will subdue them.<sup>22</sup>

Now, if you no longer have any of the lusts of this world, do not at all be sad. On the contrary, you should rejoice greatly in having merited to subdue your lusts for the sake of the Name and glory of *HaShem*, the Creator, blessed is He, as our sages, of blessed memory, stated,<sup>23</sup> “And they are joyful in suffering.”

Thus, when you are not drawn after your lusts, even in thought, but instead scorn such thoughts, you greatly lower and subdue the external husks of evil (*Kelipot*). This is as stated in *Zohar*,<sup>24</sup> “A pure heart”<sup>25</sup> refers to someone who does not draw his desire and heart to the side of evil (*Sitra Achara*).”

## 10

Equanimity-*Hishtavut*-השתוות is a very important principle from the Baal Shem Tov, may his memory live on for the world to come. That is, it should be equal-*Shaveh*-שוה to you whether people consider you to be an ignoramus or knowledgeable in all of Torah. What brings this perspective about is constant adhesion (*Dveikut*) to *HaShem*, the Creator, blessed is He. Because your mind is so preoccupied with adhesion to *HaShem*, you have neither the time nor the interest

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<sup>22</sup> Talmud Bavli, Brachot 5a.

<sup>23</sup> Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 88b.

<sup>24</sup> *Zohar* Vol. 1, 100b.

<sup>25</sup> Psalms 24:4

to think about such matters, for you will be preoccupied in adhering to *HaShem* above, blessed is He.

## 11

In everything you do, think to yourself that through this you are giving satisfaction to *HaShem*, your Creator, blessed is He. That is, do it for *HaShem*, not for yourself, even a little bit. Even if you do it for the delight of serving *HaShem*, this too is for your own self-interest.

## 12

Never say in your heart that you are greater than your fellow, that you serve *HaShem* with greater adhesion (*Dveikut*) to Him, because you are like all other creatures that were created to serve *HaShem*, blessed is He. *HaShem*, blessed is He, gave your fellow intellect, just as He gave you intellect (each one according to his measure). How then can you consider yourself to be greater than even a worm? For, unlike you, a worm serves the Creator with all its intellect and strengths. Man, too, is likened to worms and maggots, as the Psalmist states,<sup>26</sup> “But I am a worm and not a man.” In other words, “Had *HaShem*, blessed is He, not granted me intellect, I

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<sup>26</sup> Psalms 22:7

too could only serve Him as a worm serves Him. This being so, I am no greater than a worm, let alone other people!”

On the contrary, consider yourself, the worm and other small creatures, as equals in the world. We all are created beings and have no abilities except those given to us by *HaShem*, our Creator, blessed is He. This matter should always be in your thoughts.

## 13

If you are roused with lust for a particular sin, God forbid, recite the Torah verses relating to that sin with their intonation and vowels, with fear and love of *HaShem*, blessed is He, and the lust will depart from you.

## 14

If lust is roused in you for any bad character traits, God forbid, recite the verse that lists the six nations,<sup>27</sup> “The Canaanite, the Hitite etc.” Do so with fear and love of *HaShem*, and it will withdraw from you. Bind the trait to the Holy One, blessed is He. For example, if you are roused with wrong love, God forbid, instead love *HaShem* alone, blessed is He, and invest all your effort into this. If you are roused with anger, which is bad fear, drawn from the attribute of judgment

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<sup>27</sup> Exodus 33:2

(*Gevurah*), overpower your inclination and transform it into a vehicle for the Holy One, blessed is He.

If you hear someone preaching with love and fear of *HaShem*, cleave to his words and become one with the reprover. For, his words will enter your mind and become thought and the spirit of folly will withdraw from you.

## 15

First and foremost, be careful that every move in your service of *HaShem* should be free of ulterior motive, God forbid. This requires great wisdom for,<sup>28</sup> “It is exceedingly deep; who can fathom it?” This being so, there is no choice but to keep this in mind always. Do not remove your attention from it for even an instant, for it is something that becomes invalidated by the removal of attention (*Hese'ach HaDa'at*).<sup>29</sup>

Secondly, but of equal importance, be careful to immerse in the *Mikvah* (ritual pool) regularly, and to have the intentions that relate to ritual immersion in mind.

The “Three-ply cord not easily severed”<sup>30</sup> is to distance yourself from depression. Instead, your heart should rejoice in *HaShem*, blessed is He.

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<sup>28</sup> Ecclesiastes 7:24

<sup>29</sup> See the introduction to *Shaar HaEmunah* by Rabbi DovBer of Lubavitch, translated as Essential Faith.

<sup>30</sup> Ecclesiastes 4:12

## 16

Likewise, be informed of the importance of accustoming yourself to rise for the midnight prayers.

At the very least, take care to begin your prayers before sunrise, whether in summer or winter. That is, most of the prayers leading up to the recital of *Shema* should be before sunrise. The difference between prayers recited before sunrise and those recited after sunrise are like the distance between east and west, because before sunrise one can still nullify all judgments. For once the sun rises, all proclamations concerning that day have already been issued, whether for good or for bad, whereas before the proclamation, they can still be rescinded and nullified.

The mnemonic by which to remember this, is the verse,<sup>31</sup> “He has set up a tent for the sun, which is like a groom emerging from his bridal chamber, it rejoices like a powerful warrior to run its course... nothing is hidden from its heat-*Chamoto*-מתו.” Do not read, “From its heat-*MeChamoto*-מתו,” but “from its wrath-*MeCheimato*-מתו.” In other words, once the sun has come out over the earth, none can hide from the judgments rendered by the angels of wrath. Therefore, do not take this matter lightly, for it is of great importance.

The Baal Shem Tov, of blessed memory, was extremely careful in this, to such an extent that, at times, when a minyan of ten Jews was not present, he would instead pray privately.

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<sup>31</sup> Psalms 19:5-7

## 17

Do not let a day to pass without fulfilling a *Mitzvah*-commandment, whether it is a minor *mitzvah* or a major one, like our sages, of blessed memory, stated,<sup>32</sup> “Be as radiant-*Zahir*-זהיר with a minor *mitzvah* as with a major one.” Though the word *Zahir*-זהיר is usually translated as “careful,” it is of the same root, as in the verse,<sup>33</sup> “And they that are wise will be radiant-*Yazhiru*-יזהירו like the *Zohar*-זהר-radiance of the firmament.” In other words, the soul should be as radiant and illuminated from the performance of a minor *mitzvah* as a major one, for “the Merciful One seeks the heart.”<sup>34</sup>

This is a very great matter, for through it you will know that you have affected the day and created an angel. As the verse states,<sup>35</sup> “Even if there is only a single advocating angel, out of a thousand, to declare man’s uprightness on his behalf; *HaShem* will be gracious to him and say, ‘Redeem him from going down into the grave. I have found atonement for him.’”

The mnemonic by which to remember this, is the verse,<sup>36</sup> “He who guards-*Shomer*-שומר the *mitzvah* will know no evil.” In other words, whoever accepts this matter upon himself, must stand guard at his post from morning to evening, awaiting the opportunity to fulfill any *mitzvah* that comes his

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<sup>32</sup> Mishnah Avot 2:1

<sup>33</sup> Daniel 12:3

<sup>34</sup> Zohar Vol. 2, 162b; Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 106b.

<sup>35</sup> Job 33:23-24

<sup>36</sup> Ecclesiastes 8:5

way. That is, the term guard-*Shomer*-שומר is of the same root used in the verse,<sup>37</sup> “His father waited in anticipation-*Shamar*-שמר of the matter.”<sup>38</sup> Through this, one merits that, “He will know no evil.” That is, he will not be subject to random happenstance (*Keri*-קרי)<sup>39</sup> which is called evil, God forbid.

The mnemonic by which to remember this is the verse,<sup>40</sup> “The kindness of God is all day long.” That is, one must do acts of lovingkindness for God, blessed is He, every single day.

## 18

Keep the Shabbat strictly, according to the *Halachah*,<sup>41</sup> with all its details and specifics. The mnemonic by which to remember this, is the verse,<sup>42</sup> “You turn back-*Tashev*-תשב man-*Enosh*-אנוש into pulp.” The word “You turn back-*Tashev*-תשב” consists of the same letters as, “Shabbat-שבת.” The word used for man here is, “*Enosh*-אנוש” indicating that, “Even if he is an idolater, like the generation of *Enosh*, he will be forgiven.”<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Genesis 37:11

<sup>38</sup> Rashi to Genesis 37:11

<sup>39</sup> Leviticus 26:21 & Rashi there; Also see Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as HaShem Is One, Volume 2, pg. 353.

<sup>40</sup> Psalms 52:3

<sup>41</sup> Torah law

<sup>42</sup> Psalms 90:3

<sup>43</sup> Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 118b; See Genesis 4:26; Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Avoda Zara Ch. 1 – Rabbi Chiyah bar Abba said that Rabbi Yochanan said: Anyone who observes Shabbat in accordance with its laws, even if he worships idolatry as in the generation of Enosh, he is forgiven, as it states, ‘Fortunate is the man-*Enosh* who does this, and the person who holds strong to it, one who guards the Shabbat from desecrating it-*Mechalelo*, and guards his hand from doing any evil.’ (Isaiah 56:2). Do not read ‘from desecrating it-*Mechalelo*-מחללו,’ but rather, ‘he is forgiven-*Machul Lo*-מחל לו.’”

## 19

At the very least, be scrupulous with the *Shema* that is recited twice daily, taking care to recite it without any extraneous thoughts, God forbid. This is an important matter of immeasurable greatness. The mnemonic by which to remember this is the statement,<sup>44</sup> “Whoever recites the *Shema* upon his bed, the forces of harm (*Mazikin*<sup>45</sup>) depart from him.” The term, “the forces of harm-*Mazikin*-מזיקין” means all forms of harm in the world, whether bodily harm or spiritual harm.

Even if you find it impossible to pray entirely without extraneous thoughts, train yourself to, at least, begin without extraneous thoughts.<sup>46</sup>

## 20

Embrace the trait of zeal very much. Rise with zeal and alacrity from your sleep with the realization that you have been created anew and have become a new man, capable of producing offspring.<sup>47</sup> Thus, you are likened to the attribute of the Holy One, blessed is He, who has given birth to worlds.

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<sup>44</sup> Talmud Bavli, Brachot 5a

<sup>45</sup> Talmudic usage of the term *Mazikin*-מזיקין generally refers to the demonic forces, but is used here to refer to anything that may cause harm in the world.

<sup>46</sup> And you will become progressively better at it.

<sup>47</sup> One’s deeds are compared to the birthing of offspring. See Rashi to Genesis 6:9. Also see Sefer HaMashalim of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as The Book of Allegories, Num. 38.

Thus, everything you do should be with zeal and enthusiasm, because *HaShem* can be served in everything.

## 21

When you don the prayer shawl (*Talit*), “Observe the *Techeilet*-blue string.”<sup>48</sup> The explanation of this is that fear of *HaShem* should come upon you.<sup>49</sup>

## 22

Whatever you experience, remember the Holy One, blessed is He. If you experience love, recall the love of *HaShem*, if you experience fear, recall the fear of *HaShem*, as known from many sources. Even before going to the restroom, think to yourself, “Am I not separating bad from good and retaining the good for the service of *HaShem*, blessed is He?” This is the matter of unifying everything to *HaShem* (*Yichudim*). Similarly, when you go to sleep, think to yourself, “By doing this my intellect will ascend to the Holy One, blessed

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<sup>48</sup> Numbers 15:38

<sup>49</sup> Talmud Bavli, Menachot 43b: “Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai says: Anyone who is diligent in this *Mitzvah*-commandment merits receiving the Divine Presence. For with respect to the fringes-*Tzitzit* it is written, ‘That you may look upon it-*u’Re’item Oto* וראיתם אותו’ (Num. 15:39) and it is written, ‘You shall fear *HaShem*, your God, and Him you shall serve-*Et HaShem Elohecha Tirah, V’Oto Ta’avod-* את ה' אלהיך’ (Deut. 6:13).”

is He, and will be rejuvenated and strengthened for His service.”<sup>50</sup>

## 23

Before falling asleep, lie down with dread and awe, quaking and trembling from the fear of the Creator, blessed is He. Through this you will not come to sin, as the verse states,<sup>51</sup> “Tremble and sin not, reflect in your hearts while on your beds.”

## 24

Direct your thoughts to the Supernal World above in service of *HaShem*, blessed is He. Adhere to *HaShem* and trust that He will achieve His desire.<sup>52</sup>

## 25

This is a great principle: The thought one begins with when arising from bed, will accompany him throughout the day, rather than another thought.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> See Mishneh Torah, Hilchot De’ot 3:3; Also see Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, Shaar HaYichud-The Gate of Unification.

<sup>51</sup> Psalms 4:5; Talmud Bavli, Brachot 5a; Zohar Vol. 3, 113b

<sup>52</sup> See Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, Shaar HaYichud-The Gate of Unification. Also see HaShem is One, Volume 2, wherein it is extensively explained that the Upper World refers to the World of Intellect.

<sup>53</sup> See Poke’ach Ivrim of Rabbi DovBer of Lubavitch, translated as Opening the Eyes of the Blind, Sections 1 & 2.

## 26

Be very scrupulous about always rising for the midnight prayers. If you did not rise, and you were not prevented because of something beyond your control, you will be ostracized Above, God forbid.<sup>54</sup>

## 27

Convert your nights into days. Sleep a few hours during the day, so that a small amount of sleep at night will suffice you.

## 28

If you rise at midnight and are overcome with drowsiness, you should pace back and forth in the house, sing songs of praise to *HaShem* and raise your voice, thus removing drowsiness from yourself.

Moreover, study several Torah subjects, rather than concentrating on one subject, and it will not become burdensome to you. Better to study several Torah subjects, for this will assist in removing drowsiness.

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<sup>54</sup> The importance of Tikkun Chatzot and nightly Torah study is mentioned in the Talmud and throughout the Zohar. In *Iggeret HaTeshuvah* of Tanya, Ch. 10, it is prescribed that “Whoever cannot do this nightly should at the very least do so once every week, before the Shabbat.” Also see *Shulchan Aruch* (the Code of Jewish Law), *Orach Chayim* 1:2-4.

## 29

When studying Torah, pause and rest a bit every hour or so, in order to bond yourself to *HaShem*, blessed is He. Nevertheless, one must study Torah.

Even though when you are immersed in the study of Torah it is not possible for you to bond yourself to *HaShem*, blessed is He, nonetheless, you must study Torah. This is because the Torah purifies the soul and is,<sup>55</sup> “A tree of life for those who grasp it.” Thus, if you do not study Torah, your adhesion-*Dveikut* to *HaShem* will dissipate and become null and void. Therefore, when studying Torah, think to yourself that just as you cannot be in a state of adhesion (*Dveikut*) during sleep or when your intellectual faculties fall to a state of lesser awareness, so also, when you study Torah, it is no worse than this. Nonetheless, you should stop and center yourself to bond to *HaShem*, the Creator, blessed is He, every once in a while, as said above.

## 30

When speaking in conversation, think only of adhesion-*Dveikut* to *HaShem*, the Creator, blessed is He, rather than other thoughts. When studying Torah, you must think about the subject you are learning, and through this you will properly cleave to Godliness.

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<sup>55</sup> Proverbs 3:18

One must always be occupied with the study of Torah, for it is,<sup>56</sup> “A tree of life for those who grasp it.” However, if you are engaged in mundane conversation and are relying on your adhesion-*Dveikut* to *HaShem*, be very careful not to fall at times, from your adhesion to Him.

## 31

Rabbi Yisroel Baal Shem Tov said that when he is in a state of adhesion (*Dveikut*) to *HaShem*, the Creator, blessed is He, and a thought about something falls into his mind, it presumably is just as it arose in his thought. This is a measure of Divine Inspiration (*Ru'ach HaKodesh*).

He also said that from the power of the Torah that a person learns on a given day, when he has the opportunity to do something, but does not know if he should do it or not, he can understand how to proceed, through the power of the Torah subject that he learned. This holds true on condition that he is in a constant state of adhesion-*Dveikut* to *HaShem*, blessed is He. If this is so, *HaShem* will arrange that he will know what to do through the power of the Torah.

In contrast, if a person relates to *HaShem* by way of happenstance, then *HaShem* likewise relates to him through happenstance.<sup>57</sup> Moreover, *HaShem* does not arrange garments

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<sup>56</sup> Proverbs 3:18

<sup>57</sup> Leviticus 26:21 & Rashi there; Also see Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Volume 2, pg. 353.

and sustenance for him that contain sparks of Godliness that relate to the root of his soul, so that he may rectify them.

## 32

It is important to gradually ascend from level to level in prayer,<sup>58</sup> so that all your strength is not exhausted at the beginning of your prayers. Rather, begin with moderation, and then, in the middle of your prayers, bond yourself with great adhesion to *HaShem* through the words of prayer. You will then even be able to say the words of prayer quickly, without breaking your bond.

Even though at the beginning of prayer you cannot pray with such great adhesion to *HaShem*, nevertheless, say the words with great concentration of intention and strengthen yourself little by little, until *HaShem*, blessed is He, will assist you to pray with great adhesion to Him.

## 33

A person must train and accustom himself to pray in a low voice and to cry out silently, even when reciting the songs of praise. Nonetheless, he should say the words, whether of prayer or of Torah, with all his might, as the verse states,<sup>59</sup> “All

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<sup>58</sup> See Kuntres Inyan Tefilah by Rabbi DovBer of Lubavitch, translated as Praying with Passion.

<sup>59</sup> Psalms 35:10

my bones<sup>60</sup> shall say, ‘*HaShem*, who is like You.’” A cry that results from true adhesion to *HaShem* is a silent cry.<sup>61</sup>

## 34

Know that every word of prayer is a complete stature (*Komah Shleimah*). Therefore, invest all your strength into it, for otherwise, it is missing a limb.

## 35

It is a great kindness from *HaShem*, blessed is He, that a person lives after prayer. For, with the strength of his great concentration and intention, he exhausts all his strength to such a degree, that according to the natural order, he should have died.

## 36

At times a person is able to pray very quickly because his heart is burning with such intense love of *HaShem*, blessed is He, that the words come out of his mouth of their own accord.

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<sup>60</sup> *Kol Atzmotai*-כל עצמותי-All my bones also means “My very essence.”

<sup>61</sup> For an extensive explanation of the varying levels of adhesion (*Dveikut*) and divine inspiration during prayer, see *Kuntres HaHitpaalut* of Rabbi DovBer of Lubavitch, translated as *Divine Inspiration*.

## 37

If a person bonds himself to *HaShem* above during the silent prayer,<sup>62</sup> he could then merit to be elevated even higher during that prayer, as our sages, of blessed memory, taught,<sup>63</sup> “One who comes to purify himself is granted assistance.” Thus, through the strength of this prayer, in which he merits to attain adhesion of thought to *HaShem* above, he can merit to attain an even greater level, which is to be in a state of adhesion-*Dveikut* to *HaShem* above, even while not engaged in prayer.

## 38

Before praying, do not recite many Psalms with great adhesion to *HaShem*, because by doing so you weaken your body and will thus be unable to recite the essential, obligatory prayers of the day with great adhesion, namely, the verses of song, the *Shema* and the *Amidah* prayer. By doing so, you would be exhausting your strength with other things before beginning the prayers. Instead, first recite the primary prayers with adhesion-*Dveikut* to *HaShem* and then, if *HaShem*, blessed is He, grants you additional strength, recite Psalms and the Song of Songs with adhesion to Him afterwards.

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<sup>62</sup> The *Shemonah Esreh* silent prayer also called the *Amidah*-standing prayer.

<sup>63</sup> Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 104a

## 39

Before *Ne'ilah* (The concluding prayer of *Yom Kippur*-the Day of Atonement) reserve your strength and recite the *Machzor*<sup>64</sup> in a diminished state of Godly awareness-*Katnut*.<sup>65</sup> In this way, when you come to *Ne'ilah*, you will have the strength to recite it with great adhesion-*Dveikut* to *HaShem*.

## 40

If you are in a diminished state of mind, it is better to pray from the prayer book, rather than from memory, for by seeing the words and letters of the prayers, you will pray with greater intention and devotion.

However, if you are in a state of adhesion to the Upper World, it is better to close your eyes, so that the sense of vision will not obstruct your adhesion to the Upper World.

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<sup>64</sup> The *Yom Kippur* liturgy

<sup>65</sup> See chapters 34 & 35 of *Shaar HaYichud* of Rabbi DovBer of Lubavitch, translated with commentary as *The Gate of Unity*, as well as the different levels described in *Kuntres HaHitpaalut* translated as *Divine Inspiration*.

## 41

The soul<sup>66</sup> told the Rabbi (Rabbi Yisroel Baal Shem Tov) that the reason he merited all the Supernal revelations that were revealed to him, was not because of the great amount of Talmud and codifiers that he studied, but rather, because of his prayers. For, he always prayed with tremendous devotion, and this is why he merited such a lofty level.

## 42

Before praying, think to yourself that you are prepared to die during prayer due to the intense adhesion of your mind to *HaShem*.<sup>67</sup> There are those who pray with such great intention that, at times, according to the natural order, they could have died just by saying two or three words in *HaShem's* presence, blessed is He.<sup>68</sup>

However, when you think this, say in your heart, “Since I am ready to die, even after two or three words, why should I have any self-interest or pride in this prayer?” In reality, it is a very great kindness that *HaShem*, blessed is He, gives us the strength to complete our prayers and remain alive.

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<sup>66</sup> This refers to the upper aspect of his own soul. Such revelations of the upper aspect of one's soul are elucidated in Shaarei Kedushah of Rabbi Chaim Vital, Section 3, Ch. 5, translated as Gates of Holiness.

<sup>67</sup> See Shaarei Orah of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, Chapter 1.

<sup>68</sup> For example, the three words, שִׁפְתַי תִּפְתַּח, Lord open my lips. As known, this name is associated with fear of *HaShem*, the King, King of kings.

## 43a

When undergoing a fast of abstinence, have the following in mind: “Woe is me! Because of my lusts and repugnant pride, I have angered the Supernal King! Therefore, I want to afflict myself and subdue my evil inclination, my lusts and pride, and affect the Supernal realms so that, “The servant will be subdued under his Master and the maid-servant under her Mistress.”<sup>69</sup>

Through this, I fulfill the commandment-*Mitzvah* of repentance-*Teshuvah*. I wish to afflict myself so that I will be able to serve *HaShem*, blessed is He, truthfully and wholeheartedly, with love and fear, so that His unity shall be actualized by my hand. This is why I wish to afflict myself and to bring myself as an offering before Him.”

“Woe is me! What am I and what is my life? I wish to offer my fat, my blood, my body, my fire, my spirit, my soul, my strength, my heart, and my desires before *HaShem*, blessed is He, before the Creator of all worlds. All the worlds were brought about by His word, and are as nothing compared to Him. Certainly, I too am no more than dust, worm, and maggot. All I can request of His abundant kindness is that He grant me additional strength to bring many more offerings before Him.”

“I should rejoice greatly to have merited that my body, spirit and soul give satisfaction of spirit to the Creator, blessed

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<sup>69</sup> See Proverbs 30:22-23

is He. Moreover, I should rejoice that He has given the means by which subdue the evil inclination. I wish to afflict myself because I caused sorrow to the Holy One, blessed is He, and His Divine Presence, the *Shechinah*. Therefore, I want to diminish their sorrow.

Woe is me! What value can my afflictions possibly have compared to the sorrow I have caused over the years. All I can ask is that in His abundant kindnesses *HaShem* should take note of my affliction and diminish the sorrow of His *Shechinah*-The Divine Presence. On account of my afflictions may He remove the external husks of evil (*Kelipot*) from upon us.

May my afflictions cause the removal of all the external husks of evil (*Kelipot*) from the *Shechinah* above, thus purifying and unifying her to her ‘Husband,’ the Holy One, blessed is He, in complete unity, with kindness and mercy. Through my afflictions, let there be a unification from above to below, from the mind to the heart and from the heart to the liver, and may He pour His influence upon me too.”

“I put my trust in Him, for He created all worlds and brought them into being from nothing, and compared to Him, all is as nothing. He supervises over them all, bestowing them with beneficence and life. Therefore, He can certainly draw down additional strength to me and watch over me, to save me in His kindness, so that the evil inclination will not thwart me in any way from my self-affliction, by telling me that I am too weak, that my intellect is affected by the fast and that, because of that, I will be incapable of serving Him as fitting, and other such foolish excuses. Thus, all I can do is request His great

kindness, for He is the One who put it into my heart to afflict myself and in His kindness, He has helped me on many occasions. May He help me today, as well, and save me from anything that wishes to obstruct me.

From my own perspective this cannot even be considered affliction, since everything is from *HaShem*, blessed is He, and on my own I would be incapable of afflicting myself altogether. I thus give myself over to the Singular One who creates all the worlds with His speech, and I am willing to bear every type of affliction and disgrace for the sake of His unity. I desire to fulfill His command,<sup>70</sup> “You shall sanctify yourselves and be holy,” and I trust that, in His kindness, He will grant me the strength to serve Him in truth. May He assist me so that others should not know of my deeds.”

“I do not fear any weakness that may arise on account of my fast, for many people become ill even without fasting. Moreover, the *Shechinah* sustains those who are ill,<sup>71</sup> as it states,<sup>72</sup> “*HaShem* sustains him on the sickbed.” Thus, *HaShem*, in His kindness, will sustain me. Moreover, in doing so,<sup>73</sup> “I am going the way of all the earth,” and am not deviating from the standard.

In addition, our sages stated that,<sup>74</sup> “Whoever is greater than his fellow, his evil inclination is also greater.” Thus, since I am not deviating from the standard, I can trust *HaShem* in this,

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<sup>70</sup> Leviticus 20:7

<sup>71</sup> Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 12b

<sup>72</sup> Psalms 41:4

<sup>73</sup> Kings I 2:2

<sup>74</sup> Talmud Bavli, Sukkah 52a

as it states,<sup>75</sup> “Trust in *HaShem* and do good.” For, when it comes to the fulfillment of the commandments, it is permissible for a person to place his trust in *HaShem*, as it states,<sup>76</sup> “Those who hope in *HaShem* will have renewed strength.” Likewise, one who dies while engaged in repentance-*Teshuvah*, it is a good sign for him.<sup>77</sup> For, were it not for this, it is quite possible that I would need to be reincarnated for my sins, or on account of not having served *HaShem* with love and with fear, as is fitting. Additionally, it states that,<sup>78</sup> “A person should not worry about future troubles.”

## 43b

The essence of repentance-*Teshuvah* is to turn away from your evil ways.<sup>79</sup>

Moreover, do not be prideful, for whoever is prideful in his abstinence, his abstinence, “is given over to the dog.”<sup>80</sup>

On the other hand, “Even if only a single person does *Teshuvah*-repentance, the entire world is forgiven on account of it.”<sup>81</sup> This being the case, rejoice over the affliction of your fast,

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<sup>75</sup> Psalms 37:3

<sup>76</sup> Isaiah 40:31

<sup>77</sup> Talmud Bavli, Ketuvot 103b; Avodah Zarah 17a; Avot d’Rabbi Natan, 25:2

<sup>78</sup> Talmud Bavli, Yevamot 63b

<sup>79</sup> Talmud Bavli, Taanit 16a; Mishneh Torah, Laws of Fasting 5:1; For an extensive discourse on repentance see Derech Chayim by Rabbi DovBer of Lubavitch, translated as The Way of Life. For a practical guide to repentance see his *Poke’ach Ivrim* translated as Opening the Eyes of the Blind.

<sup>80</sup> Zohar, Tikkunim, Tikkun 18, 33b – “One whose offering is blemished and not as it should be, it is given over to the dog, and his requests and supplications are pushed aside,” that is, they are given over to the external forces of evil (*Kelipot*).

<sup>81</sup> Talmud Bavli, Yoma 86b

for by giving your soul to *HaShem* with self-sacrifice, you are certain to affect great things thereby.

The righteous-*Tzaddikim* say little and do much.<sup>82</sup> For although the evil inclination makes the affliction difficult, by telling him that the suffering will be too long to endure, the *Tzaddik* answers that the time will pass quickly.

The following should be your practice during fast days: Sleep well on the first three nights in order to strengthen your mental faculties. However, do not sleep too much. Change the place where you sit, sometimes seating yourself in one place and sometimes in another place. Go for short walks and lay down for a short while afterwards, to minimize your affliction. When studying Torah during a fast, do so in thought only, without speaking, to minimize your suffering.

At times you may have dryness of mouth accompanied by a very bitter taste, and your evil inclination will tell you that the pain in your head is unbearable. However, if you place your trust in the kindness of the Creator, blessed is He, you will be strengthened and the pain will dissipate.

Have in mind to give satisfaction of spirit (*Nachat Ruach*) to the Creator, blessed is He, through your fasting and that you are accepting this affliction upon yourself in order to minimize the sorrow of the *Shechinah*. Serve *HaShem* with joy, keep in mind that the *Shechinah*-Divine Presence is sustaining you, and *HaShem*, blessed is He, will assist you.

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<sup>82</sup> Talmud Bavli, Bava Metziah 87a; Mishnah Avot 1:15

## 44

At times the evil inclination deceives a person, telling him that he transgressed a grave transgression, even though it is merely only a stringency, or not a sin at all. His intention is to bring a person to sadness through it, for as a result of depression he will be unable to serve the Creator, blessed is He.

Therefore, understand the duplicity in this, and tell the evil inclination, “I will not pay attention to the stringency you are telling me. You speak falsely and your only intention is to obstruct me from service of *HaShem*, blessed is He. Even if it is in fact a slight transgression, it will certainly give my Creator much greater satisfaction if I pay no heed to what you are saying to depress me in my service of *HaShem*. On the contrary, I will serve Him with joy, because, generally, my intention in this service is not for my own sake, but solely to give satisfaction to *HaShem*, blessed is He. This being so, although I am paying no heed to this stringency, my Creator will not treat me severely because of it. After all, the whole reason that I am not paying attention to it, is so that my service of *HaShem*, blessed is He, will not be obstructed, for, how can I be idle from His service for even a moment.”

## 45

Weeping is very bad, for *HaShem* must be served specifically with joy. However, weeping that arises from joy and adhesion to *HaShem*, blessed is He, is very good.

A person who is just starting out in the service of *HaShem* should not be overly scrupulous and stringent about everything he does. For, the intention of the evil inclination is to make you depressed by causing you to fear that you have not fulfilled your obligations in every detail. However, depression is a terrible and destructive quality that obstructs a person from the service of *HaShem*, blessed is He and must be avoided.<sup>83</sup>

Even if you actually did stumble and sin, God forbid, do not be overly depressed over it, thereby tearing down everything you have accomplished and giving up on yourself, because this causes you to refrain from progressing in your service of *HaShem*, blessed is He. Instead, be upset and ashamed about the sin before the Creator, beg Him to remove your wickedness, resolve never to revert to this foolishness again and return to rejoicing in *HaShem*, the Creator, blessed is He.

Even if you know, for certain, that you did not fulfill your obligation in a given matter, due to numerous obstacles, do not be depressed. Consider that *HaShem*, the Creator, blessed is He, “Examines the heart and innards”<sup>84</sup> and that He knows that you wanted to do your best but were unable. You should thus strengthen yourself and rejoice in the Creator, blessed is He.

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<sup>83</sup> See Shaarei Kedusha of Rabbi Chaim Vital, 2:4, translated as Gates of Holiness. Also see Tanya, Igeret HaKodesh, Epistle 11.

<sup>84</sup> Psalms 7:10

The verse states,<sup>85</sup> “It is a time to do for *HaShem*, they have abrogated Your Torah.” It is explained<sup>86</sup> that there are times in which the fulfillment of a *mitzvah* may contain an admixture of sin, but that, nevertheless, one must pay no heed to the evil inclination who wishes to prevent him from fulfilling it. Under such circumstances, tell the evil inclination: “In fulfilling this commandment, my intention was certainly not to anger the Creator, blessed is He, nor was it for my own honor. Had I known that the Creator does not desire that I do this, I would certainly not have done it. My only desire is to give satisfaction of spirit to *HaShem*, the Creator, blessed is He, through the fulfillment of this *mitzvah*.” With this, the evil inclination will withdraw from you, with *HaShem*’s help. Nonetheless, before doing something, use your intellect to discern whether or not you should do it.

All the above are very great and important principles that are, “More desirable than fine gold.”<sup>87</sup> Each of them is an important principle.

## 47

It states,<sup>88</sup> “Many have acted like Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, but were not successful.” The intention is that they wanted to undergo self-mortifications in order to attain the level

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<sup>85</sup> Psalms 119:126

<sup>86</sup> Talmud Bavli, Brachot 63a

<sup>87</sup> Psalms 19:11

<sup>88</sup> Talmud Bavli, Brachot 35b

of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai (Rashbi). This is why they were unsuccessful. One's intention in the service of *HaShem* should solely be to give satisfaction to the Creator, and nothing else. That is, your intention should not be to attain a lofty level of spiritual standing.

## 48

If a person sees that his own service of *HaShem* is greater than others, he should not be arrogant, God forbid. This is as stated in *Otiyot d'Rabbi Akiva*,<sup>89</sup> "One should not say in his heart, I am greater than my fellow."

## 49

Another important principle: If people mock you over your service in prayer or other matters, do not respond at all.<sup>90</sup> Do not even respond with positive words, so as not to be drawn into arguments or pride, which cause a person to forget the Creator, blessed is He. Our sages of blessed memory stated,<sup>91</sup> "A person's silence leads to humility."

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<sup>89</sup> *Otiyot d'Rabbi Akiva*, Letter Dalet (pg. 20)

<sup>90</sup> *Shulach Aruch*, *Orach Chayim* 1:1; *Mishneh Torah*, *Hilchot De'ot* 2:3

<sup>91</sup> *Shaarei Kedusha* of Rabbi Chaim Vital, 2:5, translated as *Gates of Holiness*.

## 50

When speaking with others, do not look at the face of anyone whose thoughts are not always bonded to *HaShem*, the Creator, blessed is he, for doing so can blemish the soul.

However, regarding the faces of those whose thoughts are always in a state of adhesion to *HaShem*, the Creator, blessed is He, make a point of looking at them and acquire holiness in your soul.

## 51

Your study of Torah should always be with strength and great joy. This helps diminish wrong thoughts.

## 52

When one serves *HaShem*, blessed is He, constantly, at all times, he has no free time to be prideful or to love pride, or any other bad character traits.

## 53

One should consider himself as if he does not exist, as it states in the Talmud<sup>92</sup> regarding the verse,<sup>93</sup> “Wisdom is found from nothingness.” The intention is that one should consider himself as if he is not in this world, in which case it is of no consequence to him whether he is important in the eyes of others or not.

## 54

When studying Torah, center yourself and realize before Whom you study. For at times, one’s studies can distance his mind from *HaShem*, the Creator, blessed is He. It therefore is necessary to re-center yourself at regular intervals, every hour or so.

## 55

If you have an impulse to do a particular *mitzvah*, see to making every effort to do so. Do not allow the evil inclination to dissuade you, by telling you that this is something exceedingly great, through which you will come to haughtiness. Even so, you should still do it and not be obstructed. However, be very cautious. Even if you are roused with pride while

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<sup>92</sup> Talmud Bavli, Sota 21b

<sup>93</sup> Job 28:12

performing the good deed, push it away with great strength and passion and, ultimately, you will certainly do it for the sake of *HaShem* alone, without any self-aggrandizement. As our sages said,<sup>94</sup> “One should always engage in Torah and *mitzvot*, even if not for the sake of *HaShem*. For, through fulfilling them not for the sake of *HaShem*, he will come to fulfill them for the sake of *HaShem*.”

Do as many *mitzvot* as you can, and *HaShem*, blessed is He, will assist you that it will be without self-interest. Nevertheless, you too must strengthen yourself in this matter, as much as possible.

## 56

When a person has an impulse to take on a fast of abstention, he must be careful not to be obstructed from fulfilling it, even though he knows it is better to serve *HaShem*, blessed is He, with joy and without self-affliction, which can lead to depression. Nevertheless, we assume that a person knows himself and is aware in himself that he needs to undergo a fast of abstention, because his soul has not been rectified, as fitting.

Likewise, there may be any number of things that he should be scrupulous about, such as taking on certain stringencies, because he knows his own nature, whereas others may not need to be as scrupulous regarding the same matters.

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<sup>94</sup> Talmud Bavli, Pesachim 50b

## 57

Before prayer, think in your mind that you are prepared to die during this prayer, due to the intensity of your devotion and intent. There are those who pray with such great devotion and intent that, according to the natural order, they should have died after even saying two or three words in the presence of *HaShem*, blessed is He. However, when you think this, say in your heart, “If I am willing to die after saying two or three words, why should I have any self-interest or arrogance in this prayer?”

In truth, it is a great kindness that *HaShem*, blessed is He, grants us the strength to complete the prayers and remain alive.

## 58

There is, “The flame of the ever-turning sword to guard the way to the Tree of Life.”<sup>95</sup> When a person wishes to adhere his thoughts to the Supernal Worlds; that is, to *HaShem*, the Creator, blessed is He, the external forces of evil (*Kelipot*) prevent him from doing so. Nonetheless, even though you are unable, push yourself with all your strength; many times during a single prayer, if necessary, until you bond to *HaShem*, the Creator, blessed is His Name. Through this you will enter into the Supernal Worlds. Strengthen your faith that, “The whole

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<sup>95</sup> Genesis 3:24

earth is full of His Glory,”<sup>96</sup> with complete faith, as stated,<sup>97</sup> “The righteous-*Tzaddik* lives by his faith.” (This is as experienced in the Supernal World)

Similarly, if you fall from your level of adhesion during that prayer, you should first say the words with less intention, according to your capacity, and then strengthen yourself to return to your previous level. If necessary, do this a number of times during a single prayer, at first bonding to the body of the word and then investing the word with soul.

You must first awaken yourself physically with all your strength, in order to illuminate the power of the soul in you, as Zohar states,<sup>98</sup> “A log that does not catch on fire should be splintered and will then ignite.” After this you will be able to serve *HaShem* in thought alone, without bodily motion.

## 59

At times, when a person is in a state of adhesion (*Dveikut*) to the Upper World, to the Creator, blessed is He, he must guard himself from making any movement at all, even the slightest movement of his body, so as not to cause his bond to *HaShem* to cease.

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<sup>96</sup> Isaiah 6:3

<sup>97</sup> Habakkuk 2:4

<sup>98</sup> Zohar Vol. 3, 166b; 168a

## 60

It is impossible to pray with great intention except by being strengthened. Therefore, before prayer, one must request help and assistance from *HaShem*, blessed is He.

## 61

Consider it good for you if *HaShem*, blessed is He, helps you to have proper devotional intention (*Kavanah*) for half or most of the order of prayers. If towards the end, your adhesion (*Dveikut*) is lost, what should you do? Pray with diminished intent, according to your capacity, until the end of the concluding prayer of *Aleinu*.

## 62

It states,<sup>99</sup> “If I am not for myself, who is for me, but if I am for myself, what am I?” During prayer, one must be divested of physicality, to the point of being unaware of existing in this world. This then, is the meaning of, “If I am not for myself.” That is, “When I am divested of physicality and am unaware of existing in this world, I then have no fear of extraneous thoughts. At such times extraneous thoughts cannot

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<sup>99</sup> Mishnah Avot 1:14

approach me, given that I am altogether removed from this world.” This explains the continuation of the verse, “Who is for me,” meaning, “In such a state, what extraneous thoughts could possibly come upon me?”

On the other hand, “If I am for myself,” in other words, “If I consider myself to be a tangible existence in this world, then on the contrary, I am considered to be nothing at all,” as it states, “Then what am I?” In other words, “In such a case, of what significance am I and of what worth is my service before *HaShem*, blessed is He? Because then, extraneous thoughts confuse me, and I become insignificant, as if I am not in this world. For, the primary purpose of the creation of man in the world is for the service of *HaShem*, but I am unable to serve Him correctly because of the extraneous thoughts that confuse me.”

## 63

If you wish to seclude (*Hitbodedut*) yourself with *HaShem*, you should have a friend with you. However, secluding yourself alone is dangerous. Rather, two people should be present in a single room, each one secluding himself with the Creator, blessed is He.

At times, when you are in a state of adhesion (*Dveikut*) to *HaShem*, it is possible to be in solitude with Him even in a house full of people.

## 64

Sometimes, when a person falls from his level by himself, it is because *HaShem*, blessed is He, knows that this is necessary for him. At other times, the environment can cause him to fall from his level. Nonetheless, the descent is for the purpose of ascent, so that he may come to an even greater level.<sup>100</sup> This is as stated,<sup>101</sup> “He will guide us unto death.” It is similarly written,<sup>102</sup> “And Avram descended to Egypt,” but later it states,<sup>103</sup> “And Avram ascended from Egypt.” Avram refers to the soul,<sup>104</sup> whereas Egypt refers to the external husks of evil (*Kelipot*).<sup>105</sup>

## 65

Hide your deeds so that it will not appear to others that you are acting in a way of piety-*Chassidut*. However, before attaining a high level of *Chassidut*, you should act openly, because if you do not, but instead openly act like the rest of the world, but inwardly desire to be a *Chassid*, it is possible to be drawn into the ways of the world. In such a case, your desire to

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<sup>100</sup> See Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 2, pg. 422-442.

<sup>101</sup> Psalms 48:15 – *Al Moot*-על מות, is translated literally here according to the context, although it can also be translated as “beyond death,” i.e. “eternally.”

<sup>102</sup> Genesis 12:10

<sup>103</sup> Genesis 13:1

<sup>104</sup> Zohar Vol. 1, 122b

<sup>105</sup> Zohar Vol. 1, 83a

serve for the sake of *HaShem*, can result in the opposite, that is, of not serving for the sake of *HaShem*.

## 66

Initially, when you want to pray, it should be with fear, for this is the entrance gate to *HaShem*'s presence, blessed is He. Say in your heart, "Who do I wish to bond to? To the One who creates all worlds out of nothing with His speech, who brings them into being and sustains them." Contemplate His greatness and exaltedness and then you will be able to enter the Upper Worlds.<sup>106</sup>

## 67

At times a person can only serve *HaShem* in a diminished state.<sup>107</sup> In other words, he does not ascend and enter the Upper Worlds at all. Rather, he simply contemplates the reality that, "The whole earth is filled with His Glory,"<sup>108</sup> and that therefore *HaShem* is close to him. At such times he is like a child who does not have a big intellect, but only a small

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<sup>106</sup> Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah 2:1-2 & 4:12; Talmud Bavli Brachot 28b; Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 98:1

<sup>107</sup> *Katnut*-diminished intellect. See Chapters 34 & 35 of *Shaar HaYichud* by Rabbi DovBer of Lubavitch translated as *The Gate of Unity* for lengthier explanations of *Katnut*-diminished intellect and *Gadlut*-expanded intellect. Also see *Kuntres HaHitpaalut* by the same author, translated as *Divine Inspiration*, for an expanded explanation of all levels of ascent of Divine Inspiration and *Dveikut*-adhesion.

<sup>108</sup> Isaiah 6:3

one. Nonetheless, even though he serves in this lesser state, he can serve with great adhesion to *HaShem*.

## 68

Prayer is like having marital union with the Divine Presence (The *Shechinah*). Just as at the beginning of marital union there is much movement, so likewise, at the beginning of prayer, rouse yourself with motion,<sup>109</sup> after which you will be able to stand motionless and adhere to the Divine Presence with tremendous adhesion (*Dveikut*).

Moving yourself can bring you to great arousal and awakening. Consider to yourself, “Why am I swaying back and forth? Because, the Divine Presence stands before me.” From the strength of this realization you will be roused to great passion.

## 69

If you are in a diminished state of consciousness (*Katnut*) but are nonetheless, in a state of great adhesion to the Divine Presence, if you then think of the Upper World, you can instantly be transported there. For, wherever a person’s thoughts are, that is where he is, and if you were not in the Upper World, you would not have had this thought.

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<sup>109</sup> This refers to “shuckling,” which means to sway back and forth, which initially increases the concentration, as mentioned.

## 70

When in a state of adhesion-*Dveikut* to *HaShem*, every word of prayer you say can become very elongated, because you are so bonded to it that you do not want to pull yourself away from it. It thus becomes elongated.<sup>110</sup>

## 71

If a person is praying and has a thought that is extraneous to the words of prayer, this means that the external husks of evil are riding upon the words of his speech, God forbid. This is the meaning of the verse,<sup>111</sup> “I have compared you (*Deemeteech*-דמיתייך), my beloved, to My horse in Pharaoh’s chariots.” That is, words are called “horses”<sup>112</sup> because they carry meaning and intention, just like a horse carries its rider. When Pharaoh, which refers to the extraneous thought, rides upon speech, then, “I have silenced you (*Deemeeteach*-דמיתייך), my beloved.”<sup>113</sup> In other words, you would be better off to be silent. In contrast, “Words that come

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<sup>110</sup> This does not necessarily mean elongation the words in speech alone, but in thought and all of one’s faculties. In other words, this is adhesion to the great illumination of the intent contained in the words and letters of the prayer, which act as vessels for the light. For example, our sages, of blessed memory stated, (Brachot 13b), “Whosoever lengthens the word “One-Echad-אחד” (of the *Shema* recital), his days and years will be extended,” referring to the contemplation and adhesion to the unity of *HaShem* in the heavens, the earth and the four directions of the world.

<sup>111</sup> Song of Songs 1:9

<sup>112</sup> (See Tikkunei Zohar, Tikkun 47, 84b, and elsewhere.)

<sup>113</sup> The word *Deemeeteach*-דמיתייך also means, “be silent.”

from the heart enter the heart,”<sup>114</sup> meaning that they enter the “upper heart” by means of the intellect,<sup>115</sup> as known.

## 72

If, at times, you are unable to pray with adhesion to *HaShem*, do not believe with certainty that you will be incapable of properly praying that day. Instead, strengthen yourself even more, and the fear of *HaShem* will fall upon you more and more.

This is analogous to a king who goes out to battle and disguises himself in different clothes, so that he will not be readily recognized. Those who are wise will recognize the king by the way he walks and his mannerisms. Those who are not as wise will locate the king by taking note of where there is heightened security.

In this same way, if you find that you are unable to pray with strong intent, know that there is added security surrounding the King. The King is here, but you are unable to approach Him because of the additional security surrounding Him. Therefore, strengthen yourself with fear, great exertion and concentration, to be able to approach and pray in His presence, blessed is He. You then will be able to pray with heightened intent (*Kavanah*).

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<sup>114</sup> Sefer HaYashar, Ch. 13

<sup>115</sup> See Shaar HaYichud of Rabbi DovBer of Lubavitch, Ch. 37, translated as The Gate of Unity.

## 73

“One should not stand in prayer except with heaviness of the head (*Koved Rosh*).”<sup>116</sup> The explanation is that you should not pray for what you lack, for then your prayer will not be accepted. Rather, when you wish to pray, pray concerning the, “Heaviness in the head (*Koved Rosh*).” That is, whatever you are lacking, that lacking also exists in the head, the *Shechinah*-Divine Presence, so to speak. For, man is a “Part of God from on High,”<sup>117</sup> and if there is a lacking in the particular, there is a lacking in the general whole, and the general whole feels the lacking in the particular. Therefore, your prayer should be concerning the lacking in the general whole. This is what is meant by, “Heaviness of the head (*Koved Rosh*).” Understand this well.

## 74

“The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit; he has ceased contemplating to do good.”<sup>118</sup> There are two types of wicked people. The first, is a completely wicked person who knows his Master and rebels against him intentionally. The second, is a person whose evil inclination has so blinded his eyes, that it appears to him that he is completely righteous.

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<sup>116</sup> Mishnah Brachot 5:1; Talmud Bavli, Brachot 30a. This is usually translated, “with seriousness.”

<sup>117</sup> Job 31:2

<sup>118</sup> Psalms 36:4

More so, he may even appear to be completely righteous in the eyes of others. However, in truth, although he may study Torah constantly, pray and afflict himself, it all is in vain, for he lacks adhesion to *HaShem*, the Creator, blessed is He, and does not have the complete faith necessary to bond to *HaShem*, blessed is He, at all times. Nor does he know the fundamentals of proper service of *HaShem*; to study His Torah, pray to Him and fulfill His commandments, solely for the sake of *HaShem*.

The difference between them is that the completely wicked person can ascend and be healed of his infliction. That is, when he is roused to repentance-*Teshuvah* and returns to *HaShem* with all his heart, begging *HaShem*, blessed is He, to show him, “The way in which light dwells.”<sup>119</sup> The second person, on the other hand, has no possibility of repair. For his eyes are shut from beholding the Creator, blessed is He, His greatness and the way to serve Him. In his own eyes, he is perfectly righteous, so how can he repent?

This is why when the evil inclination lures a person to sin, he often makes it appear that he is fulfilling a positive *mitzvah*, so that he will never come to repent.

This is hinted at in the verse, “The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit.” That is, the evil inclination deceives a person by making it appear that the sin he is doing is a *mitzvah*, and therefore, “He has ceased contemplating to do good.” In other words, he will cease from ever repenting, as explained above.

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<sup>119</sup> Job 38:19

An even greater deceit is in the next verse, “On his bed he devises iniquity.”<sup>120</sup> In other words, in this too, the evil inclination deceives him. That is, when he lays on his sickbed, he prays to *HaShem*, blessed is He, to heal him in the merit of his Torah learning and the many *mitzvot* he fulfilled, without realizing that, in actuality, he is mentioning his sins, all of which were the enticements of the evil inclination.

## 75

Rabbi Yisroel Baal Shem Tov said: The verse states,<sup>121</sup> “Make a light (*Tzohar*-צָהָר) for the ark (*Teivah*-תִּיבָה).” That is, the word-*Teivah*-תִּיבָה that you speak, should illuminate-*Matzhir*-מַצְהִיר all things.<sup>122</sup>

For, every letter you utter contains worlds, souls, and Godliness, and together they ascend and unify with Godliness. The letters then unify and connect with each other, becoming a word, and they unify with true unity to Godliness. A person must therefore include his soul in all these aspects. Then all the worlds become unified as one and ascend, causing immeasurable joy and great delight.

This then, is the meaning of the continuation,<sup>123</sup> “You shall make it with lower, second and third stories.” These refer to worlds, souls, and Godliness, for “The Holy One, blessed is

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<sup>120</sup> Psalms 36:5

<sup>121</sup> Genesis 6:16

<sup>122</sup> Although in the verse the word *Teivah*-תִּיבָה refers to the Ark of Noah, the term *Teivah*-תִּיבָה also means a “word.”

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

He, has three worlds within which He is concealed.”<sup>124</sup> In every word you speak, listen to what you are saying, for the Divine Presence (*Shechinah*), the World of Speech, is speaking. However, this is only so, if your speech has light-*Tzohar*-צֹהַר; that it comes out with brilliance and with the intention of giving satisfaction to your Creator, blessed is He. One requires great faith to attain this level of speech, for the Divine Presence (*Shechinah*) is called, “firm faithfulness.”<sup>125</sup> On the other hand, a faithless person is called,<sup>126</sup> “A complainer who separates from the Master,” God forbid.

The continuation reads, “Complete it to a cubit above (*Amah*-אמה),” referring to the upper mother-*Imma*-אמה.<sup>127</sup> Or we can say that once a word has left your mouth, there is no need to keep it in mind any longer, because you cannot see its ascent to its lofty place, just as you cannot gaze at the sun. This is the meaning of, “finish it above.”<sup>128</sup>

Now, how is one to accomplish this? The verse says,<sup>129</sup> “Come, you and all your household into the ark-תיבה,” that is, put your body and all the power of your faculties into the word-*Teivah*-תיבה,” and think joyfully when you speak.

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<sup>124</sup> Zohar Vol. 3, 159a

<sup>125</sup> Isaiah 25:1; See also Pardes Rimonim, Shaar 23:1 and the citations there.

<sup>126</sup> Proverbs 16:28

<sup>127</sup> In other words, the faculty of speech is complete when it is connected above to the faculty of Understanding-*Binah*, which is called the Upper Mother-*Imma Ila'ah*.

<sup>128</sup> The words, תכלנה למעלה *Techalena LeMaalah*, can also mean that, “They dissipate above.” That is, once the words go above, they dissipate from your consciousness.

<sup>129</sup> Genesis 7:1

## 76

Rabbi Yisroel Baal Shem Tov taught: The verse states,<sup>130</sup> “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, and not your ways are My ways.” The explanation is as follows: The moment a person separates himself from *HaShem*, blessed is He, he immediately is worshiping idolatry. There is no middle ground in this, and this is the meaning of the verse,<sup>131</sup> “You turn aside, and serve other gods.”

Nevertheless, the Talmud states,<sup>132</sup> “One who sits and does not commit a transgression is considered as if he fulfilled a commandment-*mitzvah*.” This is the meaning of, “and not your ways are My ways.”<sup>133</sup>

## 77

When a person fasts or practices abstention, even from one Shabbat to the next, he should have no self-interest in it whatsoever, even slightly. He should not consider in his heart that he is doing something great by afflicting himself to such a great extent, and that he will become greatly refined through this abstention. (Such a fast is transferred to the side of evil – *Sitra Acharah*.) Instead, he should think in his heart, “What are

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<sup>130</sup> Isaiah 55:8

<sup>131</sup> Deuteronomy 11:16

<sup>132</sup> Talmud Bavli, Makkot 23b

<sup>133</sup> In other words, “If you desist and do not do your ways, I will consider it as if you did it My way.”

my deeds in comparison to the service of the angels, whose service of *HaShem*, blessed is He, is constant? Whereas, I am nothing more than a putrid drop and my end shall be to dust.”

## 78

At times, in the middle of a weekly fast, the evil inclination may try to overpower you by making you feel the great difficulty of your abstention, telling you that you cannot bear it. At such times, understand in your mind that the evil inclination zealously attempts to obstruct you from attaining a spiritual level, and this is why he harangues you so much.

If you are wise and overpower your evil inclination, at that moment you cause great things Above, as stated in Zohar,<sup>134</sup> “The Name of the Holy One, blessed is He, is sanctified and elevated when the side of evil (*Sitra Achara*) is broken and subjugated through a person’s toil in the service of *HaShem*.” The evil inclination therefore greatly desires to obstruct you from your abstention. However, if you overpower him, the side of evil (*Sitra Achara*) becomes extremely subdued.

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<sup>134</sup> Zohar Vol. 2, 68a.

## 79

At times, during a fast, Satan is given permission to cause you great anguish. This is in order to test whether you will stand in opposition and overpower the evil inclination. (If you are wise, you will cry out in supplication to *HaShem*, blessed is He, to grant you additional strength to overpower him. Certainly, *HaShem*, blessed is He, will grant you the strength to overcome, as our sages, of blessed memory, stated,<sup>135</sup> “One who comes to purify himself is granted assistance.”<sup>136</sup>) Later, when you complete your fast, you will no longer feel the great suffering you felt then.

You should also beg the Creator, blessed is He, for mercy, that He should strengthen your eyes from being damaged due to fasting and weeping.

## 80

Sometimes it is necessary to glance here and there in order to bond your thoughts to the Creator, blessed is He. This is due to the physicality of the body, which is a separating veil that covers the soul.

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<sup>135</sup> Talmud Bavli, Yoma 38b

<sup>136</sup> That is, the good inclination has an advantage over the evil inclination, provided that one comes to purify himself. For as our sages, of blessed memory, stated, “One who comes to defile himself is granted the opening to do so. One who comes to purify himself is granted assistance.” In other words, the evil inclination is only granted the opening, whereas the good inclination is granted assistance. (See *Ginat Egoz* of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Vol. 3, Section entitled “The explanation of the motion of mercy.”)

## 81

Bond yourself to the Creator, blessed is He, and when you are in a state of adhesion (*Dveikut*) to Him, make a point of asking about the needs of the household, doing something or speaking, specifically when you are in a state of adhesion (*Dveikut*). Even though it may not be something that must be done or spoken, do it anyways, in order to accustom yourself to bond to *HaShem*, blessed is He, in thought, even when you are involved in doing or speaking about physical matters. In this way, you will gradually accustom yourself to being in a state of adhesion to *HaShem*, at those times too. This is a very important principle.

## 82

How does a person merit adhesion (*Dveikut*) to *HaShem*, blessed is He? By secluding (*Hitbodedut*) yourself from others, by writing the secrets of the Torah, and through unifications (*Yichudim*) to *HaShem*, as known from the teachings of the Godly Rabbi Yitzchak Luria (the Arizal), of blessed memory. When involved in unifications (*Yichudim*), contemplate the greatness of *HaShem*, blessed is He, to the full extent of your ability.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> See the introduction to *Imrei Binah* by Rabbi DovBer of Lubavitch.

## 83

Moreover, be zealous to regularly rise at midnight, and to join night and day with Torah study or prayer.

## 84

It states in Sifra,<sup>138</sup> “Moshe said to the Jewish people: ‘Remove the evil inclination (*Yetzer Harah*) from your hearts, and let all of you be of one fear and one council, to serve in the presence of *HaShem*, the Ever Present One, blessed is He. Just as He is Singular in the world, so likewise, your service should be singularly devoted to Him.” This is a very important principle. That is, only have one thought in your service of *HaShem*, the Creator, blessed is He. This is as stated,<sup>139</sup> “And God has made it so that they should fear before Him,” and,<sup>140</sup> “God made man upright; but they have sought out many thoughts-*Cheshbonot*-השבנות.”<sup>141</sup> That is,<sup>142</sup> because of the, “many thoughts-*Machshavot Rabot*-רבות רבות,” a person becomes confused.

Thus, at all times, contemplate that everything in the world is filled with the Creator, blessed is He. This is as

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<sup>138</sup> Sifra, Shemini, Mechilta D’Miluim 2:6

<sup>139</sup> Ecclesiastes 3:14

<sup>140</sup> Ecclesiastes 7:29

<sup>141</sup> The word *Cheshbonot*-השבנות shares the same root as thought-*Machshavah*-מחשבה, as elucidated in Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as HaShem Is One, beginning of Vol. 3.

<sup>142</sup> Proverbs 19:21

stated,<sup>143</sup> “‘Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?’ Know that everything that is done through human thought and ingenuity is from the Creator, blessed is He. Even the most trivial of things that happen in the world come about through His Divine Providence, blessed is He. Therefore, if you wanted something, it should make no difference to you whether it came about or not, since everything is from the Creator, blessed is He, and He knows what is best for you.

Contemplate that everything is as nothing before *HaShem*, blessed is He, whether it is the world of the Celestial Spheres (*Galgalm*), the world of the angelic beings or the world of the Throne of Glory. All are as nothing before *HaShem*, blessed is He, for all are in the empty space where His light is constricted, in that He constricted (*Tzimtzum*) the revelation of Himself, and all were created with a single utterance.<sup>144</sup> This being so, why pursue any of the lusts of these worlds, since they all are merely one utterance of *HaShem*, blessed is He. Better to bond yourself to *HaShem*, the Creator, blessed is He, who is higher than all the worlds. His existence is essential, so why cleave to the nonessential?

This is the meaning of the statement in Zohar,<sup>145</sup> “Happy are the righteous-*Tzaddikim* who know to attach the desire of their hearts to the Supernal and Holy King. For, all the desires of their hearts are not for matters of this world and

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<sup>143</sup> Jeremiah 23:24

<sup>144</sup> The first utterance of creation, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,” is a general utterance that contained all of existence as one undifferentiated whole.

<sup>145</sup> Zohar Vol. 2, 134b

its vain lusts,” because, ultimately, all the worlds will be destroyed.<sup>146</sup> Therefore, always have it in mind to bond to *HaShem*, the Creator, blessed is He, with absolute and total love. Love Him more than anything in the world,<sup>147</sup> because any good thing that exists in the world is all rooted in Him, blessed is He.

Whatever it is you are doing, think to yourself, “I want to always give *HaShem* satisfaction and to serve Him always.” Always bond your thoughts to the Upper World, to *HaShem*, blessed is He. The meaning of this is hinted at in the verse,<sup>148</sup> “He shall not leave the Holy Sanctuary.” If, at times, you need to be involved in worldly matters, think of it as descending from the Upper World, like a person who leaves his home to go out, but intends to return as soon as possible. All along, he thinks, “When will I return home?” Always think about the Upper World, for that is your true home, with the Creator, blessed is He. Thus, even when you are involved in speaking of matters of this world, immediately reattach your thought to your primary adhesion, to *HaShem*, blessed is He. This is the meaning of what David said to his son Shlomo,<sup>149</sup> “I am going the way of all the earth,” that is, like a person who goes on the way, but his intention and desire is to return home as quickly as possible.

(This is a very lofty level. One must first purify his thoughts and soul, so that he can be in a constant state of

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<sup>146</sup> Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 97a

<sup>147</sup> Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Teshuvah 10:6

<sup>148</sup> Leviticus 21:12

<sup>149</sup> Kings I 2:2

adhesion (*Dveikut*) to the Upper World, to *HaShem*, blessed is He.)

## 85

A person should not say, “On Shabbat I will pray with devotion and intent, but not on the weekdays.” That is, do not be like servants who serve the King with zeal when He is present, but are lax in their service when He is not present. Such a person is not a faithful servant. In contrast, a faithful servant knows that being without the King is bad for him, so he pushes his way through all the security until he comes before the King. Even though he is dumbfounded in the Kings presence and is unfitting to come before Him, nonetheless, the King grants him his wish to be with Him, for He has very great mercy upon him.

## 86

A person should not say to himself, “When I am able to pray with passion I will do so, but if not, I will not force myself to pray with passion.” Rather, he should say the opposite! This is analogous to a King who comes to the battlefield in different clothing, so that he will not be recognized. Those who are close to the King recognize Him by his mannerisms. Those who are not close to the King do not recognize Him, but when they see that there is additional security in the place, they can assume that the King is there. It is the same way when you are unable

to properly pray. It means that there is additional security around the King, blessed is He, so that He is not openly revealed to you. This being the case, strengthen yourself to a greater degree, for the King is surely here, but is being concealed from you.

## 87

When praying, consider that you are going from hall to hall in the palace of the King in quest of His presence, and that if any thoughts other than this come into your mind, you will be banished from that hall. For at each hall you are judged whether you are worthy to enter.<sup>150</sup>

If, at first, you are unable to pray to *HaShem* with fervor (*Hitlahavut*), begin your prayer by sheer force of strength, until you are praying with fervor. However, when praying with fervor (*Hitlahavut*), be attentive to any thoughts that may arise in your mind that are not focused on *HaShem*, and determine their nature. If they are thoughts of wrong love, for example, lustful or licentious thoughts, immediately bring them back to their root, that is, love of *HaShem*, blessed is He.

For, there are seven general categories of thought, and no more, corresponding to the seven days of creation, each of which possess the aspects of evening (*Erev*-ערב) and morning (*Boker*-בקר).<sup>151</sup> The term evening-*Erev*-ערב shares the same

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<sup>150</sup> See Shaarei Orah of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, Shaar 1.

<sup>151</sup> Genesis 1; Also see Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Volume 2, pg. 320 and on, and the notes there.

root as admixtures-*Ta'aruvot*-תערובות, in that there is an admixture of foreign thoughts in your mind. The term morning-*Boker*-בקר shares the same root as visiting-*Bikur*-ביקור, in that you are visiting and seeking *HaShem*, blessed is He.

The seven aspects are thus love of *HaShem* (*Ahavah*) and its opposite, love of sin; fear of *Shem* (*Yirah*) and its opposite, foreign fear, for example hatred; glorification of *HaShem* (*Hitpa'arut*), and its opposite, foreign glorification, for example, self-glorification.

The same principle applies to the attributes of conquest (*Nitzuach*), and thanksgiving (*Hodayah*), and the aspect of foundations (*Yesodot*) which is a term of connection. Each of these includes ten aspects. Thus, every foreign thought, that is, a thought that is not focused on *HaShem*, gives vitality to the seven nations, God forbid.

This, then, explains the *Midrash HaNe'elam*, which states,<sup>152</sup> “When the Holy One, blessed is He, created the world, He saw that it could not be sustained and was tottering...The Holy One, blessed is He, said, ‘I am destined to bring forth a righteous *Tzaddik*, Avraham, who will love me,” referring to the quality of love of *HaShem* (*Ahavah*). “However, *Yishma'el* is destined to come from him,” referring to negative love. Thus, if you think a thought of foreign love, you are enlivening *Yishma'el* and the nine aspects that accompany him.

The same is true of *Yitzchak*, who is the attribute of fear of *HaShem*, and *Esav*, who is foreign fear, for example murder.

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<sup>152</sup> Zohar Vol. 1, 86b

Thus, if you think a thought of foreign fear, God forbid, you are enlivening Esav and the nine aspects that accompany him, God forbid.

However, if foreign love comes into your mind, regret it immediately and say in your heart, “What have I done? I have taken a portion of the world of thought and brought it into a place of filth and impurity!” This realization will subdue and lower you to the dust, and reduce the negative thought into nothingness-*Ein*. After this, you can return to the world of love of *HaShem* (*Ahavah*), by considering to yourself, “If I can have a love such as this, for example, the love of a woman, who is nothing more than a putrid drop, how much more so, must I love *HaShem*, blessed is He.”

Likewise, if you hear words of jest and they arouse you to joy, contemplate in your heart, “Is this not a tiny glimmer of the world of love of *HaShem* (*Ahavah*)?” Likewise, if you see or eat something you enjoy, contemplate in your heart, “Is this not a tiny glimmer of the world of pleasure of *HaShem*?” However, be very careful not to focus on the physicality of the pleasure, but instead,<sup>153</sup> “Then you shall delight over *HaShem*,” that is, in a way that is even higher than the letters of His Name, so to speak.<sup>154</sup> Instead, invest your whole self in that pleasure, with the realization that it is a glimmer of the world of pleasure of *HaShem*, and you then will come to the world of pleasure of

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<sup>153</sup> Isaiah 58:14

<sup>154</sup> See Ginat Egoz by Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Volume One, *The Gate of Intrinsic Being*. Also see the Chassidic discourse entitled “*Shiviti*-שׁוּיִתִּי” of the year 5720 by the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

*HaShem*. Thus, you can be sitting and eating here, but actually be in the world of pleasure of *HaShem*. Know therefore, that when a *Tzaddik* derives pleasure from this world, he draws forth the pleasure of *HaShem*, blessed is He, into all worlds.

Likewise, if you see something that causes you fear, say to yourself, “Why should I be fearful? Is he not a human being just like me? How much more so is this the case regarding a beast or wild animal! Is it not the awesome Creator, blessed is He, who is manifest in this thing? I should rather fear *HaShem* Himself!”

Likewise, in the matter of glorification (*Hitpa'arut*), if people honor and glorify you or if during prayer you feel a sense of pride and glory, in that people praise you for praying with such devotion, strengthen your fear of *HaShem*, and be embarrassed of such thoughts in His presence, blessed is He. Likewise, with the attribute of negative conquest (*Nitzu'ach*), conquer that attribute for *HaShem*, or alternately, according to your level of understanding, consider yourself conquered by *HaShem*. Do likewise with the attributes of thanksgiving (*Hodayah*) and bonding. Bond yourself to *HaShem* only, blessed is He.

## 88

Have compassion for the Divine Presence (*Shechinah*) and do not speak words that are disconnected from *HaShem*, blessed is He. The natural outcome of speaking in the presence of *HaShem* is that the fear of *HaShem* will fall upon you, for the world of speech is the world of fear of *HaShem*. Thus, if you speak before Him with love and fear, you will be overcome by fear, but if you continue in this way, you will come to an arousal of great fervor (*Hitlahavut*) thereby.

## 89

If an extraneous thought falls into your mind during prayer, be very ashamed, for you have been pushed out of the palace of the King. Therefore, return to the palace with great shame and submission. For, extraneous thoughts are transgressions equivalent to giving birth to an illegitimate child (*Mamzer*), as in the expression,<sup>155</sup> “A ewe comes from a ewe, and as the mother is, so is her daughter.” For, just as thought consists of masculine and feminine aspects, so likewise, voice and speech are masculine and feminine in nature.

Thus, if you have extraneous thoughts while speaking the holy words of prayer, it is as if you have given birth to an illegitimate child. That is, externally, a *Mamzer* has the form

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<sup>155</sup> Talmud Bavli, Ketubot 63a

of a proper person, but the very inception of his being was negative. In like manner, your words of prayer consist of holy letters, but the thought invested in them is negative. For, you are thinking something other than *HaShem*, and thus give birth to an illegitimate product of holy speech.

Moreover, consider it as though the Holy One, blessed is He, is saying to you,<sup>156</sup> “Why have I come, and there is no man?” That is, “Why have you mentioned Me” with your words, but the thought of Me is not in your words? For, your thoughts have wandered off to other matters.

## 90

The verse states,<sup>157</sup> “You fill their belly with Your concealed treasure-*Tzefuncha*-צפונך, they are sated with sons and bequeath the leftover to their babies”<sup>158</sup> Do not gaze at physically beautiful objects and certainly, do not gaze at beautiful women, because, in doing so, you feed your lusts. Ultimately, this is self-worship and is tantamount to idolatry.

Moreover, by entertaining such thoughts, you are liable to transgress at night, God forbid, thus impregnating and strengthening the husks (*Kelipah*) of evil with vitality, God forbid. This is the meaning of, “Your concealed treasure-*Tzefuncha*-צפונך.” In other words, “You gaze-*Tzofeh*-צופה for

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<sup>156</sup> Isaiah 50:2

<sup>157</sup> Psalms 17:14

<sup>158</sup> This verse is usually translated, “You fill their belly with concealed treasure, they are sated with sons, and they bequeath their abundance to their babies.”

selfish pleasure.” That is, gazing at the beauty of a woman is called, “**your** gazing-*Tzefuncha*-צפונך,” in that you gaze at her to pleasure yourself and thus strengthen the external husks.

Moreover, if this is done before conceiving a child, the child will be rooted in the power of the external husks (*Kelipah*), God forbid. This accords with the teaching of Rabbi Yitzchak Luria (the Arizal),<sup>159</sup> of blessed memory, about the verse,<sup>160</sup> “Honor your father and your mother,” that it,<sup>161</sup> “includes your elder brother.” The reason is because the elder brother is like the largest branch of a tree, which puts forth an additional branch. We thus find that the branch that comes out of the first branch derives its vitality from the first branch. Thus, the younger brother derives his vitality from the older brother.

Accordingly, if during conception, one’s main strength is invested in the external husks of *Kelipah*, and a child is subsequently born of this, then the external husks are likened to the first child, so to speak, and the child that is born is secondary to them and derives its vitality from them. In other words, by doing so, you invest your primary strength into the external husks, whereas the child that is born is merely additional-*Yitron*-יתרון to it. This, then, explains the continuation of the verse, “and bequeath the leftover-*Yitron*-יתרון to their babies.”

Instead, the following is how you should conduct your faculty of sight: If you inadvertently see a beautiful woman,

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<sup>159</sup> Likkutei Torah of the Arizal and Shaar HaPesukum, Parshat Vayera.

<sup>160</sup> Exodus 20:11

<sup>161</sup> Talmud Bavli, Ketubot 103a

contemplate to yourself, “Where does her beauty come from? If she were a corpse, her face would not be beautiful, but the opposite. This being the case, her beauty is not her own, but rather, what gives her beauty of form and complexion, is the Godly vitality that enlivens her. Clearly, the root of her beauty is the Godly vitality. Why then should I be drawn after that which is secondary? Better to adhere to the root and source of all worlds, that is, to He who is the source of all beauty and from Whom all beauty is found, *HaShem*, blessed is He.”

The same applies to seeing any beautiful object. Contemplate to yourself, “Where does the beautiful form of this thing come from? Certainly, its substance (*Chomer*) is dross, and its beautiful form (*Tzurah*) comes from the spiritual vitality invested in it, which is, ‘a Godly portion from Above.’”<sup>162</sup> Because, in reality, the vitality of all physical things is the “Godly portion from Above.”

Likewise, when you eat, you should contemplate that, “The flavor and sweetness of this food comes from the power of vitality and Sweetness Above, that vitalizes it. Even an inanimate object has vitality, as is clear that even inanimate objects are sustained in their existence.” We thus find that every place and every thing contains Godly vitality from Above.

If you observe the world in this way, you will notice that, by doing so, you actually are seeing with your intellect, and that whatever you see is in order to serve *HaShem*, the

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<sup>162</sup> Job 31:2

Infinite One, blessed is He, through the contemplation of this sight. This then, is a beneficial way to nullify the power of extraneous thoughts.

If you think in this manner throughout the day, then, “What one thinks during the day will ascend into his thoughts while sleeping and dreaming.”<sup>163</sup> Thus, through doing so, you will merit to behold the actual vitality of the physical things you saw, while you dream. For during the day, even though you contemplate the spiritual aspect of what you see, nonetheless you only see the physical. However, in a dream, you see the spiritual aspect itself, divested of its external garb.

The reason is because the term for dreaming-*Chalom*-חלום is of the same root as the phrase, “At times strong-*Eeteem Chalim*-עתיים חלים,” and is a term of strength. This is because during the day, the Godly vitality vested in you is weak, for it is bound to the physicality of the body. Therefore, you cannot see the spiritual vitality of physical things. At night, however, the spiritual vitality spreads from its limitation in the body and the vitality is strong. You can then see the vitality itself.

Thus, through training oneself to think in this way, a person can even attain a level of prophecy, as it states regarding all prophets other than our teacher, Moshe,<sup>164</sup> “I speak with him in a dream.” In contrast, Moshe was able to see the vitality invested in the physical even in a waking state.

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<sup>163</sup> Talmud Bavli, Brachot 55b

<sup>164</sup> Numbers 12:6

About this, King David, peace be upon him, continued the Psalm,<sup>165</sup> “But as for me, in righteousness I shall envision Your face; I am sated by Your image when awake.” That is, the vision of “Your face-*Panecha*-פניך” (referring to the inner aspect-*Panim*-פנים) is at night. For the term, “Envision-*Echezeh*-אחזה,” refers to the “Vision of the night-*Chezyon Layla*-חזיון לילה.”<sup>166</sup>

Now, how is this possible? Because, “I am sated by Your image when I am awake.” The word, “Your image,” refers to the inner form (*Tzurah*). In other words, “When I gaze at physical things, I do not gaze at their physicality alone, but, with my mind’s eye, I gaze at their inner image, that is, the inner form and vitality, which is Yours, and is manifest in that physical thing.”

This then, is the meaning of the verse,<sup>167</sup> “A wise man’s eyes are in his head-*Rosh*-ראש,” meaning that the wise man looks at the head of a thing, that is, at its beginning-*Rosh*-ראש. In other words, he sees the spirituality and vitality of it. About this it states,<sup>168</sup> “From the beginning-*Rosh*-ראש Your word is True,” and,<sup>169</sup> “You are exalted as head-*Rosh*-ראש over all,” which the *Zohar*<sup>170</sup> interprets to mean, “You are the beginning of all beginnings-*Reisha D’Khol Reishin*.”

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<sup>165</sup> Psalms 17:15

<sup>166</sup> Job 33:15

<sup>167</sup> Ecclesiastes 2:14

<sup>168</sup> Psalms 119:160

<sup>169</sup> Chronicles I 29:11

<sup>170</sup> *Zohar* Vol. 3 10b, 11a, 289b

(Whatever you see, remember *HaShem*. If you see something masculine, recall the Singular Name *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, which is the aspect of love. If you see something feminine, recall the name My Lord-*Adona*"ג-אדני, blessed is He, which is the aspect of fear, as explained elsewhere.<sup>171</sup>)

## 91

At times a person must exhibit arrogance before others, for the glory of the Creator, blessed is He, and His Torah. This is as our sages, of blessed memory, stated,<sup>172</sup> "A Torah Scholar must have one-eighth of one-eighth of arrogance." However, while doing so, he must be extremely careful to contemplate his own lowliness. He should say in his heart, "In truth, I am very lowly, and the only reason I am now exhibiting pride is for the honor of *HaShem*, the Creator, blessed is He. However, I have no need of any pride for myself, since<sup>173</sup> 'I am but a worm, and not a man.' What need then do I have for pride?"

## 92

Pride, even the slightest thought of it, is a very grave matter, for all selfish motives stem from pride. Since every thought is a complete stature, prideful thoughts cause great

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<sup>171</sup> For a more complete elucidation of these names, see Ginat Egoz of Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Volume 1.

<sup>172</sup> Talmud Bavli, Sotah 5a

<sup>173</sup> Psalms 22:7

blemish Above, and through one's pride he pushes away the manifestation of the Divine Presence-*Shechinah*. This is as stated,<sup>174</sup> "Whoever is prideful is detestable to *HaShem*."

## 93

When you speak *HaShem's* Torah to others, begin by connecting yourself, in thought, to *HaShem*, blessed is He, and realize that, like you, the soul of your friend is also connected to *HaShem*. For, every person only lives from *HaShem's* influence of lifeforce, the lifeforce in all creatures.

In your mind, consider yourself to be speaking in *HaShem's* presence only, blessed is He, to give Him satisfaction of spirit, and think to yourself, "I am not saying these words to impress my fellow, for what difference would his praise or ridicule make to me?"

## 94

"In all your ways, know Him-*Da'ehu*-דעהו." This is a very great principle. The word *Da'ehu*-דעהו, means bonding-דע the second *Hey*-ה of *HaShem's* name-יהו"ה to the *Vav*-ו of His name, in all your actions, even physical actions. That is, bonding the Holy One, blessed is He (ו) and His Divine presence-*Shechinah* (ה) in everything you do.

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<sup>174</sup> Proverbs 16:5

## 95

Another important principle: Your service of *HaShem* should be only for the sake of *HaShem* above and not for any other reason whatsoever, such as self-interest. Even the tiniest bit should not be for self-interest, but only for the sake of Heaven.

## 96

It is related in the name of the Baal Shem Tov: It states,<sup>175</sup> “Warm yourself by the fire of the sages, but beware of their coals (*Gachalatan*), lest you be singed... for all of their words are like coals of fire (*Gachalei Aish*).” We must ask the following question: If the meaning of, “*Gachalatan*-their coals,” refers to “burning coals,” why then does the end of the verse further elucidate, “coals of fire-*Gachalei Aish*”? On the other hand, if “*Gachalatan*-their coals” refers to “dimmed coals,” why must we be warned to beware of being singed?

The Baal Shem Tov answered as follows: At times, even a perfectly righteous *Tzaddik* may fall from his level and serve *HaShem*, blessed is He, in a diminished state of awareness (*Katnut*). In other words, he may not pray with such great devotional intent (*Kavanah*) and may sometimes even be idle. Another person might come along and see the righteous *Tzaddik* in this state, praying and studying Torah without much devotion

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<sup>175</sup> Avot 2:10

and intent or being idle. He may think to himself, “If the Tzaddik conducts himself in this way, then how much more in respect to myself.” The Mishnah therefore warns us not compare ourselves to this Torah Scholar and *Tzaddik*. For, when the *Tzaddik* awakens from his slumber and begins to study Torah and pray as before, he will elevate all his idle words and deeds. You, however, are a simple person and know nothing of the mysteries of service of the Creator, blessed is He. How can you compare yourself to him?

This, then, is the meaning of “beware of their coals (*Gachalatan*), lest you be singed.” In other words, even when they have fallen from their elevated level, at which point they are compared to dimmed coals, speaking idle words or involved in other idle matters, one should be careful not to learn from this or apply such behavior to oneself. For, “All of their words are like coals of fire (*Gachalei Aish*),” meaning that even their idle words are like coals of fire, which will be elevated when they awaken from their slumber and return to their level, as explained above.

## 97

It states,<sup>176</sup> “If I am not for myself, who is for me?” During prayer, one must be divested of physicality. This is the meaning of, “If I am not for myself.” That is to say, when “I am divested of physicality,” then “who is for me?” That is, “I

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<sup>176</sup> Mishnah Avot 1:14

will certainly be unafraid of extraneous thoughts.” The Mishnah continues, “But if I am for myself, then what am I?” In other words, “when I am self-aware, then I will be beset by many extraneous thoughts.”

The statement,<sup>177</sup> “If I am here, everything is here, and if I am not here, who is here?” may be understood in the same vein.

## 98

It states,<sup>178</sup> “Every clever person acts with knowledge, but the fool broadcasts (*Yifros*-פירוש) his foolishness.” The explanation is that a wise person even conducts his mundane affairs, such as business transactions, with knowledge-*Da’at*. The term knowledge-*Da’at*-דעת refers to adhesion to *HaShem*, blessed is He, as it states,<sup>179</sup> “and Adam knew-*Yada*-ידע Eve.” It also states,<sup>180</sup> “Know-*Da*-דע the God of your father, and serve Him with a complete heart,” meaning, cleave to the God of your father always, in all your deeds. The fool, however, conducts himself foolishly, so that even if he separates himself-*Parush*-פרוש from matters of this world, by praying and studying Torah constantly, he remains a fool. For, he studies and prays without adhesion (*Dveikut*) to *HaShem*, the Creator, blessed is He, but

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<sup>177</sup> Talmud Bavli, Sukkah 53a

<sup>178</sup> Proverbs 13:16

<sup>179</sup> Genesis 4:1

<sup>180</sup> Chronicles I 28:9

only for his self-aggrandizement, so that he should be called rabbi. He thus remains a fool.

## 99

It states,<sup>181</sup> “The *Tzaddik* knows-*Yode'ah*-יודע his animal soul.” The explanation is that he even binds his animal soul to the service of the Creator, blessed is He. For, the term “knows-*Yode'ah*-יודע” is a term of binding and adhesion.

## 100

It is related in the name of the Baal Shem Tov: The verse states,<sup>182</sup> “*Yissachar*-יששכר is a strong boned-*Garem*-גרם donkey-*Chamor*-חמור.” This may be interpreted as follows: “There is reward-*Yesh Sachar*-יש שכר by the physical substance-*Chomer*-חומר being caused-*Garem*-גרם to serve *HaShem*.”

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<sup>181</sup> Proverbs 12:10

<sup>182</sup> Genesis 49:14

**Teachings of the Baal Shem Tov,  
related in the name of his successor,  
The Saintly Rabbi DovBer,  
The Holy Maggid of Mezeritch**

**101**

At the time of marital relations, your I-ניא must be nothing-ניא. This is the meaning of the statement,<sup>183</sup> “Abaye drove away flies,” meaning that during relations, he did not think of himself to even be like a fly.

Consider yourself as an instrument in the hand of *HaShem*. For example, the craftsman strikes the hammer on the rock according to his desire. The hammer itself has no desire to strike the stone, for if it did, it would be acting separately from the craftsman, which it cannot do. So also, our limbs only act according to the influence of the intellect, which originates the action.

This being the case, consider all your limbs and organs to be instruments in the service of *HaShem*, blessed is He. For example, to serve *HaShem* you need to eat, which is only possible through the medium of the organs of your digestive system. However, eat to serve *HaShem* with a healthy body, rather than to satisfy your lust. Instead, love nothing but

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<sup>183</sup> Talmud Bavli, Nidah 17a

*HaShem*, blessed is He, and His *mitzvot*, and all your actions will be for His sake only.

The same is true of marital relations, which are necessary to fulfill the *mitzvah* of establishing the next generation. This is only possible through relations between male and female. However, since both you and your wife are instruments in the hands of *HaShem*, the marital relations should be for the love of *HaShem* and His *mitzvot*, blessed is He, rather than to fulfill lust. Therefore, your love of your wife should be like your love of your *Tefillin*, through which you bind your heart and mind to *HaShem*. That is, bonding to your wife during marital relations is compared to binding the *Tefillin* to your arm and head, thereby bonding your heart and mind to *HaShem*, blessed is He, and both are His *mitzvot*.

Therefore, do not have lustful thoughts about your wife. To what can this be compared? To a person who needs to travel to the market and his only transportation is his horse. Is it fitting that he should therefore love his horse? Is there any greater foolishness than this? In the same manner, as long as a person is in this world, he requires a wife to fully serve His Creator and merit the world to come. If he places the primary matter, of serving His Creator, aside, and instead engages in lustful thoughts about his wife, is there any greater folly than this? He should be embarrassed and disgusted for thinking of her in such a way, for certainly, his wife is no less holy to him than his *Tefillin*.

Likewise, if you inadvertently see a beautiful woman, contemplate to yourself, “All I see of her is her physical body.

However, is it not the case that the whiteness of her flesh comes from the whiteness of the seed of her father and that the redness of her flesh is from the seed of her mother? If so, physically, she is nothing more than repugnant and repulsive blood and flesh!

In reality, her beauty comes from the seed of the “father,” which refers to *HaShem’s* Supernal Wisdom that is called the “Upper Father-*Abba*,” and from the seed of the “mother,” which refers to *HaShem’s* Supernal Understanding that is called the “Upper Mother-*Imma*-mother.” This is her true beauty. This being so, better to adhere to *HaShem*, the Creator, blessed is He, and to love and fear Him only.”

When sexual lust will become repulsive to you, all sin will become repulsive to you. The reason is because man is formed through the power of marital relations and he possesses 365-ה"ש sinews, corresponding to the 365-ה"ש prohibitions. Thus, if you negate and are repulsed by the primary source from which they all were formed, you negate and are repulsed by all 365-ה"ש prohibitions.

Rabbi Yisroel Baal Shem, peace be upon him, also said: Why is sexual lust so powerful? Because it is through its power that you were conceived! More so, all the pleasure you have from eating, drinking and other matters, originated in the drop of semen from which you were born, and it is because of this, that you connect to everything in a diminished state of awareness-*Katnut*. Better to bond to the Holy One, blessed is He.

## 102

The verse states,<sup>184</sup> “And *HaShem*-יהו"ה will be my God-*Elohi*"m-אלהי"ם.” This means,<sup>185</sup> “Know Him in all your ways,” that is, in whatever happens to you, whether for good or for bad. If something bad happens to a you, God forbid, contemplate to yourself, “Certainly, this is to atone for my sins.” A person who is a *Tzaddik* should even be concerned when good things happen to him, for perhaps his merits are being consumed and he is being cleaned of them. Thus, the verse, “And *HaShem*-יהו"ה will be my God-*Elohi*"m-אלהי"ם” means as follows: “Perhaps *HaShem*-יהו"ה, who is the attribute of mercy, is in fact, acting with me through the attribute of judgment, which is the title *Elohi*"m-אלהי"ם. Therefore, I cannot be satisfied with my former deeds, but must always strive to increase my merits and good deeds.”<sup>186</sup>

## 103

A person’s speech is his vitality, and his vitality is from *HaShem*, blessed is He. Thus, when he speaks words of goodness, his speech ascends and awakens the Supernal Speech to bestow greater beneficence upon him from Above. In

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<sup>184</sup> Genesis 28:21

<sup>185</sup> Proverbs 3:6

<sup>186</sup> See *Ginat Egoz* by Rabbi Yosef Gikatilla, translated as *HaShem Is One*, Volume One. Also see his *Sefer HaMashalaim*, translated as *The Book of Allegories*, Num. 70.

contrast, if he speaks wrong speech, his vitality is wasted and does not ascend above. Thus, it is as if his vitality is being cut off from him altogether, since he does not draw forth new vitality. This is similar to the common expression: “He has exhausted his speech.”

## 104

At times, *HaShem*, blessed is He, should be served with your soul alone, that is, in thought alone, while your body remains motionless, so that it will not become ill from overuse.

## 105

At times, a person can recite the prayers with love, fear and great fervor, without any physical movements. So much so, that it can appear to the casual bystander that he is simply reciting the words of prayer, without any adhesion (*Dveikut*) to *HaShem* whatsoever. This is only possible if he is in a state of great adhesion to *HaShem*, blessed is He. He then will be capable of serving *HaShem* with the intense love of his soul alone. This kind of service of *HaShem* is actually much better than prayer that is externally visible in the movement of the body, because it proceeds faster and with much greater adhesion (*Dveikut*) to *HaShem*. The external husks of evil (*Kelipah*) cannot attach themselves to such prayer, for it is entirely inner.

## 106

Rabbi Yisroel Baal Shem said: Even if you are clean of sin, if your body is ill, your soul is also weakened, and you will be unable to pray with adhesion to *HaShem*, as is fitting. Therefore, carefully take care of your physical health.

## 107

Joyous prayer is certainly greater and better received before *HaShem*, blessed is He, than a prayer of sadness and weeping.

An analogy for this is as follows: Although a pauper begs and petitions the king with much weeping, nonetheless, he is only granted a small gift. In contrast, when the governor of a province comes before the king, and recounts the praises of the king with great joy, and while doing so, also puts forth his request, in his case, the king grants him an abundant gift, as is befitting of a governor.

## 108

Contemplate that when you pray, *HaShem*, blessed is He, is encloded in the letters of your prayer. The explanation is as follows: We are incapable of knowing what someone is thinking unless he articulates it in speech. This shows us that

speech is a garment for thought. Think in your heart, “I am weaving a garment for the King, King of kings, the Holy One, blessed is He, and it is fitting that I do so with joy.” Pray with all of your strength, for through this you are unifying with *HaShem*, blessed is He. That is, your strength is en clothed in the letters of your prayer, and *HaShem*, blessed is He, is also en clothed in the letters. You thus are unifying yourself to *HaShem*, blessed is He.

## 109

It states,<sup>187</sup> “The Torah is concerned with the property of the Jewish people.” Why is this so? It is an important principle that a person benefits from the vitality invested in everything he wears, consumes or uses, for if not for the spiritual vitality vested in it, that thing could not exist. The sparks of holiness invested in it are related to the root of his soul. This is why one person can love something and another could despise it and love something else.

Thus, when you use an object or eat food, even if it is for the wellbeing of your body, you rectify and uplift the sparks of holiness in that object. This is because you then serve *HaShem* with the vitality that your body derived from that item, whether it is food, clothing or something else. They are rectified by the strength of your service of *HaShem*, blessed is He.

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<sup>187</sup> Talmud Bavli, Yoma 39a

This is why an item can sometimes be lost, because when the sparks relating to the root of your soul are completely rectified in that object, *HaShem*, blessed is He, takes it away and gives it to another, so that the other person can rectify the sparks in the object that relate to his soul.

Rabbi Yisroel Baal Shem Tov, peace be upon him, stated: “When you sit, eat and engage with others, you are engaging with the sparks of holiness in them. Therefore, it is important to protect your possessions and everything that you have, because of the sparks of holiness they contain.”

## 110

Serve *HaShem*, blessed is He, with fear and joy, for these are, “Two lovers who never separate.”<sup>188</sup> Fear without joy results from the dominance of the “black gall.” However, it is of no benefit to be anguished over how to best serve *HaShem*, blessed is He. Instead, always be joyful. Even at the moment you are anguished, you still must serve *HaShem*, and you do not have the time to dwell on how to best serve Him.

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<sup>188</sup> See Shaar HaYichud of Rabbi DovBer of Lubavitch, Ch. 6, translated as The Gate of Unity. With respect to this teaching, see the conclusion of the chapter which was transmitted from the Holy Maggid of Mezeritch.

The verse states,<sup>189</sup> “To love *HaShem*, your God, to follow in all His ways, and to adhere to Him.” Our sages, of blessed memory, asked,<sup>190</sup> “Is it possible to adhere to Him? Is He not a consuming fire? As written,<sup>191</sup> ‘For *HaShem*, your God, is a consuming fire.’ Rather, adhere to His attributes. Just as He is compassionate, so too, you be compassionate etc.”

The explanation is as follows: Serving *HaShem* with passion involves total adhesion to *HaShem*, blessed is He. However, it is impossible to always be on this level of adhesion. One is only capable of, “reaching it, but not reaching it” (*Mati V’Lo Mati*), like fire. That is, it is like fire, which when fanned, first seems to be extinguished, but then bursts into greater flames. Fire flickers, ascending and descending, and is in constant motion. In the same way, serving *HaShem* with passion is in a way of, “reaching it, but not reaching it” (*Mati V’Lo Mati*), because being in<sup>192</sup> “a constant state of pleasure is not pleasurable.”

Therefore, the Talmud asks, “Is it not written,<sup>193</sup> ‘For *HaShem*, your God, is a devouring fire?’” In other words, arousal of fervor and passion is temporary, since it is in a way of “reaching, but not reaching” (*Mati V’Lo Mati*), like fire. This being so, how is it possible to adhere to *HaShem*, blessed is He?

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<sup>189</sup> Deuteronomy 11:22

<sup>190</sup> Talmud Bavli, Ketubot 111b; Shabbat 133b; Sotah 14a

<sup>191</sup> Deuteronomy 4:24

<sup>192</sup> Moreh Nevuchim 3:24

<sup>193</sup> Deuteronomy 4:24

The resolution is to, “Adhere to His attributes,” meaning to His garments, which refers to the letters of the Torah. For, the letters of the Torah can be in one’s mind constantly, and the Torah is the garment of *HaShem*, blessed is He. Thus, even when speaking with others, one should think the letters of Torah, for the twenty-two letters of the Torah are also of the Holy One, blessed is He.

## 112

“Just as He is merciful-*Rachum*-רחום, you be merciful-*Rachum*-רחום.”<sup>194</sup> The word “merciful-*Rachum*-רחום” shares the same letters as “matter-*Chomer*-חומר.” This can be understood as follows: The Holy One, blessed is He, does not have mercy upon coarse and crude matter-*Chomer*-חומר. For refined and holy thoughts do not manifest in coarse substance. This is only possible if *HaShem*, blessed is He, constricts Himself to manifest within matter-*Chomer*-חומר. This is an act of great compassion-*Rachum*-רחום that He bestows upon us. However, what brings this about? It comes about when a person is compassionate-*Rachum*-רחום. The Holy One, blessed is He, responds to our compassion by enclothing Himself in His garment of compassion, so to speak, and bestows His compassion-*Rachum*-רחום upon us. This, then, explains the dictum, “Just as He is merciful, you be merciful,” in other words, compassion begets compassion.

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<sup>194</sup> Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 133b

## 113

Study Torah with strength and great joy. This minimizes wrong thoughts.

## 114

The verse states,<sup>195</sup> “Better is a lowly one who is His servant, than a pompous one who lacks bread.” The explanation is: There is no greater sign of true service of *HaShem*, the Creator, blessed is He, than knowing in yourself that you are lowly. Only then have you reached any level at all, and only then are you a servant of *HaShem*, blessed is He. In contrast, whoever is honorable in his own eyes, “lacks bread,” that is, Divine sustenance.

## 115

An analogy can be taken from ice, as follows: If there is extreme cold which then turns to moderate cold, the rivers stay frozen and we can pass over them, for the ice is strong and thick. If, however, we see that the ice is not strong, this is an indication that the original cold spell was not that cold.

Similarly, if you see in yourself that sometimes you serve *HaShem* with adhesion and sometimes you do not, know

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<sup>195</sup> Proverbs 12:9

with certainty, that until this point, you have not served *HaShem* as fitting. For if you truly served Him as fitting, even once, you would always serve Him this way.

## 116

The verse states,<sup>196</sup> “Righteousness will go before him, and set his footsteps on the way.” By way of reproof this is as follows: There are those that, on their way to do a *mitzvah*, such as praying, stop on the way to speak with others. Even though they subsequently do the *mitzvah*, their transgression is not to have done so with zeal. One such as this, incurs punishment after his passing, in a manner of “measure for measure.” It is stated in various works that after one passes, he is made to go over a very narrow bridge that traverses a river. This causes him great anguish, for he is filled with trembling and trepidation. To cross the bridge he must run quickly, however, in the middle of his crossing, the Holy One, blessed is He, sends an angel to impede him. This angel was actually created from *the mitzvah* that he did, because he caused the angel great pain. How so? The moment he thought to do the *mitzvah*, while still at home, the soul of the angel was created, and when he finally fulfilled it in actuality, he created its body. However, because he procrastinated in creating the body of the angel, by stopping and speaking with others, the angel comes to hinder him and delay his crossing.

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<sup>196</sup> Psalms 85:14

This then, is the meaning of, “Righteousness will go before him.” It is meant literally, because upon one’s passing from this world, all the *mitzvot* he has done pass before him. Therefore, see to it that when you go to do a *mitzvah*, do so with alacrity. Do not be lazy or procrastinate. Through this, your “footsteps will be set on the way,” and you will not be hindered from crossing the river.

## 117

The verse states,<sup>197</sup> “The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit; he has ceased contemplating to do good.” That is, “the words of the mouth” of the evil inclination “have ceased contemplating to do good.” To clarify, the evil inclination does not necessarily try to entice a person not to study Torah altogether, for he knows he will not likely listen to such council. Because, if he does not study Torah at all, he will not be important in people’s eyes and they will not consider him to be a learned scholar. Instead, the evil inclination entices him not to learn anything that may bring him to fear *HaShem*, such as works of ethical reproof (*Mussar*), or the Code of Jewish Law (*Shulchan Aruch*), to know what he must do with clarity. Instead, he entices him to only study Talmud with all its commentaries.

This then, is the meaning of, “He has ceased contemplating to do good.” That is, the evil inclination hinders

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<sup>197</sup> Psalms 36:4

him from engaging in study that will bring him to goodness, such as acquiring fear of *HaShem*.

## 118

When a person prays with all the deep intentions that he knows, he then is praying only with the intentions that he knows. However, if he says the words of prayer with great adhesion to *HaShem* (*Dveikut*), the words are automatically imbued with all their intentions, on their own. For, each and every letter, is an entire world. Thus, when he says the words of prayer with great adhesion to *HaShem*, it is certain to rouse the Supernal Worlds and effect great things thereby.

Therefore, see to it to pray to *HaShem* with great fervor and adhesion, for by doing so you are certain to effect great things in the Supernal Worlds, because each and every letter you utter causes arousal Above.

## 119

When studying Torah, contemplate that, as the Talmud states,<sup>198</sup> “The Holy One, blessed is He, has no place in His world, except for the four cubits of *Halachah*.”<sup>199</sup> Think in your heart, “*HaShem*, blessed is He, has constricted Himself into the

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<sup>198</sup> Talmud Bavli, Brachot 8at

<sup>199</sup> *Halachah* – Torah Law

Torah subject I am learning. It therefore is appropriate that I study with joy, fear, and love.”

## 120

I heard from Rabbi Yisroel Baal Shem, peace be upon him, that the reason “The World of Freedom – *Alma D’Cheiru*” is called this, is because even a slave that arrives there is set free.

The explanation is that everything in existence is an expression of the Holy One, blessed is He, through His attributes of love and fear, as known, except that the attribute of love is in exile and is manifest in physicality, such as the love of a woman or the love of food etc. If a person considers in his heart that this love is the garment of *HaShem*, and that he has separated *HaShem*, blessed is He, from His garment, he will tremble with great fear when he recalls any evil that he has perpetrated. He will be ashamed and disgraced. He should think to himself, “If I have love for this woman, which is only a fallen love, disconnected from *HaShem*, and is manifest in a putrid drop, how much more so should I love *HaShem*, blessed is He!”

He should do likewise regarding fear. If he is fearful of idolatrous heathens or of warfare, he should say in his heart, “Why should I be fearful of a human being who is like me? Certainly, the Creator, blessed is He, is manifest within this person. How much more so should I fear Him, blessed is He.” The same with the attribute of pride, and all the other attributes.

Likewise, if he hears others talking and disturbing his prayers, he should say to himself, “Why did *HaShem* bring this person here to speak while I am praying? This too is Divine Providence. Rather, speech is the Divine Presence (*Shechinah*), and it has manifested itself in the mouth of this person, so that I should strengthen myself in my service of *HaShem*, blessed is He. I must therefore strengthen myself even more in my prayer.” This certainly is so, if the one speaking is a gentile or a minor, in which case, the Divine Presence has constricted to be manifest in this person, so that I should strengthen my concentration during prayer. If so, I should quickly strengthen my concentration in prayer.

## 121

It states,<sup>200</sup> “There are four primary categories of damage: The ox (*Shor*-שׁוֹר), the pit (*Bor*-בוֹר), the tooth (*Mav’eh*-מִבְּעָה), and the fire (*Ba’er*-בְּעַר).” The ox-*Shor*-שׁוֹר shares the same root as the term “I behold him-*Ashurenu*-אֲשׁוּרֵנוּ,”<sup>201</sup> and thus refers to lustful gazing. This kind of sight causes a person great damage. The “pit-*Bor*-בוֹר” refers to an<sup>202</sup> “uncultivated field-*Sdei Boor*-שְׂדֵה בּוֹר,” that has not been plowed or sown. This refers to a person who does not study Torah, but goes about idly. “*Mav’eh*-מִבְּעָה” means “teeth,” and refers to a person who eats with no restraint. “Fire-*Ba’er*-בְּעַר”

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<sup>200</sup> Talmud Bavli, Bava Kamma 2a.

<sup>201</sup> Numbers 23:9

<sup>202</sup> Talmud Bavli, Bava Kamma 81b

refers to anger, that is, to a person who boils over with anger, like fire.

## 122

It states in the Mishnah,<sup>203</sup> “Rebbi said: which is the straight path that a person should choose for himself? That which is honorable to himself and brings him honor from others. Be careful with a light *mitzvah* as with a major one, for you do not know the reward of the *mitzvot*.” The explanation is as follows: “Which is the straight path that a person should choose-שיבור” may be interpreted as, “Which is the straight path that a person should avoid,” for the term *SheYavor*-שיבור also means, “empty,” as in the verse,<sup>204</sup> “And the pit-בור was empty,” which is to be avoided. It then continues and answers, “That which honorable to himself.” That is, he does the *mitzvah* in a hidden manner so that others should not know about it, but in his heart, he thinks to himself that he is an exemplary servant of *HaShem*, and is proud of it. This is certainly so regarding a person who does *mitzvot* openly, “to bring honor from others.” This refers to a person who fulfills *the mitzvot* openly to receive honor from others, that is, so that others should consider him to be God fearing. Both these characteristics must be avoided.

If you follow this advice, you will, “be as careful with a light commandment as with a major one.” For, “You do not know the reward of the *mitzvot*,” meaning that you will not take

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<sup>203</sup> Mishnah Avot 2:1

<sup>204</sup> Genesis 37:24

the reward of the *mitzvot* into consideration, but do them solely to give satisfaction to your Creator, *HaShem*, blessed is He. However, if you are looking for honor, you will examine whether it is a light *mitzvah* or not and you will do a major one, because you think it will give you more honor.

## 123

It states,<sup>205</sup> “Three books are opened on *Rosh HaShanah*: One for the completely wicked (*Resha'im Gemurim*), one for the completely righteous (*Tzaddikim Gemurim*), and one for the intermediates (*Beinonim*).” The “completely righteous” refers to those whose every word is words of holiness, such as prayer and Torah study. That is, they unify the world speech with the world of thought. One must have faith that certainly all his prayers and Torah study unify the world of speech with the world of thought, when done with intention (*Kavanah*) and adhesion. Although his requests may not be answered, nonetheless, he prays with arousal from below and unifies the world of speech with the world of thought, causing this Above as well. Thus, the “completely righteous” refers to those whose entire intent is to unify the world of speech with the world of thought.

It is in this respect that our sages, of blessed memory, stated,<sup>206</sup> “One should not stand to pray except from a state of gravity of mind (*Koved Rosh*).” When one prays with intent,

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<sup>205</sup> Talmud Bavli, Rosh HaShanah 16b

<sup>206</sup> Mishnah Brachot 5:1; Talmud Bavli, Brachot 30a

then *HaShem*, blessed is He, is glorified in the world of speech, and His glory is thus drawn into all the worlds, and is drawn down upon the one who prayed as well. However, he must be careful not to sever his adhesion (*Dveikut*) by thinking about the glory that is bestowed upon him or about how he is praying with great intention (*Kavanah*).

“Intermediates-*Beinonim*” refers to those who, during prayer, have the intention in mind that *HaShem* should fulfill their requests and satisfy their physical needs in this world. These requests, “remain suspended until Yom Kippur,”<sup>207</sup> referring to the world of thought, which is called Yom Kippur. In other words, they remain suspended and dependent upon the intention. If their request for their physical needs is for the sake of Heaven, so that they will have the freedom to serve *HaShem*, blessed is He, then they are inscribed for life, because through this intention they unified the world of speech with the world of thought.

In other words, the term, “Three books-*Sefarim*” here, refers to speech.

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<sup>207</sup> Talmud Bavli, Rosh HaShanah 16b

The verse states,<sup>208</sup> “And these are the names of the Children of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob, each man and his household came. Reuven, Shimon, Levi etc.”

Rabbi Yisroel Baal Shem, may his memory bring eternal blessing, explained the following verse,<sup>209</sup> “O God! The nations have entered Your inheritance. They have defiled the Sanctuary of Your Holiness, they have turned Yerushalayim into heaps of rubble. They have given the corpse of Your servants as food for the birds of the sky, the flesh of Your devout ones to the beasts of the earth.” This means as follows: In this world, exile is brought to the world because, “They have turned Yerushalayim-ירושלם into heaps of rubble.” In other words, when a person comes to attain fear-*Yirah*-יראה or otherwise becomes perfected-*Shalem*-שלם in the fulfillment of a *mitzvah*, and he thereby becomes prideful, he is taking his perfected fear-*Yirah Shalem*-יראה שלם and turning it into heaps of rubble. That is, the term, “heaps of rubble-*Eeyeem*-עייים” refers to large and high heaps. If he then studies Torah or prays, he turns his Torah and prayers into a lyre-*Naval*-נבל or a harp. In other words, he does so without love and fear of *HaShem*. Instead, it is like someone playing music on his lyre-*Naval*. This causes all his service to go to the external forces of impurity (*Kelipot*), God forbid. About this the verse continues, “They have given the corpse-*Nivlat*-נבלת of Your servants as

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<sup>208</sup> Exodus 1:1-2

<sup>209</sup> Psalms 79:1-2

food for the birds of the sky,” which refers to the external forces of impurity (*Kelipot*). This, then, explains the verse, “They have given the corpse-*Nivlat*-נבלת of Your servants as food for the birds of the sky, the flesh of Your devout ones to the beasts of the earth.”

Now, the same can be said about this verse too. “And these are the names-*Shemot*-שמות...” This verse may be interpreted as follows: “Who caused the exile and desolation-*Shemamon*-שיממון of Israel coming to Egypt-*Mitzrayim*-מצרים?” That is, who caused the constrictions-*Metzar*-מצר of exile? The verse continues and explains, “It was Reuven...” That is, it is when a person does a *mitzvah* and says in his heart, “See now the difference between me and others-*Re’u Bein*-ראו בין, and how perfect my service is. It is thus appropriate that *HaShem*, blessed is He, should listen-*Shma*-שמע to my prayers, and attach Himself-*Yilveh*-יהלך to me,” which refers to the names *Shimon*-שמעון and *Levi*-לוי. The same is true of the remaining names.

## 125

The verse states,<sup>210</sup> “The righteous (*Tzaddik*) shall flourish like a date-palm, he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.” There are two kinds of *Tzaddikim*, both of whom are perfectly righteous. The difference between them is as follows: One is always in a state of adhesion to *HaShem*,

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<sup>210</sup> Psalms 92:13

blessed is He, and performs the service that is placed upon him. However, he is righteous for himself only and not for his fellow. In other words, he does not influence righteousness upon others. This type of *Tzaddik* is compared to a cedar, about which our sages, of blessed memory, stated,<sup>211</sup> “it does not produce fruit.” That is, he is righteous unto himself, but does not produce fruits, meaning that he does not bring others to goodness so that the righteous will propagate in the world. Instead, he serves *HaShem* on his own. Nonetheless, “he shall grow” and his reward will be greatly increased.

However, the second kind of *Tzaddik* produces fruit, as indicated by the words, “He flourishes like the date-palm.” In other words, “he brings an honorable person out from a glutton,”<sup>212</sup> increasing goodness in the world and causing it to flourish. About this kind of *Tzaddik* our sages, of blessed memory, stated,<sup>213</sup> “In the place where penitents (*Baalei Teshuvah*) stand, even the perfectly righteous cannot stand.” In other words, this kind of *Tzaddik* is called a “Master of Repentance – *Ba'al Teshuvah*. The term master-*Ba'al* בעל means that he has mastered repentance and returns the multitudes to goodness, distancing them from sin, and he thus brings about repentance in the world at large. Even though the first kind of *Tzaddik* receives great reward, the reward of this second kind of *Tzaddik* is doubled and quadrupled to a far greater degree.

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<sup>211</sup> Talmud Bavli, Ta'anit 25b

<sup>212</sup> Jeremiah 15:19

<sup>213</sup> Talmud Bavli, Brachot 34b

## 126

This is a very important principle: If it enters your mind to do a specific *mitzvah*, do not refrain from doing it because of not wanting to be seen as aggrandizing yourself or other self-interests, for certainly, from the “inner aspect-*toch*-תוך” of not doing it for the sake of *HaShem*, you will come to do it for the sake of *HaShem*,<sup>214</sup> As our sages said, “A person should always engage in Torah and the fulfillment of the commandments-*Mitzvot*, even if he does not do so for the sake of *HaShem*. For, from the “inner aspect-*toch*-תוך” of doing them not for the sake of *HaShem*, he comes to do them for the sake of *HaShem*.” For, the good deed, of doing the *mitzvah* itself, also effects good vessels Above, and in thought, the “inner aspect-*toch*-תוך” of the vessels is made. That is, in his heart of hearts, every Jew desires to serve *HaShem* for His sake only.

## 127

First and foremost, choose goodness, believing with full faith and without reservation that,<sup>215</sup> “The whole earth is full of His glory,” and that the vitality of *HaShem*, blessed is He, is manifest in everything, bringing it all into existence and vitalizing it. Having chosen this,<sup>216</sup> your mouth and your heart must be equal. Therefore, realize that all love and fear, and all

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<sup>214</sup> Talmud Bavli, Pesachim 50b

<sup>215</sup> Isaiah 6:3

<sup>216</sup> Mishnah Terumah 3:8

other qualities, even all bad things in the world, are all from *HaShem*, blessed is He. Contemplate, that if this is so, “What right do I have to attribute love, fear, beauty, victory or any other attribute, to anyone or anything other than Him, blessed is He? Rather, if I fear or love something, I should consider where this fear or love is coming from. Is not everything from *HaShem*, blessed is He? He even placed fear and love in bad things, such as wild animals, or fear of all the Divine attributes that fell into negativity with the shattering of the vessels. This being the case, the fear is actually of Him, blessed is He. Why then should I fear a tiny spark of Him that is in an aspect of bad? Better that I connect myself to the greater fear, that is, fear of *HaShem*, blessed is He and blessed is His name.” This principle likewise applies to love and all other emotions; to bring the Divine spark out from there and to uplift it to its root in *HaShem*. For this is our purpose, to uplift what was shattered, back to its root.

So also, when you speak, do not think that you are the speaker. Rather, the vitality that is vested in you, that is, *HaShem*, the Creator, blessed is He, is speaking through you. Through this, you uplift speech to its root in *HaShem*, blessed is He. In this, there also is the aspect of equanimity, for you will come to realize that, “My friend has the power of speech just like me, and it thus is all from *HaShem*, blessed is He.”

Likewise, when eating, your thought should be to extract the vitality in the food and to uplift it to the service of *HaShem*, the Creator, blessed is He. The same is true of

everything you do. Your sole consideration in doing it should be to bond yourself to *HaShem* above.

## 128

The reason both love and fear of *HaShem*, blessed is He, are necessary, is as follows: If a person only had love of *HaShem*, blessed is He, he would become accustomed to always be with *HaShem*, blessed is He. The love would thus become so embedded in him that it would become natural and familiar to him. However, through fear of *HaShem* that is joined to love of Him, he fears approaching. This will suffice for the understanding.

## 129

To gain a little understanding of the difference between diminished intellectual awareness of *HaShem* (*Katnut*) and expansive intellectual awareness of *HaShem* (*Gadlut*), we may compare it to the following: When a person sits to study the Torah of *HaShem* without understanding, he is then in a state of diminished intellect (*Katnut*), for his intellect is imperfect and incomplete. In contrast, when he studies with understanding and with passion, he then is on a level of expanded intellect (*Gadlut*), for he is bonded to the Supernal levels. The same is true of prayer, and the same applies to the fulfillment of all the *mitzvot*; they can be done in a state of diminished intellectual

awareness of *HaShem* (*Katnut*) or a state of expansive intellectual awareness of *HaShem* (*Gadlut*).

## 130

Several times, in the Torah account of creation, it states, “It was good,” and concludes with,<sup>217</sup> “Behold, it was very good.” However, the book of Deuteronomy states,<sup>218</sup> “See I have placed before you today life and good, and death and bad.” The question is, in the act of creation the Torah only mentions good. Where did the bad come from?

However, what is meant here is not actual bad. Rather, the bad we are speaking of here, is also good, but on a lower level than absolute good, such as studying Torah or doing *mitzvot*. The Zohar hints at this with the words,<sup>219</sup> “*Mi’Le’eil u’Mi’Lera*-מלעיל ומלרע-From above and from below.” The word “below” is “*Mi’LeRa*-מלרע” which means, “from the bad.”

This is why when we do good, the bad also becomes good. However, if we sin, God forbid, it becomes actual bad. For example, a broom is used to sweep the house clean. Even though it has a measure of goodness, nonetheless, it is a low level and cannot be compared to the absolute good of doing a *mitzvah*. Nevertheless, it is good. However, if the broom must be used to hit a misbehaving child, the broom becomes completely bad when the child is struck.

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<sup>217</sup> Genesis 1:31

<sup>218</sup> Deuteronomy 30:15

<sup>219</sup> See Zohar Vol. 1, 32b, 208a.

It states in Proverbs,<sup>220</sup> “All the days of the poor are bad.” This may be understood in accordance with what our sages, of blessed memory, stated,<sup>221</sup> “There is no one poorer than a person who lacks knowledge of *HaShem-Da’at*.”<sup>222</sup> We may therefore understand the verse in Proverbs to mean, “All the days of a person who is poor in the knowledge of *HaShem-Da’at* are bad.” That is, *HaShem*, blessed is He, takes no notice of his prayer and Torah study, for certainly they lack love of *HaShem* and fear of *HaShem*, and thus do not ascend to *HaShem* above.<sup>223</sup>

The Talmud, however, questions this, stating,<sup>224</sup> “But aren’t there days such as Shabbat and Holidays, when even the poor eat well?” That is, certainly on those days every person is roused from Above and surely prays with greater devotion. However, the Talmud responds, “A change in one’s eating habits is the start of intestinal disease.” In other words, even though on such days he prays with greater devotion, he is aware of his greater devotion, which brings him to pride and self-aggrandizement. This is because he perceives himself as having now ascended to a high supernal level. Therefore, even now, “his days are bad,” since, “a change in one’s eating habits

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<sup>220</sup> Proverbs 15:15

<sup>221</sup> Talmud Bavli, Nedarim 41a

<sup>222</sup> Which as previously mentioned in section 98 is a term of adhesion and bonding, *Dveikut*.

<sup>223</sup> Tikkunei Zohar 10:25b

<sup>224</sup> Talmud Bavli, Ketubot 110b

is the start of intestinal disease.” In other words,<sup>225</sup> “The evil inclination only incites on account of eating and drinking,” and it is through this that he comes to be prideful. This will suffice for the understanding.

## 132

The following is the explanation of the verse in Psalms which states,<sup>226</sup> “I will give thanks to *HaShem* with all my heart; I will tell of all Your wonders.” We need to understand the simple meaning of this verse with precision. The first part of the verse which states, “I will give thanks to *HaShem* with all my heart,” makes sense. However, the second half, “I will tell of all Your wonders,” raises a difficulty. Is it not written,<sup>227</sup> “Who can express the mighty acts of *HaShem*, who can make all His praise be heard?” If so, how could the psalmist state, “I will tell of all Your wonders?”

This may be explained according to the statement in Zohar<sup>228</sup> on the verse,<sup>229</sup> “And God tested (*Nissah*-נסה) Avraham.” The verse uses the term tested-*Nissah*-נסה which shares the same root as in the verse, “lift up a sign-*Hareemoo Ness*-הרימו נס-,” and is a term of exaltedness and elevation. However, we must also examine the words, “*Et Avraham*- את אברהם,” which includes the seemingly superfluous word “*Et*-

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<sup>225</sup> Zohar Vol. 1, 110a

<sup>226</sup> Psalms 9:2

<sup>227</sup> Psalms 106:2

<sup>228</sup> Zohar Vol. 1, 119b

<sup>229</sup> Genesis 22:1

אָה,” though the verse could have stated, “And God tested Avraham-אברהם-נסה.”

This may be understood according to what is known, that the attribute of Avraham is the attribute of kindness-*Chessed*, as it states,<sup>230</sup> “kindness to Avraham.” Now, our sages, of blessed memory, stated<sup>231</sup> that there are angels that only recite songs of *HaShem*’s praise once every seven years, and others that they only recite songs of *HaShem*’s praise once per Jubilee. Moreover, what they do recite, they recite in short. That is, there are those angels who recite<sup>232</sup> “Holy, holy, holy is *HaShem Tzva’ot*,” and there are others who recite, “Blessed is the glory of *HaShem* from His place,”<sup>233</sup> while there are other angels that recite other solitary verses, as known that there are angels that each recite one verse of the Psalm<sup>234</sup> that begins “Thank *HaShem*, for He is good; for His kindness endures forever,” and the like. Every Jew, on the other hand, is entitled to sing and praise *HaShem* at any time or occasion, and can praise *HaShem* extensively, with all manner of honor and songs of praise, without limit.

To understand this, we can present an analogy of a king whose servants and ministers all come before him to recite hymns of praise to him. Each is allotted a certain amount of time for their praise, according to their stature and importance. Now, all this is when the king is in a good mood. However, if

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<sup>230</sup> Micah 7:20

<sup>231</sup> Talmud Bavli, Chullin 91b

<sup>232</sup> Isaiah 6:3

<sup>233</sup> Ezekiel 3:12

<sup>234</sup> Psalms 136

the king is angry, God forbid, they all are afraid to enter and praise him at all. This is as stated,<sup>235</sup> “How can you praise the king in a time of wrath?” Therefore, since they are concerned that perhaps the king is angry, or that he may come to be angry about something, their custom is to minimize their praises as much as possible, and to immediately take leave of him. However, when the beloved son of the king comes to praise the king, he pays no attention to any of this. That is, even if the king is angry, when he sees his beloved son enter, this brings joy and delight to his heart and his anger automatically dissipates. As long as his son is in his presence, the king will certainly not be angry, for this is the nature of a father to a beloved son, as known. This being so, the son pays no attention to any of these considerations. He enters at any time and can praise the king without measure, for he knows that, by doing so, he brings additional joy and delight to his father.

Now, we stated that the anger dissipates when joy and love come. Although this is quite natural, we must nonetheless understand how it is. We can therefore explain that when love and joy overpower him, it causes the anger and wrath to ascend to its root where it is “sweetened” (*Meetook*), for as known, “judgments (*Dinim*) can only be sweetened in their root.”<sup>236</sup>

This, then, explains the above-mentioned verse,<sup>237</sup> “And God tested (*Nissah*-נסה) Avraham.” That is, God-*Elohi*’m-אלהי”m refers to the judgments (*Dinim*). The term tested-*Nissah*-

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<sup>235</sup> Kinot of Tisha b’Av

<sup>236</sup> Eitz Chayim Shaar 13, Ch. 11

<sup>237</sup> Genesis 22:1

נסה refers to the elevation of these judgments, as mentioned, so that they are withdrawn and elevated to their root above, where they are “sweetened.” How is this brought about? Because of Avraham. That is, through the power of love and kindness which is signified by Avraham, who is like the son of the king in the analogy.

Let us return to the analogy. We stated that the son can praise the king without measure. Now, there are two reasons why the son should praise his father without measure or limit. One is because the king is his father and king, and thus his obligation to thank and praise him is greater than the king’s servants and ministers, especially since he has no reason to be afraid, as explained above. Secondly, it is only right that he should thank and praise his father to a greater degree, specifically because he has been granted the right to do so without measure, a right which is not granted to any minister or official. In other words, it is right to give thanks over any additional blessing that one is granted from *HaShem* above, as we see from the birth of Yehudah, about which Leah said,<sup>238</sup> “This time I will thank *HaShem*.”

Through all the above, we may now understand the above verse,<sup>239</sup> “I will give thanks to *HaShem* with all my heart.” This can be interpreted to mean that in addition to the obligation that is upon me to praise and laude *HaShem*, as a son before his father, I shall also give thanks to Him because “*HaShem* is in my whole heart.” That is, the love I have for

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<sup>238</sup> Genesis 29:35

<sup>239</sup> Psalms 9:2

*HaShem* is entrenched in my heart, which indicates that His love for me is also entrenched in His heart, so to speak. This is as stated,<sup>240</sup> “As waters reflect the face to the face, so is the heart of man to man.” It is for this very reason that I have been permitted “to tell of all Your wonders,” without measure.

As for the aforementioned difficulty raised by the verse,<sup>241</sup> “Who can express all of the mighty acts of *HaShem*, who can make all His praise heard?” This difficulty is resolved by the word “I shall tell,” meaning that the little that I am able to tell, thank, relate and praise, should be considered as if I had related, “all Your wonders.” In other words, my inability to relate, “all Your wonders,” is not because of me, but rather, because it is impossible ever to conclude relating the wonders of the Master of the Universe, blessed is He and blessed is His name. Thus, whatever little I can relate, should be considered as if I related all Your wonders, because my obligation is to relate *HaShem*’s praise without limit or measure, for the two above mentioned reasons.

## 133

It states,<sup>242</sup> “Whoever indulges in too many words brings sin-*Cheit*,” which means “a lacking.”<sup>243</sup> That is, even if you speak the wisdom of Torah with others, nevertheless,

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<sup>240</sup> Proverbs 27:19

<sup>241</sup> Psalms 106:2

<sup>242</sup> Mishnah Avot 1:17

<sup>243</sup> See Rashi to Genesis 31:39

silence is much more preferable, because when you are silent, you can contemplate the greatness of *HaShem*, blessed is He, and bond to Him to a much greater degree than when you bond to Him while speaking. (However, if you have not yet attained the ability to bond to Him in silence, it is better to speak words of Torah and bond to Him thereby)

At times, a person could be laying in his bed and it appears to others that he is sleeping, but all the while he is secluding himself with *HaShem*, blessed is He, and bonding to Him.

## 134

It is a very great level of attainment to constantly see the Creator, blessed is He, with your mind's eye, as if you are looking at someone. Consider too, that *HaShem* sees you as well, like someone who is looking at you. This level can be attained if a person's thoughts are in a constant state of purity and clarity.

## 135

At first, adhere to *HaShem*, the Creator, blessed is He, below, in a state of *Katnut*-diminished intellectual awareness of *HaShem*, as appropriate to your level, and afterwards, you will be able to ascend to a state of expansive intellectual awareness of *HaShem*.

It is necessary to descend to a diminished intellectual awareness, several times throughout the day, in order to rest a little from your thoughts. At times you will be unable to serve *HaShem* except in a state of diminished intellectual awareness (*Katnut*). At such times, you will be unable to ascend to the Upper World of expansive intellectual awareness.

## 136

One is sometimes able to enter a state of adhesion (*Dveikut*) to *HaShem* above, in a state of expansive awareness, even when not engaged in prayer. At such times, he should consider himself to be higher than the dome<sup>244</sup> of the firmament (*Rakia*) and then strengthen himself to ascend even higher.

At other times, one is unable to ascend, even while engaged in prayer. However, by virtue of serving *HaShem* with love and fear below, in a state of diminished awareness, through the strength of his words uttered with love and fear below, and through adhering to *HaShem*, the Creator, blessed is He, he will be granted the strength to ascend even higher than all the firmaments, all the thrones, higher than the *Ophanim*-cycle angels and the *Seraphim*-fiery angels, and he adheres and speaks in that Upper World.

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<sup>244</sup> The dome of the firmament is called *Aravot*-עַרְבֹת and is the ninth level of the physical universe, in ascending order. The tenth level is that of the angelic beings called separate intellects (*Sichliyim*). See *HaShem is One*, Volume Two.

Contemplate and realize that, “The whole earth is full of His glory,”<sup>245</sup> and *HaShem*’s Divine Presence is constantly with me. He is the most refined of the most refined, is the Master over everything that happens in the world, and can do whatever He wishes. Therefore, it would be inappropriate of me to place my faith and trust in anyone or anything other than *HaShem*, blessed is He.

Contemplate and realize that just as you can gaze at physical things, so likewise, you are gazing at the Divine Presence of *HaShem*, whose presence you are in. This level of Divine service is a diminished state of awareness of *HaShem* (*Katnut*) and is accessible to everyone.

At times, a person can discern intellectually that there are many celestial spheres and firmaments above him and that he stands on a tiny point upon the earth. He then realizes that the entire universe is as nothing relative to the Creator, blessed is He, for He is utterly Infinite (*Ain Sof*). He therefore constricted (*Tzimtzum*) Himself and vacated a space within Himself, so to speak, within which to create the worlds. Nonetheless, although you understand all this intellectually, you may not yet be able to ascend to the upper worlds. It is about this that the verse states,<sup>246</sup> “*HaShem* appeared to me from afar.”

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<sup>245</sup> Isaiah 6:3

<sup>246</sup> Jeremiah 31:2

In contrast, when you serve *HaShem* with expansive intellectual awareness (*Gadlut*), you will be able to strengthen yourself with great force and ascend in thought until you break through all the firmaments at once, ascending even higher than the cycle angels-*Ophanim* and fiery angels-*Seraphim*, and beyond all thrones. This is called perfected service of *HaShem*.

Always be joyful. Contemplate and have complete faith that the Divine Presence is with you and guarding you. Realize that you are bound to the Creator, blessed is He, and that the Creator, blessed is He, is bound to you, in all your organs and faculties. You gaze at the Him, blessed is He, and He gazes at you. Realize that the *HaShem*, blessed is He, is all-powerful and is capable of doing whatever He wishes. If He wants, He can destroy all of the worlds in a single moment, just as He creates them every single moment. All goodness and judgments in the world originate with Him, and His influence is manifest in everything that exists. Thus, every person should firmly say to himself, “I trust and fear only *HaShem*, blessed is He.”

## 138

It states,<sup>247</sup> “Great is *HaShem* and much praised, in the city of our God, the mountain of His Holiness.” This verse may be understood based on the verse,<sup>248</sup> “You are My servant; Israel, in whom I take glory.” That is, the Holy One, blessed is

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<sup>247</sup> Psalms 48:2

<sup>248</sup> Isaiah 49:3

He, derives abundant glory, pleasure and delight, from the deeds of a *Tzaddik* and from his Torah study and prayers. Our sages, of blessed memory, stated,<sup>249</sup> “The Holy One, blessed is He, said to the Jewish people: ‘My children, I have created an evil inclination and I have created the Torah as its antidote.’” In other words, “Your love and affection for us is very great! You created the evil inclination and You created the Torah. Through the Torah You gave us the power to conquer the evil inclination and to sweeten him, like a chef who adds spices to the pot. Everything is from You and is Yours, and it is only by Your power that we have the ability to accomplished all this. Even so, You have great delight and pride in our doing so, as if we accomplished it on our own. Through this great kindness we recognize Your great love and affection for us, for You have called us, ‘The children of the Ever Present One.’”<sup>250</sup>

This is analogous to a son who is beloved to his father, and a guest is due to arrive to test the Torah knowledge of the son. Now, on his own, the son is unable to understand the legal ruling that will be discussed, because of its great profundity and depth. However, because the father loves and adores his son, he cannot not bear to see him suffering in his study of the legal ruling, because of lack of understanding in grappling with the problem. What does the father do? He teaches his son and thereby clarifies the subject to him, showing him the right way to understand it. In the process of doing so, he just about opens the whole depth of the subject to him.

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<sup>249</sup> Talmud Bavli, Kiddushin 30b

<sup>250</sup> Mishnah Avot 3:18

The guest finally arrives and begins to question and test the son on the ruling, in front of his father. The son begins to explain the ruling and the guest asks him questions on his explanation, presenting numerous difficulties. However, he is able to answer all the difficulties appropriately. For every question and difficulty that he is presented, he responds clearly and to the point. His father sees this and is joyous, deriving great pleasure and pride. Even though the son prevailed because his father tutored him, nonetheless, the father derives great satisfaction from it. Now, when the guest sees the great delight of the father, he wants to increase the father's pleasure and satisfaction. He thus attempts to overpower the son, by posing new difficulties that are stronger and more difficult than his previous questions. The son, however, trusts in what his father taught him, digs deeper into himself and awakens the power of insight to grapple with the difficulties and answer all the questions satisfactorily.

About this, the sages stated,<sup>251</sup> "Whoever is greater than his fellow, his evil inclination is also greater." The sages, of blessed memory, similarly stated,<sup>252</sup> "Satan's intent is for the sake of Heaven." The analogue is thus understood, that when *HaShem*, blessed is He, sees the *Tzaddik* prevail over his evil inclination, He derives great pleasure from this. The evil inclination comes to overpower him every single day, but he conquers and prevails over it.

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<sup>251</sup> Talmud Bavli, Sukkah 52a

<sup>252</sup> Talmud Bavli, Bava Batra 16a

About this, our sages, of blessed memory, stated,<sup>253</sup> “The Holy One, blessed is He, called Yaakov by the name ‘*El-לא*,’ which is a term of might and strength, as in the verse,<sup>254</sup> “He took away the mighty (*Eilei-ליא*) of the land.” It is in this respect that He called him “*El-לא*,” for the righteous *Tzaddik* is called,<sup>255</sup> “A mighty one who conquers his inclination.” About the future to come, our sages, of blessed memory, stated,<sup>256</sup> “The Holy One, blessed is He, will bring the evil inclination and slaughter him in the presence of the righteous and the wicked. To the righteous, the evil inclination will seem like a high mountain, whereas for the wicked, it will seem like a strand of hair. The righteous will cry out and say, ‘How were we able to overcome such a high mountain?’ The wicked will cry out and say, ‘How were we unable to overcome this strand of hair?’” That is, in the future to come, the great strength of the righteous will be recognized and revealed, in that they conquered such a great mountain.

It is possible that in the future to come, all righteous *Tzaddikim* will be called by the name “*El-לא*.” This is hinted at in the verse,<sup>257</sup> “At that time, it will be said of Yaakov and Yisroel, ‘What has *El-לא* wrought?’” As known, the righteous *Tzaddik* is called by the name Yisroel. Thus, regarding the *Tzaddik*, it will be said to him, “What has *El-לא* wrought?” In other words, this is like someone who asks his fellow, “What

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<sup>253</sup> Talmud Bavli, Megillah 18a

<sup>254</sup> Ezekiel 17:13

<sup>255</sup> Mishnah Avot 4:1

<sup>256</sup> Talmud Bavli, Sukkah 52a

<sup>257</sup> Numbers 23:23

do you do?<sup>258</sup> How are you?” In the same way, it will be said to the *Tzaddikim*, “What have you, אֵל-El, wrought?”

Thus, the above-mentioned verse,<sup>259</sup> “Great is *HaShem* and much praised, in the city of our God, the mountain of His Holiness,” may be understood as follows: We must praise and magnify *HaShem*, blessed is He, for all of the goodness He has bestowed upon us. All the great pride He derives from our service is in the city-*Eer*-עיר, which is a term of awakening-*Hitorerut*-התעוררות to “our God.” In other words, it is He, *HaShem*, our God, who awakens us, and gives us the strength to serve Him and overpower the evil inclination. This is as stated,<sup>260</sup> “If the Holy One, blessed is He, would not assist, a person would be incapable of overpowering the evil inclination.” Nevertheless, even though the power to conquer the evil inclination comes from the assistance of *HaShem*, blessed is He, He nonetheless, derives great pride and pleasure from this and gives us abundant reward, as if we did it all on our own. However, in reality, true service of *HaShem* must be through our own self-awakening, in that we are a “part of Godliness from Above.”<sup>261</sup> This is the meaning of, “The city of our God-*Eer Elohei*” עיר אלהינו-*nu*.” That is, “an awakening-*Hitorerut*-התעוררות of our good inclination, which is the part of Godliness within us.”

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<sup>258</sup> This is like the Yiddish greeting, “Vos machst du,” which literally means, “What do you do?”

<sup>259</sup> Psalms 48:2

<sup>260</sup> Talmud Bavli, Sukkah 52b

<sup>261</sup> Job 31:2

It is written,<sup>262</sup> “The mountains melted like wax in the presence of *HaShem*.” A verse in the next Psalm states,<sup>263</sup> “Let the mountains sing for joy together.” How can these two verses coexist? This can be explained as follows: As known, our sages, of blessed memory, stated,<sup>264</sup> “The term mountains-*Harim*-הרים refers to the forefathers.” They also stated,<sup>265</sup> “The forefathers are the Divine Chariot-*Merkavah*.” Now, we need to understand. How is it that the forefathers, who were in the lower world, were the Divine Chariot-*Merkavah*? However, as known, Avraham is the quality of love, which is the attribute of kindness-*Chessed*, Yitzchak is the quality of fear-*Yirah*, which is the attribute of judgment-*Din* and Yaakov is the quality of mercy, which is attribute of beauty-*Tiferet*, that mediates between them. Our sages, of blessed memory, stated,<sup>266</sup> “There are three signs by which the Jewish people are recognizable: They are merciful, they are bashful, and they perform acts of lovingkindness.” These three qualities are the attributes of our forefathers, in ascending order. That is, the quality of mercy is the attribute of Yaakov, the quality of bashfulness is the attribute of Yitzchak, for a person who fears his fellow is embarrassed before him, and the quality of performing acts of

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<sup>262</sup> Psalms 97:5

<sup>263</sup> Psalms 98:8

<sup>264</sup> Midrash Shemot Rabba 15:4

<sup>265</sup> Midrash Bereishit Rabba 47:6

<sup>266</sup> Talmud Bavli, Yevamot 79a

lovingkindness is the attribute of Avraham, which is the attribute of love and kindness.

Now, it states,<sup>267</sup> “God made everything with its opposite.” That is, just as these three qualities exist on the side of holiness, so too, they exist on the side of impurity as well. These are called, “The Fathers of Impurity-*Avot HaTumah*.”

However, the difference between them is that in holiness, the three are inter-included with each other. For example, a person who loves his friend will also have mercy upon him and if, at times, he is unable to fulfill a commitment that he made to his friend, he will be embarrassed of him. We thus see that these qualities are all inter-included with each other on the side of holiness, in that they are as one. This is because the side of holiness is the side of absolute oneness. In contrast, on the side of impurity the three qualities are separate from each other, as it states,<sup>268</sup> “All workers of iniquity shall be dispersed.” For example, such a person will have wrong love for one thing, be fearful of another thing, and have compassion for yet another thing.

Thus, the verse that states, “The mountains melted like wax in the presence of *HaShem*,” is referring to the mountains of impurity, and this is why the verse does not use the term “together” (as it does in the other verse), since the impure are in a state of separation and disunity, as explained above. The second verse, on the other hand, is referring to the mountains of holiness, who are our forefathers, Avraham, Yitzchak and

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<sup>267</sup> Ecclesiastes 7:14

<sup>268</sup> Psalms 92:10

Yaakov, and are in a state of absolute unity. It thus states, “Let the mountains sing for joy together.”

The verse, “All workers of iniquity shall be dispersed,” hints at this, because the bad character traits that a person might have, God forbid, are called, “The workers of iniquity,” in that they bring a person to the iniquity itself, which is the actual transgression. These negative character traits are in a state of disunity and do not bond together. It is for this reason that it states, “All workers of iniquity shall be dispersed,” indicating that they are dispersed and not in a state of unity. This is likewise, why the verse states, “workers of iniquity,” rather than “doers of iniquity,” which indicates that even the character traits themselves, which are the “workers that bring about iniquity” rather than the iniquity itself, are in a state of disunity.

## 140

It states,<sup>269</sup> “Teach me Your way (*Derech*-דרך), *HaShem*, and lead me on the straightforward path (*Orach*-אורח).” Now, as known, the term way-*Derech*-דרך refers to the trodden path, whereas the term path-*Orach*-אורח, refers to the untrodden path. On the untrodden path-*Orach*-אורח it is possible to err and stray from the way, and thus come to a place of danger. This is not the case with the trodden path-*Derech*-דרך, where there is no possibility of error that might cause one to stray.

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<sup>269</sup> Psalms 27:11

These two matters also exist in man. That is, there is the trodden path in the service of *HaShem*, the Creator, blessed is He, and if a person always travels on this path he will certainly not stray. This is a person who separates himself from all mundane matters and occupies himself exclusively with Torah study and fulfilling the *mitzvot*, day and night. He speaks little, only as much as necessary and no more.

However, there also is the untrodden path, called *Orach*-אורח. This refers to a person who sometimes engages in conversation with others, but only for the sake of *HaShem*, blessed is He. In other words, through his conversation with others, he affects their moral conduct and their love and fear of *HaShem*, and the like. He may also be a person who knows how to elevate his speech to Holiness above, as known about several individuals. We thus find that it certainly is permissible to engage in such speech. However, there is danger here, for the possibility exists that he could err and deviate from the good path, and come to engage in idle chatter as well, as is customary amongst the masses. Thus, one must pray and implore of *HaShem*, blessed is He, to help him whenever he goes on such a path-*Orach*-אורח. He must gird himself in prayer so that he does not come to stumble into sin, God forbid.

This then, explains the verse, “Teach me Your way (*Derech*-דרך), *HaShem*,” meaning “Show me and advise me about the trodden path, so that I can travel it on my own.” It then continues, “Lead me on the straightforward path (*Orach*-אורח),” meaning, “Guide and assist me on the untrodden path on which I may stray. Be my help and support that I should trod

upon it in a straightforward manner, rather than a crooked manner. For, without Your help, I could possibly stray, God forbid.”

This also is hinted at in the verse,<sup>270</sup> “Know Him in all your ways (*Derech*-דרך), and He will straighten your paths (*Orach*-אורח).” That is, when it comes to the trodden paths, a person must know them well, and know how to conduct himself upon them, which is something that is within the capacity of a person to know and do on his own. However, when it comes to the untrodden path, referred to as *Orach*-אורח, it states “He will straighten your paths,” meaning that *HaShem* must go before you, to straighten your path and be your support, so that you will not err and stray.

## 141

It is a very important principle to know that everything that exists in the world possesses sparks of Holiness. There is nothing devoid of these sparks. Even trees and stones possess them, as well as all the deeds that a person does. Even when a person sins, God forbid, therein are sparks of holiness that fell into impurity with the shattering of the vessel (*Shevirah*). You might ask, what are the sparks of holiness in sin? The answer is repentance. That is, sin carries within it the potential to repent. When a person repents for his sins, he elevates the sparks of holiness that were imprisoned in the sin and returns them to the

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<sup>270</sup> Proverbs 3:6

Supernal World. It is in this respect that the verse states,<sup>271</sup> “He bears iniquity (*Nos’e Avon*-נושא עון-).” The term “*Nos’e*-נושא” also means “uplifts,” indicating that *HaShem*, “uplifts iniquity” to the Supernal World above. This is also the meaning of the verse,<sup>272</sup> “My sin is too great to bear-מנושא,” meaning, “too great to elevate and uplift to the Supernal World.”

## 142

It states,<sup>273</sup> “Know what is above you.” The explanation is as follows: “Know that everything that is above is from you.”

## 143

The reason we recite the “*Hodu*” praise, between the recitation of the *Korbanot*-sacrificial offerings and *Psukei d’Zimra*-verses of song, and why we do not recite it as part of the verses of song themselves, is as follows: It is known that the *Korbanot*-sacrificial offerings correspond to the World of Action (*Asiyah*), whereas the *Psukei d’Zimra*-songs of praise correspond to the World of Formation (*Yetzirah*), whereas the blessings of the *Shema* recital that follow, correspond to the World of Creation (*Briyah*). These three correspond to three types of angels, the *Ophanim*, the *Chayot*, and the *Seraphim*.

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<sup>271</sup> Exodus 34:7

<sup>272</sup> Genesis 4:13

<sup>273</sup> Mishnah Avot 2:1

The inner meaning of their names are as follows: The angels of the World of Action (*Asiyah*) are called *Ophanim*, which means revolving cycles-*Galgal*, in that they continually revolve in their desire to adhere to their source Above. They correspond to the aspect of the *Nefesh*-soul, which itself is a term of “addition” and “increase.” For, they constantly desire to draw forth additional influence and vitality from Above.

The angels of the World of Formation (*Yetzirah*) are more elevated, and their vitality is drawn from a higher source. They are thus called living-*Chayot*.

The angels of the World of Creation (*Briyah*) are even more elevated, and they are aflame with an even greater passion to adhere to their source Above. They are therefore called fiery-*Seraphim* angels.

Man is a microcosm of the world. When he rises from bed each morning, he awakens without fear of *HaShem* at all. However, through reciting the sacrificial offerings (*Korbanot*) he becomes purified, as the *Zohar* states.<sup>274</sup> The sacrificial offerings (*Korbanot*) correspond to the World of Action (*Asiyah*) and to the revolving *Ophanim* angels. In other words, he desires to connect and roll himself, so to speak, to *HaShem*, blessed is He. How does he do this? Through the subsequent recital of the verses of song-*Psukei d’Zimra*, for these verses contain much more passion than the verses of the sacrificial offerings. However, before he can attain a great level of passion (*Hitlahavut*), he begins without so much passion, and it is for

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<sup>274</sup> *Zohar* Vol. 3, 120b

this reason that *Hodu* was established. This is because *Hodu* contains a collection of various verses and is not actually part and parcel of the verses of song-*Psukei d'Zimra*. The reason is so that when he does arrive at the verses of song-*Psukei d'Zimra*, he will already be in a more heightened state of passion and arousal. He will then have increased vitality, for passion corresponds to the *Chayot*, the living angels. When he subsequently arrives at the blessings of the *Shema*, he will come to have an even greater level of arousal of passion and will come to the level of the fiery-*Seraphim* angels.