

*Derech Chayim*  
*The Way of Life*

*Part 1*

*Shaar HaTeshuvah*  
*The Gate of Return*

*By The Holy Rabbi Dov Ber of Lubavitch*

Free Translation by Shimon Markel  
Edited by Rabbi A. Markel  
Copyright © 2004

## Derech Chayim The Gate of Return

By the Holy Rabbi Dov Ber of Lubavitch

Free translation by Shimon Markel

Edited by Rabbi A. Markel

Copyright © 2004

### Chapter One

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

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

The reverse is likewise true. When we arouse ourselves to truly returning [to G-d] through preparing [our] hearts below, this causes an arousal above, i.e. it arouses the Creator's love for [His People] Israel. This is similar to the analogy of one who shakes a rope at its **lower** end which causes the upper end to be moved as well. This then, is the meaning of the

statement, "If you waken and awaken the love etc". "If you waken" refers to the arousal from above down, as explained above concerning the Heavenly voice. [One the other hand], "If you awaken" refers to the arousal from below up, as explained.

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

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

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

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

How then, is it possible that the arousal of returning [to G-d] through one's own efforts is greater than the arousal from above, to the point that we say that this descent of the soul is [solely] for the elevation brought about through [its] return? How is it that the lower aspect

of the soul, that which is invested in the body, can [actually] elevate the higher aspect of the soul, which is its root and source? How [is it possible] for the recipient elevate the influencer [so that even the influencer rises] to a higher level?

(However, it is not repentance alone which elevates the soul. Rather, it is the fulfillment of the Torah and all [of G-d's] commandments, specifically in this world, which elevates the source of the soul to greater heights. Accordingly, even the soul of Moshe [only] merited elevation, specifically because it descended into a physical body. This is as stated, "You have been shown to know" [that only G-d exists] specifically, here below, [because] the descent is for the purpose of an ascent, as explained before.)

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

Now, certainly, in truth, the commandment-*Mitzvah* to return [to G-d] specifically relates to [that part of] the soul which is vested in the body. This is because the main aspect of the concept of *Teshuvab*-Return is as stated, "The spirit shall return". This return to one's source is caused because of the great distance which he feels [in being separated] from G-d. This is similar to the return of a lost object to its owner. It is also analogous to the verse which states, "And you shall return to the land", that just as they were banished to a distant land, from there they shall return. In other words, it is specifically the fact that they were banished to a distant land which causes the yearning to return. This is also similar to the verse, "Even if you are banished to the ends of the heavens etc". Therefore, this *Mitzvah*-commandment of returning, specifically relates to the sinner, whose soul is lost, and who has been banished from his spiritual root. Because of this, through self awakening he becomes greatly embittered in his soul, because he no longer wants to be banished. He therefore returns to G-d with all his heart and with all his soul, as in the case of Menasheh, who returned to G-d.

Therefore, we see two matters or aspects here. The first is that in returning [to G-d], he cuts himself off, distancing and separating himself from the place of impurity. This refers to the halls and shells of death and evil which are called the "gates of impurity". The more embittered he is in his heart due to his sins, the more will he separate and distance himself from them. Now, in this first aspect of distancing himself from evil, there is another aspect; that of coming close to G-d. This is the meaning of the verse, "Return unto HaShem", which is similar to the verse mentioned before of the spirit returning to HaShem. In actuality, there is no difference between these two aspects, for according to his distance from death and evil will be his closeness to life and goodness, which is the return to G-d. This is true even though they are two different forms of repentance and return. Although they are two aspects, the first being a return from evil, which is called distancing and separating

himself from evil, and the second being a coming close to G-d and binding himself to Him, [nonetheless] they are literally one thing. The two are [completely] interdependent, and are literally in equal balance with each other. An example of this is one who is returning from a distant land; the more he distances himself from there, the closer he comes to his homeland.

Nonetheless, in regard to the actual form of the repentance, as far as what each one is, the two are literal opposites. In other words, the first is that he is propelled to return because of the tremendous sadness and bitterness in his soul at his great distance. The second is that he is propelled to return, [specifically] because he is coming closer to G-d, with incredible joy and happiness in his soul. This is because, when he thinks about how greatly distant [he is] from the Living G-d, he will immediately become embittered in the [very] essence of his heart, and this will immediately bring him to tears about the sins of his youth. If this is not the case, then it cannot be called true repentance or return altogether, as known. This is as stated by King David, "All night I make my bed swim, with my tears I dampen my couch", which refers to the recital of the *Shema* prayer before retiring to sleep. One who washes his face with his own tears rectifies the image of G-d which he blemished.

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

The above explanation [of *Teshuvah*-Return to G-d] is unlike those who think that *Teshuvah* means to afflict themselves over the sins of their youth, as stated, "The foolish afflict themselves on account of their sinful ways and their iniquities". For, although the anguish and affliction of fasting may rectify that which he blemished, (This is accomplished through the reduction of his fat and blood, thus rectifying that which he blemished through his sin. The sin added increased power to the impure lusts of the fat and blood of his soul, which he blemished) nonetheless the main essence of *Teshuvah*-Return is the fact that in his heart he repents of his sins, resolves never to return to his old ways, and that he returns to HaShem. This will cause his soul to rejoice. It is this joy which strengthens the *Teshuvah* in his heart, and thus makes it everlasting. Because of his joy in coming closer to G-d, he never again will stray to his previous actions or thoughts. Nevertheless, the [fact that he is] anguished in his soul [over his past misdeeds] is certainly a rectification for his sins. However, this is only effective if he returns to HaShem with all his heart, with joy and love, for that is the **main** essence of *Teshuvah*, that he returns to G-d. [In other words, he is not merely desisting from evil, but is also coming closer to G-d, which is the primary aspect of "return".] However, if he does not return to G-d, although he may afflict himself, be truly pained about his past in his soul, confess his wrongdoings and leave evil, nonetheless, it [will] only be temporary. He

had a temporarily arousal, but, nonetheless, it is possible for him to revert and stray, when, over time, he falls from his [initial] arousal, or when he is tested [with temptation] in an impure place.

However, such is not so in the case of one who has [truly] returned with complete *Teshuvah*, i.e. one who has returned to G-d. The fact that he has left off death and darkness, and is [now going towards the] life and the great light, will cause him tremendous joy, and this is the sign that he has truly returned. This then, is the explanation of the matter mentioned before, that the bitterness and the joy are in perfect equilibrium. The amount of joy [he has] is, literally, commensurate to the amount of pain [he feels]. For, certainly, the fact that he was attached to a place of impurity has touched the very essence of his heart. But, because he has distanced himself from there, thereby coming closer to G-d, his soul rejoices. If he lacks this joy, it is a **certain** indication that his pain is not because of his essential distance [from G-d], and, therefore, it will not be everlasting.

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

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

End of Chapter One

## Chapter Two

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

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

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

We may now understand the matter of the two opposite, bitterness and joy, which may be found in a returnee, as previously explained, that he is pained and brought to tears over the sins of his youth, and because of his constant fall every day, with extraneous evil thoughts, and that he makes a strong resolution in his heart every day not to follow a path of emptiness any longer. This is the aspect of the lower *Teshuvah*. In other words, he uproots and separates himself from the place of impurity. This is also called, "tears of weeping", i.e. that he is aroused to tears, as stated, "with tears they shall approach" and "he shall surely go with tears". It is apparent that at all times, this "going" is specifically through tears. Now, this same "going" in which he has uprooted and separated himself from his previous place of impurity, and is coming closer to holiness, this certainly is similar to the spark which comes close to the torch and radiates more light, as mentioned above. In other words,

because he is coming closer to G-d, he will radiate with joy and happiness, as explained above.

This matter is similar to the statement, "Peace, peace, to the distant and to the near", that is, the distant one becomes closer. Now, how is it possible for a person who is distant, such a complete sinner, to become close to G-d, literally like those servants of G-d, who are close to the light of the face of the living King? Certainly, it must be understood that it is because *HaShem* comes out of His place and descends below to him, as it states, "G-d is close to the broken hearted". These broken hearted are those who are truly repentant, whose hearts are shattered into tiny pieces because of their great bitterness and submission. This broken spirit is, literally, compared to a sacrificial offering before G-d, as stated, "The sacrifices of the Lord are the broken spirit". This descent of *HaShem*, to uplift the broken hearts of true returnees is similar to how a heavenly fire descended upon the altar [during the time of the first Temple, in Jerusalem]. This is because, "The Lord is exalted, and beholds the lowly". In other words, because of a person's tears of bitterness and lowliness, which are called, "the lower waters which cry out, 'we desire to be before the King'", the King descends to uplift him.

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

We find that in this allegory itself, there are two aspects of *Teshuvah*, the upper *Teshuvah* and the lower *Teshuvah*. In other words, it is not that the entire lower *Teshuvah* comes about because of the upper *Teshuvah*. On the contrary, the lower *Teshuvah* is what caused the upper *Teshuvah*, so that He should descend from His place etc. This is the explanation of the matter of joy which follows the weeping, when he "is going in tears", as explained above. At that moment itself he returns to *HaShem* joyfully with his entire heart, because *HaShem* is literally close to him. This is compared to a son who was distanced from his father. Certainly, his path to his father will be that of weeping, seeking out and searching for his father. However, when he sees his father, he will laugh and cry at the same moment. Likewise the joy and weeping in his "travel" towards *HaShem* are as one. This then is the meaning of the statement, "with weeping shall they come". The approach is certainly to come close to and greet the face of their Father in Heaven. Certainly in Him they will rejoice (for, He is what they desire). Nonetheless, the "travel" towards the holy, "to behold the pleasantness of *HaShem*", is with tears. This is *Teshuvah* – return to G-d, from the depths of the heart, such as the statement, "If Israel do *Teshuvah*, they are be redeemed".

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

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

The second possibility is that he will not cry with complete bitterness immediately when he recalls all the sins of his youth, and how his heart is bound to a place of impurity. Rather, it is only after he contemplates deeply how he caused a blemish in the light of his soul, and that he is literally considered to be like a dead person, and how he never ever will behold the face of G-d, for he is completely cast out. Only then, will he be cry true tears. However, during the time that his heart is high, and his spirit is coarse because of his self involvement with the pleasures of the world or because of the spreading forth of his heart with haughtiness and arrogance, then, his heart becomes as hard as stone and none of the contemplation about what his sins have caused will be of help to him at all. It is only when he will be afflicted through his children, health, or sustenance, or at times when his heart is broken over some other matter that he will come to repent with a broken heart. This is a much lower level than the *Baal Teshuvah*-Returnee mentioned above, who immediately upon recalling his sins is touched to the very core of his heart, literally as a natural response. This is because it has touched the very core of his soul, which is higher than any reasoning or contemplation. Nonetheless, there is a benefit to those who return because they recognize that they have caused a blemish in G-dliness, i.e. those of the second category. The benefit is in the fact that his return is specifically to G-d, and he does not desire to be distant. Therefore, his tears are of the second category and are called tears of joy as will be explained in the following chapter.

End of Chapter Two

## Chapter Three

Certainly, "G-d seeks all hearts", and He is specifically very close to the brokenhearted, as previously mentioned. This refers to one who is distant who has come close to G-d. This is because certainly, without a shadow of a doubt, G-d dwells in the heart which is truly broken to a much greater degree than how he is revealed to those who are close to him through true arousal of Divine pleasure during prayer, Torah study or the fulfillment of the *Mitzvot*-commandments etc, as is stated, "returnees are greater than the perfectly righteous". This is because "G-d dwells with them to a greater degree", as stated in the *Zohar* that He dwells with them from the aspect of His essence and innerness, even more than how He dwells with those who serve G-d with their souls, with Divine pleasure and joy (i.e. the perfectly righteous). As known, the reason for this is that the "depth of the heights" (*Omeke Rom*) and the "depths below" (*Omeke Tachot*) are in equal balance. It is for this reason that it states, "G-d is exalted above and he beholds the lowly". Likewise it is stated, "The heaven is My throne... upon these I gaze, upon the poor and the low of spirit..." This is because specifically according of His astounding exaltedness does He descend down to the lowest of places. This is because just as there is no limit to the "depth of the heights" and His exaltedness above, so too, there is no measure to His ability to descend down, [even] to the lowliest of the "depths below". It is for this reason that He specifically beholds the lowly, that is, a person who is completely humble. It is specifically such a person who will receive a revelation of the true "nothingness" of G-d. [In the case of the completely righteous, their coming close to G-d is through their own efforts. In contrast, with regard to true penitents, G-d descends to them, rather than vice versa. Certainly, this is greater than even the capabilities of the greatest of righteous men.]

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

This then, is the explanation of the above statement that G-d dwells with them to a greater degree than [even] the most perfectly righteous. It is because this [matter] is greater than the ability to ascend of the souls of those, "Who can ascend the mountain of G-d, who are of clean hands and of pure hearts etc." In contrast, with regard to the true penitent, G-d Himself descends to them from the [very] depth of the heights to the depth below, as explained above by way of the analogy to the torch and flame which descends to ignite the sparks.

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

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

Now, as known, the propitious time for these tears of repentance is [specifically] during the midnight prayers of *Tikkun Chatzot*. During this time [a Jew] recalls the sins of his youth, but primarily his tears are because he has cast off the yoke of Heaven, which is the root cause of all his subsequent sins. Casting off of the yoke of Heaven is that he follows every lust and whim of his heart, immediately fulfilling his desires, [without a thought to the consequences] because he does not set any fear of G-d before his eyes, whatsoever. Such thoughts do not fall upon his heart, for it does not even enter his mind that this may be against G-d's will, or that he is blemishing his soul, [and that ultimately] this will [bring] complete destruction to it.

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

Such is not the case in regard to a person who walks rebelliously, following [the whims of] his heart due to his frivolous nature. [A person such as this] rebels [simply] because he gives no thought to his actions whatsoever. It is not because his heart is hardened, nor is it due to audacity, that he fears nothing. Rather, it is solely because he has cast off the yoke of Heaven completely. This is similar to the verse, "And they said to G-d leave us alone". Therefore, even during a time when he [undergoes] pain and suffering, he certainly will not return to HaShem. The only thing that may cause him to return is if he is placed under the heavy yoke of his enemies and [oppressors], who pursue him [and make his life miserable] until they subjugate him totally. It is only then that he will recognize and understand that it is only because he has cast off the yoke of the fear of Heaven, that the yoke of alien fear was placed upon him, i.e. fear [of his enemies] who despise [the life of] his soul. This is as stated, "Because you did not serve G-d, you will serve your enemies". The yoke of livelihood is similar to this. In other words, it will be become very burdensome and difficult for him to earn his livelihood, to the point that he, literally, becomes fed up with his life. Only then will his heart be humbled so that he will come to do true *Teshuvah*, and repent with tears over his frivolousness and light heartedness, that he rebelled against his Maker, and cast off the yoke of Heaven. Then will he return to G-d, and truly accept upon himself the yoke of Heaven. In other words, as soon as any evil thoughts enter into his mind, there will fall upon his heart a great fear and trepidation, not to follow the whims of his heart against the will of G-d, and he will resist it, because the fear of G-d is [literally] before his eyes.

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

Every person is capable of finding this [matter] within himself, and of understanding how the casting off of the yoke of Heaven is worse than the actual alien thoughts themselves. It is quite possible that a person's alien evil or lewd thoughts of licentiousness or adultery did not come into his heart out of the heat of his lusts, for he would never commit such an act, or even think about them. Rather, he purposely brings these thoughts of lust and licentiousness upon himself. He brings these thoughts upon himself several times, until when his mind is in the depths of it, he arouses the [actual] heat of his natural lusts. This is similar to the matter of one who purposely brings about an erection in himself, specifically through licentious thoughts, rather than with his hands. Such a person is in a state of banishment above and he is forbidden from entering into the domain of the Holy One blessed be He, as is known from the writings of our holy Sages of blessed memory. This only befalls a person who is frivolous by nature and does not place the fear of heaven upon his heart. He does not say to himself, "How can I intentionally bring such impurity upon myself", or "This is disgusting before G-d, and because of this I will be impeded from coming close to holiness and G-dliness". [Rather] he does not [even] consider [any of] this at all, because he is like an animal. [In other words, just like an animal] he does not hesitate from any desire which arises in his heart, even if he is not [particularly] aroused towards it at the moment at all. It is [self] understood that the casting off of the yoke of Heaven is the source of the arousal towards [all] these evils, which follow it.

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

Therefore, the punishment of one who [willingly] brings these evil thoughts upon himself is that he is banished from the domain of the holy. In other words, even if at times, he returns to G-d, in a way of "coming close", in that at times he attempts to exert himself during the prayer, [nonetheless] he is not permitted in. [From above] they confuse his thoughts and his heart, and he quickly falls from his service, as is known to those who know. This is as stated in the *Zohar*, "The thoughts of the guilty are confused [from above]". This does not necessarily mean that they have transgressed actual sins, but rather, that they have intentionally cast off the yoke of Heaven. According to the Torah, one who is in this category is called a *Rasha* – a wicked person. This is because the essential reason why a person is called a *Rasha*, is because he does not take the yoke of Heaven into consideration, whatsoever. He sins purposely and does not repent. For example it states, "And he [Moshe] said to the *Rasha* (the wicked one), why would you smite your fellow?" etc. [The wicked one

referred to here did not **actually** hit his fellow yet, but rather only raised his hand against him in a threatening way, with the intention of hitting him.]

End of Chapter Three

## Chapter Four

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

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

Likewise, in the aspect of “doing good” by way of the positive commandments [as opposed to the above, which is the only the “desisting from evil” of the negative commandments], he will be precise in fulfilling his obligations according to the command of the King. It is only then that his fasting and self affliction will make any difference relative to his past sins, in that he will never again return to his ruination. For, certainly he has returned to G-d in truth, and the One who examines hearts, desires him and will accept his penance, as in the statement, “Your right hand is spread forth to accept penitents”. This refers to those whose hearts are well prepared, and they have a strong commitment to desist and abstain from evil, so that when they do encounter evil, they immediately remove it from their hearts and thoughts completely. This is specifically through the acceptance of the Heavenly yoke upon themselves. This is as stated, “The ultimate goal of everything etc. fear G-d etc”. In other words, he fears to rebel and cause blemish, which is the main foundation of repentance for sins and transgressions.

This is the meaning of the verse, “Also hold back your servant from willful sins, let them not prevail over me, then will I be pure and keep myself clean of gross transgression.” One may ask, what is the connection of the two parts of this verse to each other? In other words, if “they shall not prevail over me”, specifically, then “will I be pure”. For, the main reason for the aspect of the rule of the sins, which are the external shells of evil, comes about because of the casting off of the Heavenly yoke, as explained previously. Because he has cast off the heavenly yoke, he becomes fair game, and abandoned to all other dominion. Because of this, all the external shells of evil cast extraneous evil thoughts upon him, to contaminate his soul. He comes under their rule, so that even when he desires to consider repentance to G-d, his soul becomes filled with extraneous, evil thoughts, so as to uproot the thoughts of repentance from his heart. He is under the rule of the impure spirit, which causes him to become contaminated and impure. Because, since he has cast off the Heavenly yoke and has brought himself to impurity many times, all the gates of impurity are opened up to him, as mentioned above. This is due to a great lacking and insensitivity of his heart to the G-dly yoke.

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

(In truth, this is the main reason for the servitude of the exile (*Galut*), which includes two matters. The first is the heavy yoke of difficult times, with suffering and difficulty in securing a livelihood, to the point that “with his soul shall he acquire bread etc”. The second is that the enemies of Israel inflict all manners of evil against them, to cause them difficulty and suffering. This is the meaning of the verse, “We have been swallowed by masters other than You”, which is only because of the aspect of the casting off of the Heavenly yoke mentioned earlier. This is as stated, “Because you have not served G-d... with joy and goodhearted-ness” with the acceptance of the Heavenly yoke, with great desire, as in, “Your kingship they accepted upon themselves with desire”, therefore, “you shall serve your enemies with a heavy yoke etc”. The punishment is literally according to the transgression.)

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

From the above, we can understand the meaning of “then will I be pure, and keep myself clean of gross transgression”. This “gross transgression” is the rebelliousness against the Supernal Kingdom of G-d. This “gross transgression” is higher than wisdom and reasoning.

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

Rather, one who knows his Creator, and recognizes Him with the aspect of the *Koach Mab* – the Power of "What" (i.e. the sublimation to G-d) etc. and intends to rebel against G-d and cast off the Heavenly yoke, saying "I shall go according to the desires of my heart", there is no fear of G-d in such a person in any way whatsoever. This comes because he cuts his soul off from its root in G-d. This is like the aspect of "other gods", "who know their Master, and intend to rebel". These are the light minded and rebellious, which is higher and above the aspect of wisdom and reasoning, but comes because they are essentially evil. This is one who in essence has destroyed his soul, and draws upon himself strange masters other than G-d, to be a servant to servants. This is what is called "gross transgression" (which is the aspect of *Keter* of *Kelipah* – Crown of the external shells of evil).

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

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

It is known that there are three levels in *Tmeemoot* – Purity. The first is the purity of the intellect and reasoning, which is called *Tamim* - תמי'ם. This can be spelled, *Tam Yam* (תם ים). [It is known that the letter *Yod* refers to *Chochmah* – Insightful Wisdom, and that *Mem* refers to the thoughts of *Binah*. These two are the main intellectual *sefiroth*. Therefore, *Tamim* refers to the purity of the intellect and reasoning. (Also, the numerical value of ים is 50, which

corresponds to the 50 gates of *Binab.*]) Now this level of purity is also the purity of the heart, for the brain and the heart are literally one, when he is pure. In other words, his heart is completely pure, so that it does not change at all, that sometimes his feelings are such and at other times they are different. One in this category is called an "*Ish Tam V'Yashar* – a pure and straight man". For example, Eyov (Job) is called "a pure and straight man who fears G-d and has left evil", and Noach is called, "A righteous and pure man etc".

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

Now, the pureness of heart is called *Tamim* – pure, and when the pureness is only in his actions he is called *Tamim B'Maasav* – pure in his actions, which is the meaning of the verse, "Those who go in purity". He is one who is called, "a man who is pure and straight in his path and in his actions". He desists from evil in actuality, in a way of purity which endures forever, in that his actions will never change from good to evil. Furthermore, he does not even consider any opposition or obstacles which attempt to obstruct him. Also, it is known that "the beginning is bound to the end". The actual action is the end and its source is in the beginning. [In other words, the fact that his actions are pure is because in essence he is pure.] This is the main aspect of truth which is the attribute of the pure, that it is unchanging from beginning to end. [The letters of Truth – *Alef Mem Taf*, are the first, middle and last letters of the Hebrew *alef beit*. In other words, it is true, from the beginning, throughout the middle, until the very end. Furthermore, they share the same letters as **תה** 'א, mentioned earlier. In other words, the 'א – the singularity of G-d is the beginning, and the **תה** – the purity, is the end, that he is pure in his actions.]

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

From all of the above we understand the meaning of the verse, "Also hold back your servant from willful sins, let them not prevail over me, then will I be pure and keep myself clean of gross transgression." In other words, I will be clean from the source [and rule] of the external evil shells. Only after this, the following verse continues, "The words of my mouth shall be desirable etc." In other words, his prayers will arise and be desirable before G-d and He will have desire in his soul, also in the way of a simple essential desire. This is as stated in the *Zohar*, "Meritorious is the man whom G-d has desire in, that G-d removes from him

every prosecution and He overturns gross transgression (פשע רב) into great influence and blessing (שפע רב).

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

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

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

This is because the most important thing is the actions of his hands, since “the beginning is bound with the end”, as explained previously. This is the meaning of, “He who has clean hands and a pure heart”, in other words, he has a pure heart in the way explained above, and “he has not carried his soul in vain”. In other words, he has the aspect of the purity of the essential desire which is above the intellect and reasoning, which is called *Tom* – Pure (with a *Cholam*). [The explanation of a *Cholam* is that it is a vowel which is above the letter. It is also a point. This signifies that it is the essential “point” of desire which is above “intellect and reasoning”. Because he is pure in essence, his actions will be pure as well, as previously explained.] It is about him that the following verse states, “He will receive blessings from G-d” in the eighteen blessings of the *Shemoneh Esreh* prayer, that “the words of his mouth will be desirable”, and his prayers are heard.

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

It is therefore understood from all of the above that the main thing is the acceptance of the Heavenly yoke, in action specifically, which is called “pure in his actions”. This is the main

rectification for the sins of one's youth, specifically during the time of the midnight prayer of *Tikkun Chatzot*, as mentioned previously.

End of Chapter Four

## Chapter Five

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

Likewise, in the analogue it is understood that there are two types of evil. The first is that he sees and feels it within himself, when he becomes aroused in a felt way, for the object of his desire. In other words, he knows over what he stumbles and he is therefore capable of guarding himself from it. If he desires to do so, and guard his soul with knowledge and free choice, he is fully capable of not following this damaging path, in which he will certainly be injured. This is as it states, "See, I have placed before you this day life and good, and death and evil". In other words, he sees two paths before him with his eyes. The first path is the path of life and goodness, and the second is a path of death and evil. He will choose the path of life and will flee from the path of death, because he has eyes, and he can see and distinguish between the two. This sight is the aspect of the sight of the light of *Chochmah*, which may be spelled, *Koach Mab* – the power of what [i.e. sublimation and subjugation to G-d] which is found in his Divine soul. This is as known, that *Chochmah* – Wisdom is called light [since it illuminates], and is the aspect of the sublimation to the G-dly "nothingness" which is found in every Jew, for it radiates in his soul. This then is the meaning of, "See, I have placed before you", in a way of sight and recognition.

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

This matter may be understood according to what was stated before concerning the matter of the casting off the Heavenly yoke, in that he follows the whims of his heart. This casting off of the Heavenly yoke is the source of all the lusts of his soul. Furthermore, we explained before that following after the whims and desires of his heart comes only as a result of casting off the Heavenly yoke. In other words, he removed the desire to accept upon the Heavenly yoke upon himself, and is lacking in this even in the way of a desire for a desire. [A desire for a desire is like a general self perception, which is the source of all of a person's particular desires, as explained elsewhere.] Because of this, he will automatically come to falling to the whims and desires of his heart. That is, because he has cast off the Heavenly yoke the yoke of strange masters is placed upon him, as explained previously. This is because he has been cut off from his source in the aspect of the *Yechidah* which is above intellect and reasoning. This is called the depth of evil.

Because of this, power is given over to the external shells of evil, which are called "*keitrin d'misavoota* – the crowns of filth", which are the gates of impurity. They cause his soul to

become impure with extraneous lewd thoughts, even when he does not desire them by choice and knowingly. Rather, they come by themselves, because of the rule of “strange masters”, as explained before. This is the meaning of “*Derech rasha'im k'aphelab* – the path of the wicked is like darkness”.

In order to understand this with greater clarity, we must understand that there are two types of darkness. There is *Ophel* (אופל) which is masculine, and there is *Aphelab* (אפילה) which is feminine, and is higher than *Ophel* - אופל. *Ophel* – אופל of *Kelipah* is masculine, and is therefore the aspect of the influencer of all types of concealed evils. This is called hidden influence [of evil], which is above all intellect and reasoning, for it is not seen or felt at all. This is like the verse, “You know the people that they are in evil”, that they are encompassed by evil, i.e. that the evil encompasses them from all sides in a concealed fashion, as stated, “They compassed me about; indeed they surrounded me”. These are the encompassing lights of the external shells of evil, from the aspect of *Keter* [the desire and pleasure, which are encompassing lights] of these external shells. This is when extraneous evil thoughts come upon a person, without his knowledge or awareness. In other words, this comes from the concealed desire which is above the awareness of *Da'at*. In other words, it is above his conscious control. It is called an encompassment which encompasses and surrounds him from all sides, and he does not know or feel it at all. It is so natural and embedded in his being, that he is unaware of it. In the terminology of the Talmud this is “when one becomes so accustomed to the sin that it he feels as if it is permissible, without feeling it [to be a sin] at all.”

Likewise, the Sages explain the verse, “The sins of my heels surround me”, that these are the sins which a person tramples with his heels. In other words, he becomes so accustomed to transgressing them, that they become regarded as permissible to him, and he does not feel it to be sinful at all. Likewise in this case, regarding this surrounding encompassment of evil, which is concealed in his soul, and encompasses him from his head to his feet, what is above his head is called, “Above *Da'at* – awareness” and what is below his feet is called, “Below *Da'at* – awareness”. This is like someone who does something in the way of a nature, without any awareness. For example, regarding his thoughts which are not for G-d, he does not feel them at all, for they are “only natural”. Or, this is like a person who transgresses a commandment without any intent of rebelling and casting off the Heavenly yoke, but rather he does it without any awareness at all. This is because of his lack of feeling for it, that it is a sin, and it is as if he tramples it with his feet. He is repaid “on the days of evil, which are the days on which the judgments rule and the prosecutors demand and are listened to”, then, “the sins of my heels surround me, above my head”. This is also like the verse, “My sins have gone over my head; like a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me”, which is the aspect of the encompassing lights of evil mentioned above. This is what is called *Ophel* – Darkness (אופל), that it darkens and conceals, as in the aspect of the depth of evil, in a concealing and encompassing way.

For, it is known that for everything which G-d created, he also created its opposite. [In other words, everything that exists on the side of the Holy has something corresponding to it on the side of evil.] On the side of Holiness, this encompassing light is called the Upper Wonder – פלא [which shares the same letters as אפל – the darkness of the side of evil]. The terminology of “wondrousness” is an aspect of concealment, something which is hidden

from the intellect and reasoning. This is called the upper darkness, as it states, "He places darkness on His side", or like the verse, "He that dwells in the concealed place of the most high, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." It is here that the Divine soul resides and is concealed, as in the following verse, "I will say to the L-rd, who is my refuge etc" and as stated, "my covering etc". It is from this level where salvation comes, as in "He will deliver thee from the snare of the fowlers". This "snare" is compared to the sins which a person tramples with his heels, so that his heels become ensnared, like one who becomes ensnared in a trap, as in the verse, "Like birds who are snared in a trap". Then, the previous verse continues, "He will deliver thee from the snare of the fowlers, and from the noisome pestilence". The "noisome pestilence" is the aspect of the hidden death, which is caused by the sins "which have gone over my head", mentioned above.

From this upper encompassment of the Holy side, there is no influence or sustenance to the external forces whatsoever. In other words, one whose essential point of his desire is attached and connected above to G-d, as mentioned earlier when speaking about one who is pure, "Shall not fear the terror at night; nor the arrows that fly by day; nor the pestilence that walks in darkness; nor the destruction that wastes at noonday". This verse speaks of the influence of the external forces in the attributes of day and night (i.e. both revealed and concealed evils), but the pure person shall not fear them. This is because, "Under His wings you will find refuge". This refers to the encompassing lights of *Binah* – Understanding, which invests until below the feet. [This refers to the garment of the *Chashmal*, which is called the "protector of the emotions", but refers to it specifically as it is after rectification-*Tikkun*, in which the "cloak of leather" is turned to a "cloak of light", as explained elsewhere]. This is as stated, "Spread the *Sukkah* of your peace upon us, and conceal us in the shadow of your wings" in order that "the satan should be removed from before us and from behind us". [It is explained elsewhere that the *Sukkah* refers to the encompassing lights of *Binah*.] This is called "protection from the outside", which refers to the protection from revealed evil of the emotions and action, that "your evil afflicts you", with the attribute of judgment and revealed afflictions.

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

The evil thoughts which he draws upon himself cause the light of his soul to slowly be extinguished, to the point where he literally reaches “the gate of death”. This is the explanation of “the pestilence that walks in darkness”, i.e. the aspect of spiritual death, which kills and destroys in a concealed way, without him knowing or feeling it at all. This is like a person who is injured in darkness, and does not know who or what caused him this injury. This is called אפל – the darkness of the side of evil, which is the opposite of פלא – The Upper wonder, on the side of Holiness. (Nonetheless, the destruction of the pestilence comes with strength and power, in the heat of the day, which is called “noonday”. This is like when at times his inclination overpowers him with a great and overpowering heat, until within him he is burning with lust. This is because the external shells of evil overpower him with powerful might, to heat him up with the fire of these evil lusts. This is as explained elsewhere on the verse regarding Tamar, “take her out and let her be burned”, in the flames and heat of the sun. In other words, this refers to the exile (*Galut*), in which “we are swallowed up by masters besides You”, who influence the Jewish people with powerful might, like the verse, “Israel is swallowed up”. Its only rectification is by burning, to burn up the evil at its source. This is during the heat of the day with the enslavement of earning a livelihood with great difficulty and toil, as in the verse, “with the sweat of your brow”.)

All of the above may be compared to two types of weapons of war. One is concealed, to attack the enemy from a hidden place, like from the forest or pits, without him knowing where the arrows come from. The second type of weapon of war is with the might of throwing fire upon the enemy etc. (This is like it states, “the sun has scorched me” in the heat of the day, and as stated by the Zohar, “Mighty judgments are the strength of the sun” etc.) About all of these aspects of evil, the psalm continues, “A thousand shall fall at your side... but it shall not come near you... because, You *Havayah* are my refuge... the young lion and the crocodile you shall trample under foot.” In other words, it is not enough that the external forces shall not receive any influence or sustenance from the “heels”, like the matter of “a snake is curled on the heels of Rabbi Chanina Ben Dosa, rather, even more than this, “you shall trample” them. This is as stated, “He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel”.)

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

Now, the explanation of the matter is that one who is a receptacle, to receive from the concealed evil at all times, which is called “*Ophel* – Darkness (אופל) of *Kelipah*”, which was explained above, it is within his power to draw upon himself this encompassing influencer of the external shells of evil. In other words, he draws upon himself many extraneous lewd and evil thoughts from the influencer of “darkness”. This is the aspect of *Malchut* (the feminine

vessel) of *Keter* (the source and influencer) of *Kelipah*. This is much worse than the influencer itself. [One main reason for this is that since it is known that *Malchut* represents the letters and the vessels which bring something out into revelation, here too, it is specifically the fact that he is a receptacle and vessel to bring out evil into actuality and revelation. This is worse than the influence itself. Without the receptacle, the influence would have no venue for revelation.]

This aspect, of the receiver and vessel of evil is called *Aphelab* – אפילה, with a *Heb* – ה, making the word feminine, which is the aspect of “the receiver”. The reason it is worse, is because her source is actually higher than the darkness of the external shells of evil itself. [This is as known that the source of the vessels is higher than the source of the light. It is specifically because of this that the vessels have the capability to contain the light and influence.] Therefore, the light of Holiness does not shine there at all, not even the concealed light of the upper encompassing light of Holiness (which is called *Peleh* (פלא) – Wondrousness, as mentioned above). This is the meaning of, “They are in evil”, that they are a recipient to receive the influence of every type of evil (from the aspect of gross iniquity, mentioned earlier). This is also the meaning of what is said about the redemption from Egypt, “from darkness to a great light”, i.e. that they were taken out of the fifty gates of impurity and evil.

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

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

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

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

In contrast, “the path (אורה) of the righteous is straight and well lit”, this being the opposite of the crooked paths of the wicked. (The explanation of a crooked or winding path is that it is a downward spiral of concealment upon concealment of G-dliness. Just as there are “hidden paths of good” there are “hidden paths of evil”. Furthermore the terminology אורה – path, is feminine, which is the aspect of the recipient [i.e. the Righteous are recipients for holiness].) In contrast, it is explained that דרך – path, is masculine, the aspect of the influencer which influences to אפילה – the feminine recipient of the external shells of evil. This is as stated, “And you will bruise their heel”, which refers to the time of the “heels of Moshiach” [these being our times], which is called, “the sins of my heels”. For, in general, the Jewish people are like a body, as is known [and in this final generation we are like the “heel” of the body]. Because of this, as known, in these generations the wicked overpower and control, with evil prosecution, for “they do not know that they stumble”, and there is a great concealment of G-dliness, as mentioned above. The rectification for this darkness is not with the light of pleasure, desire or intellect in the service of G-d, but only with tears, as will soon be explained.

End of Chapter Five

## Chapter Six

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

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

Now, we explained above in the explanation of the three levels of purity of *Tom*, *Tamim* and *Tam*, that a person who is pure and complete in his actions is higher than all the other levels of purity. This is because, as previously explained, "the end is bound with the beginning". [In other words, the fact that his actions are completely pure and complete, and totally separate from sin and evil, is because in the essence of his soul he is completely pure, whole, and separate from evil.] Likewise, it is understood here, regarding *Teshuvah* – repentance and return to G-d, that it is divided into three levels.

The first level is repentance in action, i.e. that he desists from evil completely, in actuality, like "the clean handed person" mentioned earlier. The second level is the repentance of the heart, which is the repentance and remorse which he feels in his heart, when he recites the *Viduy* confession. This is called "acknowledgement and leaving off" [i.e. admitting to the evil of past behavior and making the commitment to leave these evil ways in the future.] Now, the actual act of leaving the sin and desisting from his evil actions is the first level of "repentance in action", which is the main matter of repentance. The repentance of the heart, of confession, includes both the remorse in his heart, and the actual confession with his mouth. In other words, this is the revealed humbling of himself, like a servant who confesses his misdeeds before his master. It is specifically through this that he becomes desirable before his master. However, if he does not admit to his sins, and says "I have not sinned", his "repentance" is not desirable whatsoever, as stated, "Behold, I will enter into judgment with you, because you say, 'I have not sinned'." Therefore, a soul which sins and only repents with *Teshuvah* in the thoughts of his heart, but did not confess his evil ways, is lowered to *Sheol* [the grave or pit, referring to hell] and is then uplifted from there, as stated, "He brings down to the grave, and brings up", as is explained elsewhere. The third level is the repentance of the desire and the thought, that he uproots his evil desires from their very foundations and removes them completely, so that he no longer has any desire for this evil forever. This is a more inner aspect of repentance than the previous two levels.

It was explained above in the matter of the levels of purity of *Tam* and *Tamim*, that purity in action is higher and greater than the purity of the mind and heart. Likewise, it is understood

regarding the matter of repentance that one who returns to G-d and leaves sin in actuality, in that he no longer follows that path, is greater than them all. In other words, the source of his repentance is higher than the repentance of the desire in the brain, mentioned above. The proof for this is from the fact that we can clearly see that the thoughts of repentance in his heart and mind can cease at times, and he can return to falling into all sorts of evil thoughts.

Then he returns again and repents in his heart and mind etc. This is not the case at all with one who returns in actuality, in other words, that he no longer desires to follow the lusts of his heart and mind at all. This is like one who does not listen to the agents which tempt him to come to into the hands of sin. In other words, these are the eyes and heart, which are called the agents and intermediaries to draw him after sin and to bring extraneous evil thoughts and desires into his heart, to the point that his very soul is caused to become impure in actuality. This is like the agent of a prostitute who tempts one to desire her. Likewise, the eye sees and the heart desires, and they are called the agents who tempt, in actuality. But, when he does not allow himself to stray after his heart and his eyes, this is the root of the matter of *Teshuvah* – repentance which is called repentance in action.

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

If so, then for this reason it first says “Do not stray after your hearts” and only afterwards, “and after your eyes”. For, certainly, before he goes to the place of impurity, his heart draws him there. Only afterwards, when he arrives at that place do his eyes see and gaze, and then when he looks, he is drawn with a lust of the heart to engage in or think about the sin. It is then that the eyes precede the heart. This is stated by the Sages, “One who gazes at women, will come to the hands of sin in the end”, in actuality. This is because the eye is the agent which brings and draws down the power of impurity, to cause the heart of man, which is called “a prostitute”, to become aroused with a fiery lust. This is as stated, “*Asher atem zonim achareihem* - which you stray after [the eyes and the heart]”. [The root of the word “*zonim*” which is translated as “stray” is really “*zonab*” which means “prostitute”.] “Prostitute” is the aspect of the feminine. This is like the female who lusts after the male, and her entire heart is drawn after him, to receive his influence. This is only when she goes after the lusts of her heart to the place of impurity, that then, the eyes see etc. This is not the case if she would not leave her house at all [i.e. follow the lusts of her heart].

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

We, therefore, find that the main aspect of *Teshuvah* – repentance and return to G-d, is specifically in action, i.e. that he not return to the path of his heart. Therefore, this is the reason why it states, “Do no stray after your hearts” firstly, because the heart is called the

agent from the recipient to the influencer. Only afterwards does it state, “and after your eyes” which is called the agent from the gates of impurity of the influencer to the recipient, to cause the heart to lust and become aroused. This is the explanation of the statement that they are the two agents of sin, and this will suffice for those of understanding. [That is, the heart is the agent from man to receive the evil influence, while the eyes are the agents of the influencers of evil to cause man to sin.]

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

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

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

(In truth, we must understand the mention of “the seat of scoffers” at the end of the verse, for from this we infer that it is much stronger and worse than “the counsel of the wicked” and “the way of sinners”. At first glance though, the aspect of “scoffing” and joking seems to only be baseless merriment and merrymaking, and not actually complete sin. How then is it worse than the two previous levels?

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

because the source of “the seat of scoffers” is in the aspect of completely casting off of the Heavenly yoke, which was explained earlier.

In the aspect of casting off the Heavenly yoke, there are two possibilities and ways that it may be. The first is that he does not consider having any fear of G-d at all, for he says, “The L-rd has forsaken the land, and the L-rd does not see”. Or, he does not consider that he is about to destroy his soul, for he only desires to fulfill his lust, even though his end will be bitter. This is because he is overpowered by his inclination which burns within him. Now, merriment and joking is worse than all of the above. This is because the source of the merriment and joking comes because of the frivolity in his soul. This is the matter of his heart being greatly open to every whim that occurs to it, without restraining the spirit of his heart in any matter. This is the nature of the “white gall” whose nature leads to frivolity and baseless merriment at all times. In other words, it is this nature which causes all his laughter and lightheadedness, and his expansive spirit, which is unrestrained, and his excessive frivolous and baseless speech. This is all only because he is frivolous in the essential nature of his soul is. It is, specifically, these type of people who are called “scoffers”, because they scoff at every G-dly matter, since they do not take any serious consideration of it at all.

Such a person casts off the Heavenly yoke not because he intends to rebel against G-d, but rather, because of the frivolity and shallowness of his soul, that his heart is open to merriment and scoffing at everything. (i.e. he is incapable of taking anything seriously.) Because of this, he has no sense or feel of any fear of G-d whatsoever, because he is the opposite of a fitting receptacle for the fear of G-d. This is not to say that he renounces G-d or that he does not believe in retribution for a person's sins. Rather, he does not feel it at all, because of the “frivolous” nature of his soul, that he makes light of everything and is, literally, a joker. This is literally, is a form of madness and insanity, as stated, “And he changed his behavior before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands”. [The word for these scoffers is “*Holelim*”, and the word used in this verse for “mad” is “*Vayitholel*”. These share the same root.] This is the opposite of the faculty of *Da'at* which is the aspect of “feeling” and awareness, specifically.

This then is the meaning of the statement, “The boastful shall not stand before your eyes”. This is because the category of scoffers, cannot ever receive a revelation of the *Shechinah* (G-d's presence). The reason is because beholding the revelation of the *Shechinah* is only possible when there is fear of G-d and the acceptance of the Heavenly yoke, as known. These aspects of fear of G-d, and the Heavenly yoke are completely separate and removed from scoffers. On the contrary, they cast off the Heavenly yoke because of their great frivolity. It is for this reason that it has been stated regarding the terrible strength of this aspect of “scoffing”, that “one scoff pushes away one hundred rebukes etc”. In other words, no words of rebuke can cause the heart of the scoffer to fall [from his foolishness] and be humbled. This is not because of the hardness of his heart, but rather, it is only because of this nature in his soul, that his heart pushes away anything which feels to be a fear and yoke of Heaven that may come to conquer his heart and cause him to be humbled and restrain his spirit.

This is the meaning of the statement, “Do not reprove a scorner... rebuke a wise man”, who is the opposite of the scoffer. The wise person is one, who by the nature of his soul, feels the rebuke in his heart, and constantly restrains his heart. He is one who constantly has an

aspect of subjugation to G-d (the *Koach Mab* of *Chochmah* [the sublimation of the light of wisdom] mentioned earlier), to receive the Heavenly yoke upon himself. Therefore, with a moment of rebuke his heart is conquered, for he is a proper receptacle for this. This is because his heart is closed and contracted, which is the opposite of the openheartedness and spreading forth of the scoffers. (This is the nature of the "black gall", i.e. that his heart is contracted and humbled to receive upon himself the Heavenly yoke. This is the type of nature of the wise man, to love rebuke, and he is zealous and studious by nature, in all of his studies.)

This is the meaning of the verse, "One rebuke enters more into a wise man than a hundred [physical] blows to a fool". In other words, he immediately feels every rebuke and reproof in his heart, more than a fool feels a hundred lashes. For, the heart of the fool is that of the scoffer, with no feeling whatsoever, even when he is in the very heat of the fire, like lashes. This is as stated, "Though you should grind a fool in a mortar among crushed grain with a pestle, yet his foolishness will not depart from him." This is not the case with one who understands a reproof in the depths of his heart, even a single rebuke, as stated, "One rebuke in the heart of man is better than one hundred lashes etc." But, there is no hope for the scoffer, only, "Cast out the scoffer etc", and this will suffice for those of understanding.

Now, the source of this *Kelipab* – external shell of evil of the scoffers, is called *Kelipat Haplishtim* – The *Kelipab* of the Philistines, as stated, "The Philistines were scoffers". (This is also as explained elsewhere on the matter of "And Yitzchak settled and dug a well etc. which the Philistines had closed up". In other words, the aspect of the Philistines, which are the scoffers and merrymakers, closed up the light of the love of G-d of Avraham which radiates every day during the prayers of a Jew. Because of this, he immediately falls into foreign loves because he has "sat in the seat of scoffers" this being merriment and scoffing, which is like an open thoroughfare. In other words, his heart is like an open thoroughfare which is open to every type of laughter and foreign pleasure, without any feeling for any [matter of spiritual refinement], as explained above. Now, this is not the case with Yitzchak, who personified the aspect of fear of G-d, which is included within the love of Avraham, with the acceptance of the Heavenly yoke. Here, the aspect of the Philistines, which is the *Kelipab* of scoffing, that closes heart and conceals the G-dly light, has no effect at all. This is because, the aspects of the fear of G-d and acceptance of the Heavenly yoke of Yitzchak, is its literal and ultimate opposite.)

This then is the meaning of "Happy is he... who has not sat in the seat of scoffers". For, if he did sit there, he would automatically follow the advice of the wicked and stand in the path of sinners, because of the casting off of the Heavenly yoke, that his heart becomes open to everything. (This is like *Apikorsim* (the rebellious) who know their Master rebel against the L-rd, intentionally, that they literally rebel against Him. These people are called scoffers, and this is the aspect of *Keter*, *Chochmah* and *Binah* of the external shells of evil (*Kelipab*), because included in two hundred is one hundred.)

From the above we may discern the meaning of the verse, "Surely He scorns the scorners". In other words, "One who comes to contaminate himself", for his heart is opened to everything with merriment, he draws upon himself all the gates of impurity, which is the meaning of "He scorns the scorners". From this we must say that the casting off of the Heavenly yoke causes the gates of impurity to be drawn down upon him, and that these

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

End of Chapter Six

## Chapter Seven

We must now understand the continuation of the verse, "He did not sit in the seat of scoffers, but his delight is in the Torah of the L-rd, and in His Torah he toils day and night". Now, at first glance these are two complete opposites [i.e. the sitting of scoffers and the toil in Torah]. How then can they be connected and juxtaposed to one another? For certainly the simple understanding of the words, "his delight is in the Torah of the L-rd" is the literal opposite to "walking in the counsel of the wicked..." and "sitting in the seat of scoffers".

Now, in truth, the main opposition to the above evil is repentance in action and in actuality, to "not walk in the counsel of the wicked". This was explained above, in the explanation of "Do not stray after your hearts etc". Rather, the end of the verse, "his delight is in the Torah of the L-rd" must be referring to "the seat of scoffers", which it immediately follows. In other words, the literal opposition to "the seat of scoffers" is the zealotry in the toil of study of the Torah of G-d.

According to what we said previously, that sitting "in the seat of scoffers" is worse than all the other external shells of evil (*Kelipah*), what then is the meaning of what the Psalmist says that its rectification is only through the Torah of G-d?

Now, certainly it is true that the main aspect of true repentance (*Teshuvah*) is only the abstinence from evil, to "not walk in the counsel of the wicked etc". However, the fact that "he has not walked... stood... or sat..." in the ways of wickedness, is because "his delight is in the Torah of the L-rd". The fact that "his delight is in the Torah of the L-rd" is because he has rectified the blemish of his soul, of "casting off of the Heavenly yoke", through tears of repentance during the midnight prayer of *Tikkun Chatzot*. This is the meaning of the verse, "My tears have been my bread etc".

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

In other words, when he is sitting together with others, he should make sure not to be frivolous and lightheaded, opening his heart to all manner of merriment and joking, speaking every thought that arises in his soul, with expansive speech and a tongue that runs. For, we clearly see regarding the matter of vain speech and idle chatter, that although they may not be words of scorn and frivolity, nonetheless, we see that a person abundantly speaks all sorts of idle and vain words without any self restraint. This is only because his heart is light and his spirit is coarse, for he does not put the shame [of G-d] in his heart, to consider in his soul before whom he stands and sits and [before whom he] speaks all these words of vanity with such great abundance. This is only because his feeling of any fear of G-d is so minute. Therefore his words come out with great breadth and expansiveness, unrestrained in any way. All of this flows from one source, the same source which causes him to pursue the whims of his heart and to fall to every lust that his soul desires. This source is the casting off of the yoke of Heaven, literally.

Now, although the Torah does not explicitly forbid idle chatter, nonetheless, its effect is that it definitely uproots the fear of G-d from a person's heart completely. This is certainly true with regard to children's chatter, i.e. joking and merriment, in which there surely is an even greater measure of "casting off the Heavenly yoke", to the point that it is very close to the aspect of the scorn, merriment and boastfulness of the *Kelipah* of the Philistines, as explained above. Because his heart is so open [to everything] since no fear of G-d is before him at all, certainly, all the external shells of evil enter into such an open ruin. [These external shells of evil] draw all types of impurities upon his soul to destroy it. This is also the reason why he falls to the pursuit of the whims of his heart, and falls into extraneous evil thoughts. Therefore, the surest advice for this, so that a person should not become ensnared in the chambers of evil, is solely to keep his heart within his own domain and under control at all times, and that he should abstain from anything which comes upon him which ultimately will result in the casting off of the Heavenly yoke.

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

Now certainly, a person whose heart has been touched by the fear of G-d through true repentance, from the very depths of his heart, always feels shamed and humbled in his heart. Because of this, he will never become lighthearted, speaking frivolous and vain words, whatsoever. This comes about for two reasons: Firstly, because his heart is broken and despicable in his own eyes, and, in his heart, he is constantly agonizes and worries about the sins of his youth. Therefore, his heart will not feel uplifted, to expand into empty chatter or any type of merriment and jesting. This is because he feels like a penniless pauper, who is broken hearted, because he even lacks sustenance and bread. Therefore, his heart does not feel uplifted, [nor does he engage in] abundant in words of gaiety. Furthermore, he is not drawn after pleasures, such as hearing the voice of song, as "He sings songs with a dispirited heart". [As the beggar is] so is the truly penitent. Because he feels humbled in the very essence of his soul like a spiritual pauper, (as opposed to the example of the physical pauper), his speech is minimal and his spirit is lowly. He will not be able to be lighthearted at all, and the matter casting off the yoke of Heaven will be far from him.

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

and he feels that all creatures are better than him. Even a person who cannot find actual sins and transgressions easily within his soul is, nonetheless, capable of finding and making a clear account of all his thoughts which were not for G-d, and of all his strange desires, and more specifically, his great distance from G-d and from Torah and Mitzvot, including [the lack of true] prayer from the [depths of his] heart.

If he truly searches [within himself] without fooling himself or making light of such matters, not finding fault with himself because of his natural love for himself, so that he is not be pedantic [with himself], then he will find that his soul is literally empty. Those who have a fear of sin, and greatly feel and are bothered in their hearts by even the finest of evils, which a person usually "tramples with his heels", [for such a people, even the finest evil] will be greatly magnified in their eyes, and will immediately touch their heart upon remembering these sins. All those whose hearts are less sensitive, in regard to what they think and do, this is only because of the frivolousness and lightness of their heart, because of the lack of fear of sin.

Now, there are a great many levels of fear of sin, each person according to who and what he is. There are those who are anguished every time they open their mouths and fall to idle speech, and they certainly are pained when they fall to speaking words which express evil thoughts. Such a person will certainly be pained if, because of these evil thoughts, impurity comes upon him, this being blemishing the sign of the covenant (*P'gam HaBrit*), in which the external shell of an impure spirit rests upon his soul so that he becomes impure thereby etc. He takes everything into account. Such people are called "masters of accounting", who take stock [of all their deeds] each and every day. Specifically during reciting the *Shemah* before retiring to sleep at night, one should take stock and examine everything he has done or thought throughout the day, putting his heart fully into it and [if he is honest in his assessment] he will be abguished by it. All this comes from fear of sin, which is the adversary of all transgressions which are the rebelliousness of casting off the Heavenly yoke as a result of lightheartedness and frivolity, i.e. that he does not consider nor take any account of anything, as mentioned above.

In truth, most people's confusion is mainly in this matter. In other words, many people see all types of evil in themselves, without anything being concealed from them, not even half a thing, and yet they feel no need to be disturbed by this at all. Only at times, when a person is aroused [to G-dliness], will he feel himself to be full of evil. He then will become enraged about the state of his soul and may temporarily fall into sadness and depression. However, when he realizes that he is hopeless, he will revert to his former ruination to an greater degree than before, until "the faller shall surely fall", for he despairs in his soul. In truth, this is only the counsel of the evil inclination whose intent is to cause him to fall completely. He must therefore be very strong, and must tell his heart that the reason these evils have come upon him and grasped him in their clutches, is because he has no fear of sin in his heart, and it is because of this lack of awareness in his heart during the day and other times, that he slowly falls into lightness and frivolity.

[He should know] that this is either because of his frivolous nature or because of his self-involvement that he forgets about fear of G-d. Because of this his fear of sin diminishes. This is because fear of sin and fear of G-d is one and the same. They are [totally] interdependent. Because, in his heart, he has no fear of G-d, he therefore has no fear of sin.

He has no fear of sin because he has no fear of G-d. (This is as explained elsewhere on the verse, "Because our G-d is not among us" i.e. the fear of G-d, therefore, "these evils come upon us".)

However, there are many people who have the opposite problem. They worry over and above the proper measure, and agonize and overly worry about every evil that they discover in themselves to the point that they despair and feel that they are beyond hope. They feel this way even if the evil is only in matters of speech or thought alone, or that he finds himself lacking in the service of the mind or heart or in the toil of Torah and Mitzvot (the commandments) and the like. Now, of course, the path of repentance is such that the more one is pained in his heart, the more desirable and accepted is his repentance. However, this is only in regard specifically to action. Regarding thought, and specifically shortcomings in the performance of positive commandments, such as Torah study, Mitzvot or prayer, this additional agonizing is of no benefit whatsoever, for it is solely because he is physical and his body has a mixture of good and evil. The evil is the depression which pulls him to the side of evil, as is known. Rather, what he needs to do, is that immediately when his heart becomes pained, is to strengthen his heart and his commitment not to follow after vanity any longer, and to set the fear of G-d before him at all times, so that he should always fear sin. This will suffice for those of understanding.

The second reason that he feels shame and humility in his heart is because of fear of G-d, which is higher than fear of sin. This is so, although the two are one, as explained above that he fears sin because he fears G-d. Nonetheless, we see that there are people who fear sin, but, nonetheless, have no constant grasp of fear of G-d in their minds and hearts, such as during involvement with their livelihood (or because of coarseness in regard to permitted matters, such as lust for permitted food or permitted sexuality etc).

It may also be possible that a person's fear of G-d may not be commensurate to his fear of sin. This may be seen in simple folk or women, who fear sin, such as transgressing certain sins such as Shabbat observance, murder, or adultery. This may even apply to lesser sins, which they will fear in their very souls because they are foreign to their hearts. Nonetheless, they only have a very minute fear of G-d in their hearts, i.e. they may cheat or steal when engaging in business matters or they may swear falsely or speak gossip or use foul language and the like. This is because they lack fear of G-d. This is because this type of fear of G-d is called "fear of His exaltedness" and comes specifically through the toil of the heart and mind, until a person becomes aroused with fear of G-d. Therefore, how can there be any great degree of fear of G-d in a person who lacks in the service of the heart during prayer. It is only because of the aspect of natural faith in G-d in his soul that he has any fear of G-d at all, and then, only in a very general manner, in that that he does not rebel against G-d. He fears to rebel against G-d, at least to transgress His will openly, in public.

This is the opposite of the aspect of "casting off the Heavenly yoke" mentioned earlier, in which he does not take anything into consideration. This type of fear is therefore included in "the fear of sin which precedes his wisdom" so that "his wisdom is everlasting". (In contrast, if a person lacks even this, yet proceeds with the service of the heart and mind, it cannot endure the test of time.) This is as stated, "If there is no fear, there is no wisdom". This refers to fear of sin. The continuation of the statement is, "If there is no wisdom there is no fear". This refers to the fear of G-d. This will suffice for those of understanding.

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

Now, although these may not be severe transgressions such as profaning the Shabbat or the like, nonetheless, they will fall to lust after money, which may bring them to dishonesty in business matters, such as cheating or deceiving, so that their hands are not completely pure.

Likewise, in all other matters between himself and his Maker, a person may be lacking in positive action and could be full of negative thoughts, having all manner of nasty emotions such as arrogance, coarseness of spirit, anger etc, not budging from them even to a hair's breadth. Likewise, he may become miserly, and not give charity or do acts of loving kindness. He may become cruel, lacking mercy or have an evil eye, constantly being jealous of others or the like. He may also fall to merriment and jesting, and may even commingle with Idolaters, [G-d forbid] etc.

Over and above lusts for permissible things, such as eating permissible food and engaging in permitted sexual relations, he may fall to greatly desiring honor, or all manner of other worldly pleasures, and he will not restrain himself from any of them.

Now, although he guards himself from all evil and forbidden matters that are explicitly forbidden by the Torah, because of his fear of G-d and fear of sin, however, many times it is not commensurate to the arousal of fear of G-d in his heart. At first glance, this is very astonishing. This is because we must say that a person such as this is greatly lacking in his fear of sin, in all matters, and that he is not at all within the category of one who fears G-d, as the verse clearly states, "He shall fear G-d... and he shall fulfill His commandments", from which it is understood that these two matters are interdependent.

Furthermore, although the fulfillment of the commandments is dependant on the love of G-d, because love of G-d is the motivating source of the fulfillment of the two hundred and forty eight positive commandments, and the fear of G-d is the motivating source for abstaining from transgressing the three hundred and sixty five negative commandments, and as stated, "to love G-d and to serve him" through the positive commandments which depend on love of G-d, it nonetheless states, "What does the L-rd your G-d request of you, but to fear the L-rd your G-d etc". This is because the fear of G-d actually includes all the commandments, since even the positive commandments are the decrees of the King, which are part and parcel of the acceptance of the Heavenly yoke, specifically.

However, one could say that because such a person's fear of sin is not commensurate to his fear of G-d, therefore, his arousal of fear of G-d during prayer, literally, a be considered to be a deception in his soul. This is because, as is known, the arousal of love and fear during prayer is drawn from the *Koach Mah* – the power of "what" (i.e. sublimation) which is called

the *Chochmah* (wisdom) of the Divine soul. In other words, it comes about as a result the power of the G-dly soul, which is in an aspect of an essential G-dly arousal. This is why each person, according to the source of his soul, becomes aroused in his heart with G-dly fear [through contemplation, as explained in *Kuntras HaHitpaalut*]. This is as stated "G-d examines the hearts".

This arousal of fear of G-d in the heart, literally, is an arousal of fear in the physical heart, which is brought about by the recognition of the greatness Creator who is the source of everything etc., through *Hitbonenut* - contemplation. Through this contemplation a fear falls upon his heart, which is literally called the fear of G-d. This comes about in a felt way in one's heart of flesh, as stated, "O' L-rd, I heard your report and was afraid". [Hearing refers to the aspect of the comprehension of *Binah*. In other words, through the above contemplation in the way of comprehension, one arouses the fear of G-d in his heart.] If this is the case, then how could it be that we do not necessarily find a fear of sin appropriate to this level in such a person, i.e. a fear of sin commensurate to the fear of G-d within him?

Each and every person can find these two literally opposite poles in his soul each day. In other words, a person could arouse his fear and love of G-d during prayer or any other time as he wishes. However, after a short while, he can find himself to be completely empty of any fear of sin. Actually, this arousal does not seem to make any difference in [helping him] stand up against all the evil emotions of his heart, such as anger, haughtiness, stinginess, or cruelty etc. Certainly, it does not seem to affect him enough to desist from casting off the Heavenly yoke, with extraneous lewd thoughts.

(This is the case all the more so, specifically in our orphaned generation, in which we clearly see that every person is lacking greatly in fear of sin. Anyone who has eyes in his head can clearly see this in both young and old alike. They stumble in every possible manner, which ultimately results from casting off the Heavenly yoke, because of frivolity and not taking anything seriously, as explained before. Nonetheless, they regard themselves as having fear of G-d, engaging in the service of the mind and heart, whenever they find the time for it.

Actually, they are correct, since the fear of Heaven, in Torah, Mitzvot, charity, prayer and repentance of the heart etc, may be found in each and every Jew according to his capabilities, as stated, "Your nation are all righteous etc". (This excludes those who are completely empty. Such people are called the sinners of Israel. Nonetheless, they too "are filled with Mitzvot like a pomegranate is filled with seeds etc".)

Now, all of the above, each person according to his capabilities, may only to be found at intermittent, specific times, such as during prayer, repentance, Torah study or Mitzvot observance etc. However, usually, most people pursue all manners of vanities and emptiness of this lowly world, each person according to his path. "They swagger and sway like a drunkard", but not from wine, "and all of their wisdom" and fear, "becomes swallowed up". In other words, all the good [which they may have] is swallowed up by evil, similar to the good fat cows which were swallowed by the emaciated bad cows [in pharaoh's dream]. Even after the emaciated bad cows swallowed the fat good cows, nonetheless, they remain emaciated and bad in appearance, just as they had been to begin with. Through all the above, we may understand the meaning of the statement, "A time when man will rule over man, to

do evil unto him”, which is the primary matter of the exile of the *Shechinah*-G-d's Divine presence, as will soon be explained. This will suffice for those of understanding.

End of Chapter Seven

## Chapter Eight

It must now be understood that both within the aspect of fear of sin and in the aspect of fear of G-d, there are two types of fears. The first comes because of the strength of a person's service, and the toil of his soul during prayer, and during all other propitious times. In other words, through contemplation and recognition of his Creator he causes his heart be a fit vessel for the arousal of fear in his heart and mind, according to his capacity. He accustoms himself to such contemplation with constant diligence and zeal, until the Heavenly yoke becomes engraved upon his heart, with the two above mentioned, types of fear. The first is the fear of sin, i.e. that he fears to rebel against his Master through any transgression or sin, even a lenient transgression of the words of our Sages, as known. The second is the fear of G-d, which is the contemplation into the greatness of the Creator. When he becomes aroused with an intellectual love and fear, it will be commensurate to his comprehension. This type of fear is called, "the awe and fear of His exaltedness", and each person may acquire it, each person according to his capabilities and level. However, it is not equal at all times, for, certainly, a person goes through many changes from moment to moment.

For example, when a person is busily involved with his personal dealings or when the yoke of livelihood is increased upon him, then his mind and heart may become confused. This is even more true during times of hardship, in which case, for whatever reason, a person may become so confused to the point that "his heart is no longer with him" to even [be able to] think about matters of love and fear of G-d. Even if he does recall the fear of G-d, it will be far from him, because of his short spiritedness and the heavy and burdensome labor, which, literally, embitters his life. In such a case, certainly, with the passage of time he will fall [from his spiritual station] until, slowly but surely, even the fear of sin may be uprooted from his heart, and he will certainly lack the fear of G-d, which comes about as a result of comprehension.

Although he has not yet within the category of casting off the Heavenly yoke, nonetheless, all of the toil of his service to implant the fear of sin in his heart, has been lost completely. He becomes like one who has never tasted the fear of G-d. In this manner [he descends from level to level] until his heart is empty of all fear of Heaven [G-d forbid]. This is considered to be spiritual death [G-d forbid], in which there is no G-dly life or light whatsoever. He becomes like a piece of rotting wood or like an inanimate object, like one who by his very nature is completely empty [of vitality], like a dry wood, or like a ruined field where it is futile to plant seeds, for they will not take hold and grow.

Now, if any impression of the fear does remain upon his heart, then possibly at a propitious time, he may be aroused from above to repent, and this will inspire him to act upon it, for "The spirit of the Lord drives forth in him". He will then awaken from his slumber, to return to G-d with the service of the heart, to arouse love and fear in his heart during prayer at times. Certainly he will also strengthen his heart regarding fear of sin and to always accept the Heavenly yoke upon himself. He will not stray, neither to the right nor to the left, and the strength of Divine light and life will be with him.

However, if at least a trace impression no longer remains in him, then no G-dly spirit will affect him, to arouse his soul. This will be the case even when it is a propitious time above, such as during the ten days of repentance [between *Rosh HaShana* and *Yom Kippur*], as stated, "Seek HaShem when He is to be found", such as at midnight [during the time of *Tikkun Chatzot*] or on Shabbat and Holidays etc. During such times, all souls ascend, but he will never ascend. There is only a complete descent, which comes about because of his preoccupation with livelihood or the fact that he is going through difficult times of hardships, as mentioned above. (In such a case his heart may become broken and humbled to return with a lower level of *Teshuvah* etc.) All this comes about because he draws himself to involving his heart and soul to their depths in matters that create a separation and a barrier between him and his Creator. An example of such a prohibition would be theft, adultery, murder or transgressing the Shabbat etc.

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

Likewise, in regard to all the pleasures of this world, such as all types of delicacies and expensive clothes which inflate his ego and cause his heart to be uplifted, he is still capable of salvaging himself from this fall state, through giving charity and doing acts of kindness to the poor, and favors to others. However, if this is not the case, and instead he follows the whims of his heart, totally involving himself in gratifying his own lust for pleasures, like a glutton or a drunkard, and he uplifts his heart in arrogance, and ignores the plight of the poor, to help them, then certainly there is no fear before his eyes whatsoever, not even a trace impression of it. (This is as stated, "But Yeshurun grew fat and kicked; you have grown fat, you have become coarse etc". Similarly [the Talmud states] that, "the wine [or pleasures] of *Progita* [and the waters of *Diomeset*] deprived Israel of the Ten Tribes". [It is explained that the sin which precipitated their exile was excessive involvement in material pleasures, signified by the wine of *Progita* etc.]) Such a person dominates others with arrogance and afflicts the poor, uplifting himself over everyone and everything. Such a person is called, "Bad to G-d, and bad to the creatures", for certainly he is like a completely evil person, filled with grave transgressions. There is no hope for his soul at all.

This is as stated, "You have grown fat, you have become coarse" as in, "It shall come to pass when I bring you into the land" there will be "houses filled with goodness" but "guard yourself, lest you forget the L-rd". For, even if a person has not actually cheated or stolen at all, however, because his heart becomes uplifted and arrogant because of the abundant goodness, it is possible to forget G-d completely, "and become fat". He will then come even to the point of the sin of *avodah zarah* – idol worship, for such is the way of things. When, because of his uplifted heart, there is a withdrawal of the Holy light of the Heavenly

yoke (because of his preoccupation with worldly pleasures), automatically his heart will stray after vanities.

Nonetheless, it is understood that affliction in matters of income, health or children are for his good, since that is the opposite of a "house filled with goodness", and it breaks the arrogant heart of all its arrogance and merriment, and causes him to return to G-d. (This is similar to what was mentioned before about Menasheh, who returned to G-d as a result of being afflicted.) Now, all of the above only applies to a person who has fallen from the levels of fear of G-d and fear of sin, which were [previously] implanted in his heart as a result of his toil [in contemplation].

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

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

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

All this is solely because of the source of their G-dly souls, which is called "the aspect of their essential Jewishness". (This is the aspect of the *Yechidah* of the soul, which literally radiates in a revealed way, specifically in their actions, (since "the beginning is bound with the end"). This, then, is the meaning of the statement, "Your nation is all righteous", literally, in actuality. Therefore, "Every Israelite has a portion in the world to come", and as known, this is specifically because they fulfill the commandments in actuality, because "the beginning is bound with the end". In other words, the essential point of this nature in their G-dly souls, which is literally bound to G-dliness in an essential way, is such that although quite possibly, in the mind and heart, the G-dly light of the soul may be diminished to the point that he is completely empty of everything, nonetheless, although a Jew has sinned, he is still a Jew.

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

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

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

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

This is the same the fear of G-d which the righteous have because of the nature of their souls. It is much greater than fear of G-d which comes through toil in the heart, mind and comprehension. This type of love and fear is called "natural love and fear", which is literally like a nature in the general population of the Jewish people. Another aspect regarding this fear, which is different than the fear acquired through comprehension, is that it is eternal and

everlasting, and can never be uprooted. This is because every essence is unchanging, and this is the essence of their Jewishness, which is the foundation and root of all their service of G-d. It is "this, which stood for our fathers and for us", for, "how beautiful is our inheritance". This is what stood up and was established in every generation, to protect the Jewish people from all prosecution, both spiritually and physically. This is as stated, "And yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, nor will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them." This is because, "The heart of the fathers is towards the sons", and this too is in an essential, natural way. This will suffice for those of understanding.

End of Chapter Eight