

Rabash—the Social Writings

Rabash—the Social Writings



LAITMAN
KABBALAH
PUBLISHERS

Baruch Shalom HaLevi Ashlag

RABASH—THE SOCIAL WRITINGS

Copyright © 2010 by MICHAEL LAITMAN

All rights reserved

Published by Laitman Kabbalah Publishers

www.kabbalah.info info@kabbalah.info

1057 Steeles Avenue West, Suite 532, Toronto, ON, M2R 3X1, Canada

Bnei Baruch USA, 2009 85th street, #51, Brooklyn, NY 11214, USA

Printed in Canada

No part of this book may be used or reproduced
in any manner without written permission of the publisher,
except in the case of brief quotations embodied
in critical articles or reviews.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Ashlag, Barukh Shalom, ha-Levi, 1907-1991.

Rabash-the social writings / Baruch Ashlag ;

[foreword by Michael Laitman]. ~ 1st ed.

p. cm.

ISBN 978-1-897448-51-9

1. Cabala. I. Laitman, Michael. II. Title.

BM525.A7826 2011

296.1'6-dc22

2010042560

Compilation: David Melnichuk

Copy Editor: Claire Gerus

Proofreading: Noga Burnot, Debra Rudder

Page Layout and Cover Design: Baruch Khovov

Post Production: Uri Laitman

Translator and Executive Editor: Chaim Ratz

FIRST EDITION: AUGUST 2011

FIRST PRINTING

CONTENTS

Foreword	7
Purpose of Society 1.....	9
Purpose of Society 2.....	11
Concerning Love of Friends.....	12
Love of Friends	14
They Helped Every One His Friend.....	15
What Does the Rule, “Love Thy Friend as Thyself,” Give Us?.....	16
Love of Friends	17
According to What Is Explained Concerning “Love Thy Friend as Thyself”.....	21
Which Keeping of Torah and <i>Mitzvot</i> Purifies the Heart?	26
One Should Always Sell the Beams of His House	28
Concerning the Importance of Society.....	33
Sometimes Spirituality Is Called “a Soul”	36
Concerning Bestowal.....	40
Concerning the Importance of Friends	54
The Agenda of the Assembly 1.....	57
You Stand Today, All of You.....	60
Make for Yourself a Rav and Buy Yourself a Friend 1	68
Make for Yourself a Rav and Buy Yourself a Friend 2	77
Mighty Rock of My Salvation	83
But the More They Afflicted Them	88
And There Was Evening and There Was Morning.....	94
Who Testifies to a Person	100
The Importance of a Prayer of Many.....	113
Come unto Pharaoh 2	123
A Prayer of Many	140
The Agenda of the Assembly 2.....	146
Who Causes the Prayer.....	153
Concerning Above Reason.....	158

One's Greatness Depends on	
the Measure of One's Faith in the Future.....	173
What Is the Substance of Slander and Against Whom Is It?.....	190
The Severity of Teaching Idol Worshipers the Torah	210
The Need for Love of Friends.....	232
What Is the Foundation on which Kedusha [Holiness] Is Built....	237
What Beginning in <i>Lo Lishma</i> Means in the Work.....	288
What to Look For in the Assembly of Friends.....	299
Why Are Four Questions Asked Specifically on Passover Night? ...	310
What Placing the Hanukah Candle on the Left	
Means in the Work.....	323
What the Torah Being Called "the Middle Line"	
Means in the Work.....	332
What "There Is No Blessing in That which Is Counted"	
Means in the Work.....	343
What the King Standing on His Field When the Crop Is Ripe	
Means in the Work?.....	356
What "You Have Given the Strong to the Hands of the Weak"	
Means in the Work.....	366
Letter No. 5.....	377
Letter No. 8.....	378
Letter No. 16.....	390
Letter No. 24.....	394
Letter No. 34.....	397
Letter No. 37.....	401
Letter No. 40.....	403
The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil	410
Reproving Another	413
Man as a Whole.....	413
We Shall Do and We Shall Hear 2.....	416
Internality and Externality.....	417
Further Reading.....	419
About Bnei Baruch.....	432

FOREWORD

Rav Baruch Shalom HaLevi Ashlag (Rabash) played a remarkable role in the history of Kabbalah. He provided us with the necessary final link connecting the wisdom of Kabbalah to our human experience. Because of his special qualities, he was able to annul himself before his father and teacher, the great Kabbalist, Rav Yehuda Leib HaLevi Ashlag, known as Baal HaSulam for his *Sulam* (Ladder) commentary on *The Book of Zohar*.

Yet, if not for the essays of Rabash, his father's efforts to disclose the wisdom of Kabbalah to all would have been in vain. Without those essays, few would be able to achieve the spiritual attainment that Baal HaSulam so desperately wanted us to obtain.

In his day-to-day life, Rabash was the epitome of humility and self-restraint. Even so, his essays reveal a profound understanding of human nature. What on first glance might appear as a formality of language is actually the precise emotional path to the depths of the human heart. His writings show us the inner turning point where we must place our ladder and begin to climb. He accompanies us on this spiritual journey with astounding sensitivity to the trials and confusion that students may experience as they advance toward attainment. His words will enable readers to come to terms with their own nature, and to shift the emotions of fear and anger into liberation, joy, and confidence far more quickly than they would without his warmth and support.

Without his essays, particularly those about one's work within a group, we would never know how to grow from Kabbalah enthusiasts into full-grown Kabbalists. Rabash is the only Kabbalist ever to offer a clear working method that can be used by anyone in the world—from the moment their point in the heart awakens until they accomplish their spiritual goal through their work in groups.

In his essays, the adventures typically begin with a quote or two from sources such as *The Zohar* or the Pentateuch. Then, Rabash moves from a didactic tone to a more personal and endearing approach. And when he says, “We learn everything in one person,” it is always the beginning of the revelation of the depths of the soul, where readers discover hidden treasures they never dreamed existed.

The writings in this book aren't just for reading. They are more like an experiential user's guide. It is very important to work with them in order to see what they truly contain. The reader should try to put them into practice by living out the emotions Rabash so masterfully describes.

In fact, he always advised me to summarize the articles and to work with the texts. And to this day, I do, and I am always astonished by the insights they reveal. Today, I recommend the same to all my students: work with the texts, summarize them, translate them, implement them in the group, and you will discover the power in the writings of Rabash.

Michael Laitman

PURPOSE OF SOCIETY 1

Article No. 1, Part 1, 1984

We have gathered here to establish a society for all who wish to follow the path and method of Baal HaSulam, the way by which to climb the degrees of man and not remain as a beast, as our sages said (*Yevamot*, 61a) about the verse, “And you My sheep, the sheep of My pasture, are men.” And Rashbi said, “You are called ‘men,’ and idol worshipers are not called ‘men.’”

To understand man’s merit, we shall now bring a verse from our sages (*Berachot*, 6b) about the verse, “The end of the matter, all having been heard: fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole man” (*Ecclesiastes*, 12:13). And the Gemarah asks, “What is ‘for this is the whole man?’”

Rabbi Elazar said, “The Creator said, ‘The whole world was created only for that.’ This means that the whole world was created for the fear of God.”

Yet, we need to understand what the fear of God is, being the reason for which the world was created. From all the words of our sages, we learn that the reason for creation was to benefit His creations. This means that the Creator wished to delight the creatures so they would feel happy in the world. And here our sages said about the verse, “For this is the whole man,” that the reason for creation was the fear of God.

But according to what is explained in the essay, “Matan Torah,” the reason why the creatures are not receiving delight and pleasure, even though it was the reason for creation, is the disparity of form between the Creator and the creatures. The Creator is the giver and the creatures are the receivers. But there is a rule that the branches are similar to the root from which the branches were born.

And since there is no reception in our root, since the Creator is in no way deficient and needs nothing to satisfy His want, man

feels unpleasantness when he needs to be a receiver. This is why every person is ashamed to eat the bread of shame.

To correct that, the world had to be created. *Olam* (world) means *He'elem* (concealment), so that delight and pleasure must be concealed. Why is it so? The answer is, for fear. In other words, it is so that man would fear using his vessels of reception, called “self love.” This means that one should prevent oneself from receiving pleasures because one craves them, and should have the strength to prevail over the craving, the object of one’s desire.

Instead, one should receive pleasures that bring contentment to the Creator. This means that the creature will want to bestow upon the Creator and will have fear of the Creator, of receiving for oneself, since reception of pleasure—when one receives for one’s own benefit—removes him from cleaving to the Creator.

Therefore, when a person performs one of the *Mitzvot* (commandments) of the Creator, one should aim that this *Mitzva* will bring him pure thoughts that he will bestow upon the Creator by keeping God’s *Mitzvot*. It is as our sages said, “Rabbi Hanania Ben Akashia says, ‘The Creator wanted to cleanse Israel; hence, He gave them plentiful Torah and *Mitzvot*.’”

And this is why we gather here—to establish a society where each of us follows the spirit of bestowing upon the Creator. And to achieve bestowal upon the Creator, we must begin with bestowal upon man, which is called “love of others.”

And love of others can only be through revoking of one’s self. Thus, on the one hand, each person should feel lowly, and on the other hand, be proud that the Creator has given us the chance to be in a society where each of us has but a single goal: for Divinity to be among us.

And although we have not yet achieved this goal, we have the desire to achieve it. And this, too, should be appreciated by

us, for even though we are at the beginning of the way, we do hope to achieve the exalted goal.

PURPOSE OF SOCIETY 2

Article No. 1, Part 2, 1984

Since man is created with a *Kli* called “self-love,” where one does not see that an act will yield self-benefit, one has no motivation to make even the slightest motion. And without annulling self-love, it is impossible to achieve *Dvekut* (adhesion) with the Creator, meaning equivalence of form.

And since it is against our nature, we need a society that will form a great force so we can work together on annulling the will to receive, called “evil,” as it hinders the achievement of the goal for which man was created.

For this reason, society must consist of individuals who unanimously agree that they must achieve it. Then, all the individuals become one great force that can fight against itself, since everyone is integrated in everyone else. Thus, each person is founded on a great desire to achieve the goal.

To be integrated in one another, each person should annul himself before the others. This is done by each seeing the friends’ merits and not their faults. But one who thinks that he is a little higher than his friends can no longer unite with them.

Also, it is important to remain serious during the assembly so as not to lose the intention, as it is for this aim that they have gathered. And to walk humbly, which is a great thing, one should be accustomed to appear as though one is not serious. But in truth, a fire burns in their hearts.

Yet, to small people, during the assembly one should be wary of following words and deeds that do not yield the goal

of the gathering—that thus they should achieve *Dvekut* with the Creator. And concerning *Dvekut*, see the essay, “Matan Torah.”

But when one is not with one’s friends, it is best to show nothing of the intent in one’s heart and appear to be like everyone else. This is the meaning of “walk humbly with the Lord your God.” While there are higher interpretations of that, the simple explanation is also a great thing.

Hence, it is good that there will be equality among the friends who unite, so one can be annulled before the other. And there should be careful watch in the society, disallowing frivolity, since frivolity ruins everything. But as we have said above, this should be an internal matter.

But when there is someone who is not from this society, no seriousness should be shown, but to equalize with the person who has just come in. In other words, avoid speaking of serious matters, but only of things that suit the one who has just entered, who is called “an uninvited guest.”

CONCERNING LOVE OF FRIENDS

Article No. 2, 1984

- 1) The need for love of friends.
- 2) What is the reason I chose specifically these friends, and why have the friends chosen me?
- 3) Should each of the friends disclose his love for the society, or is it enough to feel love in one’s heart and practice love of friends in concealment, and thus not need to openly show what is in his heart?

It is known that being humble is a great thing. But we can also say the opposite—that one must disclose the love in his heart towards the friends, since by revealing it he evokes his friends’

hearts toward the friends so they, too, would feel that each of them is practicing love of friends. The benefit from that is that in this manner, one gains strength to practice love of friends more forcefully, since every person's force of love is integrated in each other's.

It turns out that where a person has one measure of strength to practice love of friends, if the group consists of ten members, then he is integrated with ten forces of the need, who understand that it is necessary to engage in love of friends. However, if each of them does not show the society that he is practicing love of friends, then one lacks the force of the group.

This is so because it is very hard to judge one's friend favorably. Each one thinks that he is righteous and that only he engages in love of friends. In that state, one has very little strength to practice love of others. Thus, this work, specifically, should be public and not concealed.

But one must always remind oneself of the purpose of the society. Otherwise, the body tends to blur the goal, since the body always cares for its own benefit. We must remember that the society was established solely on the basis of achieving love of others, and that this would be the springboard for the love of God.

This is achieved specifically by saying that one needs a society to be able to give to one's friend without any reward. In other words, he does not need a society so the society would give him assistance and gifts, which would make the body's vessels of reception content. Such a society is built on self-love and prompts only the development of his vessels of reception, as now he sees an opportunity to gain more possessions by his friend assisting him to obtain corporeal possessions.

Instead, we must remember that the society was established on the basis of love of others, so each member would receive

from the group the love of others and hatred of himself. And seeing that his friend is straining to annul his self and to love others would cause everyone to be integrated in their friends' intentions.

Thus, if the society is made of ten members, for example, each will have ten forces practicing self-annulment, hatred of self, and love of others. Otherwise, one remains with but a single force of love of others, since he does not see that the friends are practicing it, since the friends are practicing love of others in concealment. Moreover, the friends make him lose his strength of desire to walk the path of loving others. In that state, he learns from their actions and falls into the dominion of self-love.

4) Should everyone know his friend's needs, specifically for each friend, so he would know how he can satisfy them, or is it enough to practice love of friends in general?

LOVE OF FRIENDS

Article No. 3, 1984

“And a certain man found him, and behold, he was wandering in the field. And the man asked him, saying, ‘What are you seeking?’ And he said, ‘I seek my brothers. Tell me, I pray you, where they are feeding the flock?’” (Genesis, 37).

A man “wandering in the field” refers to a place from which the crop of the field to sustain the world should spring. And the works of the field are plowing, sowing, and reaping. It is said about that: “They that sow in tears shall reap in joy,” and this is called “a field which the Lord has blessed.”

Baal HaTurim explained that a person wandering in the field refers to one who strays from the path of reason, who does not know the real way, which leads to the place he should reach, as in

“an ass wandering in the field.” And he comes to a state where he thinks that he will never achieve the goal he should achieve.

“And the man asked him, saying, ‘What are you seeking?’” meaning, “How can I help you?” “And he said: ‘I seek my brethren.’” By being together with my brothers, that is, by being in a group where there is love of friends, I will be able to mount the trail that leads to the house of God.

This trail is called “a path of bestowal,” and this way is against our nature. To be able to achieve it, there is no other way but love of friends, by which everyone can help his friend.

“And the man said: ‘They are departed hence.’” And Rashi interpreted that they had departed themselves from the brotherhood, meaning they do not want to bond with you. This, in the end, caused Israel’s exile in Egypt. And to be redeemed from Egypt, we must take it upon ourselves to enter a group that wants to be in love of friends, and by that we will be rewarded with exodus from Egypt and the reception of the Torah.

THEY HELPED EVERY ONE HIS FRIEND

Article No. 4, 1984

We must understand how one can help his friend. Is this matter specifically when there are rich and poor, wise and fools, weak and strong? But when all are rich, smart, or strong, etc., how can one help another?

We see that there is one thing that is common to all—the mood. It is said, “A concern in one’s heart, let him speak of it with others.” This is because with regard to feeling high-spirited, neither wealth nor erudition can be of assistance.

Rather, it is one person who can help another by seeing that one’s friend is low. It is written, “One does not deliver oneself

from imprisonment.” Rather, it is one’s friend who can lift his spirit.

This means that one’s friend raises him from his state into a state of liveliness. Then, one begins to reacquire strength and confidence of life and wealth, and he begins as though his goal is now near him.

It turns out that each and every one must be attentive and think how he can help his friend raise his spirit, because in the matter of spirits, anyone can find a needy place in one’s friend that he can fill.

WHAT DOES THE RULE, “LOVE THY FRIEND AS THYSELF,” GIVE US?

Article No. 5, 1984

What does the *Klal* [“rule,” as well as “collective”], “Love thy friend as thyself” give us? Through this rule, we can come to love the Creator. If this is so, what does keeping the 612 *Mitzvot* [commandments] give us?

First, we need to know what a rule is. It is known that a collective (*Klal*) consists of many individuals. Without individuals, there cannot be a collective. For example, when we refer to an audience as “a sacred audience,” we are referring to a number of individuals who have gathered and formed a unit. Afterwards, a head is appointed to the audience, etc., and this is called a *Minian* (ten/quorum) or a “congregation.” At least ten people must be present, and then it is possible to say *Kedusha* (a specific part of a Jewish prayer) at the service.

The Zohar says about it: “Wherever there are ten, Divinity dwells.” This means that in a place where there are ten men, there is a place for the dwelling of Divinity.

It therefore follows that the rule, “Love thy friend as thyself,” is built on 612 *Mitzvot*. In other words, if we keep the 612 *Mitzvot*, we will be able to achieve the rule, “Love thy friend as thyself.” It turns out that the particular elements allow us to achieve the collective, and when we have the collective, we will be able to achieve the love of the Creator, as it is written, “My soul yearns for the Lord.”

However, one cannot keep all 612 *Mitzvot* alone. Take, for example, the redemption of the first-born. If one’s first-born is a girl, he cannot keep the *Mitzva* of redemption of the first-born. Also, women are exempted from observing time-dependent *Mitzvot*, such as *Tzitzit* and *Tefillin*. But because “all of Israel are responsible for one another,” through everyone, they are all kept. It is as though everyone keeps all the *Mitzvot* together. Hence, through the 612 *Mitzvot*, we can achieve the rule, “Love thy friend as thyself.”

LOVE OF FRIENDS

Article No. 6, 1984

“Love thy friends as thyself.” Rabbi Akiva says, “It is a great rule (in Hebrew: also collective) in the Torah.” It means that if one keeps this rule, all the details are included in it, meaning it is taken for granted that we will come to the particulars effortlessly, without having to work for it.

However, we see that the Torah tells us, “What does the Lord seeketh of thee? To fear Me.” Thus, the primary requirement from a person is only fear. If one keeps the commandment of fear, all the Torah and *Mitzvot* are contained in that, even the commandment, “Love thy friend as thyself.”

Yet, according to the words of Rabbi Akiva, it is the opposite, meaning fear is contained in the rule of “Love thy friend.”

Moreover, according to our sages (*Berachot* p. 6), the meaning is not as Rabbi Akiva says. They referred to the verse, “The end of the matter, all having been heard: fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole man.” The Gemarah asks, “What does it mean, ‘this is the whole man?’” Rabbi Elazar said, “The Lord said the whole world was not created but for this.” However, according to the words of Rabbi Akiva, it seems that everything is contained in the rule, “Love thy friend.”

Nevertheless, we find in the words of our sages (*Makot* 24) that they said faith is the most important. They said that Habakkuk came and declared that there is only one: “the righteous shall live by his faith.”

The Maharsha interprets, “The thing that is most conclusive for any person from Israel, at any time, is faith.” In other words, the essence of the rule is faith. Accordingly, it turns out that both fear and “Love thy friend” are contained in the rule of faith.

If we are to understand the above, we must examine closely the following:

1. What is faith?
2. What is fear?
3. What is “Love thy friend as thyself”?

The most important thing is to always remember the purpose of creation, which is known to be “to do good to His creations.” Thus, if He wants to give them delight and pleasure, why are these three above matters—faith, fear and “Love thy friend”? It means that they need only qualify their vessels to be able to receive the delight and pleasure that the Creator wishes to give to the creatures.

Now, we must understand what these three above-mentioned things qualify us for. Faith, confidence included, gives us a preliminary belief in the goal, which is to do good to His creations. We must also believe with certainty that we

can promise ourselves that we, too, can reach that goal. In other words, the purpose of creation is not necessarily for a select group. Rather, the purpose of creation belongs to all creations without exception. It is not necessarily the strong and skillful, or the brave people who can overcome. Rather, it belongs to all the creatures.

(Examine the “Introduction to The Study of the Ten Sefirot,” item 21, where it quotes *Midrash Rabba*, Portion, “This is the Blessing”: “The Creator said unto Israel: ‘Regard, the whole wisdom and the whole of Torah are easy: Anyone who fears Me and does the words of Torah, the entire wisdom and the whole of the Torah are in his heart.’”)

Thus, we must also use faith to have confidence that we can reach the goal and not despair mid-way and flee the campaign. Rather, we should believe that the Creator can help even a low and ignoble person like myself. It means that the Creator will bring me near Him and I will be able to attain adhesion with Him.

Yet, to acquire faith, fear must come first, as it is related in the introduction to the Zohar: “Fear is a commandment that contains all the commandments in the Torah, since it is the gate to faith in Him. According to the awakening of one’s fear (in His guidance), so one believes in His guidance.”

It ends there: “The fear is lest he will lessen the giving of contentment to his Maker.” This means that the fear that one should have with regard to the Creator is that perhaps he will not be able to give contentment to the Creator, and not that fear will concern one’s own benefit. It follows that the gate to faith is fear; it is impossible to reach faith by any other way.

To acquire fear, the fear that one might not be able to give contentment to his Maker, he must first desire and yearn to bestow. Afterwards, he can say that there is room for the fear that he might not be able to sustain the fear. However, one is

usually afraid that perhaps his self-love will not be complete, and he does not concern himself with not being able to bestow upon the Creator.

By which substance can one be brought to acquire a new quality that he must bestow, and that reception for self is faulty? This is against nature! Though at times, one receives a thought and desire that he must abandon self-love, which comes to us by hearing of it from friends and books, it is a very small force, which does not always shine for us so we can constantly appreciate it and say that this is the rule for all the *Mitzvot* in the Torah.

Thus, there is but one counsel: Several individuals must come together with the desire to abandon self-love, but without the sufficient force and appreciation for bestowal to become independent, without help from the outside. Now, if these individuals annul before one another, since each of them has at least potential love of the Creator, though they cannot actually keep it, then by each joining the society and annulling oneself before it, they become one body.

For example, if there are ten people in that body, it has ten times more power than a single person does. However, there is a condition: When they gather, each of them should think that he has now come for the purpose of annulling self-love. It means that he will not consider how to satisfy his will to receive now, but will think as much as possible only of the love of others. This is the only way to acquire the desire and the need to acquire a new quality, called “the will to bestow.”

And from love of friends one can reach love of the Creator, meaning wanting to give contentment to the Creator. It turns out that only in this does one obtain a need and understanding that bestowing is important and necessary, and this comes to him through love of friends. Then we can talk about fear, meaning that one is afraid that he will not be able to bestow contentment to the Creator, and this is called “fear.”

Hence, the primary basis upon which the building of sanctity can be erected is the rule of “Love thy friend.” By that, one can acquire the need to bestow contentment upon the Creator. After that, there can be fear, meaning fear of perhaps not being able to give contentment to the Creator. When actually past that gate of fear, he can come to faith, because faith is the vessel for instilling Divinity, as it is explained in several places.

We thus find that there are three rules before us: The first rule is that of Rabbi Akiva, being “Love thy friend as thyself.” Prior to that, there is nothing that provides a person with the fuel enabling him to modify his situation even a bit, as this is the only way to exit from self-love toward love of man, and the feeling that self-love is a bad thing.

Now we come to the second rule, which is the fear. Without fear, there is no room for faith, as Baal HaSulam says.

Finally, we come to the third rule, which is faith. After all the above-mentioned three rules have been acquired, one comes to sense the purpose of creation, which is to do good to His creations.

ACCORDING TO WHAT IS EXPLAINED CONCERNING “LOVE THY FRIEND AS THYSELF”

Article No. 7, 1984

According to what is explained concerning “Love thy friend as thyself,” all the details of the 612 *Mitzvot* [commandments] are contained in this rule. It is as our sages say, “The rest is its commentary; go study.” This means that by keeping the 612 *Mitzvot* we will be rewarded with the rule, “Love thy friend,” and following that, the love of God.

Thus, what does love of friends give us? It is written that by gathering a few friends together, since they each have but a small force of love of others—meaning they can carry out the love of others only potentially—when they implement it, they remember that they have decided to relinquish selflove in favor of love of others. But in fact, one sees that he cannot relinquish any pleasure of the will to receive in favor of another, not even a bit.

However, by assembling a few people who agree that they have to achieve the love of others, when they annul themselves before one another, they are all intermingled. Thus, in each person there accumulates a great force, according to the size of the association. And then each can execute the love of others in actual fact.

So what do the details of the 612 *Mitzvot* give us, which we said are in order to keep the rule, since the rule is kept by love of friends? And we see that in reality, there is love of friends among the secular, too. They, too, gather in various circles in order to have love of friends. What, then, is the difference between religious and secular?

The verse says (Psalms 1), “...nor sat in the seat of the scornful.” We must understand the prohibition of the “Seat of the scornful.” If he slanders or speaks idle words, then the prohibition is not because of a “seat of scornful.” So what does the “Seat of the scornful” give us?

Actually, the meaning is that when a few people come together for the purpose of love of friends, with the intention that each and every one will help his friend improve his corporeal state, each anticipates that by having more meetings they will profit from society and improve their corporeal state.

However, after all the meetings, everyone calculates and sees how much they have received from the association for the

self-love, what the will to receive has gained by that, since they invested time and effort to benefit society. So what have they gained by it? One could probably succeed more if engaged in self-benefit, at least the part of his own efforts. But, “I entered the association because I thought that through it, I would be able to gain more than I could gain alone. But now I see that I have gained nothing.”

Then one regrets it and says, “I would be better off using my own little strength instead of giving my time to society. However, now that I have given my time to society, in order to gain more properties through help from the society, I finally realize that not only did I not gain anything from society, I even lost what I could have gained alone.”

When someone wishes to say that love of friends should be engaged in for the purpose of bestowal, that everyone should work to benefit others, everyone laughs and mocks him. It seems to them like a kind of joke, and this is a seat of seculars. It is said about it, “but sin is a reproach to any people, and every grace that they do, they do for themselves.” Such a society detaches one from holiness and casts him into the world of mockery. This is the prohibition of the seat of the scornful.

Our sages said about such societies, “Disperse the wicked; better for them and better for the world.” In other words, it is better that they do not exist. However, it is the opposite with the righteous: “Assemble the righteous; better for them and better for the world.”

What is the meaning of “righteous”? It is those who want to keep the rule, “Love thy friend as thyself.” Their sole intention is to exit self-love and assume a different nature of love of others. And although it is a *Mitzva* [commandment] that should be kept, and that one can force oneself to keep, love is still something that

is given to the heart, and the heart disagrees with it by nature. What, then, can one do to make love of others touch the heart?

This is why we were given the 612 *Mitzvot*: they have the power to induce a sensation in the heart. However, since it is against nature, that sensation is too small to have the ability to keep love of friends *de facto*, even though one has a need for it. Hence, now he must seek advice on how to actually implement it.

The advice for one to be able to increase his strength in the rule, "Love thy friend," is by love of friends. If everyone is nullified before his friend and mingles with him, they become one mass where all the little parts that want the love of others unite in a collective force that consists of many parts. And when one has great strength, he can execute the love of others.

And then he can achieve the love of God. But the condition is that each will annul before the other. However, when he is separated from his friend, he cannot receive the share he should receive from his friend.

Thus, everyone should say that he is nothing compared to his friend. It is like writing numbers: If you first write "1" and then "0," it is ten times more. And when you write "00" it is a hundred times more. In other words, if his friend is number one, and the zero follows it, it is considered that one receives from his friend ten (10) times more. And if he says that he is double zero compared to his friend, he receives from his friend a hundred (100) times more.

However, if it is to the contrary, and he says that his friend is zero and he is one, then he is ten times less than his friend 0.1. And if he can say that he is one and he has two friends who are both zeros compared to him, then he is considered a hundred times less than them, meaning he is 0.01. Thus, his degree lessens according to the number of zeros he has from his friends.

Yet, even once he acquires that strength and can keep the love of others in actual fact, and feels his own gratification as bad for him, still, do not believe in yourself. There must be fear of falling into self-love in the middle of the work. In other words, should one be given a greater pleasure than he is used to receiving, although he can already work in order to bestow with small pleasures and is willing to relinquish them, he lives in fear of great pleasures.

This is called “fear,” and this is the gate to receive the Light of faith, called “The inspiration of Divinity,” as it is written in *The Sulam Commentary*, “By the measure fear is the measure of faith.”

Hence, we must remember that the matter of “Love thy friend as thyself” should be kept because it is a *Mitzva*, since the Creator commanded to engage in love of friends. And Rabbi Akiva only interprets this *Mitzva* that the Creator commanded. He intended to make this *Mitzva* into a rule by which all the *Mitzvot* would be kept because of the commandment of the Creator, as well as for self-gratification.

In other words, it is not that the *Mitzvot* should expand our will to receive, meaning that by keeping the *Mitzvot* we would be generously rewarded. Quite the contrary; by keeping the *Mitzvot* we will reach the reward of being able to annul our self-love and achieve the love of others, and subsequently the love of God.

Now we can understand what our sages said about the verse, *VeSamtem* [Place them]. It comes from the word, *Sam* [“potion,” as well as “placing”]. “If granted, it is a potion of life; if not granted, it is a potion of death.”

Not granted means that one engages in Torah and *Mitzvot* to multiply self-love, so the body would acquire possessions in return for its work. If granted, one’s self-love is nullified and he aims to receive a reward that is the strength for love of others. By

this he will reach the love of the Creator—that his only wish will be to give contentment to the Creator.

WHICH KEEPING OF TORAH AND MITZVOT PURIFIES THE HEART?

Article No. 8, 1984

Question: Does keeping Torah and *Mitzvot* in order to receive reward purify the heart, too? Our sages said, “I have created the evil inclination; I have created the spice of Torah.” This means that it does purify the heart. But is it so when one aims specifically at not receiving a reward, or does it also purify the heart if one works in order to receive a reward?

Answer: In the “Introduction to the Book of Zohar” (Item 44), it is written, “When one begins to engage in Torah and *Mitzvot*, even without any intention, meaning without love and fear, as is appropriate when serving the King, even in *Lo Lishma* (not for Her Name), the point in one’s heart begins to grow and show its activity. This is so because *Mitzvot* do not require intention, and even actions without intention can purify one’s will to receive, but in its first degree, called ‘still.’ And to the extent that one purifies the still part of the will to receive, one gradually builds the 613 organs of the point in the heart, which is the still of *Nefesh de Kedusha* (holiness).” Thus, we see that observing Torah and *Mitzvot*, even *Lo Lishma* purifies the heart.

Question: Is the path of observing Torah and *Mitzvot* in order not to be rewarded meant only for a chosen few? Or can anyone walk this path of observing everything in order not to be rewarded, by which they will be rewarded with *Dvekut* (adhesion) with the Creator?

Answer: Although the will to receive for oneself alone emerged at the thought of creation, being given a correction that the souls will correct it to being in order to bestow, meaning by observing Torah and *Mitzvot*, we will turn our will to receive to be in order to bestow. This is given to everyone, without exception, for everyone was given this remedy, not necessarily a chosen few.

But since this is a matter of choice, some advance more quickly and others more slowly. But as it is written in the “Introduction to the Books of Zohar” (Items 13, 14), in the end, everyone will achieve their complete perfection, as it is written, “He that is banished be not an outcast from him.”

Still, when beginning to learn to observe Torah and *Mitzvot*, one begins in *Lo Lishma*. This is because man is created with a will to receive; hence, he does not understand anything that does not yield him self-benefit and he will never want to begin to observe Torah and *Mitzvot*.

It is as the Rambam wrote (*Hilchot Teshuva*, Chapter 10), “Sages said, ‘one should always engage in Torah, even *Lo Lishma*, because from *Lo Lishma*, one comes to *Lishma*.’ Hence, when teaching children and women and the populace, they are only taught to work out of fear and to receive reward. And when they gain knowledge and acquire wisdom, that secret is revealed to them bit by bit. They are accustomed to it calmly until they attain Him and serve Him with love.” Thus, we see from the Rambam’s words that everyone should achieve *Lishma*, but the difference is in the timing.

Question: If a person sees and feels that he is treading a path that leads to *Lishma*, should he try to influence others so they will tread the right path, too?

Answer: This is a general question. It is like a religious person examining a secular person. If he knows that he can reform him,

then he is must reform him, due to the *Mitzva*, “Thou shalt surely rebuke thy neighbor.” Similarly, in this case it can be said that you should tell your friend about the better way that one can go, provided your intention is only the *Mitzva*. But there are many times when a person rebukes another only for the purpose of domination, and not in order to “Rebuke thy neighbor.”

And we learn from the above that everyone’s desire that others will tread the path of truth has created disputes between orthodox and secular, between the Lithuanian faction and Hassidim, and among the Hassidim themselves. This is because everyone thinks that he is in the right, and everyone is trying to persuade the other to tread the right path.

ONE SHOULD ALWAYS SELL THE BEAMS OF HIS HOUSE

Article No. 9, 1984

“Rabbi Yehuda said, ‘Rav said, ‘One should always sell the beams of his house and put shoes on his feet’” (*Shabbat*, 129). We should understand the precision about the beams of one’s house and the great importance of shoes, to the point that it is worth selling the beams of his house for it, meaning to have the ability to put shoes on his feet.

We should interpret it in the work. The *Korot* [beams] of his house comes from the word *Mikreh* [incident/event], meaning everything that a person experiences in his home. We perceive man by two discernments—by knowledge, meaning with the intellect, and by emotion, meaning what we feel in our hearts—whether we are happy or unhappy.

These incidents that we experience evoke questions in our everyday lives. This applies between a person and his Creator, and between a person and his friend.

Between a person and the Creator means that he has complaints that the Creator is not satisfying all his needs. In other words, the Creator should fulfill what the person thinks he needs because the rule is that the conduct of the Good is to do good. And sometimes he complains as though he feels the opposite—that his situation is always worse than that of others, who are at a higher degree than he is.

It follows that he is in a state called “spies,” who slander Providence because he doesn’t feel that delight and pleasure in his life and it is hard for him to say, “Only goodness and grace will follow me all the days of my life.” Thus, at that time he is in a state of “spies.”

Our sages said about that (*Berachot* [Blessings], 54), “One must bless for the bad as he blesses for the good,” since the basis of Judaism is built on faith above reason. This means not relying on what the intellect compels one to think, say, and do, but on faith in a benevolent, higher Providence. And precisely by justifying Providence, one is later rewarded with feeling delight and pleasure.

Baal HaSulam gave an allegory about a person who had complaints and demands of the Creator that He wasn’t granting all his wishes. It is like a person who is walking on the street with a little child, and the child is crying bitterly. All the people on the street are looking at the father and thinking, “How cruel is this man who can hear his son crying without paying any attention? The child’s cries make even people on the street feel sorry for the child, but this man, who is his father, doesn’t. And there is a rule, ‘As a father has compassion on his children.’”

The child’s cries made people go to his father and ask, “Where is your mercy?” Then his father replied, “What can I do if my son, whom I keep like the apple of my eye, demands of me to give him a pin so he can scratch his eye because he has an itch

in his eyes? Can I be called “cruel” for not granting his wish, or is it for mercy that I will not give it to him so he will not poke his eye and remain blind forever?”

Therefore, we must believe that everything that the Creator gives us is for our own good, although we must pray, just in case, that the Creator will lift these troubles from us. However, we must know that the prayer and the granting of the prayer are two separate issues. In other words, if we do what we must, then the Creator will do what is good for us, as with the above allegory. It is said about that, “And the Lord will do that which seems good to Him.”

The same principle applies to a person and his friend, meaning that he should sell the beams of his house and put shoes on his feet. In other words, a person should sell the beams of his house, meaning all the incidents that his house experienced in regards to love of friends.

One may have questions and complaints about his friend, since he is working devotedly in love of friends, yet he sees no response on the part of the friends that would help him in any way. They are all behaving not according to his understanding of how love of friends should be, meaning that each one will speak to his friend in a respectable manner, as it is among distinguished individuals.

Also, regarding actions, he sees no action on the part of the friends that he can look at in relation to love of friends. Instead, everything is normal, as it is among ordinary people who still did not have an interest in coming together and deciding to build a society where there is love of friends, where each cares for the well-being of the other.

Thus, now he sees that there is no one to look at who engages in love of friends. And since he feels that he is the only one who is walking on the right path, and he is looking at everyone with

contempt and scorn, this is called “spies.” That is, he is spying on his friends to see if they are behaving properly toward him in regards to “Love thy friend.” And since he constantly hears that the friends are preaching all day long that love of others is the most important, he wants to see if what they say is what they do.

And then he sees that it is all lip service. He finds that even in speaking there is no love of others, and this is the smallest thing in love of others. In other words, if he asks someone a question, he answers him offhandedly, indifferently, not in the way one answers a friend. Rather, it is all cold, as though he wants to get rid of him.

And don’t ask me, “If you’re thinking about love of others, why are you criticizing if your friend loves you, as though love of friends is established on the basis of self-love, and this is why I want to see what my self-love gained from this engagement?” These are not my thoughts. Rather, I truly want love of others.

This is why I was interested in establishing this society, so I would see that each and every one is engaging in love of others, so that through it, the little bit of force that I have in love of others would increase and I would have the strength to engage in love of others more powerfully than I could by myself. But now I see that I have gained nothing because I see that not even one is doing good. Thus, it would be better if I weren’t with them and hadn’t learned from their actions.

To that, there is the reply that if a society is established with certain people, and when they gathered, there must have been someone who wished to establish specifically this “bunch.” Thus, he sorted out these people to see that they were suitable for each other. In other words, each of them had a spark of love of others, but the spark could not ignite the light of love to shine in each, so they agreed that by uniting, the sparks would become a big flame.

Hence, now, too, when he is spying on them, he should overcome and say, “As all of them were of one mind that they must walk on the path of love of others when the society was established, so it is now.” And when everyone judges his friends favorably, all the sparks will ignite once more and again there will be one big flame.

It is as Baal HaSulam once said when he asked about the covenant that two friends make, as we find in the Torah (Gen 21:27), “And Abraham took sheep and oxen, and gave them unto Abimelech; and they two made a covenant.” He asked, “If the two of them love each other, of course they do good to each other. And naturally, when there is no love between them because the love has waned for some reason, they do not do good to one another. So how does making a covenant between them help?”

He answered that the covenant that they do is not for now, since now when the love is felt between them, there is no need to make a covenant. Rather, the making of the covenant is done purposely for the future. In other words, it is possible that after some time, they will not feel the love as they do now, but they will still keep their relations as before. This is what the making of the covenant is for.

We can also see that although now they do not feel the love as it was when the society was established, everyone must still overcome his view and go above reason. By that, everything will be corrected and each will judge his friend favorably.

Now we can understand the words of our sages, who said, “One should always sell the beams of his house and put shoes on his feet.” *Min'alim* [shoes] comes from the word *Ne'ilat Delet* [locking a door], meaning closing. Once a person has spied on his friend—and *Rigel* [spied] comes from the word *Raglaim* [feet/legs]—he should “Sell the beams of his house,” meaning

all that has happened to his house in the connection between him and his friend, meaning the spies that he has, who slander the friends.

Then, “Sell everything” means remove all the incidents that the spies have brought to him and put shoes on his feet, instead. The meaning is that he should lock away the spies as though they no longer exist in the land, and he will shut away all the questions and demands that he has about them. And then everything will come to its place in peace.

CONCERNING THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIETY

Article No. 12, 1984

It is known that one is always among people who have no connection to the work on the path of truth, but to the contrary, always resist those who walk on the path of truth. And since people’s thoughts mingle, the views of those who oppose the path of truth permeate those with some desire to walk on the path of truth.

Hence, there is no other solution but to establish a separate society for themselves, to be their framework, meaning a separate community that does not mingle with other people whose views differ from that society. And they should constantly evoke in themselves the issue of the purpose of society, so they will not follow the majority, because following the majority is our nature.

If the society isolates itself from the rest of the people, if they have no connection with other people in regards to spiritual matters, and their contact with them is only on corporeal matters, they will not mingle with their views, since they have no connection in matters of religion.

But when a person is among religious people and begins to converse and argue with them, he immediately mingles with their views. Their views subconsciously penetrate his mind to such an extent that he will not be able to discern that these are not his own views, but what he received from the people he connected with.

Therefore, in matters of work on the path of truth, one should isolate oneself from other people. This is because the path of truth requires constant strengthening, since it is against the view of the world. The view of the world is knowing and receiving, whereas the view of Torah is faith and bestowal. If one strays from that, he immediately forgets all the work of the path of truth and falls into a world of self-love. Only from a society in the form of “They helped every man his friend” does each person in the society receive the strength to fight against the view of the world.

Also, we find the following in the words of *The Zohar* (*Pinechas*, p 31, Item 91, and in the *Sulam*): “When a person dwells in a city inhabited by evil people, and he cannot keep the *Mitzvot* of the Torah, and does not succeed in the Torah, he relocates and uproots himself from there and plants himself in a place inhabited by good people, with Torah and with *Mitzvot*. This is because the Torah is called ‘tree,’ as it is written, ‘She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her.’ And man is a tree, as it is written, ‘For is the tree of the field man.’ And the *Mitzvot* in the Torah are likened unto fruits. And what does it say? ‘Only the trees of which thou knows that they are not trees for food, them thou may destroy and cut down,’ destroy from this world and cut down from the next world.”

For this reason, one must uproot himself from the place where there are wicked, for he will not be able to succeed there in Torah and *Mitzvot*, and plant himself elsewhere, among righteous, and he will succeed in Torah and *Mitzvot*.

And man, whom *The Zohar* compares to the tree of the field, suffers, like the tree of the field, from bad neighbors. In other words, we must always cut down the bad weeds around us that affect us, and we must also keep away from bad environments and from people who do not favor the path of truth. We need a careful watch so as to not be drawn to follow them.

This is called “isolation,” when one has thoughts of the “single authority,” called “bestowal,” and not “public authority,” which is self-love. This is called “two authorities”—the Creator’s authority and one’s own authority.

Now we can understand what our sages said (*Sanhedrin*, p 38), “Rav Yehuda said, ‘Rav said, ‘*Adam ha Rishon* was heretic,’ as it is written, ‘And the Lord God called unto the man, and said unto him: ‘Where art thou?’ Where has thine heart gone?’”

In Rashi’s interpretation, “heretic” refers to a tendency towards idol worship. And in the commentary, *Etz Yosef* (*Joseph’s Tree*), it is written, “When it writes, ‘Where, where has thine heart gone?’ it is heresy, as it is written, ‘that ye go not about after your own heart,’ this is heresy, when his heart leans towards the other side.”

But all this is very perplexing: How can it be said that *Adam ha Rishon* was inclined towards idolatry? Or according to the *Etz Yosef* commentary, that he was in the form of “that ye go not about after your own heart,” is it heresy? According to what we learn about the work of God, that it is solely about the aim to bestow, if a person works in order to receive, this work is foreign to us, for we need to work only to bestow, and he took everything in order to receive.

This is the meaning of what he said, that he failed in “go not about after your own heart.” In other words, he could not take the eating from the Tree of Knowledge in order to bestow,

but received the eating from the Tree of Knowledge in order to receive. This is called “heart,” meaning the heart wishes only to receive for self-gratification. And this was the sin of the Tree of Knowledge.

To understand this matter, see the introduction to the book *Panim Masbirot*. And from this we can understand the benefits of the society—it can introduce a different atmosphere—one of working only in order to bestow.

SOMETIMES SPIRITUALITY IS CALLED “A SOUL”

Article No. 13, 1984

We must understand why spirituality is sometimes called “a soul” [Heb: *Neshama*], as it is written, “Body and soul,” and sometimes spirituality is called “soul” [Heb: *Nefesh*], as in, “And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”

Usually, when speaking of spirituality, we speak of its highest discernment, which is *Neshama*, so that one will know that a high degree has been made ready for him, which is *Neshama*, to evoke in his heart the desire to achieve it and to think what is the reason that he has not achieved it yet. Then he will come to know that all we need in order to attain spirituality is equivalence of form.

The body is born with a nature of self-love, which is disparity of form from the Creator, whom we attain as only giving. Thus, one should cleanse one’s body and come to equivalence of form so he, too, will want to do things that are only to bestow. By that, he will be able to reach this high degree called *Neshama*. This is why we always speak in terms of body and *Neshama* [soul].

But when referring to the order of the work, following the degree of the body comes the degree of *Nefesh*. This is why the

writing says, “And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul [Heb: *Nefesh*],” for this is the next degree after the body.

This is why it says, “With all your heart,” and subsequently, “With all your soul.” In other words, one must be willing to give everything he has to the Creator. But afterwards, if he obtains a higher degree, meaning *Ruach* [spirit], and then *Neshama*, he should still be willing to give everything to the Creator. But the text begins with the first degree that comes after the body.

All that a man has, he must give to the Creator. This means that he does not do anything for his own benefit. Rather, everything is for the sake of the Creator. This is considered that all his deeds are only to bestow, while he is completely inconsequential. Rather, everything is for the sake of the Creator.

Now you can understand what is written in *The Zohar* (*Teruma* [Contribution], p 219, Item 479 in the *Sulam* Commentary), “‘With all your soul.’ He asks, ‘It should have said, ‘In your soul,’ what is ‘With all your soul?’ Why does it say, ‘With?’ He replies that it comes to include *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, *Neshama*. This is ‘With all your soul,’ where ‘all’ means what this *Nefesh* grips.”

From this, we see that *The Zohar* interprets the “all” that the Torah adds to us as coming to tell us that *Nefesh* and *Ruach* are included in the *Neshama*. However, it deliberately begins with *Nefesh*, since after the body comes the *Nefesh*. But when we speak of spirituality in general, we refer to spirituality as *Neshama*, as it is written, “And he blew into his nostrils the *Neshama* [“soul” or “breath”] of life.”

To obtain the degree of *NRN* [*Nefesh-Ruach-Neshama*], we must go by a path of bestowal and try to come out of self-love. This is called “the path of truth,” meaning that by so doing, we will achieve the quality of truth that exists in His Providence, who behaves toward us with the quality of benevolence.

This is called “The Creator’s seal is truth.” This means that the objective of the work of the Creator, meaning His work in creating the worlds—which is to do good to His creations—is that man must reach the Creator’s quality of truth. Man will know that he has reached his completeness after he has attained the guidance of the Creator as benevolent, whether he has abundance. But also, he should see that others have abundance, too, meaning see that everyone has complete abundance.

This is presented in “Introduction to the Study of the Ten Sefirot” (Item 150), “The fourth discernment of love, which is unconditional love, is eternal. This is so because after he has judged the whole world favorably, the love is eternal and absolute. There cannot be covering and hiding in the world because there, it is a place of complete disclosure of the face, as it is written, ‘Your Teacher will no longer hide Himself, but your eyes will see your Teacher,’ since he already knows all of the Creator’s dealings with all the people in the form of true Providence that appears from His name, ‘The Good who does good to the good and to the bad.’”

It therefore follows that if one reaches complete perfection, he attains his true state. However, there are preliminary degrees before that, as it is written in “Introduction to the Study of the Ten Sefirot,” that the first discernment is repentance from fear. It is written about it (Item 63), “The first degree of attainment of the disclosure of the face, meaning attainment and sensation of the Providence of reward and punishment in a way that He who knows all mysteries will testify that he will not turn back to folly, is called ‘repentance from fear.’ At that time, his sins become mistakes for him, and he is called ‘incomplete righteous’ or ‘medium.’”

However, according to the above, there is another sign that one is walking on the path of truth—the state of negation. In other words, even though he sees that now he is in a worse state, that is, before he began to walk on the path of truth he felt closer

to *Kedusha* [holiness], whereas now that he's begun to walk on this path he feels more remote. But according to the known rule, "Holiness is increased, not decreased," there rises the question, "Why now that he is walking on the path of truth does he feel that he is regressing instead of progressing, as it should be if he is walking on the path of truth? At the very least, he should not decline from his previous state."

The answer is that there must be absence before there is presence. This means that first there must be a *Kli* [vessel], which is called "a lack," and then there will be room to fill the lack. Therefore, first, one must go forward and bring himself closer to the truth each time. In other words, each time he goes forward, he sees his situation: that he is immersed in self-love. And each time he should see more clearly that self-love is bad because self-love is what hinders us from reaching the delight and pleasure that the Creator has prepared for us, as this is what separates us from the Creator.

Accordingly, we can understand that what a person thinks—that he is regressing now that he has begun on the path of truth—he must know that this is not so. Rather, he is advancing toward the truth. Previously, when his work was not based on bestowal and faith, he was far from seeing the truth. But now he must come to feel the evil within him, as it is written, "There shall be no strange god within you."

Our sages said, "Who is the strange God in a man's body? It is the evil inclination." In other words, within a person, the will to receive is his very evil.

And then when he has achieved the recognition of evil, he can say that he is going to correct it. It turns out that prior to attaining his evil to an extent where he couldn't tolerate it any longer, there was nothing to correct. Thus, he has indeed gone a long way forward in the truth, to see his real situation.

And when a person sees the evil in himself to an extent that he cannot tolerate it, he begins to seek advice for how to come out of it. But the only advice for a man of Israel is to turn to the Creator, so He will open his eyes and his heart and fill it with sublime abundance, as our sages said, “He who comes to be purified is aided.”

Then, when he receives help from the Creator, all the lacks will be filled with the light of the Creator, and he begins to rise on the degrees of holiness because the need has already been prepared within him by coming to see his true state. Hence, now there is room to receive his completeness.

And then a person begins to see how each day, according to his work, he rises ever upwards. However, we must always awaken what the heart forgets, what is needed for the correction of the heart—*Love of friends*—whose purpose is to achieve love of others.

This is not a pleasant thing for the heart, which is called “self-love.” Hence, when there is a gathering of friends, we must remember to bring up the question, meaning everyone should ask himself how much we have advanced in love of others, and how much we have done to promote us in that matter.

CONCERNING BESTOWAL

Article No. 16, 1984

Explaining the matter of bestowal. When a person serves someone whom the world regards as important, the important person doesn't need to reward him for his service. Rather, the very service of an important person is regarded by him as though he has rewarded him. This means that if one knows that he is an important person, he already enjoys the service and doesn't need further reward for his service. Instead, the service itself is his pleasure.

But if he is serving an ordinary person, he takes no pleasure in the service and must be rewarded for the service. This means that if he does that same service for an important person, he needs no reward.

If, for example, an important person comes by plane, carrying a small suitcase, many people are waiting for his arrival, and the important person gives his suitcase to someone to take it to the car that will take him home. For this service he wants to give him, say, one hundred dollars. He will certainly refuse to receive from him because the pleasure he derives from his service is more than the hundred dollars he is giving him.

But if he were an ordinary person, he wouldn't serve him even for money. Instead, he would tell him, "There are porters here; they will carry your suitcase to the car. As for me, it is beneath me to serve you. But since it is the porters' job, they will be happy to serve you if you pay them."

It follows that in his same action, there is a difference and significant distinction not in the act, *but for whom* he does it—if he is doing it for an important person. It depends *only* on the importance of that individual in that person's eyes, meaning what he feels about that person's greatness. It doesn't matter if he understands that he is an important person or if others around him say that he is an important person; this already gives him the strength to serve him without needing any reward.

According to the above, we should understand the true intention of the one who is serving the important person. Is his intention to enjoy serving him, since he considers it a great privilege? Or is it because he takes great pleasure in serving him? From which source does the pleasure of serving the important person come to him? He doesn't know. However, he is seeing something natural—that there is great pleasure involved here—so he wants to serve him.

In other words, is his aim that this is an important person, which is why he wants that person to enjoy? Or does he want to serve him because it gives him joy? Meaning, if he could have the same pleasure that he takes in serving him through some other means, would he relinquish this service, since he only wants to serve him because he feels that here he could find a good feeling, and this is why he serves him?

The question is whether the service is because he wants the important person to feel good, the pleasure that he derives from serving him is only a result, but his aim is not for himself but only for the important person to feel good. Or, is he in fact not considering the important person, but all his calculations are about how much pleasure he can derive from it?

And if we asked, “Does it matter with which intention he is working?” The answer is that we should know what vessels of bestowal mean.

There are three discernments that we find in an act of bestowal.

1) He engages in bestowal upon others—whether with his body or with his money—in order to be rewarded for it. In other words, the service itself is not enough to give him pleasure. Instead, he wants to be given something else in return for it. For example, he wants to be given honor in return for his work in bestowal. For that, he has the strength to work. But if he weren't confident that he would receive honor in return for it, he wouldn't do what he does for others.

2) He engages in bestowal upon others and does not wish to be given any reward for his work, meaning another thing, something else. Rather, he settles for performing acts of bestowal. It is in his nature to enjoy doing good to others and this is his whole pleasure. Certainly, this is a greater degree than the first, since from here we see that he does things with

the aim to do good to others. We should call it, “Bestowing in order to bestow.”

However, if we look a little deeper and scrutinize his real intention in giving to others, does he do all those deeds because he wishes to enjoy—meaning for self-love, since by his nature, he enjoys acts of bestowal—or is his aim that he enjoys others having good things?

In other words, is he enjoying others having a good mood and this is why he tries to do good to others, so they would be in high spirits and enjoy their lives? And if by chance he sees that there is another person, and that person would succeed more than he in doing what he wishes to do for his town’s people, would he relinquish his pleasure in performing acts of bestowal and try to have the other person do it?

Indeed, if that person—who engages in acts of bestowal without wanting any reward for his work—couldn’t make the concession of having the other person do those things for his town’s people, although he knows the other person is more competent, we still cannot call this “bestowing in order to bestow,” since at the end of the day, self-love is his determining factor.

3) He is working *in order to not receive any reward*. And even if he sees that there is another person who is more competent, he relinquishes his pleasure in giving to others and cares only for the well-being of the other. This is called “bestowing in order to bestow.”

Thus, there is broad scrutiny that must be made here about his real intention: whether he wants high spirits for himself and this is why he serves him, or is he aiming to give high spirits to the important person.

To understand the above distinction, we can understand the matter by a person picturing for himself that he is a very important person, and this is why he wishes to please him, so he

would be in high spirits, and this is why he wants to serve him. But during the service that he does for him, he himself is in high spirits and feels elated. Now he feels that all the pleasures he would feel in his life are nothing compared to what he is feeling now, since he is serving the most important person in the world, and he has no words to describe the contentment he derives from wanting to make that important person be in high spirits.

Now he can scrutinize himself, meaning what is his aim in wanting to give contentment to the important person— is he caring for his own good, meaning that he wants to delight him because it would give him high spirits—or is he aiming only for the important person to enjoy, so the important person will have high spirits, and he has a great desire to serve him only because of the greatness of that person?

Thus, although during the service he feels the great pleasure that is derived during the service, still, if he knows that there is someone who would give more contentment to the important person if he were to serve him, he concedes his own pleasure, which he can feel during the service. Instead, he wishes wholeheartedly for the other to do this service because it would bring him more contentment than if he were to serve him.

It therefore follows that if he agrees to concede his service—even though he experiences great delight from his service, and yet, to benefit the important person and make him more content, he relinquishes it because he is not thinking of himself but only of the benefit of the important person—this is considered that he has no intention of self-benefit. Instead, it is all in order to bestow and he has no consideration of himself. At that time, he has the complete scrutiny, for he cannot deceive himself, and this is called, “complete bestowal.”

However, we should know that one cannot achieve this on his own. Rather, it is said about that (*Kidushin*, 30), “Man’s

inclination overcomes him each day and seeks to kill him, as it is said, ‘The wicked watches the righteous, and seeks to slay him.’ And if the Creator did not help him, he would not overcome it, as it is said, ‘The Lord will not leave him in his hand.’”

This means that first, one must see if he has the strength to come to be able to act with the aim to bestow contentment upon the Creator. Then, when he has already come to realize that he cannot achieve it by himself, that person focuses his Torah and *Mitzvot* on a single point, which is that “the light in it reforms him,” that this will be the only reward that he wants from the Torah and *Mitzvot*. In other words, the reward for his labor will be for the Creator to give him this strength called “the power of bestowal.”

There is a rule that one who makes an effort, meaning cancels his rest, it is because he wants something, since he knows that without labor he will not be given, so he must toil. For this reason, a person who exerts to keep Torah and *Mitzvot* must certainly be missing something, and this is why he exerts in Torah and *Mitzvot*, to obtain what he wishes through it.

Accordingly, one must pay attention and contemplate what he wants—what is the reward that he wants for his work—before he begins his work in serving the Creator. Or, put simply, what is the reason that compels him to engage in Torah and *Mitzvot*? Then, when he determines what he needs, for which he must toil, a person begins to think very hard until it is difficult for him to know what he really wants.

This is why there are many people who, when they begin to contemplate the purpose of their work—cannot determine the real goal. For this reason, they say, “Why should we tire ourselves with scrutinizing?” Instead, they work without any purpose and say, “We are working for the next world.”

And what is the next world? “Why should we think about that? We only believe that it’s good and settle for that. When we receive the reward of the next world, then we’ll know what it is. Why should we get into scrutinies?”

Only a few say that there is the matter of *Dvekut* [adhesion] with the Creator, and that to achieve *Dvekut* they must achieve equivalence of form, meaning “As He is merciful, you, too, are merciful.” And then he begins to try to achieve equivalence of form—that all his actions will be in bestowal—for only then the restriction and concealment that exist in the world are removed from him and he begins to feel the *Kedusha* [holiness].

But when he begins to reach the degree of bestowal in his work, he sees that he is very far from it, that he has no desire for a thought, word, or deed that he would have the ability to aim in order to bestow. And then he doesn’t know what to do to obtain the power of bestowal. And each time he adds effort, he sees that this whole matter is far from him. In the end, he realizes that it is not humanly possible that he will ever reach it.

At that time, he realizes that only the Creator can help him, and only then does he understand that he must engage in Torah and *Mitzvot* in order to receive reward. And the reward for his labor will be for the Creator to give him the power of bestowal. This is the reward that he hopes for, since he wants to achieve *Dvekut* with the Creator, which is equivalence of form, meaning bestowal.

And this is the only reward he hopes for—that through his toil in Torah and *Mitzvot* he will be given what he cannot obtain by himself, and instead, he needs another to give him. It is like labor in corporeality: since one cannot obtain money by himself, he works, and in return, he is paid money. Likewise, in spirituality, what he cannot obtain by himself, he needs someone to give it to him, so this is what we call “reward.”

Therefore, when a person wishes to achieve the quality of bestowal because he wants to achieve *Dvekut* with the Creator, and he cannot obtain this quality, but needs the Creator to give it to him, that which he wants to be given is called “reward.” And since there is a rule that if one wants reward he must make an effort and work, he keeps Torah and *Mitzvot* to be given this reward, which is called “the power of bestowal,” meaning to exit self-love and receive a desire to have the strength to engage only in love of others.

This is the meaning of, “One should always engage in Torah and *Mitzvot* in *Lo Lishma* [not for Her name], for from *Lo Lishma* one comes to *Lishma* [for Her name] because the light in it reforms him.” Thus, through the labor in Torah and *Mitzvot* to achieve *Lishma*, he will achieve the degree of *Lishma* by laboring first. This is why he is rewarded with the light in it, which reforms him, and it is considered that he was given the power of bestowal from above.

However, we should ask, “Why does he first need to exert himself and afterwards be given the light of Torah? Why is he not given the light of Torah immediately, so it will reform him instantly? Also, why exert and toil for nothing and waste time for nothing? Wouldn’t it be better if he were given the light right at the beginning of his work, meaning that he would immediately receive the light and would immediately begin his work in *Lishma*?”

The thing is that there is no light without a *Kli* [vessel], and a *Kli* means a desire. In other words, when a person has a need and craves to satisfy that need, this is called “a *Kli*.” Only then, when he has a *Kli*—meaning a desire for some fulfillment—can it be said that he is given the filling and he is content with the filling that he was given, since this is what he craved. Reward is considered a fulfillment, when the craving receives. Moreover, the measure of the importance of the fulfillment depends on the

measure of the craving. And by the measure of his suffering, to that extent one enjoys the fulfillment.

For this reason, it is impossible to give a person a light that will reform him when he has no desire for it whatsoever. This is because reforming him means he will lose the power of self-love and receive the power of love of others.

If a person has no desire to exit self-love, and he is told, “Do some work and in return you will have no desire for self-love,” he does not regard it as a reward. On the contrary, he thinks that for the work he did for the owner, he should have rewarded him in return for his labor. But in return, he is giving him something very bad, and so much so that he would lose all the self-love in an instant. Who would agree to that?

For this reason, first one must study in *Lo Lishma*, so that through it, the body will assist him, since a person is willing to give up a small pleasure to receive a great pleasure. But by nature, one is incapable of imagining pleasure unless it is based on self-love. Therefore, he is told that he will be rewarded for engaging in Torah and *Mitzvot*. This is not a lie, for he will certainly be rewarded. In other words, he is told that for his effort in Torah and *Mitzvot*, he will be rewarded, and this is the truth, since he will indeed be rewarded, but the reward will change.

For example, a father tells his child, “If you are a good boy, I will buy you a toy car, a plastic car.” Afterwards, the father goes abroad and returns several years later. The son has already grown, and he comes to his father and tells him, “Dad, before you went abroad, you promised me a plastic toy car.” So his father goes and buys him a real car, one that can travel great distances.

The son is already clever and understands that now is not the time for a plastic car, but for a real car. Is this considered a deception by his father? Of course not! Instead, now the boy sees that when he was a child, he could only understand a trifle reward.

Here, too, he begins with a trifling reward, called *Lo Lishma*, meaning he is waiting to be rewarded with something that is worthless compared to the real reward that he will receive—being rewarded with *Lishma*, which is the *Kli* in which one can receive the delight and pleasure that the Creator wishes to impart. Those are the real pleasures.

It follows that by telling him to work in *Lo Lishma*, meaning to receive a reward, this is true, meaning that when he aims in order to bestow, he will be rewarded, too. The only falsehood is in the actual reward. While a person is in *Lo Lishma*, he thinks that he will be given a different reward, that the *Kli* that receives it is called “self-love.”

But afterwards, when a person grows, he begins to understand that the *Kelim* [vessels] that actually receive the reward are the *Kelim* of bestowal, that it is precisely through those *Kelim* that the real delight and pleasure is received. At that time, he feels that he is the happiest man on earth. But the reward that he wished to receive while he was in *Lo Lishma* could only be a reward suitable for a little boy.

Thus, when teaching to receive reward and pleasure for one’s work in *Lo Lishma*, it is not considered a lie, since he did not lose anything by his reward being exchanged for a greater reward. We should only explain that the *Lo Lishma*, meaning this reward, is not the real name, as he thinks. Instead, the reward has a different name than what he thought. However, a reward remains a reward, and the reward is not changed; only the name of the reward changes—from a false and imaginary reward to a true reward.

From all the above, it follows that *the main thing that a person needs in return for his toil in Torah and Mitzvot is for the Creator to give him the vessels of bestowal, which one cannot obtain by himself because they are contrary to nature. However, this is a gift from*

above—that his reward will be to always wait for the time when he can bring contentment to the Creator. And since this is the reward that he awaits, this is called “his reward.”

To understand the above, we should look in “General Preface to the Tree of Life” (Item 3), where it is written, “The root of the darkness is the *Masach* in the *Kli* of *Malchut*, and the root of the reward is rooted in the Reflected Light that comes out through a *Zivug de Haka*.”

There he offers the root to what we see in this world—that everything that we see in this world is a branch that extends from the roots, from the upper worlds. He says there, “The root of the labor that a person feels in this world extends from the root of the *Masach* in the *Kli* of *Malchut*.”

This means that the *Kli* that the creatures have is called “a desire to receive pleasure,” which the Creator created because of His desire to delight His creatures. Hence, He created in the creatures a desire to receive pleasure. In the upper *Sefirot*, this is called *Malchut*.

Afterwards, we learn that there was a *Tzimtzum* [restriction]. This means that one doesn’t want to be a receiver because he wants equivalence of form with the Creator; hence, a rule was made in the *Kedusha* [holiness] that nothing is received unless there is an aim to bestow.

This is the meaning of the correction of the *Masach* [screen]. Since we are speaking of upper lights, not wanting to receive light is called “a *Masach*.” It is like a person who places a curtain or a veil when the sun shines too brightly and he doesn’t want to receive the sunlight, so that the sun will not shine into the house.

Hence, when speaking of upper lights, although *Malchut* had a great desire and craving to receive the light of pleasure, she still relinquished the pleasure, not receiving it because she wanted

equivalence of form. This is called “labor,” meaning doing something against her will—preventing herself from receiving the pleasure.

In the corporeal world, too, when a person must give up some pleasure, it is considered an effort. For example, if a person enjoys rest, and for some reason must give up his rest and do something, this is called “labor.”

He also shows us how, when the corporeal branch receives a reward, where it is rooted in the upper worlds. He shows us that the root of the reward extends from the Reflected Light—the desire to bestow that comes out of the *Zivug de Hakaa* that occurred between the upper light and the *Masach* and *Aviut* [thickness] (see *The Study of the Ten Sefirot*, Part 4, Item 8). He writes, “The clothing Reflected Light comes out as a result of two forces.”

In spirituality, a *Zivug de Hakaa* means that if two things are opposite to one another, it is regarded as *Hakaa* [striking/ beating]. This means that on the one hand, one truly wants that thing because he sees that it will give him immense pleasure, but on the other hand, he overcomes and does not receive it because he wants equivalence of form.

Indeed, there are two desires here: 1) One’s desire to receive pleasure, and 2) his desire for equivalence of form. And of those two, a new thing is born, called “clothing Reflected Light.” With this force, he can later obtain the upper abundance because this Reflected Light is the appropriate *Kli* for reception of the bounty.

In other words, with this *Kli*, he has two things: 1) He receives the pleasure that is found in the upper abundance, which comes from the thought of creation, to do good to His creations. 2) At the same time, he finds himself in equivalence of form, which is the second discernment that he has upon reception of the abundance.

From all the above, we see that the whole reward is only the Reflected Light, which is the power of bestowal that the lower one receives from the upper one, which he calls “Reflected Light,” meaning what the lower one gives to the upper one. This means that the abundance that initially came from the Creator is called “Direct Light,” as it is written, “God created man straight.” It is as we learn, that the thought of creation was to do good to His creations, meaning for the lower ones to receive abundance, and this is called “straight.”

But the receivers of the abundance wish for equivalence of form, hence we have a correction called “Reflected Light.” This means that the receiver of the abundance does not receive it because he wishes to enjoy, but because he wishes to give to the upper one. In other words, as the upper wishes for the receiver to enjoy, the receiver of the abundance aims to return pleasure to the giver, meaning for the upper one to enjoy the fulfillment of His thought. It therefore follows that *the reward is primarily the Reflected Light, meaning the power of bestowal that the lower one receives from the upper one.*

But we should still understand why we say that the *Kli*, which is called “power of bestowal,” is the whole reward. After all, “reward” implies something that is received. We say, “I work for the pay,” or we say that the purpose of creation is to do good to His creations, meaning that they will receive reward. And here we are saying that the reward is called “the power of giving.” And what do we understand? That the reward should be for a person to be imparted with attaining Godliness and the secrets of Torah, and so on. But why is he saying that the reward is in obtaining the power of giving, meaning the power of bestowal? Moreover, he is telling us that this extends from the upper root, called “Reflected Light.”

There is a known rule that the cow wants to nurse more than the calf wants to suckle. It therefore follows that the Creator

wishes to give to the creatures more than the creatures wish to receive. So who is inhibiting? We must remember the *Tzimtzum* occurred so that the creatures would have equivalence of form. This is a correction to prevent the bread of shame, which extends from our root because the Creator is about bestowal and not reception, for He has no needs and there is no such thing as reception in Him. Thus, according to the rule that exists in our nature—that each branch wishes to resemble its root—when the lower one must carry out an action that is not present in the root, he feels unpleasantness.

It follows that to receive abundance, which is light and pleasure, one does not need to do anything for it, since the Creator want to give to the creature more than the creature wants to receive. However, the creature has no *Kli* in which to enjoy the pleasures that he will be given, due to the shame. It follows that the only reward we need is the *Kli*, which is called “the power of bestowal.” Thus, all we need are *Kelim* [plural of *Kli*], and not lights, and this is why the reward is primarily the power of bestowal.

However, to obtain that *Kli*, called “the desire to bestow,” we need a desire, meaning to feel that we need this *Kli*. This is why we must first engage in Torah and *Mitzvot* in *Lo Lishma*, and this is our labor—to see that everything we do is for self-benefit, without any intention to bestow.

And then we see that we need the power of bestowal, and we want a reward for our work—that the Creator will give us this reward—the desire to bestow. And when we have that power, we will be able to receive the delight and pleasure that is already available and for which we don’t need to work at all because the Creator gives it. But for a person to rise from degree to degree, he must acquire the power of bestowal each time, and then nothing else is missing.

CONCERNING THE IMPORTANCE OF FRIENDS

Article No. 17, Part 1, 1984

Concerning the importance of the friends in the society and how to appreciate them, meaning with which kind of importance everyone should regard his friend. Common sense dictates that if one regards one's friend as being at a lower degree than one's own, he will want to teach him how to behave more virtuously than the qualities he has. Hence, he cannot be his friend; he can take the friend as a student, but not as a friend.

And if one sees one's friend as being at a higher degree than his own, and sees that he can acquire good qualities from him, then he can be his Rav, but not his friend.

This means that precisely when one sees one's friend as being at an equal degree to one's own, one can accept the other as a friend and bond with him. This is so because "a friend" means that both parties are in the same state. This is what common sense dictates. In other words, they have the same views and thus decide to bond. Then, both of them act towards the goal that they both wish to achieve.

It is like two like-minded friends who are doing business together to achieve a profit. In that situation, they feel that they have equal powers. But should one of them feel that he is more competent than the other, he will not want to accept him as an equal partner. Instead, they would create a proportional partnership according to the strength and qualities that one has above the other. In that state, the partnership is a thirty-three or twenty-five percent partnership, and it cannot be said that they are equal in the business.

But with love of friends, when friends bond to create unity among them, it explicitly means that they are equal. This is called "unity." For example, if they do business together and say that the profits will not be distributed equally, is this called

“unity”? Clearly, a business of love of friends should be when all the profits and possessions that the love of friends yields will be equally controlled by them. They should not hide or conceal from one another, but everything will be with love, friendship, truthfulness, and peace.

But in the essay, “A Speech for the Completion of The Zohar,” it is written, “The measure of the greatness comes under two conditions: 1) to always listen and receive the appreciation of society, to the extent of their greatness; 2) the environment should be great, as it is written, ‘In the multitude of people is the king’s glory.’”

To accept the first condition, each student must feel that he is the smallest among all the friends, and then he will be able to receive the appreciation of the greatness from everyone. This is so because the greater one cannot receive from the smaller one, much less be impressed by his words. Only the lower one is impressed by the appreciation of the greater one.

And for the second condition, each student must extol each friend’s merit as though he were the greatest in the generation. Then the environment will affect him as a great environment should, since quality is more important than quantity.

It follows that in the matter of love of friends, they help each other, meaning it is enough for everyone to regard his friend as being of the same degree as his own. But because everyone should learn from his friends, there is the issue of Rav and disciple. For this reason, he should consider the friend as greater than himself.

But how can one consider one’s friend greater than himself when he can see that his own merits are greater than his friend’s, that he is more talented and has better natural qualities? There are two ways to understand this:

1. He is going with faith above reason: once he has chosen him as a friend, he appreciates him above reason.

2. This is more natural—within reason. If he has decided to accept the other as a friend, and works on himself to love him, then it is natural with love to see only good things. And even though there are bad things in one's friend, he cannot see them, as it is written, "love covers all transgressions."

We can see that a person may see faults in his neighbor's children, but not in his own. And when someone mentions some faults in his children, he immediately resists his friend and begins to declare his children's merits.

And the question is, which is the truth? After all, there are merits to his children, and hence he is upset when others speak of his children. The thing is this, as I had heard it from my father: Indeed, each person has advantages and disadvantages. And both the neighbor and the father are saying the truth. But the neighbor does not treat the other's children like a father to his children, since he does not have the same love for the children as the father does.

Hence, when he considers the other's children, he sees only the children's faults, since this gives him more pleasure. This is because he can show that he is more virtuous than the other because his own children are better. For this reason, he sees only the other's faults. What he is seeing is true, but he sees only things he enjoys.

But the father, too, sees only the truth, except that he regards only the good things that his children have. He does not see his children's faults, since it gives him no pleasure. Hence, he is saying the truth about what he sees in his children. And because he regards only the things that can please him, he sees only the virtues.

It turns out that if one has love of friends, the rule in love is that you want to see the friends' merits and not their

faults. Hence, if one sees some fault in one's friend, it is not a sign that his friend is at fault, but that the seer is at fault, meaning that because his love of friends is flawed, he sees faults in his friend.

Therefore, now he should not see to his friend's correction. Rather, he himself needs correction. It follows from all the above that he should not care for the correction of his friend's faults, which he sees in his friend, but he himself needs to correct the flaw he has created in the love of friends. And when he corrects himself, he will see only his friend's merits and not his faults.

THE AGENDA OF THE ASSEMBLY 1

Article No. 17, Part 2, 1984

In the beginning of the assembly, there should be an agenda. Everyone should speak of the importance of the society as much as he can, describing the profits that society will give him and the important things he hopes society will bring him, which he cannot obtain by himself, and how he appreciates the society accordingly.

It is as our sages wrote (*Berachot* 32), "Rabbi Shamlai said, 'One should always praise the Creator, and then pray.' Where did we get that? From Moses, as it is written, 'And I besought the Lord at that time.' It is also written, 'O Lord God, Thou hast begun,' and it is written, 'Let me go over, I pray Thee, and see the good land.'"

And the reason we need to begin with praising the Creator is that it is natural that there are two conditions when one asks for something of another:

1. That he has what I ask of him, such as wealth, power, and repute as being wealthy and affluent.

2. That he will have a kind heart, meaning a desire to do good to others.

From such a person you can ask for a favor. This is why they said, “One should always praise the Creator, and then pray.” This means that after one believes in the greatness of the Creator, that He has all sorts of pleasures to give to the creatures and He wishes to do good, then it is pertinent to say that he is praying to the Creator, who will certainly help him since He wishes to bestow. And then the Creator can give him what he wishes. Then, also, the prayer can be confident that the Creator will grant it.

Similarly, with love of friends, at the very beginning of the assembly, when gathering, we should praise the friends, the importance of each of the friends. To the extent that we assume the greatness of the society, one can appreciate the society.

“And then pray” means that everyone should examine himself and see how much effort he is giving to the society. Then, when they see that you are powerless to do anything for the society, there is room for prayer to the Creator to help you, and give you strength and desire to engage in love of others.

And afterwards, everyone should behave the same as in the last three of the “Eighteen Prayer.” In other words, after having pleaded before the Creator, *The Zohar* says that in the last three of the “Eighteen Prayer,” one should think as though the Creator has already granted his request and he has departed.

In love of friends we should behave the same: After examining ourselves and following the known advice of praying, we should think as though our prayer has been answered and rejoice with our friends, as though all the friends are one body. And as the body wishes for all its organs to enjoy, we, too, want all our friends to enjoy themselves now.

Hence, after all the calculations comes the time of joy and love of friends. At that time, everyone should feel happy, as though one had just sealed a very good deal that will earn him lots of money. And it is customary that at such a time he gives drinks to the friends.

Similarly, here everyone needs his friends to drink and eat cakes, etc. Because now he is happy, he wishes his friends to feel good, too. Hence, the dispersion of the assembly should be in a state of joy and elation.

This follows the way of “a time of Torah” and “a time of prayer.” “A time of Torah” means wholeness, when there are no deficiencies. This is called “right,” as it is written, “at His right hand was a fiery law.”

But “a time of prayer” is called “left,” since a place of deficiency is a place that needs correction. This is called “the correction of the *Kelim* (vessels).” But in the state of Torah, called “right,” there is no room for correction, and this is why Torah is called a “gift.”

It is customary to give presents to a person you love. And it is also customary to not love one who is deficient. Hence, at a “time of Torah,” there is no room for thoughts of correction. Thus, when leaving the assembly, it should be as in the last three of the “Eighteen Prayer.” And for this reason, everyone will feel wholeness.

YOU STAND TODAY, ALL OF YOU

Article No. 19, 1984

The interpreters ask about the words, “You stand today, all of you ...your heads, your tribes, your elders and your officers, every man of Israel.” It begins with the plural form, “You” [plural form in Hebrew], and ends in singular form, “Every man of Israel.” The author of the book, *Light and Sun*, explains that by using plural form and singular form, it points to the matter of love of friends. Although among you are “heads, tribes,” etc., still no one sees greater merit in himself than in any man of Israel. Instead, everyone is equal in that no one complains about the other. For this reason, from above, too, they are treated accordingly, and this is why great abundance is imparted below.

It is our way to study everything within one subject. It turns out that a person should take upon himself the burden of the kingdom of heaven as an ox to the burden and as a donkey to the load, which are mind and heart. In other words, all of one’s work should be in order to bestow.

Accordingly, if one works in order to bestow and does not wish for any reward in return—except to serve in the holy work without hoping to be given any addition to what he has—he has no wish even for additional work. In other words, receiving some knowledge that he is walking on the right path is certainly a just demand, and yet he relinquishes even that because he wishes to go with his eyes shut and believe in the Creator. And what he can, he does and he is content with his lot.

And he even feels that there are people who have some understanding of the work of the Creator, while he sees that he is completely empty. In other words, many times he feels a good taste in the work, and at times he feels that he is in a state of “Your heads.” In other words, at times he thinks that now he has reached a degree where it is impossible that he will ever decline

to a state of lowliness, a state where if he wishes to engage in the work of God, he has to make great efforts to force his body. At that time, what he does is by compulsion because he has no desire for the work, and the body only wishes to rest and does not care for anything.

Instead, at that time he feels that he has already come to know for sure that there is nothing else in the world except to work in order to bestow, and then he certainly finds good taste in the work. And when he regards his previous states, he cannot understand, now that he is in a state of ascent. Hence, by all calculations, he decides that now it is impossible that he will ever suffer a decline.

But sometimes, after a day, an hour, or a few minutes, he descends to such a state of lowliness that he cannot immediately feel that he has fallen from his uplifted state to the “depth of the great abyss.” Rather, at times, after an hour or two he suddenly sees that he has fallen from the highest level, meaning from his previous certainty that he was the strongest man, and he is like any man of Israel, meaning like an ordinary person. Then he begins to seek advice in his heart, “What should I do now?” “How can I pick myself up to the state of *Gadlut* [greatness/adulthood] that I had before?”

At that time, one should walk on the path of truth—to say, “My current state, being in utter lowliness, means that I was deliberately thrown out from above to know if I truly wish to do the holy work in order to bestow, or if I wish to be God’s servant because I find it more rewarding than other things.”

Then, if one can say, “Now I want to work in order to bestow and I do not want to do the holy work to receive some gratification in the work. Instead, I will settle for doing the work of holiness like any man of Israel—praying or taking a lesson on the daily portion. And I don’t have time to think with which intent I study

or pray, but I will simply observe the actions without any special intent.” At that time, he will reenter the holy work because now he wishes to be God’s servant without any preconditions.

This is the meaning of what is written, “You stand today, all of you,” meaning everything you went through, all the states you have experienced—whether states of *Gadlut* or states of less than *Gadlut*, which were considered intermediate or so. You take all those details and you do not compare one degree to another because you do not care for any reward, but only for doing the Creator’s will. He has commanded us to observe *Mitzvot* [commandments] and to study Torah, and this is what we do, like any common man of Israel. In other words, the state he is in right now is as important to him as when he thought he was in a state of *Gadlut*. At that time, “The Lord your God makes with you this day.”

This means that then the Creator makes a covenant with him. In other words, precisely when one accepts His work without any conditions and agrees to do the holy work without any reward, which is called “unconditional surrender,” this is the time when the Creator makes a covenant with him.

Baal HaSulam explained the matter of making a covenant: When two people see that they love each other, they make a covenant between them that their love will always endure. And he asked, “If they love each other and understand that this love will never leave them, why this covenant? Why do they make this covenant, meaning for what purpose?” In other words, what do they gain by this making of a covenant? Is it only a ritual or is it for some benefit?

He said that the matter of making a covenant is that now they understand that it is in their interest for each to love the other because of reasons they can now see—that each one feels the other and cares only for his well-being—so they make a covenant.

And as now neither has any complaints against his friend, or they would not make the covenant, they tell each other, "It is worthwhile for us to make a covenant once and for all." In other words, if there is ever a state where one will have complaints against the other, they will both remember the covenant that they made when love was revealed between them.

Similarly, even though they currently do not feel the love as they did then, they still evoke the old love and do not look at the state they are currently in. Instead, they go back to doing things for each other. This is the benefit of the covenant. Thus, even when the love that was between them has lost its fancy, because they made the covenant, they have the strength to reawaken the shining love that they had before. In this way, they usher each other back into the future.

It follows that making the covenant is for the future. It is like a contract that they sign that they will not be able to regret when they see that the ties of love are not as they were, that this love gave them great pleasure while they were doing good to each other, but now that love has been corrupted, they are powerless and none can do anything for the other.

But if they do wish to do something for their friends, they must consider the making of the covenant that they had before, and out of that they should rebuild the love. It is like a person who signs a contract with his friend, and the contract connects them so they cannot part from one another.

It follows that, "You stand today, all of you." In other words, he thinks of details, "Your heads, your tribes, your elders and your officers, every man of Israel." This means that of all the high degrees that he had, it is now considered for him that he is in a state of "Every man of Israel," and he assumes that state, as when he was in a state that he considered good. He says, "Now I do my part, and I agree that the Creator will give me what He

wants, and I have no criticism.” At that time, he is rewarded with making a covenant. In other words, the connection remains forever because the Creator made a covenant with him for all eternity.

According to the above, we should interpret the verse, “The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may do all the words of this law.” We should understand what this verse comes to tell us. We cannot say that it comes to tell us that we do not know what is hidden and only the Creator knows. We cannot say that because without the verse, we do not know what is hidden from us. Thus, what does the verse come to tell us?

It is known that there is a thing that is hidden and a thing that is revealed. It means that the active part of what we do is when we can see whether or not we are doing it. And if the body does not wish to perform the *Mitzva* [commandment], there is a tactic—one can force oneself, meaning that he is compelled to do the *Mitzva* against his will. It turns out that coercion is relevant with revealed things.

The hidden thing is the intention in the Mitzva. This, one cannot see, meaning what the other one intends while doing. It is the same with the person himself, the one who acts. He, too, cannot know, unless he lies to himself while doing. He thinks that he has no other goal and that he is completely dedicated to the Creator. But with the action, called “the revealed part,” it is irrelevant to speak of a person lying to himself, that he thinks that he is wearing *Tefillin* (phylacteries) when in truth, it is not *Tefillin*. Similarly, a woman cannot lie to herself saying that she lights the Sabbath candles when in fact she isn’t.

But with intention, it can be said that one lies to oneself. He thinks that he is working *Lishma* [for Her name] when in fact he is entirely in *Lo Lishma* [not for Her name]. Also, there cannot be

coercion because one cannot coerce one's thought into thinking what he wants to. Regarding things that belong to emotion or knowledge, a person is powerless. He cannot force his mind to understand differently than it does or feel differently than how he feels.

Now we can understand the above matter—that all that is left for us is the practical part. This is called “The things that are revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may do all the words of this law.” We are commanded to perform the action, meaning it is the deed that we are commanded to do, even coercively.

But as for the intention, called “the hidden part,” in that, no man has any view or governance. Thus, what should we do to keep the hidden part, as well? Here all that one can do is test, meaning examine himself to see if he is truly doing everything in order to bestow, or whether the body resists the aim to bestow. He feels that he is removed from it to the extent that there is nothing he can do alone, since whatever he plans to do, all the tactics to be able to aim in order to bestow, do not help him.

It is about that that the verse comes to tell us that this matter of *Lishma*, called “the hidden part,” belongs to the Lord our God. In other words, only the Creator can help him, while there is absolutely no possibility that he himself would realize it. It is not in the hands of man because it is above nature. This is why the verse says, “The secret things belong to the Lord our God,” meaning that it belongs to Him, that the Creator should provide this force called “to bestow.”

This is why our sages said (*Kidushin* 30), “Man's inclination overpowers him every day and seeks to put him to death, as it is said, ‘The wicked watches the righteous, and seeks to slay him.’ And if the Creator did not help him, he would not overcome it, as it is said, ‘The Lord will not leave him in his hand.’”

The matter of seeking to slay him means that it wishes for man to do everything in order to receive, which is regarded as being separated from the Life of Lives. Naturally, one remains a beast. This is why our sages said, “The wicked are called ‘dead’ while they are alive.” It turns out that it is called “death” when his intention is to receive. This is considered separation. To be rewarded with *Dvekut* [adhesion], meaning to be granted the strength to bestow—to have such a thing—only the Creator can give it to him; it is not in man’s power to obtain.

This is why our sages said, “Man’s inclination overpowers him every day and seeks to slay him, and if the Creator did not help him, he would not overcome it, as it is said, “The Lord will not leave him in his hand.”” From what we explained, we can understand the verse, “The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our sons.”

Thus, *only the act is for us to do, but the hidden part is for the Creator to do.*

However, there is still something for us to do about the hidden, so the Creator will give us the hidden part. This follows the rule that everything requires an awakening from below. There is a rule that there is no light without a *Kli* [vessel], meaning there is no fulfillment without a deficiency. You cannot insert anything unless there is a vacancy, and then you put in whatever you want. But if there is no cavity, no empty place, how can we insert anything?

Therefore, first we should see that we do not have the *vessel of bestowal*, called “*desire to bestow*,” and that this is our light. As we explained in previous articles, our primary reward is to obtain the desire to bestow, called “*Reflected Light*,” as it is said, “The whole reward that we hope for is the *Reflected Light*” (General Preface to the Tree of Life).

Therefore, if the desire to bestow is called “the light,” then this deficiency, when one sees that he does not have the power to bestow, is called “a *Kli*.” He feels that this is what he is missing, meaning he sees what he is losing by not having this power called “the power of bestowal.” Hence, his deficiency is built in him according to his sensation. This is called “a *Kli*” and “a vacancy,” for here—where he lacks the power of bestowal—there is room for this filling to enter. This is called “the arrival of the light into the *Kli*.”

However, we should know that receiving this *Kli* requires a lot of work. We have *Kelim* [plural of *Kli*], called “deficiencies,” which we wish to fill. They are called “*Kelim* of self-love,” meaning that we wish to receive fulfillment. These are very important *Kelim* because they come from the side of the Creator, who created them existence from absence because He wishes to do good to His creations, meaning that He wishes to give fulfillment. Yet, how is it possible to give fulfillment if there is no vacancy in which to place the filling? For this reason, He created these *Kelim* existence from absence to place the delight and pleasure in them. It turns out that this is the essence of the *Kli* that the Creator created.

However, because this *Kli* is called “desire to receive,” it wished to have equivalence of form, called “*Dvekut* [adhesion] with the Creator.” This is why this *Kli* was disqualified from being a *Kli* for reception of the upper abundance. Now there is a need for a new *Kli* for reception, which dresses in the former *Kli*, where only by both—by clothing the will to bestow within the will to receive—will this *Kli* befit reception.

The previous *Kli*, called “desire to receive,” came from the Emanator. The lower one has no part in the work of the desire to receive, although everything comes from the Emanator. Similarly, the second *Kli*, called “desire to bestow,” comes only

from the Emanator, as well, and the lower one cannot add, just as in the first *Kli*, called “desire to receive.”

However, the difference is that the vessel of bestowal must first have a demand from the lower one, who seeks of the Creator to be given the new *Kli*. This, the first *Kli* did not have because it came to him without any awakening on the part of the lower one.

MAKE FOR YOURSELF A RAV AND BUY YOURSELF A FRIEND 1

Article No. 1, 1984-85

In the Mishnah (*Avot*, 1), Yehoshua Ben Perachia says, “Make for yourself a rav [great/teacher], buy yourself a friend, and judge every person favorably.” We see that there are three things here: 1) Make for yourself a rav; 2) buy yourself a friend; 3) judge every person favorably.

This means that besides making for himself a rav, there is something more that he must do in relation to the collective. In other words, engaging in love of friends is not enough. Additionally, he should be considerate toward every person and judge them favorably.

We must understand the difference in wording between “make,” “buy,” and “favorably.” Making is a practical thing. This means that there is no mind involved here, only action. In other words, even if one does not agree with the thing he wishes to do, but on the contrary, the mind makes him see that it is not a worthwhile deed, this is called *doing*, meaning sheer force, with no brains, since it is against his reason.

Accordingly, we should interpret in relation to the work, that the fact that one needs to assume the kingdom of heaven is called “an act.” It is like putting the yoke on an ox so it would

plow the ground. Although the ox does not wish to take this work on itself, we force it nonetheless.

Similarly, with the kingdom of heaven we should also force and enslave ourselves because it is the Creator's commandment, without any rhyme or reason. This is so because man must accept the kingdom of heaven not because the body feels that some benefit will come to it as a result, but in order to give contentment to the Creator.

But how can the body agree to it? This is the reason why the work must be above reason. It is called *Make for yourself a rav*, since there should be the kingdom of heaven because "He is great and ruling."

It is written in *The Zohar* ("Introduction of The Book of Zohar"), "Fear is the most important, for man to fear the Upper One because He is great and ruling, the essence and the root of all the worlds, and all are of no consequence compared to Him.' Thus, one should fear the Creator because He is great and rules over everything. He is great because He is the root from which all the worlds expand, and His greatness is seen by His actions. And He rules over everything because all the worlds that He created, both upper and lower, are regarded as nothing compared to Him for they add nothing to His essence."

Therefore, the order of the work is for one to begin with "Make for yourself a rav," and take upon himself the burden of the kingdom of heaven above logic and above reason. This is called "doing," meaning action only, despite the body's disapproval. Afterwards, "Buy yourself a friend." Buying is just as when a person wishes to buy something; he must let go of something that he has already acquired. He gives what he's had for some time and in return purchases a new object.

It is similar with the work of God. For one to achieve *Dvekut* [adhesion] with the Creator, which is equivalence of form, as in,

“As He is merciful, you be merciful, too,” he must concede many things that he has in order to buy bonding with the Creator. This is the meaning of “Buy yourself a friend.”

Before a person makes for himself a rav, meaning the kingdom of heaven, how can he buy himself a friend, meaning bond with the rav? After all, he has no rav yet. Only after he has made for himself a rav is there a point in demanding that the body to make concessions to buy the bonding, that he wishes to give contentment to the Creator.

Moreover, we should understand that he has the strength to observe “buy yourself a friend” to the same extent as the greatness of the rav. This is so because he is willing to make concessions so as to bond with the rav to the very same extent that he feels the importance of the rav, since then he understands that obtaining *Dvekut* [adhesion] with the Creator is worth any effort.

It turns out that if one sees that he cannot overcome the body because he thinks that he is not strong enough and was born with a weak nature, it is not so. *The reason is that he is not feeling the greatness of the rav.* In other words, he still does not have the importance of the kingdom of heaven, so he has no strength to overcome for something that is not very important. But for an important thing, anyone can concede important things that he loves and receive what he needs.

For example, if a person is very tired and goes to sleep at around 11 pm, if he is awakened at 3 am, of course he will say that he has no energy to get up to study because he’s very tired. And if he feels a little weak or has a slight temperature, the body will certainly have no power to rise at the time he is accustomed to rising.

But if a person is very tired, feeling sick, and goes to sleep at midnight, but is awakened at 1 am and is told, “There is a fire in the yard; it’s about to come into your room. Quick, get up and

you'll save your life in return for the effort you are making," he will not make any excuses about being tired, mindless, or sick. Rather, even if he is very sick, he will make every effort to save his life. Evidently, because he will obtain an important thing, the body has the energy to do what it can to get what he wants.

Therefore, while working on "Make for yourself a rav," a person believes that it is, "For they are our lives and the length of our days." To the extent that he feels that this is his life, the body has enough strength to overcome all the obstacles, as written in the allegory. For this reason, in all of man's works, in studying or in praying, he should focus all his work on obtaining the greatness and importance of the rav. Much work and many prayers should be made on that alone.

In the words of *The Zohar*, this is called "Raising Divinity from the dust," which means raising the kingdom of heaven, which is lowered to the dust. In other words, one does not place an important thing on the ground, while something that is unimportant is tossed to the ground. And since the kingdom of heaven, called "Divinity," is "Lowered to the very bottom," it is said in the books that before every spiritual action one must pray to "raise Divinity from the dust." This means that we should pray that we will regard the kingdom of heaven as important and that it will be worthwhile exerting for it and raising it to its importance.

Now we can understand what we say in the *Rosh Hashanah* [New Year's Eve] prayer, "Give glory to Your people." This seems quite perplexing. How is it permitted to pray for honor? Our sages said, "Be very, very humble," so how can we pray for the Creator to give us glory?

We should interpret that we pray that the Creator will give the glory of God to Your people, since we have no glory of God, but "The city of God is lowered to the very bottom," called "Divinity in

the dust.” Also, we do not have the real importance in the matter of “Make for yourself a rav.” Hence, on *Rosh Hashanah*, the time when we take upon ourselves the kingdom of heaven, we ask of the Creator to give the glory of God to Your people, for the people of Israel to feel the glory of the Creator. And then we will be able to keep the Torah and *Mitzvot* [commandments] in full.

Hence, we should say, “Give the glory of God to Your people,” meaning that He will give the glory of God to the people of Israel. This does not mean that He will give the glory of Israel to the people of Israel, but that the Creator will give the glory of God to the people of Israel, for this is all we need to feel the importance and greatness of *Dvekut* with the Creator. If we have this importance, each person will be able to make efforts and there will be no one in the world saying he has no strength to save his life, so he wishes to remain a beast, if he feels that life is a very important thing because he can enjoy life.

But if a person does not feel that life has meaning, many people choose to die. This is so because no person can experience suffering in his life because it is against the purpose of creation, since the purpose of creation was to do good to His creations, meaning that they would enjoy life. Hence, when one sees that he cannot be happy now, or at least later, he commits suicide because he does not have the goal of life.

It follows that *all we lack is*, “*Make for yourself a rav, to sense the greatness of the Creator.* Then, everyone will be able to achieve the goal, which is to adhere to Him.

And we should also interpret the words of Rabbi Yehoshua Ben Perachia—who says three things: 1) Make for yourself a rav. 2) Buy yourself a friend. 3) Judge every person favorably—in regards to love of friends.

It would make sense to think that friendship relates to two persons of the same level in skills and qualities, since then they

find it easy to communicate, and they unite as one. And then, “They helped everyone his friend,” like two people who make a partnership and each invests equal energy, resources, and work. Then the profits, too, are divided equally among them.

However, if one is superior to the other, meaning he invests more money or more expertise or more energy than the other, the division of profits is unequal, too. This is called “one-third partnership” or a “one-quarter partnership.” Thus, it is not considered a real partnership because one is of higher status than the other.

It turns out that real friendship—when each makes the necessary payment to buy his friend—is precisely when both are of equal status, and then both pay equally. It is like a corporeal business, where both of them give everything equally, or there cannot be a real partnership. Hence, “Buy yourself a friend,” since there can be bonding—when each buys his friend—only when they are equal.

But on the other hand, it is impossible to learn from one another if one does not see that his friend is greater than him. But if the other one is greater, he cannot be his friend, but his *rav* [teacher/great], while he is considered a student. At that time, he can learn knowledge or virtues from him.

This is why it is said, “*Make for yourself a rav and buy yourself a friend*”; both have to exist. In other words, each should regard the other as a friend, and then there is room for buying. This means that each must pay with concessions to the other, like a father concedes his rest, works for his son, spends money for his son, and all is because of the love.

However, there it is natural love. The Creator gave natural love for raising children so there would be persistence to the world. If, for instance, the father would raise the children because it is a *Mitzva* [commandment], his children would have

food, clothing, and other things that are necessary for children to the extent that a person is committed to keep all the *Mitzvot* [plural of *Mitzva*]. At times he would keep the *Mitzvot*, and at times he would only do the very minimum, and his children could starve to death.

This is why the Creator gave parents natural love for their children, so there would be persistence to the world. This is not so with love of friends. Here everyone must make great efforts by himself to create the love of friends in his heart.

It is the same with “And buy yourself a friend.” Once he understands, at least intellectually, that he needs help and he cannot do the holy work, to the extent that he understands it in his mind, he begins to buy, to make concessions for his friend’s sake.

This is so because he understands that the work is primarily in bestowing upon the Creator. However, it is against his nature because man is born with a desire to receive only for his own benefit. Hence, we were given the *cure* by which to go from self-love to love of others, and by that he can arrive at the love of the Creator.

Therefore, he can find a friend at his level. But afterwards, making the friend a *rav*, meaning for him to feel that his friend is at a higher degree than him, is something that one cannot see, that his friend is like a *rav* and he is like a student. But if he does not regard his friend as a *rav*, how will he learn from him? This is called “Make,” meaning a mindless action. In other words, he must accept, above reason, that his friend is greater than him, and this is called “Make,” meaning *acting above reason*.

In the essay, “A Speech for the Completion of The Zohar,” it is written, “To receive the first condition, each student must feel the smallest among all the friends. In that state, one can receive the appreciation of the greatness of the great one.” Thus, he is

explicitly stating that everyone should see himself as the smallest among the students.

And yet, how can one see oneself as the smallest of the students? Here, only above reason is pertinent. This is called “Make for yourself a rav,” meaning that each of them is considered a rav compared to him, and he is regarded as merely a student.

This is a great exertion, since there is a rule that the other’s deficiencies are always visible while his own faults are always hidden. And yet, he must regard the other as being virtuous, and that it is worthwhile for him to accept what he says or does, to learn from the other’s actions.

But the body does not agree to it because whenever one must learn from another, meaning if he has high regard for the other, the other commits him to labor, and the body revokes the views and actions of the other. Because the body wants to rest, it is better for it and more convenient to rule out his friend’s views and actions so he will not have to make an effort.

This is why it is called, “Make for yourself a rav.” It means that for the friend to be your rav, you have to *make* it. In other words, it is not by reason, since the reason asserts otherwise, and sometimes even shows him the opposite, that he can be the rav and the other his student. This is why it is called “Make,” meaning *doing* and not reasoning.

3) “And judge every person favorably.”

After we said, “Buy yourself a friend,” there remains the question, “What about the rest of the people?” For example, if a person chooses a few friends from his congregation and leaves the others and does not bond with them, the question is, “How should he treat them?” After all, they are not his friends, and why didn’t he choose them? We should probably say that he did not find virtues in them to make it worth his while to bond with them, meaning he does not appreciate them.

Thus, how should he treat the rest of the people in his congregation? And the same applies for the rest of the people who are not from among the people of the congregation. How should he treat them? Rabbi Yehoshua Ben Perachia says about it, “Judge every person favorably,” meaning one should judge everyone favorably.

This means that the fact that he does not find qualities in them is not their fault. Rather, it is not in his power to be able to see the merits of the general public. For this reason, he sees according to the qualities of his own soul. This is true according to his attainment, but not according to the truth. In other words, there is such a thing as truth in itself, regardless of the one who attains.

There is truth that each attains according to his attainment, meaning that truth changes according to the ones who attain. Meaning, it is subject to change according to the changing states in the one who attains.

But the actual truth did not change in its essence. This is why each person can attain the same thing differently. Therefore, in the eyes of the public, it could be that the public is just fine, but he sees differently, according to his own quality.

This is why he says, “And judge every person favorably,” meaning he should judge all the others besides his friends favorably—that they are all worthy in and of themselves and he has no complaints whatsoever concerning their conduct. But for himself, he cannot learn anything from them because he has no equivalence with them.

MAKE FOR YOURSELF A RAV AND BUY YOURSELF A FRIEND 2

Article No. 08, 1984-85

Considering what we discussed in article no. 1 (1984-5), we should elaborate a little:

We should discern between a) man and the Creator, b) a man and his friend, and c) a man and the rest of the people, who are not his friends, although there is a saying, “All of Israel are friends.”

At one time, we find that the words, “make for yourself a rav [teacher/important person] and buy yourself a friend,” are the path of correction, and another time, it is in the words, “And judge every person favorably” (*Avot*, Chapter 1). We should understand the difference between “make” and “buy,” and the meaning of judging favorably.

We should interpret “make” as coming to exclude from reason. This is because when reason cannot understand if something is worth doing or not, how can it determine what is good for me? Or vice versa, if reason considers them as equal, who will determine for a person what he should do? Thus, the act can decide.

We should know that there are two ways before us: to work in order to bestow or to work in order to receive. There are parts in man’s body that tell him, “You will succeed in life if you work in order to bestow, and this is the way you will enjoy life.” This is the argument of the good inclination, as our sages said, “If you do so, you will be happy for this world and happy for the next world.”

And the argument of the evil inclination is the opposite: It is better to work in order to receive. In that state, only the force called “action that is above reason” determines, not the intellect or emotion. This is why doing is called “above reason”

and “above reasoning,” and this is the force called “faith that is against the intellect.”

“Buy” is within reason. Normally, people want to see what they want to buy, so the merchant shows them the goods and they negotiate whether or not it is worth the price that the merchant is asking. If they do not think it is worth it, they don’t buy. Thus, “buy” is within reason.

Now we will explain the matter of “rav” and the matter of “friend.” A friend is sometimes called “society,” when people come together and wish to bond. This can happen through equivalence of form, by everyone caring in love of others. By that, they unite and become one.

Therefore, when a society is established to become a single group, we see that people who consider creating such a society usually seek people who are alike in views and attributes, whom they can see as more or less equal. Otherwise, they will not accept them into the group that they want to establish. And after that begins the work of love of friends.

But if they had no equivalence with the goals of the society from the beginning, before they even entered the society, it cannot be expected that anything will come out of that bonding. Only if there was apparent equality among them before they entered the society can it be said that they can begin to exert in the work of love of others.

Between Man and the Creator

Between man and the Creator, the order begins with “Make for yourself a rav,” and afterwards, “Buy yourself a friend.” In other words, first one must believe above reason that the Creator is great, as written in *The Zohar* (p 185, Item 191 in the *Sulam Commentary*), “Fear, which is the rudiment, means that man should fear his Master because He is great and ruling.”

To the extent that one believes in the greatness of the Creator, who is called “Great,” he has the strength to give to the “buy,” meaning to buy through conceding self-love in order to achieve equivalence of form, called *Dvekut* [adhesion] with the Creator. And this is called a *Haver* [friend]: one who is in *Hibur* [bonding/connection] with the Creator.

When buying corporeal things, we must relinquish money, honor, or simply make an effort to obtain it. Similarly, when a person wishes to buy bonding with the Creator, he must relinquish self-love, because otherwise he cannot achieve equivalence of form.

When one sees that he is unfit to make concessions to buy the equivalence of form, it is not because he was born with a weak character and hence cannot overcome his self-love. Rather, the fault is in “Make for yourself a rav,” meaning that he is not working on the faith, since he will be able to make concessions according to the importance of his faith in the greatness of the Creator.

Moreover, one should know that if he wishes to measure his degree of faith, he can see it in the degree of concessions he can make in self-love. Then, he’ll know his degree in the work of faith above reason. This applies between man and the Creator.

Between a Man and His Friend

Between a man and his friend, we should begin with “Buy yourself a friend,” and then “Make for yourself a rav.” This is so because when a person looks for a friend, he should first examine him to see if he is really worth bonding with. After all, we see that a special prayer has been set up concerning a friend, which we say after the blessings in the prayer, “May it please ... Keep us away from an evil person and from a bad friend.”

This means that before one takes a friend for himself, he must examine him in every possible way. At that time, he *must* use

his reason. This is why it was not said, “Make yourself a friend,” since “making” implies above reason. Therefore, concerning a man and his friend, he should go with his reason and examine as much as he can if his friend is okay, as we pray each day, “Keep us away from an evil person and from a bad friend.”

And when he sees that it is worthwhile for him to bond with him, he must pay in order to bond with him, meaning make concessions in self-love, and in return receive the power of love of others. And then he can expect to be rewarded with love for the Creator, too.

After he has bonded with a group of people who wish to achieve the degree of love of the Creator, and he wishes to take from them the strength to work in order to bestow and be moved by their words about the necessity for obtaining the love of the Creator, he must regard each friend in the group as greater than himself.

It was written in the book, *Matan Torah (The Giving of the Torah, p 143)*, that one is not impressed by the society or takes their appreciation of something unless he regards the society as greater than himself. This is the reason why each one must feel that he is the smallest of them all, since one who is great cannot receive from one who is smaller than himself, much less be impressed by his words. Rather, it is only the smaller one who is impressed through appreciating the greater one.

It follows that in the second stage, when everyone must learn from the others, there is the matter of “make for yourself a rav.” This is because to be able to say that his friend is greater than himself, he must use “making,” which is doing without reason, since only above reason can he say that his friend is at a higher degree than himself. Therefore, between a man and his friend, the order is to begin with keeping, “Buy yourself a friend,” and then, “Make for yourself a rav.”

Between a Man and Every Person

The Mishnah tells us, “Make for yourself a rav, buy for yourself a friend, and judge every person favorably” (*Avot*, Chapter 1).

We have explained that between a man and his friend the order is that first you go and buy yourself a friend—and we explained that buying is within reason—and then you must engage in “Make for yourself a rav.” And between man and the Creator, the order is to first “Make for yourself a rav,” and then “Buy yourself a friend.”

We should understand the meaning of saying that concerning every person, “Judge favorably.” Is this buying or making? According to the above, we should interpret the meaning of “And judge every person favorably” as “making,” not “buying.”

For example, assume there are many people in the congregation, and a small group among them decides that they want to unite in a society that engages in love of friends. And let us say, for instance, that there are 100 men in the congregation, and ten of them decide to unite. We should examine why those ten specific individuals decided to unite, and exclude others in the congregation. Is it because they find that those people are more virtuous than the rest of the people in the congregation, or because they are worse than the others and that they must take some action to ascend on the ladder of Torah and fear?

According to the above-mentioned, we can interpret that the reason those people agreed to unite into a single group that engages in love of friends is that each of them feels that they have one desire that can unite all their views, so as to receive the strength of love of others. There is a famous maxim by our sages, “As their faces differ, their views differ.” Thus, those who agreed among them to unite into a group understood that there isn’t such a great distance between them in the sense that they recognize the necessity to work in love of others. Therefore, each

of them will be able to make concessions in favor of the others, and they can unite around that. But the rest of the people have no understanding of the necessity of work on love of others; hence, they cannot bond with them.

It therefore follows that when engaging in unity of love of friends, everyone examines the other, his reason and his attributes, to see if he qualifies or is worthy of joining the society that those people decided to allow inside. It is as we pray, “Keep us away from an evil person and from a bad friend,” within reason.

It turns out that he prides himself over the rest of the people in the congregation. How is this permitted? After all, it is against an explicit rule that says, “Rabbi Levitas, man of Yavne, would say, ‘Be very, very humble’” (*Avot*, Chapter 4).

Rabbi Yehoshua Ben Perachia says about that, “‘Judge every person favorably’ (*Avot*, Chapter 1) means that with regards to the rest of the people, he should go above reason, which is called “making,” that is, acting and not reasoning. This is so because his reason shows him that they are not as suitable as the people to whom he associated himself, and this is what everyone says to himself. Thus, everyone prides himself over the others. The advice for that is what he says, “And judge every person favorably.”

This means that with regard to the rest of the people at the congregation, he should judge them favorably and say that they truly are more important people than himself, and that it is his own fault that he cannot appreciate the greatness and importance of the public, called by our sages, “Every person.” Hence, within reason, he doesn’t see their greatness, and we said that between a man and his friend there should be “buying.” However, he must use the “making,” which is above reason. And this is called, “Judge every person favorably.”

MIGHTY ROCK OF MY SALVATION

Article No. 13, 1984-85

In the Hanukah song we say, “Mighty rock of my salvation, to praise You is a delight; Restore my House of Prayer, and there we will bring a thanksgiving offering.” The song begins with words of praise, “To praise You is a delight,” and then begins with words of prayer, “Restore my House of Prayer.”

Afterwards, it returns to words of thanksgiving and praise, “And there we will bring a thanksgiving offering.”

Thus, there are three things here, similar to the order of the prayer:

1. The first three of the Eighteen [a sequence of prayers] are praise and thanksgiving.
2. The middle three are pleas.
3. The last three are praise and thanksgiving once more.

Thus, we begin with the present, as it says, “To praise You is a delight,” meaning we thank and praise You for the good we have received from You. It is as our sages said, “One should always praise the Creator and then pray” (*Berachot* [Blessings], 32).

The reason is that one who believes that the Creator is merciful and gracious, and that He desires to do good to the creations, has room for prayer. This is why we must first establish the praise of the Creator, meaning a person himself should establish praise of the Creator. This does not mean that the Creator should see that the person is praising Him, since the Creator doesn't need people. Rather, the person himself should see the praise of the Creator, and then he can ask Him to help him, since His conduct is to do good to His creations.

Thus, after he said, “To praise You is a delight” comes the prayer, and we say, “Restore my House of Prayer.”

What is “My House of Prayer”? It means, as it is written, “Even them will I bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer.” “My holy mountain.” *Har* [mountain] comes from the word *Hirhurim* [thoughts/contemplations], meaning that He will bring them thoughts of *Kedusha* [holiness]—that all their thoughts will be only of *Kedusha*.

“And make them joyful in My house of prayer” is man’s heart, so there will be a place for the presence of Divinity there. Divinity is called “prayer,” as it is known that *Malchut* is called “prayer,” as it is written, “But I am all prayer.”

After “Restore my House of Prayer” comes “And there we will bring a thanksgiving offering.” It follows that first there is praise, then there is prayer, and then praise once more, like the order of the prayer, which concludes with praise and thanksgiving.

But what can one do if he wants to begin with praise but his heart is closed, and he feels that he is full of faults and cannot open his mouth and sing and praise? The advice is to go above reason and say that everything is “covered *Hassadim* [mercies].” In other words, he should say that everything is *Hesed* [grace/mercy], but it is covered from him because he is not yet qualified to see the delight and pleasure that the Creator has prepared for His creations.

And after he establishes the praise of the Creator—meaning that he believes above reason that everything is good and gracious—he should pray that the Creator will mend his heart to become “My House of Prayer,” meaning that the mercies of the Creator will appear there. This is called “revealed *Hassadim*.”

And then, “There we will bring a thanksgiving offering,” meaning that he will give thanks for having been privileged with offering the vessels of reception. This is called, “There we will

bring a thanksgiving offering” for having been rewarded with sacrificing his will to receive. In return for it came the will to bestow, which is called “the place of the Temple.”

But the important thing is for a person to first have a desire to sacrifice the will to receive. And since the will to receive is the very essence of the Creator, the creature loves it and it is very difficult for him to understand that it must be annulled or else it is impossible to be rewarded with anything spiritual.

In corporeality, we see that a person has a desire and deficiency that concerns him, which comes from inside his body, and there is a desire that one acquires from the outside, not from himself. In other words, if there were no people outside who begot this desire in him, he would never feel that he needed it, but people on the outside begat this desire in him.

For example, a person alone will still want to eat, drink, sleep, and so on, even when there are no other people around him. However, if there are people around him, there is the matter of shame, where others compel him. Then he must eat and drink what people around him compel him to.

This is apparent primarily in clothing. At home, a person wears what is comfortable for him. But when he is among people, he must dress according to the way others see it. He has no choice, since shame compels him to follow their fancies.

It is the same in spirituality. A person has a desire within him, which comes from himself. In other words, even when he is alone and there are no people around him to affect him, or from whom to absorb some desire, he receives an awakening and craves to be a servant of the Creator. But his own desire is probably not big enough for him not to need to enhance it so he can work with it to obtain the spiritual goal. Therefore, there is a way—just like in corporeality—to enhance that desire through people on the outside who will compel him to follow their views and their spirit.

This is done by bonding with people whom he sees that also have a need for spirituality. And the desire that those people on the outside have begets a desire in him, and thus he receives a great desire for spirituality. In other words, in addition to the desire that he has from within, he receives a desire for spirituality that they beget in him, and then he acquires a great desire with which he can reach the goal.

Hence, the issue of *love of friends* is where each person in the group, besides having a desire of his own, acquires desire from the friends. This is a great asset that can be obtained *only* through love of friends. However, one should take great care not to be among friends who have no desire to examine themselves, the basis of their work—whether it is to bestow or to receive—and to see if they are doing things in order to reach the path of truth, which is the way of nothing but bestowal.

Only in such a group is it possible to instill the friends with a desire to bestow, meaning that each will absorb a lack from the friends, which he himself lacks the power to bestow, and wherever he walks, he is eagerly searching for a place where perhaps someone will be able to give him the power to bestow.

Hence, when he comes into a group where everyone is thirsty for the power to bestow, everyone receives this strength from everyone else. This is considered receiving strength from the outside in addition to the small power that he has within him.

However, opposite that, there is a force from the outside from which it is forbidden to receive any assistance, even though this force, which he can receive from the outside, will give him fuel for the work. One should be very careful not to receive it. And one needs take great care because the body tends to receive strength for the work specifically from people on the outside. It comes to a person when he hears that it is said about him, for

instance, that he is a virtuous person, or a wise disciple, or a man with fear of heaven, or when it is said about him that he is a man who seeks the truth. When a person hears these things, that his work is appreciated, these words give him strength for the work because he is receiving honor for his work.

And then he doesn't need faith above reason and the power of bestowal, meaning that the Creator will help him and this will be his motivation. Instead, he receives fuel from the externals. In other words, the external ones compel him to engage in Torah and *Mitzvot* [commandments].

This is the issue with being humble—one of its reasons is so that there will be no nursing to the external ones. This is why one must walk humbly, as it is written, “And to walk humbly with the Lord your God.”

The external ones are people who are outside of him. They nurse on his work by afterwards—meaning after he hears that he is respected—he learns to work for the outer ones and not for the Creator. This is so because he no longer needs the Creator to bring him closer to His work, since now he is the operator because people on the outside give him the fuel to study and work for them. In other words, they are the ones who are compelling him to work, and it is not the Creator who compels him to work for Him. Rather, others are compelling him to work for them—so they will respect him, etc.

It follows that this is similar to working for a *foreign god*. That is, they order him to work for the reward of respect and the like, which they will give him in return for engaging in Torah and *Mitzvot*. This means that if they do not know of his work, and he did not see that there is someone who sees and engages in the Torah, there is no one to obligate him to work. This is called “the grip of the external ones,” and this is why a person must work in a concealed manner.

However, working in a concealed manner is not enough. Although it is true that now only the Creator compels him to do the holy work, there must be one more thing: a person must work not in order to receive reward. This is a completely different matter because it is against our nature. We are created with a nature called “will to receive.” But now we must work only in the work of bestowal and receive nothing for ourselves.

For that, we must seek out a society where each one believes that we must work to bestow. Since this is a small force within a person, he must look for people who are seeking such powers, too. Then, united, each of them can receive strength from the others, and this is all that one needs. And the Creator will send him help from above that we may be able to walk on the path of bestowal.

BUT THE MORE THEY AFFLICTED THEM

Article No. 16, 1984-5

It is written, “But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread out, so that they were in dread of the sons of Israel” (Exodus 1:12). The meaning of the words, “But the more they afflicted them” is that they will multiply and spread to that same extent that they are afflicted. It seems as though it is a condition—that there cannot be multiplication and spreading in the work before there is a basis of affliction first.

But to understand the above written, we must know our tenet, meaning know what is our essence. As it is explained in the introductions, it is only our will to receive. And certainly, when the will to receive fulfills its wish, that fulfillment is not considered work, since work means what one is rewarded for.

In other words, work is actions that man would avoid, and he does them only because he has no choice, since he wishes to receive some reward. The reward is considered the thing that he craves, and his only desire and wish is for that thing. True craving means that this thing touches his heart so deeply that he says, "I'd rather die than to live if I cannot obtain it." It follows that if he has no affliction or pain for not having what he craves, it is not considered a craving. And his craving is measured by the extent of his suffering.

It therefore follows that if one wishes to receive some satisfaction, there must first be a lack. This is so because there is no light without a *Kli* [vessel], and no one can fill it with anything if there is no deficiency. For example, one cannot eat without appetite or enjoy rest without fatigue.

Hence, one is not suffering because the Egyptians in his body are afflicting him unless he does not want to obey them and wishes to go by a way that displeases them. The root of reception in man is called "self-love," and this is regarded as "Egypt." There are many nations, which are generally called "the seventy nations," that are the opposite of *Kedusha* [holiness], which are the seven *Sefirot*, where each *Sefira* [singular of *Sefirot*] consists of ten, hence the number seventy nations. And also, each nation has its own unique desire.

The *Klipa* [shell] of Egypt is a general *Klipa*. It is where the sparks of *Kedusha* fell, which the people of Israel—who were in Egypt—had to correct. Thus, first there must be pain and affliction for not being able to exit their governance, as it is written, "And the children of Israel sighed because of the labor, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God because of the labor. And God heard their groaning."

We should be precise about the words "because of the labor" being written twice. We should explain that all the sighs

were from the labor, meaning that they could not work for the Creator. Indeed, their suffering was from not being able to make the work that they were doing be for the Creator, due to the *Klipa* of Egypt. This is why it is written, “Because of the labor” twice.

1) All the sighs were not because they were lacking anything. They lacked only one thing, meaning they did not wish for any luxuries or payment. Their only lack, for which they felt pain and suffering, was that of not being able to do anything for the Creator. In other words, they wished that they would have a desire to give contentment to the Creator and not to themselves, but they couldn't, and this afflicted them. This is called “wanting to have some grip in spirituality.”

2) The second “Because of the labor” comes to teach that, “And their cry came up unto God,” that God heard their groaning, was because their only request was work. This comes to imply to the other “Because of the labor.” It turns out that the whole exile that they felt was only because they were under the rule of the *Klipa* of Egypt and they could not do anything to make it only in order to bestow.

It is written in *The Zohar* (Exodus, Item 381 in the *Sulam* Commentary), “Rabbi Yehuda said, ‘Come and see that this is so, as Rabbi Yehoshua of Sakhnin said, ‘As long as their minister was given dominion over Israel, the cry of Israel was not heard. When their minister fell, it writes, ‘The king of Egypt died,’ and promptly, ‘And the children of Israel sighed because of the labor, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God because of the labor.’ But until then they were not answered in their cry.’”

For this reason, we can say that if it is not time to dethrone Egypt's minister, there is no room for choice or for them to repent and to be able to be redeemed from exile. He says (Exodus, Item 380 in the *Sulam* Commentary), “‘In those many days.’ ‘Many’

refers to Israel's stay in Egypt, that is, that the end has come. And since their exile has been completed, what does it say? 'The king of Egypt died.' What does that mean? It means that the minister of Egypt was lowered from his status and fell from his pride. This is why the writing says about him, 'The king of Egypt died,' since decline is regarded for him as dying. As when the king of Egypt—who was their minister—fell, the Creator remembered Israel and heard their groaning."

The Zohar asks this question about the verse, "In your distress, when all these things come upon you" (Deuteronomy 4). It means that before everything takes place, it is impossible to achieve perfection. It turns out that you give an excuse, a pretext that all the things that one should go through can be experienced through suffering, and this is measured by neither time nor quantity of affliction, but by the measure of feeling (see in *The Zohar*).

We can understand it through an allegory. If a person should make one kilogram worth of labor, which is a thousand grams of suffering, the reward comes for that as well. As our sages said, "The reward matches the pain." This means that the labor that one should exert before he receives the reward is because there is no light without a *Kli*, since there is no fulfillment without a deficiency. And the labor that one gives is the qualification for reception of the need, so that afterwards he will be able to receive the filling in it.

Let us say that that person can give the thousand grams of deficiency intermittently, which are discernments in quantity and quality. A person can exert for ten minutes a day, meaning regret his remoteness from the Creator, or he can regret his remoteness from the Creator ten minutes a week, or ten minutes a month.

It is similar with the *quality* of his suffering when he remembers that he is remote from the Creator. Although it

pains him, it is not so terrible and there are things that pain him more, things that he craves. It turns out that in quality, too, one should contemplate. Thus, a person has a choice, although he must experience the whole process of labor and affliction through the end, until he comes to a state of, "And you will return to the Lord your God and listen to His voice."

Thus, man has a choice to shorten the time of the process of affliction due to the prolonging of time, which, as we said, is called "quantity," and to add in quality, which is the sensation of suffering at being remote from the Creator.

But we should know that there is a big difference between quantity and quality in the manner of the work. When considering quantity of time, a person can arrange his schedule, meaning the amount of time he allocates to himself, even by coercion. This means that even though the body does not wish to sit for the whole time of the lesson that he decided on, he must sit for several minutes or hours and regret being remote from the Creator. If he has a strong desire and he is not of weak character, he can sit and keep the schedule he arranged for himself, since this is an act, and with actions a person can do things by coercion.

But with quality, this is very difficult because one cannot force oneself to feel differently than he does. If he comes to examine his feelings of pain and suffering at being remote from the Creator, he sometimes comes to a state where he does not care. At that time, he does not know what to do because he cannot change how he feels, and then he is perplexed.

This causes the prolonging of the exile because it is hard for us to give the necessary quantity, much less the quality. And when he begins to scrutinize the quality of the deficiency, he sees that he feels no pain, that he is seemingly unconscious, unfeeling. And although remoteness from the Creator means

not having life, it doesn't pain him that he has no life. Then he has no other choice but to pray to the Creator to give him some life, so he will feel that he is dangerously ill and needs to cure the soul.

And sometimes one comes to a state where he is in such a decline that he doesn't even have the strength to pray for it. Rather, he is in a state of complete indifference. This is called "being in a state of still," meaning he is completely motionless.

In that state, only his society can help him. In other words, if he comes among friends and does not criticize them in any way, testing if they, too, have the same obstructions and thoughts but have overcome them, or they just take no interest in introspection and this is why they can engage in Torah and *Mitzvot*, how can he be like them?

At that time, he cannot receive any assistance from society because he has no *Dveikut* [adhesion] with them at all, as they are too small to be his friends. Thus, naturally, he is not affected by them whatsoever.

But if he comes among his friends not with his head high, thinking that he is wise and the friends are fools—but rather tosses his pride away and follows the rule, "Poverty follows the poor," not only is he in a state of decline and feels no need for spirituality, he also receives thoughts of pride, meaning that he is wiser than all his society.

Now let us return to the first question, regarding what *The Zohar* says, "And since their exile has been completed," what does it say, "The king of Egypt died," since he regards dethroning as death. And since the king of Egypt—who is their minister—fell, the Creator remembered Israel and heard their prayer. It turns out that there is a pretext that no prayer will help before it is due time. Thus, there is nothing that can be done, because the Creator will not hear their prayer.

With the above words we can understand the matters as they are. This is the same issue that our sages described about the verse, “I the Lord will hasten it in its time.” If they are rewarded, “I will hasten it.” If they are not rewarded, “In its time.” In other words, when the time comes, an awakening from the Creator will come, and through it Israel will repent. It turns out that the choice is in regards to time, as he says in the “Introduction to The Book of Zohar” (Item 16).

It follows from all the above that one should not consider the time of redemption—that it is written that before that, their prayer was not accepted—because this relates to the time of quantity and quality of suffering, that there is a certain time at which suffering will be completed. However, we can shorten the time. The whole quantity and quality by which the suffering will appear can be shortened in a way that all the suffering will come in a short time, but all the suffering will have appeared there.

AND THERE WAS EVENING AND THERE WAS MORNING

Article No. 36, 1984-85

The Zohar says about the verse, “And there was evening and there was morning” (Genesis 3, p 96, and Item 151 in the *Sulam* Commentary), “‘And there was evening,’ which the text writes, means that it extends from the side of darkness, meaning *Malchut*. ‘And there was morning’ means that it extends from the side of the light, which is ZA.

“This is why it writes about them, ‘One day,’ indicating that the evening and morning are as one body, and both make the day. Rabbi Yehuda said, ‘What is the reason?’ He asks, ‘Since ‘And there was evening and there was morning’ points to the unification of ZON, that the light of day comes out of both of

them, then after the text announces it on the first day, why does it say about each day, ‘And there was evening and there was morning?’

“And he replies, ‘It is to know that there is no day without a night and no night without a day, and they will never part from one another. This is why the text repeats and informs us each and every day, to indicate that it is impossible that there will ever be the light of day without the darkness of night. Likewise, there will never be the darkness of night that does not bring a day after it, since they will never part from one another.’” Thus far its words.

We should understand the above-written in the work, as to what light means and what darkness means, and why it is impossible to have a day unless it is from the both of them together, meaning that light and darkness produce a single day, that is, it takes both to build a single day. This means that the day begins when the darkness begins because this is when the sequence of the making of a new day begins.

We should also understand how the word “day” can be applied to darkness, since when the darkness has begun, we can already begin to count the day.

It is known that after the restrictions and the departure of the light that occurred in the upper worlds—after the second restriction and the breaking—the system of *Klipot* [shells] emerged, until the place of *BYA* divided into two discernments. From its middle and above it was the *BYA* of *Kedusha* [holiness], and from its middle and below it became the permanent section of the *Klipot*, as explained in *TES* (Part 16, p 1938, Item 88).

Consequently, in this world, “A man is born the foal of a wild donkey” and he has no desire for spirituality. Thus, from where does the sensation of need for spirituality come to a person, to the point of saying that he feels darkness, which he calls “night,”

by feeling that he is remote from the Creator? We must know that at the same time he begins to feel that he is far from the Creator, he is already beginning to believe in the existence of the Creator to some extent, or else, how can he say that he is remote from something that doesn't exist? Instead, he must say that he has some illumination from afar that shines for him to the extent that he feels that he is remote from the Creator.

It therefore follows that as soon as the darkness begins, meaning the sense of the existence of darkness, the light immediately begins to shine to some extent. And the measure of illumination of the light is recognized only through negation. That means that one feels a lack, that he does not have the light of the Creator shining for him in an affirmative manner. However, the light shines for him in the form of lack, meaning that now he begins to feel that he is missing the light of the Creator, which is called "day."

But those for whom the light of day does not shine don't know if there is such a reality where a person must feel the absence of the light of the Creator, which is called "day." Let us speak of a single person, meaning within the same body. Sometimes one feels that he is in darkness, meaning that he is remote from the Creator and craves to draw near to the Creator. He feels suffering at being remote from the Creator.

The question is, "Who causes him to worry about spirituality?" And sometimes he feels darkness and suffering when he sees that another is successful in corporeality in possessions and with people, while he lacks both sustenance and respect. He sees about himself that in truth, he is more gifted than the other, both in terms of talent and in terms of ancestry, and he deserves more respect. But in fact, he is many degrees lower than the other one, and this pains him terribly.

At that time, he has no connection to spirituality, and he doesn't even remember that he ever was connected, and that he himself considered all the friends with whom he was studying at the seminary, that when he saw them suffering for their concerns to achieve wholeness in life, they seemed to him like children who cannot make a purposeful calculation, and all that their eyes see is what they want. At one time they see that the most important thing in life is money, and at another time they see that the most important thing in life is to have a respectable position among people, etc.. And now he is within those very things that he mocked, and he feels that his life is tasteless unless he determines the whole of the hope and peace in life at the same level that they determine, that this is called "life's purpose."

And what is the truth? It is that now the Creator has taken pity on him and illuminated the discernment of day for him, and this day begins with negation. In other words, when the day begins to shine in his heart in the form of darkness, it is called "the beginning of the rise of day," and then *Kelim* begin to form in him, in which the light will be able to shine in an affirmative manner. This is the light of the Creator, when one begins to feel the love of the Creator and begins to feel the flavor of Torah and the taste of *Mitzvot*.

From this we can understand the above words of *The Zohar*, that a day comes out specifically of the both of them, as it writes, "This is why it writes about them, 'One day,' indicating that the evening and morning are as one body, and both make the day." Also, when Rabbi Yehuda said that this is why the text alerts every day anew—to indicate that it is impossible that there will ever be light without the darkness of the night that comes first. And also, there will not be the darkness of the night that does not bring the light of day after it, so they will never part from one another.

It is as mentioned above, 1) following the rule that there is no light without a *Kli*, and 2) it also requires light, which is called “day,” to make a *Kli*.

But we should understand why, if one has already been granted a little bit of day in the negative form and feels that his whole life is only if he is rewarded with *Dvekut* with the Creator and he begins to torment over being remote from the Creator, who, then, causes him to fall from his state of ascent? In other words, his whole life should be only in spiritual life, and this is all his hope, and he suddenly falls into a state of lowliness, a state where he would always laugh at people whose hope in life was to obtain the fulfillment of beastly lusts. But now he himself is among them, nourished by the same nourishments that they feed on.

Moreover, we should wonder how he has forgotten that he was once in a state of ascent. Now he is in a state of such amnesia that it doesn’t even occur to him that he would consider the people that he is now among, meaning that his only ambitions are at such a low level and he is not ashamed of himself that he dared go into such an atmosphere that he always ran from. In other words, this air that they breathe so willingly, he would always say that it suffocates *Kedusha* [holiness], and now he is among them and feels that there is no fault in them.

The answer is as the writing says (Psalms 1), “Happy is the man that has not walked in the counsel of the wicked.” We must understand what is the counsel of the wicked. It is known that the question of one who is wicked that is brought in the *Hagadah* [Passover narrative] is “What mean you by this service?” Baal HaSulam explained that it means that when a person begins to work in order to bestow, the wicked one’s question comes and asks, “What will you get out of not working for yourself?”

And when a person receives such a question, he begins to contemplate that perhaps he is right. And then he falls into his

net. Accordingly, we should interpret, “Happy is the man that has not walked in the counsel of the wicked” that when the wicked come to him and advise him that it is not worthwhile to work if he does not see some benefit and gain from it to himself, he does not listen to them. Instead, he strengthens himself in the work and says, “Now I see that I am going on the path of truth, and they wish to confuse me.” It follows that when that man overcomes, he is happy.

Afterwards, the writings says, “Nor stood in the way of sinners.” We should interpret “Way of sinners.” He says, “Nor stood.” A sin is as we explained in the previous essay (35, 1984-85), that the sin is if a person breaks “You shall not add.” In other words, the real way is that we have to go above reason, called faith. And the opposite of that is knowing—the body understands that he has no other choice except to believe above reason.

Hence, when he feels some taste in the work and takes it as support, and says that now he does not need faith, since he already has some basis, he immediately falls from his degree. And when one is careful about it and does not stand for even a minute to look and see if it is possible to change his basis, it is considered that he is happy because he did not stand in the way of sinners, to look at their way.

And afterwards, the writing says, “Nor sat in the seat of the scornful,” referring to those people who spend their days idly, who do not take their lives seriously and consider every moment precious. We should know to what “The seat of the scornful” refers. Those who cherish every moment and sit and think of others—if other people are all right and how much others should correct their actions, and have no pity for themselves, worrying about their own lives, this causes them all the descents. The RADAK interprets scornful as being of a shrewd mind in an evil way, finding faults in people and disclosing secrets to each

other. This matter is for lazy people, idlers. This is why he said, “Nor sat in the seat of the scornful,” and this is the reason for the descents.

WHO TESTIFIES TO A PERSON

Article No. 37, 1984-85

It is written in *The Zohar, Shoftim* [judges] (and in the *Sulam* Commentary p 8, Item 11), “It is a *Mitzva* [commandment/good deed] to testify in court so that his friend will not lose money because he is not testifying. This is why the authors of the Mishnah said, ‘Who testifies to a person? The walls of his house.’

“What is the meaning of ‘The walls of his house’? These are the walls of his heart, as it is written, ‘Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall.’ The authors of the Mishnah asserted that it teaches that Hezekiah prayed from the walls of his heart. Moreover, his household testifies to him. His household are his 248 organs, since the body is called ‘house.’

“This is what the authors of the Mishnah asserted: ‘A wicked one, his iniquities are engraved in his bones. Likewise, a righteous one—his merits are engraved in his bones.’ This is the reason why David said, ‘All my bones shall say.’ But why are the iniquities engraved in the bones more than in the flesh, tendons, and skin? This is because the bones are white, and a black writing is visible only from within white. It is like the Torah, which is white from within, meaning the parchment, and black from without, meaning the ink. Black and white are darkness and light. And moreover, the body is destined to rise on its bones, hence the sins and merits are engraved in its bones. If he is rewarded, the body will rise on its bones. If he is not rewarded, it will not rise and will not have revival of the dead.” Thus far its words.

We should understand why *The Zohar* interprets that a person should testify before a court so that his friend will not lose money. This is interpreted in the work of the Creator. Thus, we should understand what it is that one is demanding, and from whom he is demanding it. And to make it reliable, a person must testify.

In the work of the Creator, a person demands of the Creator to give him what he wants of the Creator. Thus, to show that his argument is true, doesn't the Creator know whether or not a person is telling the truth? However, if the man testifies, then he knows that his argument is true. Moreover, how can one be trusted to testify for himself? And we should also understand why the testimony must be from the walls of his heart, since he brings evidence to the meaning of "walls of his house" from Hezekiah in the words, "Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall," which we interpreted to mean "the walls of his heart."

Thus, a person's testimony should also be from the walls of his heart. However, it is known that a testimony must be from his mouth, as our sages said, "From their mouths, not from their writings," and here he says that it should be from the walls of his heart and not from the mouth.

We should also understand why it says, "This is what the authors of the Mishnah asserted: 'A wicked one, his iniquities are engraved in his bones. And likewise, a righteous one—his merits are engraved in his bones.'"

But are sins and merits engraved in corporeal bones? How is a spiritual matter, which is sins and *Mitzvot*, engraved in bones? And it is even more difficult to understand his answer, "This is because the bones are white, and a black writing is visible only from within white."

Also, we should understand why he says, "And moreover, the body is destined to rise on its bones." Why particularly, "On its

bones,” which means that whether or not he is revived depends on his bones?

To understand the above in the work, we must remember the known rule that “There is no light without a *Kli* [vessel],” meaning that it is impossible to receive any fulfillment if there is no hole or deficiency there, where the filling can enter. For example, a person cannot eat a meal if he is not hungry. Moreover, the amount of pleasure that person can derive from the meal is measured by the amount of desire he has for the meal.

It follows that where one does not feel any lack, he will not experience any pleasure, which he will be able to receive, since there is no room to receive any filling. Thus, when we speak of the order of the work, when a person begins to enter the work, meaning when he wishes to do the work of holiness with the aim to bestow contentment upon his Maker, according to the above-mentioned rule, he must have a need for it—to feel that he needs to bestow upon the Creator. And we can say that he has a *Kli* to the extent of his need to give to the Creator. And the filling for that *Kli* is while he gives to the Creator, meaning when he wishes to bring Him contentment. This means that the body already agrees to bestow upon the Creator.

And since man is born with a nature for reception and not for bestowal, if one wishes to engage in bestowal the body will certainly resist it. And if a person wants to engage in bestowal, meaning that he has a desire to obtain such a *Kli*, and a *Kli* means a desire and deficiency, then the body immediately comes and asks, “Why do you want to change the nature you were created in? What is the deficiency that you feel you are lacking? Are you one hundred percent sure that you understand that you need to work in order to bestow? Look at how the majority do the work of holiness; they are not meticulous about what they do. In other words, in their engagement in Torah or *Mitzvot*, they see primarily that the act will be proper, with all its precisions and

details, but not the intent. They say, 'We certainly do what we can.' They pay no mind to the intent because they say that the work *Lishma* [for Her name] belongs to a chosen few, and not to everyone."

It follows that the body, which comes and asks its questions, is probably asking to the point. And since it is not given a sufficient answer, it doesn't allow a person to think thoughts of desire to bestow, since it is right, there is no light without a *Kli*. In other words, "If you don't feel the need to engage in bestowal, why are you making a fuss?" So first it tells him, "Give me this need, the desire to bestow, and then we'll talk." But according to the above-said, the need for the desire must be present, meaning that he should suffer at not being able to bestow. Thus, since he has no *Kli*, he certainly cannot be granted the light, meaning the filling.

Therefore, a person should try to have a great deficiency because he is unable to bestow upon the Creator. And it is known that a deficiency is determined by the sensation of suffering that he feels because of the deficiency. Otherwise, although he does not have what he is asking, it is still not considered a deficiency because a real lack is measured by the pain that he feels at not having. Otherwise, it is nothing but empty words.

Now we can understand what our sages said (*Taanit*, 2a), "To love the Lord your God and to serve Him with all your heart.' What is the work of the heart? It is a prayer. We should understand why they extended the prayer beyond the literal meaning. Usually, when one wants another person to give him something, he asks him to, verbally, as it is written, 'For You hear the prayer of every mouth.' So why did they say that a prayer is called 'the work of the heart?'"

We said above that a prayer is called "a deficiency," and he wants his deficiency to be filled. And yet, no deficiency is sensed

in a person's mouth; rather, all of man's sensations are sensed in the heart. This is why if a person doesn't feel a lack in his heart, what he utters in his mouth does not count at all, so we could say that he truly needs what he is asking for with his mouth. This is so because the filling he is asking for should enter a place of deficiency, which is the heart. This is why our sages said that a prayer should be from the bottom of the heart, meaning that the whole heart will sense the lack for which he is asking.

It is known that light and *Kli* are called "deficiency" and "filling" [or "fulfillment"]. We ascribe the light, which is the filling, to the Creator, and the *Kli*, which is the lack, to the creatures. Thus, a person should prepare the *Kli* so the Creator will pour the abundance there, or there will be no room for the abundance. For this reason, when a person asks the Creator to help him so he can aim his actions to bestow, the body comes and asks him, "Why are you praying this prayer? What are you missing without it?"

For this reason, we must study and scrutinize the books that discuss the necessity of the work of bestowal until we understand and feel that if we don't have this *Kli*, we will not be able to enter the *Kedusha*. We should not look at the majority, who say that the most important thing is the act and here is where all the energy should go, and that the acts of *Mitzvot* and establishing of the Torah that we do is enough for us.

Instead, he must perform every act of Torah and *Mitzvot* in order to bring him into the aim to bestow. Afterwards, when he has complete understanding of how much he needs to engage in order to bestow, and he feels pain and suffering at not having this force, then it is considered that he already has something for which to pray—for work in the heart—since the heart feels what it needs.

For such a prayer comes the answer to the prayer. This means that he is given this strength from above so he will be able to aim in order to bestow, for then he already has the light and *Kli*. However, what can one do if, after all the efforts he has made, he still does not feel the lack of not being able to bestow as pain and suffering? The solution is to ask the Creator to give him the *Kli* called, “A lack from not feeling,” and that he is unconscious, without any pain from being unable to bestow.

It follows that if he can regret and ache over not having the deficiency, for not feeling how remote he is from *Kedusha* [holiness], that he is utterly mundane and doesn’t understand that the life he is living—wanting to satisfy the corporeal needs—is no more important than that of any other animal that he sees, and that if he paid attention to see how similar he is to them with all their aspirations, and that the only difference is man’s cunningness and his ability to exploit others while animals are not clever enough to exploit others.

Sometimes, even though he sees that he is studying Torah and keeping the *Mitzvot*, he cannot remember—while keeping the *Mitzvot* or while studying Torah—that he should obtain connection with the Creator by engaging in Torah and *Mitzvot*. It is as though they are separate things for him—the Torah and *Mitzvot* are one thing, and the Creator is another.

And if he regrets not having any sensation of deficiency, that he is like animals, this is called “work in the heart,” as well. It is called, “a prayer.” This means that for this deficiency, he already has a place in which to receive fulfillment from the Creator, to give him the sense of deficiency, which is the *Kli* that the Creator fills with a filling.

Now we can understand the question, “why is a prayer in the heart and not in the mouth?” It is because a prayer is called, “a

deficiency,” and it cannot be said that he has a deficiency in the mouth. Rather, *the deficiency is a sensation in the heart.*

Now we should explain why we asked about his saying that the merits and the sins are engraved on the bones, and he can revive from the bones or not. *The Zohar* compares the bones, which are white, to the Torah, which is black over white, where the black is darkness and the white is light.

We should explain the meaning of bones being white. This is why both the merits and the sins are written on them, since concerning the work of the Creator, it should be interpreted that a person who engages in Torah and *Mitzvot* is called “a bone.” The primary part of Torah and *Mitzvot* is considered white, since something in which there are no deficiencies is called “white.” And since there is nothing to add to the actions that a person does, for it is said about it, “You shall neither add nor subtract,” his engagement in the Torah is called “bones.” They are white because the merits and sins of a person are engraved in them.

However, if a person criticizes his actions—the reason why he is building his foundation (the reason that compels him to engage in Torah and *Mitzvot*, his aim while doing the deeds)—and tries to see if he is truly doing those deeds for the Creator, to bestow contentment upon his Maker, then he can see the truth: he is inside the nature he was born in, called “receiving in order to receive,” and he doesn’t want to engage in Torah and *Mitzvot* without any reward.

And the real reason why one cannot exit his nature is that he doesn’t see the need for it, so he would have to change the nature that was imprinted in him, which is called “self-love,” and assume the love of others in order to achieve the love of the Creator. This is so because a person feels that he is deficient of the love of his surroundings, meaning that the family will love him, and his town’s people, etc. But what will he gain from

loving the Creator? Also, what will he gain if he loves his friends? After all, he is always considering the profits related to self-love. Thus, how can he exit this love?

And if he asks himself why he is keeping Torah and *Mitzvot* in actions, and is even meticulous about all its precisions and details, then he answers himself that he received faith through education. In education, you begin to guide a person to engage in Torah and *Mitzvot* in *Lo Lishma* [not for Her name], as Maimonides says (end of *Hilchot Teshuva* [*Laws of Repentance*]). It follows that he has taken it upon himself to believe in the Creator, that he will serve in the holy work, and in return will be rewarded in this world and in the next world.

This is why a person is told that the real work is to believe in the Creator who gave us Torah and *Mitzvot* to keep, and by that, we will achieve equivalence of form, called “*Dvekut* [adhesion] with the Creator.” This means that one should exit self-love and assume love of others. And to the extent that he exits self-love, he can be rewarded with complete faith. Otherwise he is separated, as written in the *Sulam* Commentary (“Introduction of The Book of Zohar,” p 138), “It is a law that the creature cannot receive apparent harm from Him, for it is a flaw in His glory that the creature should perceive Him as doing harm, for it is inappropriate for the perfect Operator. Hence, when one feels bad, to the extent that there is denial of His guidance upon him and the Operator is hidden from him, this is the biggest punishment in the world.”

If a person introspects, he recognizes the truth that the Torah and *Mitzvot* should be for the Creator. He feels how remote he is from the truth, and the scrutiny brings him into pain and suffering at constantly marching on the wrong road from being called a “servant of the Creator.” Rather, all his work is for his own sake, which is called, “working for himself,” which is the way of all the animals, but is inappropriate for the speaking.

It follows that through those sufferings, he receives a *Kli*, meaning a deficiency. And since he sees that he is incapable of exiting self-love by himself, for he doesn't have the strength to go against nature, the solution is to ask the Creator to help him, as our sages said, "He who comes to be purified is aided." It follows that then he has room for filling the deficiency, since there is no light without a *Kli*.

This brings up the question that we asked earlier: "What can one do if, even though he understands that it is worthwhile to work in order to bestow, he still doesn't have the pain and suffering at not being able aim in order to bestow? In that case, he should know that this does not mean that he doesn't have complete faith in the Creator, only that he cannot aim in order to bestow. He should know that he is lacking whole faith, since when he has whole faith in the Creator, there is a natural law that the small annuls itself before the big. Thus, if he truly had whole faith in the greatness of the Creator, he would be annulled before the Creator naturally, and he would wish to serve Him without any reward.

It follows that there is no deficiency here, for he cannot prevail over nature. Rather, there is lack of whole faith here, although he has faith. The evidence of that is that he is keeping Torah and *Mitzvot*. However, it is not whole faith, as it should be.

In other words, the entire wholeness is that they believe in His greatness, and if one wishes to know if he has whole faith, he can see how much he is willing to work in order to bestow and how much the body is annulled before the Creator. Thus, a person's inability to work in order to bestow is the deficiency, but there is a greater deficiency here—that he lacks whole faith—and this is the main one.

But what can one do if, even though he sees that he lacks whole faith, that deficiency still does not beget in him pain

and suffering at his being deficient? The real reason is that *he is looking at the majority*, and sees that they are important people, of influence and status, and it is not apparent that they lack whole faith. When speaking to them, they say that this is only for a chosen few, which is their well-known view. This is the great partition, which becomes a barrier for a person, arresting his progress on the right path.

This is the reason why we need an *environment*, meaning a group of people who are all of the view that they must achieve whole faith. This is the only thing that can save a person from the views of the collective. At that time, *everyone strengthens everyone else* to crave to achieve whole faith, that he can bestow contentment upon the Creator, and that this will be his only aspiration.

However, this does not conclude the solution for achieving a deficiency for whole faith. Rather, one must exert in actions more than one is accustomed in both quantity and quality. And the body will certainly resist that and ask, "How is today different from other days?" And he will reply, "I am picturing myself as a servant of the Creator, how I would serve the Creator if I had whole faith. This is why I want to serve Him at the same pace *as though* I were already rewarded with whole faith." This creates in him a deficiency and pain at not having whole faith, since the resistance of the body causes him to have a need for whole faith. But this is certainly said specifically where he goes against the body, in coercion, when he works with the body not according to his will.

It follows that those two actions, his working more than he is accustomed to, and the resistance of the body, cause him to need whole faith. Only then is a *Kli* formed in him so that afterwards the light will clothe within it, since now he has room for prayer in his heart, meaning a place of deficiency. And then

the Creator, who hears a prayer, gives him the light of faith by which he can serve the King not in order to be rewarded.

Now we can understand what we asked about the meaning of the merits and sins being engraved in corporeal bones. “Bones” refer to the heart of the matter [“bone of the matter” is an idiom in Hebrew], referring to the Torah and *Mitzvot* that he is keeping. We were given it to keep it in action, and there is nothing to add to it, as it is written, “You shall neither add nor subtract.”

And on these actions, the sins and merits are engraved, meaning that if he wishes to walk on the path of truth and criticize his actions—whether they are with the intent to bestow or not—and he is a man who loves the truth and is not interested in what others do, but wants to know if he is engaging in Torah and *Mitzvot Lishma* [for Her name] or is it all for himself, then he sees that he is immersed in self-love and cannot come out of it by himself.

Then he cries for the Creator to help him out of self-love and be rewarded with the love of others and the love of the Creator, and “The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth.” This is why he is rewarded with *Dvekut* [adhesion] with the Creator.

It follows that then, the merits are engraved in his bones, meaning that the Torah and *Mitzvot* that he kept are called “white,” since in terms of the actions, everything is white, positive, and there is nothing to add to them. But afterwards, he scrutinized and saw that the aim was not in order, and that there was darkness on them because he was separated and didn’t have *Dvekut*, called “equivalence of form,” that he will do everything with the aim to bestow. Instead, he is ruled by self-love.

Thus, he has darkness placed over the white, which are the white bones, as written in the words of *The Zohar*. This means that he sees that there is darkness on the Torah and *Mitzvot* that he performed, that he is separated from the light, since the light

wants to bestow, while he does everything in order to receive and cannot do anything except what concerns self-love.

It follows that his bones, meaning the practical Torah and *Mitzvot*, are white, which means that there is no deficiency in the act that requires any additions. But through the criticism that he puts on this white, he sees that there is darkness there. And if he pays attention to mending it because it causes him pain and suffering that he is in the dark, and he prays for the Creator to help him and deliver him from self-love, by that, he is later rewarded with adhering to the Creator.

This is called, “A righteous one—his merits are engraved in his bones,” meaning that his criticism of his white bones caused him to be rewarded with revival of the dead, since “the wicked in their lives are called ‘dead,’” for they are separated from the Life of Lives. Thus, when they are rewarded with clinging to the Creator, it is considered that they have been rewarded with the revival of the dead.

But, “A wicked one, his iniquities are engraved in his bones,” since a wicked one is one who is still immersed in self-love, and a righteous one is called “good,” and “good” is called “bestowal,” as it is written, “My heart overflows with a good thing; I say, ‘My work is for the King.’” In other words, what is a good thing? It is when one can say, “My work is for the King,” meaning that all his actions are for the Creator and not for his own sake.

This is why, “He who has a good eye will be blessed.” For this reason, those people who have practical Torah and *Mitzvot*, which is considered the core, that the Torah and *Mitzvot* were given by the Creator to keep them, this is called “whites,” since the actions have no deficiencies, as it is written, “You shall neither add nor subtract.” This is why his bones are white.

“His iniquities are engraved in his bones,” which are white, because he did not criticize his actions, whether or not they are

in order to bestow. Instead, he trusted the majority and how they keep Torah and *Mitzvot*. And they say that working for the Creator is work that belongs to a chosen few, and not everyone must take this path of being concerned with his work being with the aim to bestow.

This is called “the view of landlords.” But “the view of Torah” is different. It is known that “the view of landlords is opposite from the view of Torah,” since the view of landlords is that by a person engaging in Torah and *Mitzvot*, his possessions grow and expand, since he becomes an owner of a bigger house. In other words, everything he does goes into self-love.

But the view of Torah is as our sages said about the verse, “When a man dies in a tent.” They said, “The Torah exists only in one who puts himself to death over it.” This means that he puts *his self* to death, meaning it is the self-love that he puts to death. Thus, he has no possessions, as there is no landlord to whom we can relate possessions, since his only aim is to bestow, not to receive. Thus, he annuls his self.

It follows that “A wicked one, his iniquities are engraved in his bones” means that he did not walk in the path of Torah, since the Torah is called “black over white.” *The Zohar* says that this is why his merits are engraved in his bones, “Since the bones are white, and a black writing is visible only from within white.” Like the Torah, meaning if there is white, which means that he keeps Torah and *Mitzvot*, it can be said that he is like the Torah, that he has black over the white. Then, he is trying to achieve *Dvekut* or remains with the white bones and doesn’t write anything on them.

This is why he is called “wicked,” for his iniquities are engraved in his bones. But those who have no white in them, who have no practical Torah and *Mitzvot*, do not belong to the discernment of “wicked.” Rather, they belong to the discernment of animals, meaning they are only beasts.

THE IMPORTANCE OF A PRAYER OF MANY

Article No. 7, 1985-86

It is written in *The Zohar, VaYishlach* [And Jacob Sent], (p 13, Item 45 in the *Sulam* Commentary), “Come and see. Rabbi Shimon said, ‘A prayer of many rises before the Creator and the Creator crowns Himself with that prayer because it rises in several manners: One asks for *Hassadim* [grace], another for *Gevurot* [strength], and another for *Rachamim* [mercy]. It consists of several sides—the right side, the left side, and the middle. And because it consists of several sides and manners, it becomes a crown and is placed on the head of the Righteous One who lives forever, meaning *Yesod*, who imparts all the salvations to the *Nukva*, and from her to the entire public. And come and see, Jacob consisted of all three lines; this is why the Creator wanted his prayer, for it was in utter completeness—of all three lines, like a prayer of many. This is why it is written, ‘Then Jacob was very much afraid and distressed,’ since the Creator made it this way for him, so he would pray because He craved his prayer.”

We see in the words of *The Zohar* that it interprets a prayer of many as a single person, saying that Jacob consisted of all three lines. But in all the places where it writes about a prayer of many, it literally means that many pray, as our sages said (*Berachot*, p 8a), “Rabbi Yochanan said in the name of Rabbi Shimon Bar-Yochai, ‘Why is it written, ‘And I, my prayer is a time of good will unto You, O Lord.’ When is it a time of good will? When many pray.”

This means that many pray together, literally. Also, we should understand what *The Zohar* says, that “A crown is placed on the head of the Righteous One who lives forever.” What does it mean that it becomes a crown on the head? A crown means the crown of the king, like the crown of the kingship. And what

does it mean that the crown on his head is made of the prayer? What makes us understand the importance and greatness of a prayer? Since he wishes to reveal to us the importance of the prayer, he tells us, “Know that the crown for the king is made of the prayer.”

It says that it is called *Yesod* and that it gives all the salvations to the *Nukva*, and from her to the entire public. We should understand why the crown is made specifically on *Yesod*, since it is known that we pray to *Ein Sof*, so what does it mean that a prayer of many becomes a crown specifically on *Yesod*? And also, why does it say that *Yesod* imparts to the *Nukva*, and from the *Nukva* to the public?

Baal HaSulam explained the matter of a prayer of many as a person praying for the many; this is called “a prayer of many.” This is why a prayer of many is called “a time of good will.” When a person prays for himself, he has slander and question whether his prayer is truly worth acceptance. But when he prays for the public, it becomes irrelevant to scrutinize him and to see if he is worthy of his prayer being answered, since he is not asking for anything for himself, but only for the public.

This is why it was said that a prayer of many is called “a time of good will” and his prayer is answered. And according to what is explained in several places in the *Sulam* Commentary, a prayer of many relates to *Malchut*, who is called “the assembly of Israel” or “the Holy Divinity.” She is called “many” because she contains all the souls. And since Divinity is in exile, we ask about the exile of Divinity, which is sometimes called “Divinity in the dust,” since all those names indicate to us the content of the purpose of creation, which was in order to do good to His creations.

It is known that for Him to reveal the perfection of His deeds, there was the first restriction. This means that in a place where

there is only a *Kli* called “receiving in order to receive,” the upper bounty will be hidden from that place. The abundance comes only to a place where it is possible to aim in order to bestow. And since by nature man is born only to receive, in that place that he sees, his receiver—called “self-love”—cannot receive. Instead, he must do everything for Divinity, meaning for *Malchut*, for only by that will His glory appear in *Malchut*. This is so because only when the Creator can appear to the lower ones will His glory be seen. It was written that the place where the *Shocheh* [dweller] appears is called *Shechina* [“dwelling,” but also “Divinity”].

This is called, “Let His great name be magnified and sanctified,” since the name of the Creator, who is called “The Good who does good,” appears in the world. This is so because everyone obtains the purpose of creation called, “To do good to His creations,” since now there is a *Kli* that is fit for reception, being the intention to bestow, called *Dvekut* [adhesion] with the Creator.

It turns out that since by nature the creatures are only about reception in order to receive, and since they cannot work in order to bestow without overcoming their nature, they cause *Malchut* to remain in the dust, meaning they cannot see her merit. This means that they cannot see what she can receive from the Creator because everything is hidden due to the restriction.

However, we need some introspection. That is, we should believe what our sages tell us, that all the pleasures in corporeal delights are but a tiny candle compared to the pleasures that exist in spirituality. As it is written in the *Sulam* Commentary (“Introduction of The Book of Zohar,” p 173), “This is the meaning of the breaking of the vessels that preceded the creation of the world. Through the breaking of the vessels of *Kedusha* [holiness] and their fall into the separated *BYA*, holy sparks fell along with them to the *Klipot* [shells], from which came the

pleasures and love of every kind into the domain of the *Klipot*, which pass them on for man's reception and for his delight."

It therefore follows that the majority of pleasures are in *Kedusha*, while we see the contrary, that in corporeality everyone sees things that can be enjoyed. But in the toil in the Torah and *Mitzvot* [commandments], it is impossible to tell a person to engage in Torah and *Mitzvot* without promising him reward for his work. This is because while one engages in keeping the *Mitzvot*, he finds it completely tasteless, but when he is promised a reward and he believes it, he can work in Torah and *Mitzvot* because he will be rewarded.

This is not so when he engages in corporeal things such as eating, drinking, money, honor, etc.. A person does not ask, "Why must I deal with these mundane matters?" since where one feels pleasure, he doesn't ask about the purpose of receiving the pleasure. All he can think about while receiving the pleasure is how to enhance the pleasure in quantity and quality. God forbid that one should ever contemplate the matter of reception of pleasure, meaning, "Why do I need to receive pleasure?"

Sometimes, a person receives pleasure from something for which he did not pay a thing. Although it gives him much pleasure, the question still arises in him, "What is the purpose of that pleasure?" For example, a pleasure that costs no money is the pleasure of rest. There is no need to buy this pleasure, for one receives it free of charge. Still, many times a person asks himself, "What will I gain by enjoying this rest?"

But when a person experiences true delight and pleasure, the purpose of this delight never even occurs to him. And if it does happen that he should contemplate the purpose of this pleasure that he's enjoying now, it is a sign that the pleasure he is feeling is not real pleasure, since he can still contemplate its purpose. This is a sign that there is a deficiency in that pleasure,

and where there is deficiency, he can contemplate a different purpose than what he is feeling now.

From all the above, it follows that the majority of good taste and pleasure in life are found in Torah and *Mitzvot*, since this is where the upper light is deposited. It is written about it in the *Sulam* Commentary (“Introduction of The Book of Zohar, p 242, “Visions of the Ladder,” Item 1), “When one is rewarded with listening to the voice of His word, the 613 *Mitzvot* become *Pekudin*, from the word *Pikadon* [deposit]. This is so because there are 613 *Mitzvot*, and in each *Mitzva* a light of a unique degree is deposited, which corresponds to a unique organ in the 613 organs and tendons of the souls and the body. It follows that while performing the *Mitzva*, one extends to the corresponding organ in his soul and body, the degree of light that belongs to that organ and tendon. This is considered the *Panim* [face/ anterior] of the *Mitzvot*.”

It follows that by keeping Torah and *Mitzvot*, the purpose of creation—to do good to His creations—becomes revealed. However, he says in the *Sulam* Commentary that this comes specifically after one is rewarded with keeping the Torah and *Mitzvot* in the form of “Listening to the voice of His word.” But when he keeps Torah and *Mitzvot* in the form of “That fulfill His word,” before they are rewarded with listening, the *Mitzvot* are called *Eitin* [tips/counsels], and they are regarded as *Achor* [back/posterior]. It means that the upper light that belongs to that *Mitzva* is still not shining in them, but they are regarded as counsels by which to come to the light of *Panim*, which belongs to the *Mitzva*.

And all the work and the strengthening that one needs to overcome his desire and thought, which obstruct him from going on the path of truth, apply only when he is in *Achoraim* [back], in the form of “That fulfill His word.” This is so because in that state, he still doesn’t feel the upper light that is clothed in Torah

and *Mitzvot*. Hence, he does everything because he believes it is a great privilege to be rewarded with engaging in Torah and *Mitzvot*, even when he doesn't feel its importance but does everything with faith above reason, for this is man's purpose—to achieve *Dvekut* with the Creator—and he does everything to achieve it. As a result, he observes everything and makes great efforts wherever he can, and his sole intention is to achieve wholeness.

And he sees that after all the efforts and prevailing when he wishes to overcome the obstructers that stand against him, he is still standing on the outside, since *Dvekut* means equivalence of form, and he still did not move an inch from self-love, which is an opposite act from *Dvekut* with the Creator. In that state, he goes to pray to the Creator to enlighten him so he can raise Divinity from the dust. This means that the kingdom of heaven—as she appears to a man when he wants to work only for her, to disclose the glory of heaven in the world—tastes like dust in that state. And he sees that everyone is like him, disrespectful toward the glory of heaven because they cannot appreciate her importance. This is called “a prayer of many,” meaning that he prays for the collective.

Two discernments must be made: 1) *Malchut* is called “many” because she contains all the souls. 2) A prayer of many, when he prays for the collective, means that the collective will be rewarded with the importance of Torah and *Mitzvot*, that they will be rewarded with 613 deposits that the upper light shines in each and every *Mitzva*.

It follows that at the end of the day, the two discernments of “many” become one. This means that he prays for the public to be rewarded, for the greatness and importance of *Malchut*—who is called “many”—to be seen, which occurs when everyone is rewarded with vessels of bestowal. At that time, the 613 *Mitzvot* will be revealed, as in “Listening to the voice of His word,” at which time the 613 *Mitzvot* are called 613 deposits.

The above-mentioned means that a prayer of many is not rejected when one prays for the collective. The collective is called “the whole of Israel,” and the collective is called “the Holy Divinity.” And since the collective comprises several discernments, *The Zohar* says that the reason why the prayer of the collective is accepted is that there is wholeness in it. It writes, “And the Creator crowns Himself with that prayer because it rises in several manners, since one asks for *Hassadim*, another for *Gevurot*, and another for *Rachamim*.”

We should understand why a prayer must consist of all of them. The rule is that all the discernments that we discern in spirituality are revelations that should be disclosed for the purpose of correcting the lower ones. It follows that the matter of three lines that we say—that perfection means that the three lines are revealed there—means that the Creator wishes to give to the lower ones abundance so they can use them and there will not be any flaw there. This is unlike how it was in the world of *Nekudim* where there was the breaking of the vessels because there was no correction of lines there, as the holy Ari says.

In other words, when the upper one gives some abundance to the lower one, he wishes that the abundance that the lower one receives will benefit the lower one. But if the *Kli* where the abundance should go is imperfect, all the bounty will go to the external ones. This is the issue with the breaking of the vessels—that the bounty went outside of *Kedusha* [holiness]. For this reason, the bounty is not poured out to the lower ones, and it is considered that the prayer was not accepted.

And here comes the matter of correction of lines in the collective. It means that the many, which is *Malchut*, consists of the collective. In other words, there is a correction called “three lines” by which the abundance remains in *Kedusha* and does not go to the external ones. Hence, such a prayer can be accepted, meaning that she can be given abundance.

The Zohar interprets about that, “Because Jacob consisted of three lines,” since Jacob is called “the middle line,” which includes the right and the left. This is why the Creator wanted his prayer, for it is in utter completeness, comprising all three lines, like the prayer of many. In other words, there are no delays on the part of the Creator in imparting the abundance below, since His desire is to benefit His creations. However, it is as though He waits for the vessels of reception of the lower ones to be fit for reception.

Thus, when there is a proper *Kli* on the part of the lower one—meaning that the prayer is the *Kli* that is fit for reception—it must be on the condition that the abundance will not be lost, meaning that the abundance will not go to the external ones, to the *Klipot*. This is why there is a correction on the *Kli* of *Malchut* that she should transfer the bounty to the lower ones, and this correction is called, “correction of lines.”

Now we will explain the rest of the words of *The Zohar*, which we asked about what it said. It writes, “And because it consists of several sides and manners, it becomes a crown and is placed on the head of the Righteous One who lives forever, meaning *Yesod*, who imparts all the salvations to the *Nukva*, and from her to the entire public.”

We asked, “But do we not pray to *Ein Sof*?” Thus, what does it mean that the prayer of many becomes a crown specifically over *Yesod*? The thing is that the order of the imparting of the bounty that comes to *Malchut* is called *Yesod*. This means that all of the first nine *Sefirot* give their essence to *Yesod*, and he is called “all.”

It follows that we always speak from the perspective of the giver and the receiver of the bounty, who is called *Malchut*. Thus, since the Emanator wishes to bestow and waits for the lower ones to give the proper *Kelim* for reception of the abundance,

when the prayers go up—when the prayers are arranged in such a way that is fit for acceptance—they are called “a *Kli* for reception of the abundance.” It follows that the *Kli* rose to the giver, and since the general giver is *Yesod*, it is considered that the prayer rose to *Yesod*.

Accordingly, this follows the rule, “The act below awakens the act above.” It means that upon the awakening of the lower ones, who wish to draw near to the Creator and be rewarded with *Dvekut* with the Creator, they ask for the Creator’s help. It is as our sages said, “He who comes to be purified is aided” (*Zohar*, Noah, p 23, and in the *Sulam* Commentary, Item 63). If a person comes to purify, he is aided with a holy soul and he is purified, sanctified, and he is called “holy.”

Thus we see that when a man wishes to improve his actions, he causes a *Zivug* above, by which abundance is poured below. This is called *raising MAN*, meaning causing a deficiency above. But we should understand how we can say that the lower ones cause a deficiency above. And we should also know the meaning of “deficiency.” It is known that a *Kli* is called “a deficiency,” meaning that if there is a deficiency, there is room to place the filling there and fill the deficiency.

There are no delays in bestowing on the part of the Emanator, for His wish is to do good. The reason why we see that there is concealment of the light is because the lower ones have no *Kelim* to receive the abundance. Hence, when the lower one awakens to purify himself but lacks the strength, he asks the Creator to help him. Then this deficiency rises, so now the upper one has a *Kli* for giving him abundance, and this is called *raising MAN*.

It follows that when the prayer, which is a deficiency—what the lower one seeks for his deficiency to be satisfied—rises to the giver, and the giver is called *Yesod*, who bestows upon the assembly of Israel, called *Malchut*—it becomes a crown on His head. This is

so because a crown means *Keter* [crown], indicating to the King's crown, meaning the importance of the king. This means that when there is disclosure of His light, everyone recognizes the importance of the Creator.

However, during the concealment of the face, Divinity—the place where the King appears—is called “exile” and “dust.” This is so because no taste is discerned in spirituality, but the Torah and *Mitzvot* seem to taste like dust to them. And all this is because the lower ones do not have the *Kelim* to receive the abundance. And because of that, His glory is desecrated among the nations, meaning that before a person is rewarded with the discernment of being Jewish, he is similar to the nations, as it is known that each person is a small world and consists of all seventy nations, as well as of Israel.

But then, during the concealment, when the upper bounty cannot appear to the lower ones because they do not have the proper *Kelim*, whatever illumination they are given will go to the *Klipot*. Because of that, the upper abundance had to be hidden from them. This is called, “The crown has fallen from our head,” meaning that the importance of the Creator is desecrated.

But when a person comes to purify, when he wishes for the Creator to bring him closer and give him the vessel of bestowal by which to be rewarded with *Dvekut*, all the upper bounty that will be revealed will be in order to bestow. In other words, he wishes to be given strength from above to have the ability to always be in *Kedusha*, which is *Dvekut*.

Then a crown is made of his prayer, the King's crown, since then the importance of the King is recognized. And this is the meaning of what *The Zohar* says, that the prayer “Becomes a crown and is placed on the head of the Righteous One who lives forever, meaning *Yesod*, who imparts all the salvations to the *Nukva*, and from her to the entire public.” This is so because

through the prayer, the upper abundance is given to the lower ones, at which time the delight and pleasure are revealed. This is called “a crown,” the King’s crown, the importance of the King.

COME UNTO PHARAOH 2

Article No. 13, 1985-86

The Zohar asks, “It is written, ‘Come unto Pharaoh,’ but it should have said, ‘Go unto Pharaoh,’ etc. Since the Creator saw that Moses was afraid and other appointed emissaries could not approach him, the Creator said, ‘Behold, I am against you, Pharaoh, king of Egypt, the great monster that lies in the midst of his Niles.’ The Creator had to wage war against him, and none other, as it is written, ‘I am the Lord,’ which they explained, ‘I and not a messenger.’” Thus far its words (in the beginning of the portion, *Bo* [Come]).

The difference between “come” and “go” is that “come” means that we should walk *together*, like a person who tells his friend, “Come.”

We should understand it because *The Zohar* asks why the Creator needed to go with Moses. It is because Moses alone could not fight him, but the Creator Himself and none other. Thus, why did he need Moses to go with the Creator? After all, it says, “I and not a messenger.” Thus, what is the point of the Creator going to Pharaoh, who is called “great monster,” with Moses? He could have gone to Pharaoh without Moses.

We should also understand what our sages said (*Kidushin* [Matrimony] 30b), “Rish Lakish said, ‘Man’s inclination overcomes him every day and seeks to kill him, as it is said, ‘The wicked watches the righteous,’ and if the Creator did not help him, he would not overcome it, as it is said, ‘The Lord will not leave him in his hand.’”

Here, too, there rises the question, “If a person cannot prevail by himself and needs the Creator’s help, why this doubling?” In other words, either the Creator gives a person the strength to overcome alone, or the Creator will do everything. Why is it that two forces seem to be required here, one of man and subsequently the force of the Creator? It is as though only the two of them can conquer evil, and one force is insufficient.

It is known that man’s perfection is that he must reach the purpose of creation to obtain the purpose for which the world was created, which is called “to do good to His creations.” In other words, the creatures should come to receive the delight and pleasure that He contemplated to delight them.

Prior to that, creation is still not considered a creation that befits the Creator, since it is known that from the perfect Operator, perfect operations should emerge. This means that everyone should feel the beauty of creation and will be able to praise and glorify creation, that everyone will be able to glorify and thank the Creator for the creation He has created, and that everyone will be able to say, “Blessed is He who said, ‘Let there be the world.’” In other words, everyone should bless the Creator for having created a good world filled with pleasures, where everyone is joyful and happy from the contentment they feel from all the pleasures they are experiencing in the world.

However, when a person begins to examine if he is truly satisfied with his life and how much contentment he is really deriving from himself and from his environment, he sees the opposite—everyone is suffering, in torment, and each person suffers differently. But one should say, “Blessed is He who said, ‘Let there be the world,’” so he sees that he is only saying it superficially.

However, it is known that the delight and pleasure cannot appear in the world before the world has *Kelim* [vessels] of

bestowal, since our vessels of reception are still contaminated by self-reception, which is heavily restricted in its measure and separates us from the Creator (meaning that there was the first restriction on the vessels of reception so the abundance would not shine there, see in the “Introduction of the Book of Zohar,” p 138).

Obtaining the vessels of bestowal is where disputes and wars begin, since it is against our nature. And this is why we were given Torah and *Mitzvot*, to achieve the degree of bestowal, as our sages said, “I have created the evil inclination; I have created the spice of Torah” (*Kidushin* 30).

Also, we were given the *Mitzva* [commandment/good deed] of “love thy friend as thyself,” and Rabbi Akiva said, “This is the great rule of the Torah” (*Beresheet Rabba, Parasha* 24). In other words, by working in love of friends, a person accustoms himself to exit self-love and achieve love of others.

However, we should understand what we see before us, that there are people who exert in love of friends and still do not come an inch closer to love of the Creator so they can work in Torah and *Mitzvot*, due to the love of the Creator. This means that they say they are in fact advancing a little in love of friends, but they see no progress in love of the Creator. However, we should know that in love of friends, too, there are degrees, meaning we must contemplate the obligation to love of friends.

We can compare it to a two-story building with a ground floor, as well.. The King is on the second floor, and one who wishes to come to the King—whose only goal is to converse with the King face-to-face—is told that he must first climb to the first floor, since it is impossible to climb to the second floor without first climbing to the first floor.

Certainly, everyone understands that this is so. However, there is a reason why they must first climb to the first floor—it

is called “corrections.” In other words, by climbing to the first floor, one can learn how to address the King face-to-face, and will be able to ask the King for his wish.

That person, who hears that he must first climb to the first floor and subsequently to the second floor, understands it very well. But since his only wish is to see the King’s face and he cares for nothing else, this makes what he is told—that he must climb to the first floor—a burden and a toil for him.

However, he has no choice, so he climbs to the first floor. He is not interested in seeing what is there, although he heard that the first floor is where one learns how to speak with the King. But he pays no attention to that, for this is not his goal. His goal is the King, not what he can learn on the first floor. His goal is not the study, but to see the King’s face. Why should he waste time on trifles, since everything is naught compared to the King? Thus, why should he take interest in what is taught on the first floor?

Hence, when he climbs to the first floor, he has no desire to stay there. Instead, he wishes to quickly climb to the second, to the King Himself, for this is all he wants. However, he is told, “Without knowing the rules that abide on the first floor, you will certainly blemish the King’s honor. For this reason, you cannot hope to be able to climb to the second floor before you learn all that there is to learn on the first floor.”

Similarly, with love of friends, we heard that it was impossible to be rewarded with love of the Creator before one was rewarded with love of friends, as Rabbi Akiva said, “love thy friend as thyself is the great rule of the Torah.” Therefore, while engaging in love of friends, he is not considering love of friends as being valuable, but as redundant.

He keeps it because he has no choice, but he is constantly looking for the time when “I will be rewarded with the love of the Creator, and I’ll be able to rid myself of the love of friends.

This work is burdensome to me because I can hardly stand my friends, for I see that they all have different traits than mine and I have nothing in common with them. But I have no choice, since I was told that without love of friends I won't be able to achieve love of the Creator. So against my will, I sit with them.

“However, I can ask myself, ‘What am I getting from the friends?’ Only one thing: I am correcting myself through self-torment by sitting with them and tolerating their talks, which I dislike and which are against my nature. But what can I do? I am told that I must suffer in this world, so I do: I sit and wait for the time when I can run from them and avoid seeing the lowliness that I see in them.”

It turns out that he is not taking from the love of friends the remedy called, “love of others,” but only because he was told that he has no choice, for otherwise he will not achieve love of the Creator. This is the reason why he engages in love of friends and keeps all the obligations to which the friends commit him. But what he should learn from them is miles away from him.

This means that he is not exiting self-love and he is not reaching love of others. He is observing the love of friends not out of love, but out of fear, since he is not allowed into love of the Creator before he enters the love of friends. As a result, he fears not observing love of friends because he will not be allowed into love of the Creator.

This is similar to the allegory about not being allowed onto the second floor where the King sits, until he climbs to the first floor. The idea is that he will learn the rules of how to keep the King's honor, so it would seem reasonable that he would be happy to go onto the first floor, since now he is learning how to be watchful of the King's honor.

It would benefit him because afterwards, when he enters the King's palace, he will not blemish the King's honor. And

therefore, while he is on the first floor, he pays attention to all the rules that apply there and to becoming accustomed to them, since he wants to come into the King, to bestow upon the King, and not at all to be contemptuous of the King's honor.

This relates only to one who wishes to come before the King to give contentment to Him. But one who wishes to come in before the King for self-reception considers what is found on the first floor as redundant. It is of no interest to him. He goes up to the first floor only because he is afraid, since he knows that he will not be allowed to climb to the second floor before he climbs to the first floor. He feels no need to study the laws that are taught there—how to avoid blemishing the King's honor—since the only reason he wants to come before the King is for purposes of self-love.

Therefore, we should know that we were given love of friends to learn how to avoid blemishing the King's honor. In other words, if he has no other desire except to give contentment to the King, he will certainly blemish the King's honor, which is called "Passing on *Kedusha* [holiness] to the external ones." For this reason, we mustn't underestimate the importance of the work in love of friends, for by that he will learn how to exit self-love and enter the path of love of others. And when he completes the work of love of friends, he will be able to be rewarded with love of the Creator.

We should know that there is a virtue to love of friends: one cannot deceive himself and say that he loves the friends, if in fact he doesn't love them. Here he can examine whether he truly has love of friends or not. But with love of the Creator, one cannot examine oneself as to whether his intention is the love of the Creator, meaning that he wants to bestow upon the Creator, or his desire is to receive in order to receive.

But we should know that after all the corrections that man is given to do without the Creator's help, he will not be granted

any progress in the work of bestowal. And we asked, “Why, then, should one do things in order to later be rewarded with the help of the Creator? After all, the Creator can help even without the work of the lower ones, and man’s work on progress in the work will not help in any case.”

However, if one does not begin to work, he doesn’t know that he cannot triumph over the inclination. But when a person begins to walk in the work of the Creator and does what he can do, then he can offer a true prayer for the Creator to help him.

But why would the Creator want him to offer a true prayer? With a flesh and blood, you can say that he wants him to make a genuine plea because when a person makes a genuine plea of his friend, his friend gives him true gratitude. The flesh and blood, who chase honors, the gratitude that he gives him is as though he is belittling himself before him and he enjoys it.

But as for the Creator, does He need to be given people’s respect? Therefore, why would the Creator want a person to make a heartfelt prayer?

The thing is that it is known that there is no light without a *Kli*. It is impossible for one to give something that is very important, and if one has no desire for something, he will slight it and discard it. It will be lost because the need for something matches what he needs; this gives the importance. To the extent of the importance, he keeps the gift from being lost, for otherwise everything will go to the *Klipot*.

This is called “nursing the *Klipot*,” meaning that everything goes to the vessels of reception, which take into their authority everything that a person slights in matters of *Kedusha*. From this we know why one should begin the work. But why doesn’t the Creator give one the strength to complete the work alone, without His help?

It is known what *The Zohar* interprets concerning what our sages said, “He who comes to be purified is aided.” It asks, “With what?” And it says, “With a holy soul,” meaning he receives illumination from above, which is called *Neshama* [a soul], called “attaining Godliness,” which means that he is included in the thought of creation to do good to His creations.

It follows that by having a *Kli* and a desire for vessels of bestowal, he receives the light, called *Neshama*. Thus, both are required. In other words, a person should begin, and by that he receives a *Kli*. And by being unable to finish, he cries out to the Creator for help, and then he receives the light.

Now we can understand what is written, “Come unto Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I might show these My signs in the midst of them.”

A question arises, “Why did the Creator harden Pharaoh’s heart?” The text answers, “That I might show these My signs in the midst of them.” And the interpretation is, “Why has the Creator hardened man’s heart and he cannot win the war against the inclination by himself?”

The answer is, *so man will cry out to the Creator, and by that will have the Kli*. And then the Creator will be able to place the letters of Torah within him, inside the *Kli*. This is the soul that the Creator gives him as help.

This is considered, “The Torah and the Creator are one.” “My signs” refers to the letters of the Torah, as in the names of the Creator. This is the “doing good to His creations,” which is the thought of creation to do good to His creations. This comes to a person specifically when he has a *Kli*, and this *Kli* comes through the hardening of the heart, for then there is a place where he can cry out to the Creator for help, and He helps him with a holy soul.

Now we can see the matter of “Come unto Pharaoh,” meaning both of us, together. In other words, a person should

begin and then see that he cannot defeat it, and this is implied in Moses being afraid to approach him. And then the Creator said, “Behold, I am against you, Pharaoh,” meaning that then comes the help from the Creator. And with what? With a holy soul, as written in *The Zohar*.

It follows that the hardening of the heart, in the words, “For I have hardened his heart,” was to make a place for a prayer. And this prayer is not like one of flesh and blood, who wants respect, to be asked so he will be respected. Rather, the purpose of the prayer is for him to have a *Kli*, a need for the help of the Creator, for there is no light without a *Kli*. And when a person sees that he cannot help himself in any way, then he has a need for the Creator’s help.

This is the meaning of what our sages said, “The Creator craves the prayer of the righteous.” Here, too, there arises the question, “But does the Creator need man’s surrender, that he will ask of Him?” However, since His wish is to benefit His creations, but there is no light without a *Kli*, He craves the prayer of the righteous, for by that they disclose the *Kelim* [vessels] into which He can impart. It follows that when a person sees that he cannot overcome the evil in him, *this is really the time for asking for the help of the Creator*.

Now we can understand what the Creator said (Exodus 6), “And I will take you to Me for a people, and I will be to you a God; and you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.”

In *Masechet Berachot* (38a), our sages wrote about it as follows, “‘Who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.’ The sages ... Thus said the Creator unto Israel: ‘When I bring you out, I will do for you something to show you that it is I who brought you out from Egypt, as it is written, ‘That I am the Lord your God, who brought you out.’”

This means that it is not enough that the Creator brings the people of Israel out of Egypt, that they were liberated from the torment that they suffered there. When speaking of the work of the Creator, there arises the question, "Was this not enough?" Now they have been liberated from the enslavement of the exile after not being able to serve the Creator due to Pharaoh's rule, and all that they built for themselves, whatever position in the work, was all swallowed in the earth, as our sages said (*Sutah* p 11), "Pithom and Ramses. Rav and Shmuel, one said her name was Pithom. And why was her name Ramses? For his head *Mitroses* [splinters] first." RASHI interprets, "When they built some, it would splinter and fall. They would rebuild, and it would fall. And one said, 'Her name is Ramses, and why was her name Pithom? It is because first is first, it was swallowed by the *Pi Tehom* [mouth of the abyss].'"

We therefore see that there is no dispute between Rav and Shmuel regarding the facts, only regarding the interpretation. The fact was that everything that they built would fall. This means that every time they built *for themselves* some structure in the work, the Egyptians came, meaning the alien thoughts of the Egyptians, and ruined all their work. In other words, all the work that they did with all their efforts to overcome and to serve in the work of holiness was swallowed in the ground.

Thus, each day they had to start over, and it seemed to them as though they were never engaged in the work of holiness. Moreover, each time they contemplated moving forward, they saw that not only did they not progress, they even regressed, since new "who" and "what" questions would always surface in their minds.

Accordingly, we should understand this exodus from Egypt as their finally having the ability to serve the Creator without the alien thoughts of the Egyptians. Thus, what does this knowing in the words, "And you shall know," come to tell us? That we must know that it is *the Creator* who delivered them from the

land of Egypt. And there is more we should wonder about, since we began the examination at the enslavement in Egypt, when they were being worked in hard labor, and they were liberated from that, so what else did they miss?

But what is hard labor? Our sages explained the verse, “All their labors which they rigorously imposed on them” (*Sutah* 11b). “Rabbi Shmuel Bar Nahmany said, ‘Rabbi Yonatan said, ‘They replaced men’s work with women’s work, and women’s work with men’s work. And the Egyptians made the children of Israel serve *BeParech* [with rigor].’ Rabbi Elazar says, *Be ‘Peh Rach* [with a soft mouth].’”

We should also understand the matter of hard labor in the work of holiness. We should make two discernments:

1. The act called “the revealed part,” which a person can see and where one cannot say that he is erring or deceiving himself, since it cannot be said that there is a mistake about something that is visibly apparent. This is so because with the act of *Mitzvot* and the study of Torah, he sees, and others can also see if he is carrying out actions of Torah and *Mitzvot* or not.
2. The intention. This is called “the hidden part,’ since others cannot see the intention behind one’s acts. And he, too, cannot see the intention in the act, since it is possible to be mistaken about intention and to mislead oneself, for only in apparent things, called “the revealed part,” everyone can see the truth. But what one cannot trust himself when it comes to intentions in the heart or thought sin the mind. It follows that this is hidden from himself and from others.

Now we can interpret the meaning of hard labor, which was said to be “Replacing men’s work with women’s work.” “Men’s work” means that he is already a *Gever* [man], that he can

LeHitgaber [overcome] his evil and engage in Torah and *Mitzvot* in action. Thus, what should he do when he is already called “a man,” meaning a man of war, who can fight with his evil in action? Now it is time for him to begin his work in the second discernment, meaning in the concealed, which is the aim. In other words, henceforth, he should try to aim all his actions to be in order to bestow contentment upon the Creator and not for his own benefit.

And what did the Egyptians do when they saw that he was a man who could exit their rule and enter holiness? They swapped their work and gave them women’s work. This means that all their work was in women’s work, that is, the Egyptians made them think, “Who needs intentions? The actions are what counts, and here, in actions, you will succeed, as you can see—you are a man, you can prevail over the evil in you and engage in Torah and *Mitzvot* in every detail and precision, and you must put all your efforts into being more meticulous in Torah and *Mitzvot*.”

“However, *you should not engage in intentions!* This work is not for you, but only for a chosen few. If you begin with the work of bestowing, meaning noticing that you must aim everything to be in order to bestow, you will not have the energy to be so meticulous in the revealed action, where you will not deceive yourself because you see what you are doing. Therefore, there is where you can expand in every detail and precision in your actions.

“But with regard to intentions, you have no real test. Thus, we advise you for your own good, and do not think, God forbid, that we want to divert you from the work of holiness. On the contrary, we want you to rise in the degrees of holiness.”

This is called, “Replacing men’s work with women’s work.” Where they should have done work that belongs to men, they explained to the people of Israel that it would be best for them to do women’s work, meaning what belongs to women.

“And women’s work with men’s work” means that those people do not have the power to overcome. Rather, “They are as feeble as a female,” meaning that they were weak in keeping Torah and *Mitzvot* and didn’t have the strength to keep and observe the *Mitzvot*, even in the revealed form, which is called “only in action.” And all the work of overcoming was only on the action, not on the intention.

The Egyptians came to them and made them think, “We don’t want to interrupt your holy work. On the contrary, we want you to be true servants of the Creator. In other words, we see that you wish to serve in the work of holiness, so we are advising you that the most important thing is not the action; it is the *intention*. Therefore, instead of exerting to overcome in action, accustoming yourselves to overcome your body, to study for another hour or to pray for another half hour trying to answer ‘Blessed be He,’ and ‘Blessed be His name,’ and ‘Amen,’ not to mention in the middle of the repetition of the cantor. Who needs it?

“The main aim is for *the Creator*. That is where you need to focus all your efforts. Why waste your strength on trifling things? Indeed, the *Halacha* [religious law] says that you must keep all those little things, but this work is not for you; it’s work for women. You need to engage in *men’s* work. The fact that you want to engage only in action is unbecoming to you. You should focus primarily on the intent, meaning use every bit of energy you have to aim that everything will be for the Creator. However, don’t think for a minute that we are trying, God forbid, to interrupt your work of the Creator. We want the contrary—for you to rise up the ladder of holiness and achieve perfection, meaning that all your actions will be only in order to bestow contentment upon your Maker.”

And since they were at the degree called “women” and still did not have the strength to overcome, not even in the part of

the action—considered that they are as feeble as females—the Egyptians made them see that the important thing was the aim *Lishma* [for Her name]. By that, the Egyptians made certain that they would not have the strength to continue and overcome in the work of holiness.

It is as Maimonides says when he wrote (*Hilchot Teshuva* [*Laws of Repentance*], *Parasha* no. 10), “The sages said, ‘One should always engage in Torah, even in *Lo Lishma* [not for Her name], since from *Lo Lishma* he will come to *Lishma* [for Her name].’ Therefore, when teaching the little ones, the women, and the illiterate in general, they must be taught to work out of fear and to receive reward. When they gain knowledge and acquire much wisdom, they are to be shown that secret bit by bit, and must be accustomed to it with ease, until they attain it, and know Him and serve Him out of love.”

The Egyptians advised those who were under the discernment of women to not follow the words of Maimonides. On the contrary, even though they were at the degree of women and little ones, they made them understand that they should immediately begin the work on aiming *Lishma*. By that, the Egyptians made certain that they would remain in their domain, outside of *Kedusha* [holiness].

Thus, this is called “hard labor,” as Rabbi Shmuel Bar Nahmany interpreted, “*BaParech* [with toil] means *BePricha* [fragile/crumbling].” And RASHI interpreted, “In crumbling and breaking of the body and the waist.” The reason is that when replacing men’s work with women’s work, and women’s work with men’s work, it will be as we explained, since men’s work was to overcome and advance and aim for the intention *Lishma*, but they weakened them in this work because the Egyptians resisted this work. Hence, besides having to toil in overcoming so they could aim in order to bestow, they had more work in that the Egyptians made them think that all of this work was redundant,

that the work of bestowal did not relate to them, but only to a chosen few.

This is called “twofold work”: 1) straining to aim in order to bestow, and 2) fighting them and saying that it is not true, that they *will* be able to achieve *Lishma*, and not as the Egyptians said, that they should do women’s work. And this was the Egyptians’ whole intention, to prevent them from approaching the work of bestowal.

Also, they replaced the work of men with that of women, which, as we said, is worthless because it is keeping Torah and *Mitzvot* only in action. This means that their entire war against the inclination is only over the action, and not, as Maimonides says, that women’s work should be only about doing things and not teaching them that they must intend *Lishma*.

Therefore, when the Egyptians came and told them that they had to do men’s work, meaning aim to bestow, it was hard work for them: 1) Concerning *Lishma*, you are totally incapable of it. 2) Overcoming the body and keeping practical *Mitzvot* was harder for them before the Egyptians’ alien thoughts came and made them think that the act of *Mitzvot* without intention was completely worthless and degraded the importance of Torah and *Mitzvot* in *Lo Lishma*. Thus, now, through the Egyptians, the work in the form of women was degraded, and this caused them hard labor, as it was said that it is the breaking of the body and the waist.

It follows from all the above that there are three meanings to the word *Perech* [toil/hard labor], yet there is no contradiction between one interpretation and the other. Rather, all three things were there, and each interpreted according to his own issue:

1. In the first interpretation of *Perech*, Rabbi Elazar says it is “in *Pe Rach* [soft mouth].”
2. Rabbi Shmuel Bar Nahmany said “In *Pericha*,” which means breaking.

3. Rabbi Shmuel Bar Nahmany, “Rabbi Yonatan said, ‘They replaced men’s work with women’s work, and women’s work with men’s work.’”

However, they all interpret hard labor as *Pericha* [friable], meaning the breaking of the body. And the reason why it was hard work to the point that they called this work, “Labor that breaks the body and the waist” is that they replaced men’s work with women’s work, and women’s work with men’s work. This caused them the hard labor.

And yet, why did they listen to the views of the Egyptians? It is because they spoke to Israel with *Peh Rach* [a soft mouth], meaning that the thoughts of the Egyptians came to Israel with a soft mouth. That is, everything they told them to do was not to turn them away from serving the Creator, God forbid. On the contrary, they wished to *guide* them to walk in the ways of the Creator successfully, so they would not waste time in vain, meaning that they would see no progress in the work of holiness. And since they were spoken to with a soft mouth, it was hard for them to overcome these thoughts.

This implies that when he says that they replaced men’s work with that of women, he explains why they listened to the Egyptians. The answer is, because of the *Perech*—that they spoke to Israel with *Pe Rach* [a soft mouth]. Thus, it is for the two above reasons that they came to work in hard labor, as Rabbi Shmuel Bar Nahmany says, *Perech* means work of *Pericha* [breaking], which is work that breaks the body.

Accordingly, we should understand why it is not enough for the people of Israel that the Creator brought them out of Egypt, out of their enslavement so they could engage in Torah and *Mitzvot*, each according to his attainment, and the *Klipa* of Egypt didn’t have the strength to resist their work.

Indeed, how great is the miracle and who can appreciate the importance of the matter? When a person considers the amount of suffering and torment that he feels while being in exile under the enslavement of Pharaoh King of Egypt, and to the extent of the darkness of Pithom and Ramses that he assumes in his heart, which they were building. And now, the gates of the *Klipa* of Egypt were opened before them all at once and they came under their own authority. This means that now they were free to engage in Torah and *Mitzvot* as they wished, without any interruptions. What joy and elation it brings to person when he compares the time of darkness to the time when it illuminates. It is as it is said, “He who separates between darkness and light.”

According to the above, we should understand the necessity to know that only the Creator delivers them from the burdens of the Egyptians, as our sages said, “When I bring you out, I will do for you something to show you that it is I who brought you out from Egypt, as it is written, ‘That I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.’”

The thing is that we must always remember the goal that we must reach. And since the purpose of creation is to do good to His creations, our goal is to receive the delight and pleasure that He has contemplated on our behalf. But for the purpose of correction, called *Dvekut* [adhesion], which is about equivalence of form, we have to work to obtain the vessels of bestowal.

Yet, this is only the correction of creation; it is not wholeness. Wholeness means knowing the Creator, knowing and attaining the Torah, which is called “the names of the Creator.”

Accordingly, it is not enough that we already have the strength to keep Torah and *Mitzvot* without any interruptions, for this is only a correction, not the complete goal. The complete goal is to obtain the knowledge of the Torah, as in, “The Torah, Israel, and the Creator are one.” This is why our

sages said, "This is what the Creator said to Israel, 'And you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who brought you out,' I and not a messenger." This means that every single one should come to know the Creator, and this is called "Torah," the names of the Creator.

A PRAYER OF MANY

Article No. 15, 1985-86

It is written in *The Zohar* (*Beshalach* (When Pharaoh Let), and in the *Sulam* Commentary, Item 11), "And she said, 'I dwell among my own people.' He asks, 'What does that mean?' He replies, 'When *Din* is present in the world, one should not part from the collective and be alone because when the *Din* is present in the world, those who are noticed and are noted alone are caught first, even if they are righteous. Hence, one should never retire from the people because the mercy of the Creator is always on the whole people together. This is why she said, 'I dwell among my own people,' and I do not wish to part from them.'"

"When *Din* is present in the world" refers to the desire to receive, which is self-love, the nature in which the creatures are born, due to His will to do good to His creations. And because there was a desire for equivalence of form so there would not be the bread of shame, a sentence [*Din*] was passed that it is forbidden to use the vessels of reception, except when one knows that he can aim for the reception to be in order to bestow. Then, one is permitted to use the vessels of reception.

Accordingly, the meaning of "When *Din* is present in the world" is that when the whole world is immersed in self-love, there is darkness in the world because there is no room for the light to draw the creatures down due to the disparity of form between the light and the creatures who receive the light. It is

on this disparity of form that the sentence was passed that the upper abundance will not be given to the creatures.

Therefore, when a person awakens and wishes for the Creator to bring him closer, meaning give him vessels of bestowal, which is called “bringing closer,” he asks the Creator to help him. However, it is known that the help that comes from the Creator is called “upper abundance,” which is called *Neshama* “a soul.” It is as *The Zohar* says, that the aid received from above is in a holy soul.

For this reason, when a person comes to ask the Creator to bring him closer to Him, but he is seen alone, it means that he understands that the Creator must bring him closer personally. Yet, why does he think that the public can remain in its current state and that only he should be treated differently by the Creator?

It is because he understands that he has merits that others do not. And although these are individuals who do not belong to the collective because they understand that they deserve to draw near the Creator more than others and consider themselves righteous, they are caught first. In other words, the *Din*, which is self-reception, is present in them more than in all the others, and they become worse than others in the qualities of self-love.

This is so because he thinks that he deserves more than other people. In other words, it is enough for other people to have what they have, but when he considers himself, he deserves more than the rest of the people. This thought is considered actual reception, meaning 100% self-love. It follows that self-love begins to develop in him more than in others.

It therefore follows that he is constantly working in self-love. And yet, to his own eyes, he seems righteous, since he wishes to work as a giver. He tells himself that his request of the Creator to bring him closer is right because what is he asking?

For the Creator to give him strength to keep Torah and *Mitzvot* in order to bestow. And what fault could there be in wishing to serve the King?

With that, we can interpret the words of *The Zohar*. It advises those people with an inner demand, who cannot accept the state they are in because they do not see any progress in the work of God, and believe what is written (Deuteronomy 30:20), “To love the Lord your God, to listen to His voice, and to cleave unto Him; for this is your life, and the length of your days.” They see that they lack love and *Dvekut* [adhesion/cleaving] and they do not feel the life in the Torah or know how to find counsel for their souls to come to feel in their organs that which the text tells us.

The advice is to ask for the whole collective. In other words, everything that one feels that he is lacking and asks fulfillment for, he should not say that he is an exception or deserves more than what the collective has. Rather, “I dwell among my own people,” meaning I am asking for the entire collective because I wish to come to a state where I will have no care for myself whatsoever, but only for the Creator to have contentment. Therefore, it makes no difference to me if the Creator takes pleasure in me or can receive the pleasure from others.

In other words, he asks the Creator to give us such an understanding, which is called, “entirely for the Creator.” It means that he will be certain that he is not deceiving himself that he wants to bestow upon the Creator, that perhaps he is really thinking only of his own self-love, meaning that he will feel the delight and pleasure.

Therefore, he prays for the collective. This means that if there are a few people in the collective who can reach the goal of *Dvekut* with the Creator, and this will bring the Creator more contentment than if he himself were rewarded with nearing

the Creator, he excludes himself. Instead, he wishes for the Creator to help them because this will bring more contentment above than from his own work. For this reason, he prays for the collective, that the Creator will help the entire collective and will give them that feeling—that they receive satisfaction from being able to bestow upon the Creator, to bring Him contentment.

And since everything requires an awakening from below, he gives the awakening from below, and others will receive the awakening from above, to whomever the Creator knows will be more beneficial for the Creator.

It follows that if he has the strength to ask for such a prayer, then he will certainly face a true test—if he agrees to such a prayer. However, if he knows that what he is saying is only lip service, what can he do when he sees that the body disagrees with such a prayer to have pure bestowal without a hint of reception?

Here there is only the famous advice—to pray to the Creator and believe above reason that the Creator can help him and the whole collective. And he should not be impressed if he sees that he has already prayed many times but his prayer was not answered. This brings one to despair and the body mocks him and tells him, “Can’t you see that you cannot do a thing? And as if you are completely hopeless, you are now asking of the Creator to grant you things that are unacceptable to reasonable people.”

At that time, the body argues, “Do tell me, who among the pious and practical people wish for the Creator to give them something that is completely unreasonable? Moreover, you can see for yourself that you were not granted even smaller things than the demand you are making now of the Creator to help you, even though you asked the Creator to help you. And now you say that you want to ask the Creator to grant you something great. It is indeed a very important thing because there aren’t many prayers in the world that ask the Creator to give them

strength to do things for the collective, that the whole public will be rewarded with delight and pleasure by your labor. This is called ‘pure and clean bestowal without a hint of self-love.’

“And you think that your prayer for small things was not granted, but great and important things are certainly priceless.” For example, we might say that it is worthwhile to go to a certain person who has such precious paraphernalia that you’d have to search the entire world to find such objects, since they are found only among a chosen few. And a person from the middle-class came, who barely had the usual paraphernalia in his house, and it suddenly occurred to him that he, too, should try to obtain those objects, too, which are found among the chosen few. Certainly, if someone heard about it he would laugh at him.

It is the same for us. When a person is not educated, but is below average, yet wishes to ask the Creator for *Kelim* [vessels] that are found with a chosen few in the world, here the body itself mocks him. It tells him, “You fool, how can you even think of asking the Creator for something that even learned people do not have? How can I give you strength to work on such nonsense?”

And here begins the real work, since man’s work in this world is to exit the domain of the evil inclination, which is called “receiving in order to receive.” And now he wishes for the Creator to help him walk on the path of pure and clean bestowal without a hint of self-reception.

It follows that this work is truly against the evil, since he does not wish to leave any possessions with it. Rather, now he wants his work henceforth to not be for the will to receive. Rather, he asks the Creator that even what he worked for before, and what was registered in the domain of the will to receive, will all be moved from its authority to the authority of the Creator.

It follows that now he prays for the Creator to give him the strength to repent. That is, the Creator will give him the strength

to bring all the deeds that were for the will to receive back to the Creator's domain, both those of the past, and those of the future. It is as Maimonides says (*Laws of Repentance*, Chapter 2), "Repentance must be for the past, as well."

He writes, "What is repentance? It is for the sinner to leave his sin and remove it from his mind, and resolve in his heart never to do it again, as it is written, 'Let the wicked forsake his way.' And he should also regret the past, as it is said, 'For after I turned back, I repented,' and He who knows all mysteries will testify that he will never return to this sin."

Now we can understand the importance of a prayer of many, as it is written, "I dwell among my own people." *The Zohar* says, "One should never retire from the people because the mercy of the Creator is always on the whole people together." This means that if one asks the Creator to give him vessels of bestowal, as our sages said, "As He is merciful, you be merciful, too," one should pray for the whole collective. This is because then it is apparent that his aim is for the Creator to give him vessels of pure bestowal, as it was written, "The mercy of the Creator is always on the whole people together." It is known that there is no giving of half a thing from above. This means that when abundance is given from above to below, it is for the whole collective.

For this reason, one must ask for the whole public, since any abundance that comes from above, always comes for the whole people. This is why he says, "The mercy of the Creator is always on the whole people." Thus, there are two meanings to that, since to have pure bestowal, it would have been enough to pray for only one person besides himself. But there is another issue here—a person must ask for a whole thing because it is a rule in spirituality that what comes is always a complete thing, and all the observations are only in the receivers. For this reason, one should ask for the whole collective.

And since the abundance comes to the whole collective, and since there is no light without a *Kli* [vessel], meaning it is impossible to receive fulfillment if there is no vacancy for it where the filling can enter, he is therefore answered for that prayer that he was making for the public. It is as our sages said (*Baba Kama*, 92), “Anyone who pleads for mercy on his friend is answered first, since he needs the same thing.” It means that although the abundance comes to the collective, the collective lacks the *Kelim*.

In other words, the abundance that comes from above is enough for the whole people, but without *Kelim*—deficiencies, so they can fill the cavities—the public does not attain the abundance that comes from above. Rather, he who has deficiencies is answered first.

THE AGENDA OF THE ASSEMBLY 2

Article No. 17, 1985-86

In *Masechet Berachot* (p 32), our sages wrote, “Rabbi Shamlai said, ‘One should always praise the Creator, and then pray.’ From where do we have that? From Moses, as it is written, ‘And I pleaded.’” Baal HaSulam interpreted that when one wishes to ask for a favor from another, he must know, a) if he has what he asks of him, because if he doesn’t, there is no point in asking, and b) that he has a kind heart. This is so because he may have what he asks, but not the kind of heart that would give.

Hence, first one needs to praise the Creator, meaning believe that the Creator has everything that one is asking for, and that the Creator is merciful and grants everyone his wish for the best.

It turns out that when the friends gather in one place, the assembly is certainly for a purpose, since when one allocates part

of his time—which he would use for his own needs, relinquishing his engagements, and partaking in an assembly—he wishes to acquire something. Thus, it is important to try that when each of the friends goes home, he should see what he came to the assembly with, and what he has acquired now that he is going home.

Sometimes during the assembly of friends, everyone feels good during the meeting. At that time, it does not occur to them to contemplate with which possession they will go home, meaning what I have in my hand, which I acquired at the assembly of friends and did not have before I came to the society. And then he sees that he has nothing.

This is similar to what is written (Deuteronomy 23:25), “When you come into your friend’s vineyard, you may eat grapes until you have satiated your soul, but do not put any in your vessels.” We should interpret it that when the friends gather, this is called “Your friend’s vineyard,” when you sit and eat and drink together, talking about this and that, and the body enjoys during the action. This is similar to, “You may eat grapes until you have satiated your soul.”

But when you go home and wish to see what you have in your *Kelim* [vessels], to take some livelihood home, when we leave the gathering and wish to examine what we have in our *Kelim* after all the partying, we see that, “But do not put any in your vessels.” In other words, there is nothing in the *Kelim* with which to revive the soul after the assembly.

However, when one exerts, he should make certain that it is not without reward. It is as we say in the prayer, “And came unto Zion,” “Lest we touch in vain.” Rather, when one goes to an assembly, he should acquire nourishments there so that when he goes home he will be able to see if he has something to put in the *Kelim*. Then he will have the nourishments to feed himself until the next meeting. And until that time, he will have from what

has been prepared, meaning from what he has acquired during the assembly of friends.

Therefore, first one must praise the importance of the gathering, and then see what to acquire from that activity. It is as our sages said, “One should always praise the Creator, and then pray.” In other words, the beginning of the assembly, meaning the beginning of the discussions, which is the beginning of the assembly, should be about praising the society. Each and every one must try to provide reasons and explanations for their merit and importance. They should speak of nothing but the praise of society.

Finally, its praise should be disclosed by all the friends. Then they should say, “Now we are through with Stage One of the assembly of friends, and Stage Two begins.” Then each will state his mind about the actions we can take so that each and every one will be able to acquire the love of friends, *what each person can do to acquire love in his heart for each and every one in the society*.

And once Stage Two is completed—suggestions regarding what can be done in favor of society—begins Stage Three. This concerns *carrying out of the friends’ decisions about what should be done*.

And regarding the praise of society, in *Matan Torah (The Giving of the Torah)*, p 137, he introduces the matter of love of friends, that by bonding with the friends he can obtain the greatness of the Creator. The whole world is immersed in self-love, and he wishes to go by the path of bestowal. But this is against the common view because this is the nature we were born with due to the purpose of creation, which is, as was said, “His will to do good to His creatures.”

And all our power to resist it, to act to the contrary—that not only do we not want to receive for ourselves, but we rather want to give, which is considered that all our actions will be only

in order to bestow contentment upon our Maker—is because it is within the nature of bestowal that when one gives to an important person he enjoys it. It turns out that without pleasure, one cannot do anything because it is against nature.

However, we can *replace* the pleasure. This means that instead of receiving pleasure from an act of reception, we will wish to receive pleasure from an act of bestowal. This is called “equivalence of form.” We should say that as the Creator enjoys giving to the creatures, we should enjoy giving to the Creator.

Otherwise, meaning if we have no joy or pleasure while we give to the Creator, we are blemishing the equivalence of form. It is as our sages said, “There was no joy before Him as on the day when heaven and earth were created.” There was no joy before the Creator since the day the world was created like the joy that He is destined to rejoice with the righteous in the future (*The Zohar*, 1, 115).

Therefore, if we have no joy while we are keeping the commandments of the Creator, then if one aims in order to bestow, it is not considered equivalence of form because one can only be glad where there is pleasure. It turns out that if he has no delight or pleasure in giving to the Creator, it is still not regarded as equivalence of form, that he has room to receive the upper abundance, since he is still lacking the pleasure that the Creator has while giving to the creatures.

It therefore follows that the whole basis upon which we can receive delight and pleasure, and which is permitted for us to enjoy—and is even mandatory—is to enjoy an act of bestowal. Thus, there is one point we should work on—*appreciation of spirituality*. This is expressed in paying attention to whom I turn, with whom I speak, whose commandments I am keeping, and whose laws I am learning, meaning in seeking advice concerning how to appreciate the Giver of the Torah.

And before one obtains some illumination from above by himself, he should seek out like-minded people who are also seeking to enhance the importance of any contact with the Creator in whatever way. And when many people support it, everyone can receive assistance from his friend.

We should know that “Two is the least plural.” This means that if two friends sit together and contemplate how to enhance the importance of the Creator, they already have the strength to receive enhancement of the greatness of the Creator in the form of awakening from below. And for this act, the awakening from above follows, and they begin to have some sensation of the greatness of the Creator.

According to what is written, “In the multitude of people is the King’s glory,” it follows that the greater the number of the collective, the more effective is the power of the collective. In other words, they produce a stronger atmosphere of greatness and importance of the Creator. At that time, each person’s body feels that he regards anything that he wishes to do for holiness—meaning to bestow upon the Creator—as a great fortune, that he has been privileged with being among people who have been rewarded with serving the King. At that time, every little thing he does fills him with joy and pleasure that now he has something with which to serve the King.

To the extent that the society regards the greatness of the Creator with their thoughts during the assembly, each according to his degree originates the importance of the Creator in him. Thus, he can walk all day in the world of gladness and joy, meaning he enjoys every little thing that he does concerning the work of the Creator. This is so because if he remembers that he should contemplate spirituality for even a minute, he immediately says, “I am already grateful and praising and glorifying the Creator,” since he believes that now the Creator has called him and wishes to speak with him.

And when a person imagines that the King is calling him and tells him that he wants to play with him, what joy would he experience then, and what high spirits would he have? Certainly, in that uplifted state, he would not think any trifle thoughts. He would only be a little embarrassed at not knowing the King's laws and manners—how to behave when the King speaks to him.

But he considers what he does know how to do for the King as a great fortune, since he nonetheless knows some rules by which to keep the King's commandments, which he learned at school when he was young. And now that he has grown and wishes to serve the King, he will certainly miss the knowledge of the King's laws.

It turns out that his concern is that he does not know what gives the King more pleasure, which act or which intention. And other than that, he lives in a world that is all good. While gathering for the assembly, this is what the society should think, and to speak of the greatness of society, as it is written, "One should always praise the Creator, and then pray."

It is the same with the society. When we wish to demand something of the society, and this is called "praying," we must first establish the merit of the society, and then "pray," meaning demand of the society to give us what we want from it.

Thus, first we need to see what the society has, which possessions they have, which we can receive from them by bonding with them. Perhaps we do not need the possession that the society has, but moreover, we run as far away from it as possible.

Accordingly, when one comes to the assembly of friends, he should always see whether or not the friends have the goal that he craves, that each of them has some grip on that goal. And he thinks that by everyone bonding together for one goal, each will have his own share, as well as the shares of the whole of society.

It follows that each member of the society will have the same strength as the whole of society together.

Each one should seriously consider the purpose of the gathering—that it should bring about a sensation, following the assembly of friends, that each one has something in his hand which he can put in his vessels, and that he is not in the form of, “But do not put any in your vessels.” Each one should consider that if he does not sit especially attentive during the assembly, not only does he himself lose, but he also corrupts the whole of society.

This is similar to what is written in the Midrash (*Vayikra Rabba*, Chapter 4): “Two people went inside a boat. One of them began to drill beneath him making a hole in the boat. He told him, ‘Why are you drilling?’ And he replied, ‘Why should you care; I am drilling under me, not under you?’ So he replied, ‘You fool! Both of us will drown together with the boat!’”

And after they speak of the importance and necessity of the society, there begins the order of correction—how and with what can we reinforce the society to become one bloc, as it is written, “And there Israel camped before the mount” (Exodus 19), and it was explained, “as one man and one heart.” The order should be that anyone with a suggestion that can improve the love of friends, it should be discussed, *but it must be accepted by all the friends, so there is no issue of coercion here.*

Thus far we discussed the connection between man and man, which is to bring us the connection between man and God, as it is written in *Matan Torah (The Giving of the Torah)*, p 137. It follows that as they speak of the importance of love of friends, and that its whole importance is that it leads us to the love of the Creator, they should also think that the love of friends should bring us into the importance of the love of the Creator.

WHO CAUSES THE PRAYER

Article No. 18, 1985-86

Our sages wrote (*Mesechet Berachot* 32), “One should always praise the Creator and then pray.” This shows us that one should believe that when a person comes to a state where he feels his fault in the work of the Creator—when he feels that his faith is not as it should be, that is, able to believe that the Creator is benevolent, and this feeling, when he sees that he cannot thank the Creator and say wholeheartedly, “Blessed is He who said, ‘Let there be the world,’” meaning that he so enjoys the world that he thanks the Creator for having created the world so he has what to enjoy—if he doesn’t feel the delight and pleasure that can be received, it is hard for him to be thankful for it. And this pains him that he cannot praise the Creator for the world He has created and say wholeheartedly, “Blessed is He who said, ‘Let there be the world.’”

And that deficiency pains him, meaning he says that this feeling must have come to him because he is remote from the Creator, meaning immersed in self-love. This causes him to part from the Creator, meaning that he doesn’t feel the greatness of the Creator because the Creator is hidden from him.

And therefore, he cannot see the truth, as it is written, “For it is your life and the length of your days.” And also, he cannot feel the importance of the Torah, as it is written, “For this is your wisdom and your understanding in the eyes of the nations, who will hear all these statutes and say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’”

When a person introspects and thinks, “Where is this excitement that the nations are saying about us, ‘Surely this ... is a wise and understanding people,’ because of the Torah, because we keep what is written, ‘Observe and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the eyes of the nations.’ So why don’t I feel the importance of Torah and *Mitzvot*?”

In that state of reflection, when he feels how remote he is from any reverence for the work of the Creator, he begins to awaken and think, “Something must be done. I cannot stay in that state of lowliness for the rest of my life.” Certainly, this is the time when a person begins to pray to the Creator to bring him closer to Him and to help him from above, as our sages said, “He who comes to be purified is aided.”

In other words, He should lift the concealment of the greatness and importance of *Kedusha* [holiness] from him, so he can overcome all the ignoble thoughts and desires that come from self-love, and that all his concerns will be only about how he can do something for the *Kedusha*, called “in order to bestow contentment upon his Maker.” And certainly, this can only be to the extent that he believes in the greatness and importance of the Creator.

Thus, he asks the Creator to open his eyes so he will see and feel the greatness and importance of the Creator, as it is written (Psalm 88), “Lord, why do You reject my soul? Why do You hide Your face from me?” And then it is a prayer from the bottom of the heart. That is, at that time, a person wants the Creator to heal his heart, as it is written (Psalm 147), “Who heals the brokenhearted and binds up their sadness.”

And then one probably thinks that the awakening for the prayer that the Creator will bring him closer to Him came from himself, and he awaits the Creator’s salvation, that He will help him by granting his prayer. That is, that He will bring him closer to Him, as he is praying now because now he feels His lack, which he didn’t feel before.

Therefore, when a person doesn’t receive from the Creator what he thinks the Creator should give him, he becomes angry that the Creator is not granting his prayer. As for other people, he believes that He is not bringing them closer because they have

no desire for spirituality. But he is not like other people, who have no affinity to the Creator, so the Creator doesn't need to bring them closer anyway.

But this man, who prayed for the Creator to help him come closer to Him, the Creator Himself can see that he is not like other people. Rather, he is higher than the populace; he understands the world and its purpose, and he contemplates the purpose for which he was created and what he must achieve. But when he looks at other people, he sees their lowliness—that all their thoughts and actions are for their own benefit—and he feels that he understands differently because his mind and qualities are more virtuous and worthy than those of other people.

Moreover, sometimes he sees that he is even more virtuous than the people in his group. He sees that they occasionally think of spirituality, but he—his every thought and all his desires are only about spirituality. He always wants to exit self-love, and all his requests of the Creator are only for Him to deliver him from this lowliness. And he doesn't see that his friends are equally serious, thinking only about spirituality.

For this reason, he is upset with the Creator for not granting his prayer, leaving him in his current state like the rest of the friends, and is not considerate with him, meaning with his prayer, which is truly prayed from the bottom of the heart. Thus, regarding the granting of the prayer, he finds a fault above.

And he asks himself, "But it is written, 'For you hear the prayer of every mouth,' and 'Every mouth' means that the whole mouth should ask the prayer, meaning that his whole body demands that the Creator will help him. But as for the rest of the people, their prayers are not answered because it is not with 'every mouth.'"

Baal HaSulam said about it, "It is written, 'And it shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer, and while they are still

speaking, I will hear.” He interpreted that when a person feels his fault and prays for the Creator to help him, it is not because a person feels his fault, and this gives him reason to pray. Rather, the reason is that *he is favored by the Creator, and the Creator wishes to bring him near.*

At that time, the Creator sends him the sensation of his own fault and calls upon him to join Him. In other words, *it is the Creator who brings him near by giving him a desire to turn to the Creator and to speak to the Creator.* It follows that he already had the granting of the prayer *even before he prayed.* That is, the Creator brought him closer by enabling him to speak to the Creator. This is called, “Before they call, I will answer.” That is, the Creator brought that person near Him before the thought appeared in the man’s mind that he should pray to the Creator.

But why did the Creator choose him and give him the call to come to Him and pray? To this, we have no answer. Instead, we must believe above reason that this is so. This is what we call, “Guidance of Private Providence.” One mustn’t say, “I’m waiting for the Creator to give me awakening from above, and then I will be able to work in the work of holiness.” Baal HaSulam said that in regard to the future, a person must believe in reward and punishment, meaning he must say (*Avot*, Chapter 1), “If I am not for me who is for me, and when I am for me, what am I, and if not now, then when?”

Thus, one mustn’t wait another moment. Instead, he should say, “If not now, then when?” And he must not wait for a better time, so “Then I will get up and do the work of holiness.” Rather, it is as our sages said (*Avot*, Chapter 2), “Do not say, ‘I will study when I have time,’ lest you will not have time.”

But after the fact, said Baal HaSulam, one must believe in private Providence—that it was not the person who called upon the Creator, but the Creator who called upon the person and

told him, “I want you to speak to Me.” It follows that the reason for the nearing did not come from the individual but from the Creator. For this reason, one mustn’t think that the Creator did not hear the prayer. Rather, He brought him near even before he turned to the Creator to bring him near Him.

This is called, “Before they call, I will answer.” It follows from the above that if a person has awakened to sense his ignoble state, it did not come from the individual. Rather, the Creator sent him this feeling so he would ask to be brought closer. Therefore, as soon as one has a thought that he is remote from the Creator and wishes to pray to the Creator to bring him closer, *he mustn’t pray until he first thanks the Creator for having called upon him to bring him closer.*

The Creator wants man to pray to Him. And when a person does self-analysis into why he suddenly remembered that there is spirituality and that he should try to obtain something in spirituality, if he immediately says that the Creator sent him this thought, then he can pray.

This is the meaning of what our sages said, “One should always praise the Creator.” In other words, as soon as one begins to contemplate his situation concerning spirituality, he should promptly praise and thank the Creator for having given him the thought and desire for spirituality. Afterwards, when he knows that the Creator is calling him, he immediately begins to thank and praise the King for having brought him closer. This is when he can pray for his situation, since he sees that he is lacking Torah and doesn’t know any distinction between true and false, and he prays for the Creator to show him the path of truth.

Now we can understand what our sages said (*Midrash Rabba, Toldot*, 63, Mark 5), “‘And the Lord answered him.’ Rabbi Levi said, ‘There is an allegory about a prince who was striving to take a pound of gold from his father. He was striving from within and

he was striving from without, since in Arabic, ‘striving’ means ‘asking.’” He interprets there the gifts of priesthood, that ‘taking a pound means that his father, too, wished to give it, and was striving opposite him to hurry his taking.’”

From what we have explained, the reason that a person wants to draw near comes from the Creator. The Creator does not wait for a person to wake up, but awakens the person. Afterwards, one prays that the Creator will bring him closer. We can understand it with the allegory that he gives about the verse, “And ... answered him,” which means that Isaac prayed to the Creator.

And he gave an allegory about that, meaning that his father, that is, the Creator, conspires from within, meaning that his father gave him a thought and desire to pray to Him, and afterwards the prince conspires from without. In other words, the people of Israel are princes, and they are standing outside the King’s palace and wish to draw near the Creator, meaning enter the King’s palace. This means that his father in heaven started first.

CONCERNING ABOVE REASON

Article No. 21, 1985-86

Concerning above reason, we should use this tool both between friends and between an individual and the Creator. However, there is a difference between them. Between an individual and the Creator, this tool must remain forever. In other words, one must never underestimate this tool, called, “faith above reason.” But between friends, if he can see his friend’s virtue within reason, it is all the better.

And yet, the nature of the body is to the contrary—it always sees his friend’s fault and not his virtues. This is why our sages

said, “Judge every person favorably.” In other words, although within reason you see that your friend is wrong, you should still try to judge him favorably. And this can be above reason. That is, although logically he cannot justify him, above reason he can justify him nonetheless.

However, if he can justify him within reason, this is certainly better. If, for example, he sees that the friends are at a higher degree than his own, he sees within reason how he is in utter lowliness compared to the friends, that all the friends keep the schedule of arriving at the seminary, and take greater interest in all that is happening among the friends, to help anyone in any way they can, and immediately implement every advice for the work from the teachers in actual fact, etc., it certainly affects him and gives him strength to overcome his laziness, both when he needs to wake up before dawn and when he is awakened.

Also, during the lesson, his body is more interested in the lessons, since otherwise he will lag behind his friends. Also, with anything that concerns *Kedusha* [holiness], he must take it more seriously because the body cannot tolerate lowliness. Moreover, when his body looks at the friends, it sees within reason that they are all working for the Creator, and then his body, too, lets him work for the Creator.

And the reason why the body helps him shift to in order to bestow is as mentioned—the body is unwilling to tolerate lowliness. Instead, everybody has pride, and he is unwilling to accept a situation where his friend is greater than him. Thus, when he sees that his friends are at a higher level than his own, this causes him to ascend in every way.

This is the meaning of what our sages said, “Counters’ envy increases wisdom.” In other words, when all the friends look at the society as being at a high level, both in thoughts and in actions, it is natural that each and every one must raise his degree to a higher level than he has by the qualities of his own body.

This means that even if innately he has no craving for great desires or is not intensely attracted to honor, still, through envy, he can acquire additional powers that he doesn't have in his own nature. Instead, the force of the quality of envy in him has procreated new powers within him, which exist in the society. And through them, he has received those new qualities, meaning powers that were not installed in him by his progenitors. Thus, now he has new qualities that society has procreated in him.

It turns out that a person has qualities that his parents bequeathed to their children, and he has qualities that he acquired from the society, which is a new possession. And this comes to him only through bonding with the society and the envy that he feels toward the friends when he sees that they have better qualities than his own. It motivates him to acquire their good qualities, which he doesn't have and of which he is jealous.

Thus, through the society, he gains new qualities that he adopts by seeing that they are at a higher degree than his, and he is envious of them. This is the reason why now he can be greater than when he didn't have a society, since he acquires new powers through the society.

However, this can be said if he truly sees the friends at a higher degree than his own. But at the same time, the evil inclination shows him the lowliness of the society and makes him think, "On the contrary, this society that you wish to bond with is not for you. They are many degrees below your own. Thus, from such a society, not only will you gain nothing, but rather, even the inborn forces that you have, which are small, are larger than those within this society.

Thus, you should in fact stay away from them. And if you do want to bond with them, at least see that they all obey you, meaning follow your understanding of how the society should

behave: how they sit when they gather, how they study, and how they pray. In other words, either they are all serious, and God forbid that they should even smile or ever discuss the friends' worldly matters—if they make a living or how they make a living, easily or with difficulties, if he has a job where he doesn't suffer or has a difficult landlord who gives him a hard time, or if his coworkers don't mock him for being orthodox, etc.

All those matters are of no importance and it is a waste thinking about them, for they are only corporeal matters. He, on the other hand, came to partake in an assembly of Israel for a noble purpose, which is to be a true servant of the Creator.”

It follows that when he wishes to forget about his corporeality—when in fact, his corporeality deeply concerns him and he lets it go and does not want to remember—the friends come and begin to discuss their friends' corporeality. And he does not care about his friends' corporeality, since now he wants spirituality, “So why are the friends suddenly messing up my mind with mundane stuff which is of no concern to me at all? Is this why I want to forget about my corporeality, to make time to think about the friends' corporeality, can this be?” Thus, “You'd better listen to me and stay away from them,” his body tells him, “And you will certainly be more successful. Why mess up your mind with such nonsense?”

Therefore, when the body shows him the inferiority of his friends, what can he answer his body when it comes with arguments of a righteous one? In other words, the body doesn't advise him to turn away from the society because the body is suggesting that he be wicked. On the contrary, the body tells him, “By staying away from the society, you will be righteous and you will think only about your spirituality, and when necessary, of your corporeality, as well.”

Therefore, if a person believes that without a society it is impossible to advance and achieve love of the Creator, since

this is the springboard for exiting self-love and entering love of the Creator, he has no other choice but to go above reason. He should tell his body, “The fact that you see that they are not really at the degree of craving to attain the love of the Creator as you desire it—meaning, since you are my body, I see in you that you are holier than the rest of the bodies of the friends, since you wish to be a servant of the Creator.

“I see that you are advising me to leave the friends because their bodies already display their inferiority and they haven’t the strength to conceal their improper traits, since people normally hide the evil in them from one another so that others will respect them because they have prominent qualities. But here, their evil is so great that they are unable to overcome the evil and hide it so that others will not see them. Thus, from my perspective, they are certainly ignoble.

“However, without a society I will not gain anything, despite all my good qualities. Thus, above reason, I will keep what our sages said (*Avot*, Chapter 4), ‘Be very, very humble.’ In other words, I must go above reason and believe that they are standing at a higher degree than mine. And then, to the extent of my faith, I will be able to receive encouragement and strength from the society and receive from them what the society can give.”

It follows that the only reason he is accepting the love of friends above reason is because of necessity, for lack of other options, but within reason he sees that he is right.

However, it is precisely here, meaning concerning friends, that *within reason is more important than the degree of above reason*. This is so because in truth, when a person wishes to bring himself closer to *Dvekut* [adhesion] with the Creator, through the work that he wishes to do only in order to bestow, the evil begins to appear in him. And the matter of recognition of evil is not an intellectual matter. Rather, it is a sensation in the heart.

This means that he should feel about himself that he is worse and lower than the whole world. And if he hasn't come to feel it, but thinks that there is someone who is still worse than him, then he probably has not obtained recognition of evil. In other words, the evil is still hidden in his heart and still hasn't been disclosed in him.

This is so because it is possible to see evil only when he has some good. For example, it is impossible to detect any dirt in the house if it is dark. But when you turn on a lamp, you can see that there is dirt there.

Also, if one does not do good deeds, does not engage in Torah and prayer, and wish to draw near the Creator, he has no light to illuminate his heart and to allow him to see the evil in his heart. It turns out that the reason why he is still not seeing that there is more evil in his heart than in all of the friends is that he needs more good. For this reason, he thinks that he is more virtuous than his friends.

It therefore turns out that his seeing that his friends are worse than he comes from his lack of the light that will shine for him, so he will see the evil in himself. Thus, the whole matter of evil that is in man is not in finding the evil, since everyone has this evil, called "will to receive in order to receive," which is self-love. Instead, the difference is entirely in the disclosure of the evil. In other words, not every person sees and feels that self-love is bad and harmful, since a person doesn't see that engagement in satisfying his will to receive, called "self-love," will harm him.

Yet, when he begins to do the holy work on the path of truth, meaning when he wishes to achieve *Dvekut* [adhesion] with the Creator, so all his actions will be for the Creator, by that he receives a little more light that shines for him each time, and then he begins to feel self-love as a bad thing.

It is a gradual process. Each time he sees that this is what obstructs him from achieving *Dvekut* with the Creator, he sees more clearly each time how it—the will to receive—is his real enemy, just as King Solomon referred to the evil inclination as “an enemy.” It is written about it, “If your enemy is hungry, feed him bread, for you will heap burning coals on his head.”

We therefore see that in truth, a person should feel that he is worse than others because this is indeed the truth. And we should also understand what our sages said, “Counters’ envy increases wisdom.” This is precisely within reason. But above reason, his friend’s merit is not evident enough to say that he is envious of his friend, so it would cause him to work and toil because his friend compels him, due to envy.

Baal HaSulam interpreted a phrase by Rabbi Yohanan, “The Creator saw that righteous were few. He stood and planted them in each and every generation,” as it is said, “For the pillars of the earth are the Lord’s, and He has set the world upon them.” RASHI interprets, “Spread them through all the generations,” to be a basis, sustenance, and a foundation for the existence of the world (*Yoma* 78b). “Few” means that they were growing fewer. Hence, what did He do? “He stood and planted them in each and every generation.” Thus, by planting them in each generation, they would multiply.

We should understand how they would multiply if He planted them in each and every generation. We should understand the difference between all the righteous being in a single generation, and being scattered through all the generations, as is understood from the words of RASHI’s commentary, that by spreading them throughout the generations the righteous would increase.

He, Baal HaSulam, said, “By having righteous in each generation, there will be room for people who do not have the innate qualities to achieve *Dvekut* with the Creator. However,

by bonding with the righteous that will be in each generation, through adhering to them, they will learn from their actions and will be able to acquire new qualities through the righteous that will be in each generation. This is why He spread the righteous in each generation, so that in this way the righteous will increase.”

And as was said, the same can be obtained by adhesion of friends—new qualities by which they will be qualified to achieve *Dveikut* with the Creator. And all this can be said while he sees the merits of the friends. At that time, it is relevant to say that he should learn from their actions. But when he sees that he is better qualified than they are, there is nothing he can receive from the friends.

This is why they said that when the evil inclination comes and shows him the lowliness of the friends, he should go above reason. But certainly, it would be better and more successful if he could see within reason that the friends are at a higher degree than his own. With that we can understand the prayer that Rabbi Elimelech had written for us, “*Let our hearts see the virtues of our friends, and not their faults.*”

However, between an individual and the Creator, it is a whole other matter. In other words, above reason is better. This means that if he takes upon himself faith above reason, his work is in the right direction. This is not so within reason, although a person’s intellect grasps differently. In other words, every person knows and understands that if he didn’t have to believe, but His Providence were revealed throughout the world, meaning to all the creatures, the whole world would certainly engage in Torah and *Mitzvot*, and there would be no place for secular people. Rather, everyone would be orthodox.

However, His Providence is not revealed to the lower ones. Instead, they must believe. Yet, faith is a difficult thing, since the Creator gave us intellect and reason to see each thing according

to our own eyes. We consider everything that concerns human relations according to our best judgment, and there is nothing that will give us distinctions except our minds, as our sages said, “A judge has only what his eyes see” (*Baba Batra* 131). It follows that we conduct all our matters within reason, not above reason.

And for this reason, when a person begins with the work of the Creator and he is told that he must assume faith above reason, he begins to think: “But I see that the Creator gave us reason so as to understand everything according to the intellect, meaning according to the way our minds grasp. Thus, how can I take upon myself something that is against my mind?” It is a very difficult thing for the body to understand that it is in its interest to do the work of holiness in above reason.

Above reason applies to both mind and heart. This is why not every person can enter the work of holiness in the form of bestowal, which is work above reason. Therefore, when teaching the rest of the world the work of the Creator, the order is as Maimonides said, that they begin in *Lo Lishma* [not for Her name] until they gain knowledge and acquire much wisdom, and then they are told that the essence of the work is in order to bestow, which is called, “work for the Creator.”

However, we should understand why above reason is better. The contrary seems to make more sense—that if serving the Creator were clothed within reason, more people would come and want to be servants of the Creator. Baal HaSulam said about it that one should not think that when the Creator gives us His work in the form of above reason, it is a low degree. Rather, we should believe that it is a very high degree, for only by that does one have a chance to be able to work in order to bestow. Otherwise, he would have to fall into in order to receive.

Therefore, although more people would be serving if the work had been within reason, they would never be able to

achieve *Dvekut* with the Creator, which is the work in order to bestow. Hence, although there would be an increase in quantity, in terms of quality, it would be impossible for man to be able to receive the delight and pleasure that the Creator wishes to give to the creatures, according to His desire—to do good to His creations.

Thus, for the delight and pleasure that the creatures will receive to be flawless, meaning to avoid having the bread of shame, there was the correction of the *Tzimtzum* [restriction]—that the upper abundance would not shine unless it was where there is equivalence of form. This is considered that the creatures receive the abundance in vessels of bestowal. And when there are no vessels of bestowal in the creatures, they must remain in the dark, which is called, “they will die without wisdom.”

However, we should know that although there is the light of Torah in *Lo Lishma*, as well, of which our sages said, “One should always engage in Torah and *Mitzvot* in *Lo Lishma* because from *Lo Lishma* we come to *Lishma*, since the light in it reforms him,” afterwards, one must reach *Lishma*. In other words, he should come to work above reason in mind and heart.

But between a man and his friend, if he can work in love of friends within reason, meaning if he tries to see the friends as being at a higher level of holiness than himself, this is certainly better. In other words, if he sees within reason that the friends are closer to *Dvekut* with the Creator than him, it is certainly better than if he had to believe above reason.

Thus, in truth, he sees that he is at a higher degree than the friends. Within reason, he always sees the friends as low. However, he believes above reason that he should say—because it is a *Mitzva* [commandment/good deed]—that he should believe that it is not as he sees it. Certainly, if he can see within reason that the friends are at degrees of holiness, it is all the better.

Similarly, we can interpret the verse (Samuel, 16:7), “But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for it is not as man sees, for man looks to the eyes, but the Lord looks to the heart.’”

We therefore see that when the Creator sent Samuel to anoint one of the sons of Yishai [Jesse], Samuel understood by what he saw in his eyes that Eliav, son of Yishai, was fit to be the king of Israel instead of King Saul, but the Creator disagreed with his perception. In the end, they brought David, who was herding the cattle, and David was red-headed with fair eyes and good appearance, “And the Lord said, ‘Arise, anoint him; for this is he.’”

What does that teach us? There are two things that we see here:

1) From the perspective of Samuel, he understands Eliav’s virtues—according to his mind—as being fit to be king over Israel. But the Creator told him, “No, do not follow your own reason,” since when concerning the Creator, reason is worthless. Rather, since the Creator wanted to enthrone a king, this is called “between an individual and the Creator,” where there is no room for reason, “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are My ways your ways.” Rather, what did the Creator tell him? “For it is not as man sees, for man looks to the eyes, and the Lord looks to the heart.”

According to the above, we can interpret that “For man looks to the eyes” is good between a person and his friend. In that case, it is good if one can go within reason, that it is in accord with what one sees.

This is not so with, “And the Lord looks to the heart.” In other words, concerning matters of the Creator, it is above reason and one must not look according to his own eyes, but above

reason. Thus, two discernments must be made here: 1) Between a person and the Creator, above reason is better; 2) between a person and his friend, within reason is better.

This is why the Creator told him, “Do not look at his appearance,” since following his eyes is good between a man and his friend. If you can see the friend’s merits within reason, it is all the better. But this is not so here, when I want to anoint him as king. This operation belongs to Me. I want him as king. This is called “between a person and the Creator.” Here, the proper work is *above reason*, since precisely in this way it is possible to achieve reception in order to bestow. Otherwise, he will fall into receiving in order to receive, which causes separation and remoteness from *Kedusha* [holiness].

However, here arises a question, after one has decided to go above reason and not look at all the questions that the body begins to ask. When he begins to work on the path of bestowal and faith above reason, and overcomes the obstacles—the questions that the body brings him from the world over—and closes his eyes and doesn’t wish to look at anything that contradicts the mind and heart, but has decided to go only above reason, after this decision, sometimes he suddenly brings great excuses that the body must agree with.

Thus, he sees that now he is going within reason. But what can he do when now he sees, through the excuses he received from above, that he tells himself, “What can I do now that I have no place where I can work above reason? I see now that everything I do in order to bestow is how it should be.”

Thus, he no longer has any questions about serving the Creator, which force him to work above reason. But since the work is primarily above reason, what can he do when he is in such a state?

Baal HaSulam said that when a person is rewarded with some disclosure from above and now he feels that it is worthwhile

being a servant of the Creator, it follows that thus far he had work in the form of above reason: the body disagreed with this work and he always had to overcome, and needed the Creator to give him strength above reason. But now he no longer needs the help of the Creator, since now he feels that he has a basis on which to build his structure. In other words, he already has support on which to rely.

Thus, now he is blemishing the faith that he was using before, since now he can already say, “Thank God I am rid of the burden of faith, which was a burden and load to me.” But now I already have a basis within reason because now I have received some awakening from above so that the body agrees that it is worthwhile to keep Torah and *Mitzvot*. It turns out that by that he is blemishing the faith.

And Baal HaSulam said that at that time, one must say, “Now I see that the real way is actually to go above reason. And the evidence of that is the fact that now I have been rewarded with some illumination from above, only because I have taken it upon myself to go above reason. This is why I was rewarded with the Creator bringing me a little closer to Him and giving me some awakening from above.”

And this illumination that he has now received gives him an answer to all the questions. It turns out that this testifies to the above reason. Thus, what should I do now so I will continue with above reason? There is only to reinforce and to start looking for ways to dress his work in above reason.

It turns out that by that, he did not blemish his faith at all, since he was walking in it before he was rewarded with any illumination from above, since even now he is not receiving the illumination as a foundation on which to build the structure of his work. Rather, he is taking the illumination as a *testimony* that he is on the right track, that he is in faith above reason. Only in

this form of work does the Creator bring a person closer to Him and gives him room to draw nearer to Him, since this nearing will not let him fall into the vessels of reception, which are called “within reason,” since the Creator sees that he is trying to go only above reason.

It follows from all the above that concerning above reason, there is a difference between a person-and-the-Creator and a person-and-his-friend. Between a person and his friend, if he can see the friends’ merits within reason it is better. But if within reason he sees only the friends’ faults, he has no choice but to go above reason and say, “What I see, hear, and feel is all wrong and untrue. It is impossible that I was mistaken about the friends I have chosen to bond with, meaning that I miscalculated.

“That is, I thought that I would grow richer in spirituality through them, since they had possessions that I did not. Hence, if I were to bond with them, I could rise to a higher degree than I thought. But now I see that in fact, I am discerning otherwise. And I heard that Baal HaSulam said that *the only thing that can help a person out of self-love and be rewarded with the love of the Creator is the love of friends*. Hence, I have no choice but to bond with those friends, although in my view, I would be better off staying away from them and avoid bonding with them.

“However, I have no choice and I must believe above reason that indeed, all the friends are at a high degree, but I cannot see their virtue with my eyes.” This is the reason why he must believe above reason. But when he sees the merit of the friends within reason, he can certainly derive great benefits from the friends. But what can he do? He has no choice.

However, it is a different order between a person and the Creator. In a place where one can go above reason, it is better. Therefore, where one can be assisted from within reason, being rewarded with some illumination from above, then he can say,

“Now I see that it is worthwhile being a servant of the Creator because I feel a good taste in the work.”

It follows that he took this feeling—that he finds meaning in the work—as a basis and foundation upon which to build his Judaism. And now that he understands with his reason that it is worthwhile to keep Torah and *Mitzvot*, his whole foundation is built on this condition. This means that when he finds meaning in the work, he should obey the voice of the Creator. Thus, if he does not find meaning in the work, he cannot keep the *Mitzvot* of the Creator.

It is known that assuming the kingdom of heaven must be done “With all your heart and with all your soul.” In other words, even if He takes one’s soul from him, meaning even if he has no livelihood, not even *Nefesh*, he is still committed to being a servant of the Creator and to not present any conditions before the Creator, telling Him, “If you do as I wish, according to what I understand that I need—meaning that I feel a lack in this, and if You satisfy my need—I promise to be a servant of the Creator. But if You do not satisfy all my wishes—those I understand that I need—I cannot take upon myself everything that You command me through Moses.”

However, one should assume the burden of the kingdom of heaven without any conditions, meaning even above reason. Moreover, one must say, “Our having to work above reason is not because the Creator cannot give us reason.” Rather, we must believe that it is all to our benefit. It turns out that between a person and the Creator we should try to keep it above reason, and if he receives some reason, he should do as mentioned above.

ONE'S GREATNESS DEPENDS ON THE MEASURE OF ONE'S FAITH IN THE FUTURE

Article No. 9, 1986-87

It is written in *The Zohar* (*BeShalach* [When Pharaoh Sent], p 64, and in the *Sulam* Commentary, Item 216), “‘Then shall Moses ... sing.’ It should have said, ‘Sang.’ And it replies, ‘But this thing depends on the future, that he complemented for that tie and complemented for the future, when Israel praises this singing in the future.’ ‘This singing’ is in female form [in Hebrew], but it should have said, ‘This song,’ in male form [in Hebrew]. And it replies, ‘This singing is that the queen praises the King.’ Rabbi Yehuda said, ‘Thus, it is the singing of the queen to the King, so why does it say, ‘Moses and the children of Israel’? After all, the queen should have been the one who is praising.’ It replies, ‘Happy are Moses and Israel, for they know how to properly praise the King for the queen.’”

We should understand the answer that he gives about what is written in future form, that it refers to the future. What does it come to teach us in the work? We should also understand the answer that he is giving about why it writes “singing” in female form, which interprets the intention to *Malchut*, meaning that *Malchut* is praising the King, about which Rabbi Yehuda asked. Thus, if his intention is the *Malchut*, why does it say, “Moses and the children of Israel”? For this reason, he must interpret his intention as being for Moses and the children of Israel, who know how to praise the King for the *Malchut*. We should also understand the meaning of Moses and Israel having to praise the King for the *Malchut*, and why they do not have to praise the King for themselves, but for *Malchut*.

It is known that Moses is called “the loyal shepherd.” Baal HaSulam interpreted that Moses was providing the people of

Israel with faith, and faith is called *Malchut* [kingship]. In other words, he instilled fear of heaven, called “kingdom of heaven,” into the people of Israel. This is why Moses is called “the loyal shepherd,” after the faith. It is written about it, “And they believed in the Lord and in his servant, Moses,” meaning for Moses having instilled in them faith in the Creator.

It is known that one cannot live out of negativity, but out of positivity. This is so because “provision” refers to what a person receives and *enjoys receiving*. This comes to us from the purpose of creation, called “His desire to do good to His creations.” Therefore, a person must receive delight and pleasure so as to have something with which to delight one’s body. This is called “positivity,” meaning a filling. And with this filling, he fulfills his needs.

But a person also needs a lack. Otherwise, there is no place in which the light of life can enter. A lack is called “a *Kli*” [a vessel]. This means that if one has no *Kelim* [vessels], he cannot receive anything. A lack is called “a desire,” meaning that he has a desire for something and he feels that he is lacking this thing and wishes to fulfill the need. To the extent that he feels its absence and to the extent that he needs to satisfy his need, this is the measure of his lack. In other words, a great lack or a small lack depends on the measure of one’s sense of necessity to satisfy that need.

This means that if a person comes to feel that he is lacking something, and he feels that feeling in his every organ, yet he doesn’t have a strong desire to satisfy his need, there are many reasons why he doesn’t have such a great desire to fulfill his need.

1. He told his friends what he needs and he feels the necessity for it. However, the friends made him see that what he needs is unattainable. So his friends influenced him with their views that he must accept his

situation. They weakened his strength to overcome so he can prevail over the obstacles on his way to obtaining what he wants. In consequence, the need and craving weakened, too, since he sees that he will never obtain what he wants. For this reason, meaning because he sees that it is utterly impossible that he will ever fulfill his need, this is the reason why he doesn't obtain his goal—it causes him to lessen his need. It turns out that his great desire has waned due to despair.

2. Sometimes he doesn't even tell his friends what he wants; he only hears from friends who were talking to each other. And he heard that they have already given up, and that affects him, too. In other words, their despair affects him and he loses the enthusiasm that he had for achieving *Dvekut* [adhesion] as soon as possible. Thus, he loses that willpower.
3. And sometimes, one thinks for himself, without any slander from the outside, but sees that each time he wishes to draw near to *Kedusha* [holiness], when he begins to analyze, he realizes the opposite, that he is regressing instead of moving forward. And this causes him to lose his strength for the work.

It turns out that then he collapses under his load. He has nothing from which to receive sustenance because he sees only negativity and darkness. Thus, he loses the spirit of life that he had when he seemingly had some livelihood, called “reviving his soul.” And now he feels spiritually dead, meaning he cannot make a single movement in the work, just as if he were actually dead.

This means that even though now he sees the truth, meaning the recognition of evil, it is negative, and from that one cannot receive any livelihood, since *provision of the body is specifically from positivity*. Therefore, one must walk on the right line for

two reasons: 1) to keep his desire from waning when he hears slander; 2) to receive vitality, which is specifically from positivity, meaning that it is an important thing and that there is a question of wholeness here.

However, it is difficult to understand how, when he criticizes his work-order and sees that his being immersed in self-love is the truth, how can he be told to walk on the right line, which is called “wholeness”? After all, as far as he can see, when he judges honestly, it is a total lie.

It is known that general and particular are equal. This means that the individual follows the same order that applies to the collective. In regard to the collective, it was given to us to believe in the coming of the Messiah (in the prayer, “I Believe”), “I believe in the coming of the Messiah. And though he may be delayed, I await his arrival still.”

Hence, one must never give up and say, “I see that I am incapable of obtaining *Dvekut* [adhesion] with the Creator.” It is considered that he goes out of the exile—in the nations of the world, called “self-love”—and comes under the authority of *Kedusha* [holiness], and will come to correct the root of his soul and cling to the Life of Lives.

It follows that if one believes in redemption in general, that He will come, he should believe that redemption will come in particular. Hence, one should receive wholeness for himself in relation to the future in a way that one should depict for himself the measure of goodness, pleasure, and joy that he will receive when he receives fulfillment for all his needs. And this certainly gives him emotional satisfaction and energy to work to obtain this goal that he hopes to achieve.

It turns out that first one must depict for himself what he is hoping for, what will make him happy and joyful if he obtains what he anticipates. However, first one should thoroughly

know the goal that he wants to obtain. And if one does not pay close attention and much scrutiny to what he expects from his life, meaning he should tell himself, “Now I have decided what I want, after analyzing the joy in life that can be obtained in the world.”

If he has the opportunity to obtain it, then he will have the strength and wisdom to say, “Now I can thank the Creator for having created His world.” Now he can wholeheartedly say, “Blessed is He who said, ‘Let there be the world,’ since I feel the delight and pleasure, that it is truly worthwhile for me and for all creations to receive this delight and pleasure that I have now received from the purpose of creation, called ‘His desire to do good to His creations.’”

And although he is still far from obtaining the goal, if he nonetheless knows for certain from what he can receive his future happiness, it is as it is written (*Avot*, Chapter 6), “Rabbi Meir says, ‘Anyone who engages in Torah *Lishma* [for Her name] is rewarded with a great many things. Moreover, the whole world is worthwhile for him. He is let into the secrets of the Torah and he becomes like an everlasting spring.’”

And when he pays attention to that—to what he can achieve—meaning when he feels the importance of the goal and depicts for himself the happiness that he will achieve, the joy that he will experience when he attains it is unimaginable.

Thus, to the extent that he believes in the importance of the goal, and to the extent that he believes that “Though he may be delayed, I await his arrival still,” he can receive the filling of the light of life from the future goal. It is known that there is inner light and there is surrounding light. Baal HaSulam once interpreted “inner light” as referring to what one receives in the present, and “surrounding light” as the light that is destined to shine, but which one has not yet attained. However, the

surrounding light shines in the present, too, to the extent of his confidence that he will attain it.

He said that it is like a person who bought merchandise from the market. Since many people brought this merchandise to the market it had little value, so all the merchants wanted to sell the merchandise at any price. But there were no buyers because everyone was afraid to buy, perhaps it might grow even cheaper.

Then one man bought all the merchandise for a very low price. When he came home and told them what happened in the market, they all laughed at him: "What did you do? Of course all the merchants wanted to sell all the merchandise that they had in stock. This will only make everything cheaper, and as a result, you will lose all your money."

But he insisted, saying, "Now I am happier than ever, since I will profit from this merchandise not as before, when I knew I could profit twenty percent from the merchandise. Instead, I'll make a five hundred percent profit. However, I will not sell it now. I will put it in storage and I will take it to the market in three years, for by then this merchandise will not be found here in the country, and I will get the price that I want."

It turns out that if he calculates how much he has earned in the present, meaning this year, then he has nothing. This is considered that he has nothing in the present with which to be happy.

But this is an allegory about the inner light, which shines in the present. However, the surrounding light, called "light that shines specifically in the future," shines for him in the present, too, to the extent of his belief that in the future he will receive the full reward he hopes for. And then his joy will be complete. And now he is receiving joy and high spirits from the fact that he will receive in the future.

This explains the above allegory, that this merchant was ridiculed by everyone for buying the merchandise in the market precisely when it was irrelevant, when no one wanted to buy it. Yet he bought it as something that others left because it was worthless, and now he is delighted because he is one hundred percent sure that in three years this merchandise will not be found anywhere and then he will get rich. And so, he enjoys in the present what will happen in the future.

It follows that to the extent that he believes that it will come to him—and does not despair about the future—as it is written, “Though he may be delayed, I await his arrival still,” he can enjoy in the present what will come in the future.

Thus, when a person is told that even though he walked on the left line—meaning criticized and saw that he was in utter baseness—and he sees this truth, since he doesn’t wish to deceive himself and justify his thoughts and actions, but seeks the truth and doesn’t care if the truth is bitter, yet he wishes to reach the goal for which he was born, but because of all this truth he cannot go on living, since it is impossible to live without pleasure, called “vitality” and “life.” To live, one needs light, which revives a person. And by living, it is possible to work and to reach the goal. For this reason, he must then shift to the right line, called “wholeness.”

However, this wholeness—from which he now receives the liveliness that sustains his body—should be built on a basis of truth. And this brings up the question, “How can he receive wholeness when he sees the truth: he is in the lowest state, immersed in self-love from head to toe and without a spark of bestowal?”

To that he should say, “Everything I see is truth.” However, it is so from the perspective of the inner light. This means that in the present, he is in lowliness and has nothing from which to

receive joy and life. But with respect to the surrounding light, which is the future, he believes that “Though he may be delayed, I await his arrival still.”

It turns out that through the surrounding light that shines in relation to the future, he can draw it so it will shine in the present. And to the extent of the faith and confidence that he has in the coming of the Messiah on the personal level, he can draw vitality and joy so it will shine in the present.

It follows that now that he is walking on the right line to receive wholeness, it is the real truth, since the surrounding light shines in the present. And besides, it is a path of truth, and since by that he believes in the coming of the Messiah on the personal level, it is a great remedy that through the commandment of faith, the future will draw nearer to the present in him. This means that the surrounding light will be internal, and this is considered that the light actually dresses in the present. It is called, “the surrounding will become internal.”

Thus, from here—meaning from faith, from believing that in the end he will reach the goal, even though reason shows him each time that he is retreating from the goal and not advancing—he overcomes and goes above reason. And then faith itself accumulates each time in the form of “each penny joins into a great amount,” until he is rewarded with permanent whole faith, which is the obtaining of the light of *Hassadim* in illumination of *Hochma*, as it is written in the *Sulam* Commentary.

Now we can understand what we asked about why *The Zohar* explains that this is why it is written, “Shall ... sing,” in future tense. By that, it implies that Israel are destined to praise this singing in the future. What does that come to teach us in the work? In matters of work, we should know what we have now, in the present, and to know what we must do. Thus, what can we learn about what the future holds?

As we explained, we must walk on the right line, which is wholeness, and receive vitality from it, because it is impossible to live in negativity. Hence, there is advice to feel wholeness from what will be in the future. This is the meaning of what the righteous call, “singing in the future.” In other words, now—in the present—they are singing about what they will receive in the future. This means that to the extent that they picture the delight and pleasure they will receive in the future, they can feel it in the present, provided they have faith that there is a future, meaning that in the future everyone will be corrected.

This is something one can already be thankful for in the present. To the extent that he feels it, this is the measure of the praise that he can give in the present. And besides receiving life in the present from positivity, he gains from the goal in general being important for him because he must picture for himself the delight and pleasure in store for the creatures to receive.

And each time he contemplates the matter, he gradually sees a bit more of what he can receive in the future, meaning what has been prepared for us by the purpose of creation. And although he sees that in his current state he is miles away from the goal, this depends on the measure of his faith in the goal, as in the example of the allegory above. This follows the rule, “All that is certain to be collected is deemed collected” (*Yevamot*, 38).

With the above, we can understand what *The Zohar* explains—that the reason why it writes “Shall ... sing,” in future tense, is to imply that Israel are destined to praise this singing in the future. This is so because we must know that, so we can receive joy and vitality in the present from what will be in the future. By that, we can sing in the present as if now we were receiving all the delight and pleasure.

This is regarded as being able to receive illumination from a surrounding. In other words, the surrounding shines in the

internal from afar, meaning that although a person is still far from obtaining the delight and pleasure, he can still draw illumination from the surrounding in the present.

Now we will explain what we asked about *The Zohar* explaining why he writes, “This singing” in female form [in Hebrew]. It is because Moses and Israel know how to properly praise the King for the queen. And we asked, “Why do Moses and Israel not praise the King for themselves?”

First, we must understand the issue of having to praise the King. In corporeality, we understand that a flesh and blood king needs honors, to be respected. He receives joy from the praises that they give him. But with regard to the Creator, why does He need us to praise Him and sing before Him chants and songs?

It is a known rule that *everything we say in regard to the Creator is only by way of “By Your actions we know You.” However, there is no attainment in Him, Himself, whatsoever. Rather, all we speak of relates to the attainment of the lower ones.*

This is the reason why one must praise and thank the Creator, for by that, one can measure and assume the greatness and importance of the giving that the Creator gives him. To that extent, one can test how much importance and greatness of the King he feels.

The purpose of creation is to do good to His creations, meaning for the creatures to enjoy Him. And *by the measure of the greatness of the Giver, there is meaning and pleasure in giving, that they give Him in order to enjoy.* And when one tries to give thanks, he already has reason for considering and scrutinizing the giving: what he received and from whom he received, meaning the greatness of the giving and the greatness of the giver.

It follows that one’s gratitude should not be because the upper one will enjoy it, but so that the lower one will enjoy it.

Otherwise, it is similar to the allegory that Baal HaSulam said about the verse, “Who has not taken My name in vain.”

He asked, “What does it mean that a person takes in vain? Does it mean that he was given a soul from above in vain?” He said that it is similar to a child being given a bag of gold coins, and is delighted about the coins because they look so nice and are lovely to look at. But the child is incapable of assessing the value of the gold coins.

From this we can understand that the gratitude and praise that we give to the Creator are only to benefit the creatures, meaning that we have something by which to praise the King. This means that when one tries to praise the Creator, this is the time when he is capable of feeling the importance of the gift and the importance of the giver of the gift. And for this reason, what one should mind most is the praise that one gives to the King. This enables him to be given every time anew. Otherwise, if one cannot appreciate the King’s gift, one cannot be given anything because he falls under the definition of “Who is a fool? He who loses what he is given” (*Hagigah*, 4a).

And what is the reason that a fool loses what he is given? This is simple: he is a fool. He doesn’t appreciate the importance of the matter, so he doesn’t pay attention to keeping the gift that he has been given. For this reason, the extent of the importance of the gift is his keeping of it. Thus, he can be in a state of constant ascension because it is evident that he doesn’t lose what he is given, for he appreciates it.

It follows from the above that one may have many descents because he doesn’t appreciate the gift of the King. In other words, he cannot appreciate the measure of importance of the nearing—that he has been given from above a desire and a thought that it is worthwhile to be a servant of the Creator.

And since he did not appreciate the importance of the matter, meaning the calling that he was given—to enter and to serve the King—he might even corrupt, if he is serving the King without knowing how to keep himself from blemishing something. In that state, a person is thrown back to a place of garbage and waste.

In that state, he sustains himself on the same waste that cats and dogs search to sustain themselves, and he, too, searches for provisions for his body in that place. He doesn't see that he can find provision elsewhere. Meaning, during the descent, those things that he said were waste and unfit as food for humans—but are suitable as food only for animals—he himself chases that provision and has no desire for human food because he finds it completely tasteless.

For this reason, the stability of the states of ascent depends primarily on the importance of the matter. This is why it depends mainly on the praise and gratitude that he gives to being accepted from above. This is so because the praises themselves that he gives to the Creator enhance His importance and esteem. This is why we are commanded to think very seriously about the praising.

There are three discernments in regard to the praising:

1. The measure of the giving. This means that the importance of the gift is according to the measure of praise and gratitude that one gives for the gift.
2. The greatness of the giver, meaning if the giver is an important person. For example, if the king gives a present to someone, the gift may be a very small thing but it will still be very important. In other words, the measure of the praise and gratitude does not take the greatness of the gift into account, but rather measures the greatness of the giver. Therefore, the same person might give to two people, but to one, the giver is more important and

he recognizes the importance and greatness of the giver. Thus, he will be more grateful than the other, who does not recognize the importance of the giver to the same extent.

3. The greatness of the giver, regardless of whether he gives or not. Sometimes, the king is so important in the eyes of a person, that the person has a strong desire to speak to the king, but not because he wishes to speak to the king so that the king will give him something. He doesn't want a thing, but his whole pleasure is in having the privilege of speaking to the king.

However, it is impolite to come to the king without some request, so he is searching for some request that the king may grant. In other words, he is saying that he wants to come to the king so the king will give him something, but in truth, he says that he wants the king to give him something only on the outside. In his heart, he doesn't want anything from the Creator. Just having the ability to speak to the king is enough for him and it doesn't matter to him if the king has given him something or not.

When people on the outside see that he did not receive a thing from the king, and look at him as he is walking out of the king's house delighted and elated, they laugh at him. They tell him, "What a fool you are! How mindless are you? You can see for yourself that you are leaving as empty-handed as you came in. You walked into the king to ask for something of the king, yet you walked out empty-handed, so why the joy?"

We can understand this if while a person prays to the Creator to give him something, we can discern about it, 1) that one prays for the Creator to give him what he demands of the Creator. If He accepts his demand for the prayer to be granted, when

he receives what he wants, he is willing to thank the Creator. And the extent of salvation that he received from the Creator is the extent of his joy, high spirits, praise, and gratitude. In other words, *everything is measured by the degree of greatness of the salvation that he received from the Creator.*

2) The measure of the greatness of the giver. In other words, since he believes in the greatness of the Creator, this is what determines for him what he is receiving from Him. That is, even though in the eyes of the receiver it is a small thing, he still received something from the Creator. Thus, he can already be glad, and praise and thank the Creator, since it is the giver who is important to him, as in the above-mentioned allegory.

3) The greatness of the giver without giving. He, too, has great importance. In other words, the king is so important in his eyes that he doesn't want anything from the king, but will consider it great fortune if he can speak even a few words with the king. And the reason why he comes in with some request is only superficial, since one cannot come before the king without some request. Yet, he did not come for the king to grant his request. The reason he said he was asking for something was only for the external ones, who don't understand that speaking to the king is the most valuable giving, but the external ones do not understand it.

And when we speak of a single body, we should say that the "external ones" are the thoughts that come to a person from the outside world, meaning those who have no concept of the internality, and have no tools to understand that the internality of the king is what counts. Rather, they value the king only by what extends from the king to them, which is called "the externality of the king." But they have no clue of the internality of the king, meaning the king himself and not what extends from the king outward.

Hence, these thoughts mock a person when he says, “Since I just spoke to the king, it doesn’t matter if the king is granting my wish.” Rather, his only wish is the internality of the king, not what extends from him.

Therefore, if a person prays to the Creator and doesn’t see that the Creator has given him something—since what matters to him is the internality of the king—he can be glad and rejoice in having been rewarded with speaking to the king. Yet, external thoughts within him wish to revoke that joy in him because they consider only the vessels of reception—what he received from the king in his vessels of reception, while he tells them, “I am delighted and joyful, and I praise and thank the king simply for having given me the chance to speak with him. This is enough for me.”

Moreover, he says to his external ones, “Know that I want nothing of the king except to praise him and to thank him. By that, I adhere to the king because I want to bestow upon him by praising him. And I have nothing else to give him. It follows that now I am considered ‘a servant of the Creator,’ and not ‘a servant of myself.’ For this reason, I cannot hear your telling me, ‘What have you gained?’

“For example, all year long you engaged in Torah and in prayer, keeping all the *Mitzvot* [commandments], but you are still standing at the same degree as a year ago or two years ago. Thus, why the joy that you praise the Creator and say, ‘This is my gain, that I spoke to the Creator many times, and what else do I need?’ In other words, if the king had given me something, I might have received it in order to receive. But now that I have nothing in my hand, I am happy and thank the Creator because my intention in the work was only to bestow.”

However, since in that state a person is telling the truth, he faces strong resistance from the external ones, who cannot tolerate one who is walking on the path of truth, if his only aim

is to bestow. In that state, he is at a great war, and they wish to shatter his joy. They make him think that the opposite is true—that what they are telling him is the path of truth, and that he is deceiving himself thinking that he is right.

In this world, a lie usually succeeds. For this reason, he needs great strengthening and to tell them, “I am walking on the path of truth, and right now I want no criticism. If there is truth in your words, I ask that you will come to me with your complaints, to show me the truth, when *I* decide it is time for criticism. Only at that time will I be willing to listen to your views.”

It therefore follows that one does not need to have joy in the work, only faith. In other words, when he believes in the greatness of the Creator, he doesn’t need the king to give him anything. Simply being able to speak to the king is all he wants, meaning to speak to the king as mentioned in the third discernment of giving praise.

If he pays more attention to praising the king, then high inspiration will come to him by itself because he doesn’t want anything from the king. This is similar to the *Sefira* of *Bina*. It is known that at its end, *Hochma* does not wish to receive the light of *Hochma*, but *Hochma* wishes to bestow upon the Emanator as the Emanator bestows upon *Hochma*. And she wants equivalence of form.

In that state, the abundance, called “light of *Hassadim*,” after the *Kli*, comes by itself. This means that the receiver wishes to engage in *Hesed* [grace/mercy], hence the abundance is called “light of *Hassadim*” [plural of *Hesed*]. It is similar here. When a person wants nothing of the king except to bestow upon the king, and pays attention to what he thinks, an inspiration from above comes upon him by itself when he engages in singing and praising of the king, to the extent that he has prepared himself.

Now we can understand the matter of Moses and Israel singing and praising the king for the queen, and not the queen herself. It is known that everything we say about the upper worlds is only in relation to the souls, which are called “the collective soul of Israel” or “the assembly of Israel.” It is explained in *Talmud Eser Sefirot* (Part 16), that the soul of Adam HaRishon came out from the interior of the worlds *Beria*, *Yetzira*, and *Assiya*, from which he received *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, *Neshama*. And they all came out from *Malchut de* [of] *Atzilut*, called “Divinity.” And *Zeir Anpin*, who gives to the *Malchut*, is called “King.”

And since *Malchut* is the receiver for the souls, it follows that *Malchut* cannot receive abundance for the people of Israel because they are still unfit—having no vessels of bestowal. Otherwise, it will all go to the *Sitra Achra*, who are called “dead,” since there is reception in order to receive in them, which is called “separation and remoteness from the Creator,” who is called “the Life of Lives.” This is why they are called “dead.”

In *The Zohar*, it is considered that a person must be concerned about the “affliction of Divinity,” meaning sorrow at not being able to receive abundance for her children, who are the people of Israel. She is called “the assembly of Israel” because she assembles within her the abundance that she should give to Israel. Therefore, when the people of Israel engage in equivalence of form, there is room for *Malchut* to receive the upper abundance from the king, who is called “the giver,” *ZA*, so as to give to the people of Israel.

This is called “*Malchut*, who is called ‘the queen,’ praising the king for the abundance she has received from Him.” Likewise, when she cannot receive abundance for Israel from the King, it is called “the affliction of Divinity.” And when she *can* receive abundance, she is called “The mother of the sons is happy,” and she praises the King.

Yet, all the sorrow and joy relate only to the whole of Israel. This is why *The Zohar* says that Moses and Israel say the song, meaning praise the king for the queen. It means that the reason why Moses and Israel praise the king is for the queen, which means that they have established themselves to praise the king, since what the king was to give to Moses and Israel was not for themselves, but for *Malchut*. In other words, they cannot tolerate the affliction of Divinity and this is why they engage in equivalence of form, so that *Malchut* can bestow. This is why it says, "Happy are Moses and Israel, for they know how to properly praise the King for the queen."

WHAT IS THE SUBSTANCE OF SLANDER AND AGAINST WHOM IS IT?

Article No. 10, 1986-87

It is written in *The Zohar* (*Metzora*, p 2, and in the *Sulam* Commentary, Item 4), "Come and see, with the slander that the serpent said to the woman, he caused the woman and Adam to be sentenced to death, them, and the whole world. It is written about slander, 'And their tongue, a sharp sword.' For this reason, 'Beware of the sword,' meaning slander. 'Wrath brings the punishments of the sword.' What is, 'Wrath brings the punishments of the sword'? It is the sword for the Creator, as we learned that the Creator has a sword in which He judges the wicked. It is written about it, 'The Lord has a sword full of blood,' 'And My sword shall eat flesh,' which is the *Malchut* from the side of *Din* [judgment] in her. Hence, 'Beware of the sword, for wrath brings the punishments of the sword, that you may know there is a judgment.'

"It writes *Din*, but it means, 'That you may know that thus it is judged,' that anyone with a sword in his tongue who speaks

slander, the sword that consumes everything is ready for him—the *Malchut* in the form of the *Din* in her. It is written about it, ‘This shall be the law of the leper.’ *Malchut*, which is called ‘this,’ sentences the leper because he slandered, for afflictions come for slander.” Thus far its words.

This needs to be understood, since *The Zohar* says that for anyone with a sword in his tongue, meaning who slanders, the sword that consumes everything is ready for him—the *Malchut* in the form of *Din* in her. And we learn that from what is written about the serpent, that he slandered the woman. However, there the slander was about the Creator; how is that a proof between a person and his friend, that it should be so grave as to cause death, as it explains about the verse, “And their tongue, a sharp sword,” about slander between a person and his friend?

In other words, there is the same measure and severity of iniquity of slander between a person and his friend as in slander between a person and the Creator. Is it possible that one who slanders his friend will be similar to one who slanders the Creator? When slandering the Creator, we can understand that it causes death, since by slandering the Creator he becomes separate from the Creator. For this reason, since he is separated from the Life of Lives, he is considered dead. But why would it cause death when the slander is between a person and his friend?

The Zohar says that afflictions come for slander. Our sages said (*Arachin*, 15b), “In the West they say: The talk of a third kills three: it kills the one who tells, the one who receives, and the one about whom it is said.” RASHI interprets “The talk of a third” as gossip, which is the third between a person and his friend, revealing a secret to him. Also there, Rabbi Yohanan, in the name of Rabbi Yosi Ben Zimra, “Anyone who slanders, it is as though he denies the tenet.” And Rav Hasda said, “Mr. Ukva said, ‘Anyone who slanders, the Creator says, ‘He and I cannot dwell in the world.’”

Also, we should understand the severity of the prohibition on slander, to the point that it is as though one has denied the tenet, or according to what Mr. Ukva says, that the Creator says, “He and I cannot dwell in the world.” It means that if we say, for example, that if Reuben slandered to Shimon about Levi doing something bad, the Creator cannot dwell in the world, due to Reuben’s speaking badly about Levi. But with other sins that Reuben might have committed, the Creator can dwell in the world with him. Thus, if this is such a grave matter, then we should understand what is slander and what makes it so bad.

We will interpret it in the work. In the book, *The Giving of the Torah*, he explains the great importance of the commandment, “Love thy friend as thyself.” “Rabbi Akiva says, ‘This is the great rule of the Torah.’ This statement of our sages demands explanation. The word *Klal* (collective/rule) indicates a sum of details that, when put together, form the above collective. Thus, when he says about the commandment, ‘Love thy friend as thyself,’ that it is a great *Klal* in the Torah, we must understand that the rest of the 612 commandments in the Torah, with all their interpretations, are no more or no less than the sum of the details inserted and contained in that single commandment, ‘Love thy friend as thyself.’”

“This is quite perplexing, because you can say this regarding *Mitzvot* [commandments] between man and man, but how can that single *Mitzva* [commandment] contain all the *Mitzvot* between man and God, which are the essence and the vast majority of the laws?”

He also writes there, “About a convert who came before Hillel (*Shabbat* 31) and told him: ‘Teach me the whole of the Torah while I am standing on one leg.’ And he replied: ‘What you hate, do not do to your friend (the translation of ‘love thy friend as thyself’), and the rest is its commentary; go study.’”

“Here before us is a clear law, that in all 612 commandments and in all the writings in the Torah there is none that is preferred to the commandment, love thy friend as thyself ... since he specifically says, ‘the rest is its commentary; go study.’ This means that the rest of the Torah is interpretations of that one commandment, that the commandment to love your friend as yourself could not be completed were it not for them.”

We should understand why, when the convert told him in the holy tongue [Hebrew], “Teach me the whole of the Torah while I am standing on one leg,” Hillel did not reply to him in the holy tongue, but replied to him in the language of translation [Aramaic] and told him, “What you hate, do not do to your friend.”

We should also understand that in the Torah, it is written, “Love thy friend as thyself,” which is a positive *Mitzva* [commandment to perform some action], but Hillel spoke in a negative term [commandment to avoid some action], for he told him, “What you hate, do not do to your friend,” which is a negative phrasing.

In the book, *The Giving of the Torah*, he explains the greatness and importance of the rule, “Love thy friend as thyself,” since the purpose of creation is to do good to His creations, and for the creatures to feel delight and pleasure without any lacks. There is a rule that *any branch wishes to resemble its root*. And since our root is the Creator, who created all the creatures, He has no deficiencies or needs to receive anything from anyone.

Therefore, when the creatures receive from someone, they, too, feel ashamed of their benefactors. Thus, for the creatures to not be ashamed while receiving delight and pleasure from the Creator, the matter of *Tzimtzum* [restriction] was set up in the upper worlds. This causes the upper abundance to be hidden from us, so we do not feel the good that He has hidden in the Torah and *Mitzvot* that the Creator has given us.

And although we are made to believe that the corporeal pleasures that we see before us, feeling its virtue and benefit, the whole world—meaning all the creatures in this world devotedly chase after pleasures to obtain them—still, there is but a tiny light in them, a very small illumination compared to what can be obtained by keeping Torah and *Mitzvot*. It is written about it in *The Zohar* that the *Kedusha* [holiness] sustains the *Klipot* [shells]. This means that if *Kedusha* did not give sustenance to the *Klipot*, they wouldn't be able to exist.

And there is a reason why the *Klipot* should exist, since in the end, everything will be corrected and will enter the *Kedusha*. This was given for the creatures to correct, for by having the concept of time for them, there can be two topics within the same topic, even though they are in contrast. It is written about it (“Introduction to The Book of Zohar,” Item 25), “For this reason, there are two systems, ‘*Kedusha* [holiness],’ and the ‘Impure *ABYA*,’ which are opposite to one another. Thus, how can the *Kedusha* correct them?”

This is not so with man, who is created in this world. Since there is a matter of time, they (two systems) are in one person, but one at a time. And then there is a way for *Kedusha* to correct the impurity. This is so because until thirteen years of age, a person attains the will to receive that is in the system of impurity. Afterwards, through engagement in Torah, he begins to obtain *Nefesh de* [of] *Kedusha*, and then he is sustained by the system of the worlds of *Kedusha*.

Yet, all the abundance that the *Klipot* have, which they receive from the *Kedusha*, is but a tiny light that fell because of the breaking of the vessels and through the sin of the tree of knowledge, by which the impure *ABYA* were made. And yet, we should believe, imagine, and observe how all the creatures chase that tiny light with all their might, and none of them says, “I will settle for what I have acquired.” Instead, each always wishes

to add to what he has, as our sages said, “One who has one hundred wishes for two hundred.”

And the reason why there was no wholeness in them is because there was no perfection in them to begin with. But in spirituality, the upper light is dressed in everything spiritual. Hence, when a person attains some illumination of spirituality, he cannot tell if it is to a small or a great degree, since in the spiritual, even the degree of *Nefesh de Nefesh*, which is a part of *Kedusha*—and like the rest of *Kedusha*, it is perfection—there is wholeness in even a part of it. This is so because the discernments of “great” or “small” in the upper light are according to the value of the receiver.

In other words, it depends on the level to which the receiver is capable of obtaining the greatness and importance of the light. But there is no change at all in the light itself, as it is written, “I the Lord (*HaVaYaH*), do not change” (as explained in the “Preface to the Wisdom of Kabbalah,” Item 63).

Accordingly, the question arises, “Why does the whole world chase the tiny light that shines in corporeal pleasures, while for spiritual pleasures, which hold the majority of delight and pleasure, we do not see anyone wishing to make such great efforts, as they make for corporeality?” However, corporeal pleasures are in the impure *ABYA*. There were no restriction or concealment on them, and purposely so, or the world would not exist, since it is impossible to live without pleasure.

Also, it extends from the purpose of creation to do good to His creations. Hence, without pleasure there is no existence to the world. It turns out that the pleasures *had* to be disclosed in them. This is not so with additions, meaning with receiving delight and pleasure for more than sustaining the body, which is the real pleasure. On that, there were restriction and concealment so they would not see the light of life that is clothed in Torah

and *Mitzvot*, before a person can accustom himself to working in order to bestow, called “equivalence of form.” This is so because *had the light that is clothed in Torah and Mitzvot been revealed, there would be no room for choice.*

In other words, where the light is revealed, the pleasure that one would feel in keeping Torah and *Mitzvot* would be in the form of self-reception. Thus, he would not be able to say that he is keeping Torah and *Mitzvot* because of the commandment of the Creator. Rather, he would have to keep Torah and *Mitzvot* because of the pleasure that he feels in them. While a person feels pleasure in some transgressions, he can calculate that the pleasure is only a tiny light compared to the real taste from Torah and *Mitzvot* and how it is difficult to overcome the lust, and that the greater the desire, the harder it is to endure the trial.

It turns out that while the immensity of the pleasure in Torah and *Mitzvot* is revealed, a person cannot say, “I am doing this *Mitzva* [commandment] because it is the Creator’s will,” meaning that he wants to bestow upon the Creator by keeping His *Mitzvot* [commandments]. After all, without the Creator’s command, he would still keep Torah and *Mitzvot* for self-love, and not because he wants to give to the Creator.

This is the reason for the placement of the restriction and the concealment on Torah and *Mitzvot*. And this is why the whole world chases corporeal pleasures, while having no energy for the pleasures in Torah and *Mitzvot*, because the pleasure is not revealed for the above-mentioned reason.

It therefore follows that regarding faith, we must assume the importance there is in Torah and *Mitzvot*, and in general believe in the Creator—that He watches over the creatures. This means that one cannot say that he is not keeping Torah and *Mitzvot* because he doesn’t feel the Creator’s guidance, how He gives

abundance to the creatures, since here, too, he must believe, even though he doesn't feel it.

This is so because if he felt that His guidance is benevolent, there would be no question of faith there anymore. But why did the Creator make it so we would serve Him with faith? Wouldn't it be better if we could serve in a state of knowing?

The answer is, as Baal HaSulam said it, that one shouldn't think that the fact that the Creator wants us to serve Him with faith is because He cannot shine to us in the form of knowing. Rather, the Creator knows that faith is a more successful way for us to reach the goal, called "*Dvekut* [adhesion] with the Creator," which is equivalence of form. By that, we will have the power to receive the good while being without the "bread of shame," meaning without shame. This is so because the only reason we will want to receive delight and pleasure from the Creator is that we will know that the Creator will derive pleasure from it, and since we wish to bestow upon the Creator, we wish to receive delight and pleasure from Him.

Thus, we see that the main work we must do, to achieve the purpose for which the world was created—to do good to His creations—is to *qualify ourselves to acquire vessels of bestowal*. This is the correction for making the King's gift complete, so they will feel no shame upon reception of the pleasures. And all the evil in us removes us from the good that we are destined to receive.

We were given the remedy of Torah and *Mitzvot* so as to achieve those *Kelim*. This is the meaning of what our sages said (*Kidushin*, 30), "The Creator says, 'I have created the evil inclination; I have created for it the spice of Torah,' by which he will lose all the sparks of self-love within him and will be rewarded with his desire being only to bestow contentment upon his Maker."

In the essay, “The Giving of the Torah” (Item 13) he says, “There are two parts in the Torah: 1) *Mitzvot* [commandments] between man and God, and 2) *Mitzvot* between man and man. And both aim for the same thing—to bring the creature to the final goal of *Dvekut* with Him.

“Furthermore, even the practical side in both of them is really one and the same. ... Toward those who keep Torah and *Mitzvot Lishma*, there is no difference between the two parts of the Torah, even on the practical side. This is because before one accomplishes it, one is compelled to feel any act of bestowal—either toward another person or toward the Creator—as emptiness beyond conception...

“Since this is the case, it is reasonable to think that the part of the Torah that deals with man’s relationship with his friend is more capable of bringing one to the desired goal. This is because the work in *Mitzvot* between man and God is fixed and specific and is not demanding, and one becomes easily accustomed to it, and everything that is done out of habit is no longer useful. But the *Mitzvot* between man and man are changing and irregular, and demands surround him wherever he may turn. Hence, their cure is much more certain and their aim is closer.”

Now we understand why Rabbi Akiva said about the verse, “Love thy friend as thyself,” that it is “the great rule of Torah.” It is because the important thing is to be rewarded with *Dvekut* with the Creator, which is called “a vessel of bestowal,” meaning equivalence of form. And this is why the remedy of Torah and *Mitzvot* was given, so that through it we will be able to exit self-love and reach love of others, since *stage one is the love between a person and his friend, and then we can achieve the love of the Creator.*

Now we can understand what we asked above, why when the convert came to Hillel and told him, “Teach me the whole of the Torah while I am standing on one leg,” Hillel did not reply

to him in the holy tongue, as he asked, “Teach me the whole of the Torah while I am standing on one leg,” but replied to him in the language of translation [Aramaic], “What you hate, do not do to your friend” (the translation of “Love thy friend as thyself”). And there is more to understand, since in the Torah, it is written, “Love thy friend as thyself,” which is a positive *Mitzva* [commandment to perform some action], while he replied to the convert in a negative tongue, “Do not do,” since he told him, “What you hate, do not do to your friend.”

According to what he explains about the importance of the *Mitzva*, “Love thy friend as thyself,” in his explanation of the words of Rabbi Akiva, who said that “Love thy friend as thyself” is the great rule of the Torah, that specifically this *Mitzva* has the power to bring one the remedy for reaching the love of the Creator, for this reason, when the convert came to Hillel and told him, “Teach me the whole of the Torah while I’m standing on one leg,” he wished to tell him the rule, “Love thy friend as thyself,” as it is written in the Torah. However, he wished to explain to him the grave iniquity called “slander,” which is even harsher than the *Mitzva*, “Love thy friend as thyself.”

The *Mitzva*, “Love thy friend as thyself” gives one the power to overcome and exit self-love, by which he comes out of self-love and can achieve the love of the Creator.

It follows that if he does not engage in the *Mitzva*, “Love thy friend as thyself,” he is in a state of “sit and do nothing.” He did not progress in coming out of the domination of self-love, but did not regress, either. In other words, although he did not give love to others, he also did not relapse and did nothing to evoke hatred of others.

Yet, if he slanders his friend, by that, he relapses. Not only does he not engage in love of others, he does the opposite—engages in actions that cause hatred of others by slandering

his friend. Naturally, one does not slander one he loves, for it separates the hearts. Therefore, we do not wish to slander one that we love so as to not spoil the love between us, since slander inflicts hatred.

It therefore follows that the severity of the iniquity of slander is that *love of others yields love of the Creator. But hatred of others yields hatred of the Creator*, and there is nothing worse in the world than that which yields hatred of the Creator. But when a person sins with other transgressions and cannot overcome his will to receive because he is immersed in self-love, it still doesn't make him hate the Creator. This is why it is written about the rest of the transgressions, "I am the Lord, who dwells with them in the midst of their impurity." But in regards to slander, by this action he becomes hateful of the Creator, which is the very opposite act of love of others.

Now we can understand the words of Rabbi Yohanan in the name of Rabbi Yosi Ben Zimra: "Anyone who slanders, it is as though he denies the tenet." Can it be that slander would make one deny the tenet? However, since it causes him to hate the Creator, he denies the very purpose of creation—to do good. And we see that one who does good to another and gives him more delight and pleasure each time certainly loves him. But when a person slanders, it brings him to hate the Creator. Thus, this person denies the very purpose of creation—to do good.

Now we can also understand what we asked about what Rav Hasda said in the name of Mr. Ukva: "Anyone who slanders, the Creator says, 'He and I cannot dwell in the world.'" Is it possible that slander could cause the Creator to not dwell in the world with him?

As we said above, one who slanders becomes hateful of the Creator. As in corporeality, a person can be in a house with many people and yet be indifferent to whether they are good

people or not. But when he sees his hater there, he immediately runs away from there, for he cannot be in a single room with a hater. Similarly, we say that one who becomes hateful of the Creator, the Creator cannot be with him in the world.

We could ask, “But one who steals something from his friend also causes his friend to hate, since when the one from whom it was stolen finds out that he stole, he will see that he is his hater?” Or, we could say that even if he never knows who stole from him, the thief himself—instead of engaging in love of others—engages in an opposite act in hatred of others, by which he becomes more immersed in self-love. And yet, they do not say that stealing is as bad as slander. Also, it means that robbing is not as grave as slander.

The answer should be that one who engages in stealing or robbing does not rob or steal because of hatred. The reason is that he has love for money or for important artifacts, and this is why he steals or robs, not because of hate, God forbid. But with slander, it is not because of some fancy, but only out of hatred.

It is as Rish Lakish said (*Arachin* 15), “Rish Lakish said, ‘Why is it written, ‘If the serpent bites without whispering, there is no advantage to the one with the tongue?’ In the future, all the animals will come to the serpent and tell him, ‘The lion preys and eats; a wolf preys and eats. But you, what pleasure have you?’ He tells them, ‘And what is the advantage of the one with the tongue?’”

RASHI interprets, “‘A lion preys and eats,’ all who harm people derive pleasure. The lion preys and eats. He eats of what is alive. And if a wolf preys, it kills first and then eats. It has pleasure. But you, what is your pleasure in biting people? The serpent replied, ‘And what is the advantage of the one with the tongue? One who slanders, what joy does he have? Similarly, when I bite, I get no pleasure.’”

With the above said, we can see that there is a difference between harming people because one derives pleasure, such as the lion and the wolf, who have no desire to harm because they hate people, but because of desire, since they take pleasure in people. Thus, the reason why they harm others is only out of desire.

This is not so with slander. One does not receive any reward for it, but it is an act that causes hatred of people. And according to the rule, “Love thy friend as thyself,” where from love of man one comes to love of the Creator, it follows that from hatred of people one can come to hatred of the Creator.

Similarly, we find these words (*Berachot* 17a): “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all they that do them.’ It did not say, ‘That do,’ but ‘That do them,’ they who do *Lishma* [for Her name] and not they who do *Lo Lishma* [not for Her name]. And anyone who does *Lo Lishma*, it is better for him to not be born. In the Tosfot, he asks, ‘And if the sayer should say, ‘Rav Yehuda said, ‘Rav said, ‘One should always engage in Torah and *Mitzvot*, even in *Lo Lishma*, and out of *Lo Lishma* he will come to *Lishma*.’” We should say, ‘Here we are dealing with one who is studying only in order to annoy his friends, and there it was about one who is studying in order to be respected.’”

We should understand the answer of the Tosfot, when he says that we should distinguish between *Lo Lishma* in order to annoy and *Lo Lishma* in order to be respected, meaning to call him “a Rabbi” and so on. We should understand it according to the rule that Rabbi Akiva said, “Love thy friend as thyself is the great rule of the Torah.” By what he explains in the essay, “The Giving of the Torah,” it is because through this *Mitzva* [commandment] he will acquire love of others, and from that he will later come to love of the Creator.

It therefore follows that one should try to exit self-love, and then he will be able to engage in Torah and *Mitzvot Lishma*, meaning in order to bestow and not for his own benefit. And this is done by keeping Torah and *Mitzvot*. Thus, *as long as he does not exit self-love, he cannot engage in Lishma. And although he engages in self-love, there is power in keeping Torah and Mitzvot in order to exit self-love and from that to subsequently come to love of the Creator, at which time he will do everything in order to bestow.*

Reaching *Lishma* is possible only when he engages in Torah and *Mitzvot* in order to be respected. That is, he is studying but he still cannot work to the benefit of others, since he hasn't acquired the quality of love of others. Hence, engagement in Torah and *Mitzvot* will help him achieve the quality of loving others.

But when he studies in order to annoy, which is an opposite act from love of others, keeping Torah and *Mitzvot* for the hatred of others, in order to annoy, how can two opposites be in the same carrier? Meaning, it is said that the Torah assists in achieving love of others when one performs an act of bestowal—although the intention is to receive a prerogative, the Torah assists him toward the intention of obtaining the desire to bestow, as well. But here he engages in the very opposite, in hatred of others. How can that cause love of others?

It is as we said about the distinction between a thief or a robber, and a slanderer. Thieves and robbers love money, gold, and other important things. They have no personal dealings with the individual himself. In other words, thieves and robbers have no thought or consideration of the person himself, but their thoughts are focused on where they can get more money more easily, and with greater difficulty for the police to expose them as thieves or robbers. But they never think of the person himself.

With slander, however, one has no consideration of the act itself when he slanders. Rather, his only thought is to humiliate

his friend in the eyes of people. Thus, the only thought is one of hatred. It is a rule that one does not slander one he loves. Hence, it is specifically slander that causes hatred of others, which subsequently leads to hatred of the Creator. For this reason, slander is a very grave matter, which actually brings destruction of the world.

Now we will explain the measure of slander—how and how much is considered slander, whether a word or a sentence that is said about one’s friend is already considered slander. We find this measure in Hillel’s answer to the convert, “What you hate, do not do to your friend.” This means that with any word that you want to say about your friends, observe and consider if you would hate it if this was said about you. In other words, when you would derive no pleasure from these words, “Do not do to your friend.”

Thus, when one wishes to say something about one’s friend, he should immediately think, “If this were said about me, would I hate that word?” “Do not do to your friend,” as Hillel said to the convert. From here we should learn the measure of slander that is forbidden to say.

And with the above said, we can understand why Hillel spoke to the convert in the language of translation and not in the holy tongue [Hebrew], just as to the convert, who told him [in Hebrew], “Teach me the whole of the Torah while I am standing on one leg.” Instead, he spoke in the language of translation, meaning that what he told him was, “What you hate, do not do to your friend” [in Aramaic], the translation of “Love thy friend as thyself.”

First, we should understand what the language of transition implies to us. The Ari said (*Talmud Eser Sefirot*, Part 15, p 1765), “‘And the Lord God caused a deep sleep’ is translation in *Gematria* [*Tardema* (sleep) = *Targum* (translation)], and it is considered

Achoraim [posterior].” This means that the holy tongue [Hebrew] is called *Panim* [anterior] and the translation [Aramaic] is called *Achoraim* [posterior].

Panim means something that illuminates or something whole. *Achor* [back] means something that is not illuminating or is incomplete. In the holy tongue, which is called, *Panim*, it writes, “Love thy friend as thyself,” which is wholeness, since through love of man one achieves the love of the Creator, which is the completion of the goal, for one should achieve *Dvekut* [adhesion], as it is written, “And to cleave unto Him.”

But the translation of “Love thy friend as thyself” that Hillel told him, “What you hate, do not do to your friend,” we should say that it relates to slander, which is about negation, that slander is forbidden because it brings hatred, and from that, one might come to hatred of the Creator. However, this is still not considered wholeness because by not slandering, one still does not achieve love of others, and from love of others he will reach wholeness, called *Dvekut* with the Creator.

However, this is why slander is worse, since not only does he not engage in love of others, he does the opposite—he engages in hatred of others. For this reason, when teaching the collective to begin the work, they are first taught how to not spoil and harm the collective. This is called “avoiding.” Otherwise, you are harming the collective by doing things to harm.

This is why Hillel said to the convert who came to him only the translation of “Love thy friend as thyself”: 1) Because it is more harmful when slandering, for it causes hatred, which is the opposite of love of others. 2) Because it is easier to keep, for this is only in “sit and do not do.” But “Love thy friend” is “Rise up and do,” when one should take action to sustain the love of friends.

However, afterwards there are exceptions: people who each wish to be servants of the Creator personally. A person is told

that the matter of “Love thy friend,” which is the rule that Rabbi Akiva said, as above-mentioned, that love of others can bring him to achieve love of the Creator. This is the main goal—that one will have vessels of bestowal and that in these vessels he will be able to receive delight and pleasure, which is the purpose of creation, to do good to His creation.

And two methods in education extend from that:

1. Focusing the study on not slandering because it is the worst iniquity.
2. Focusing the education on “Love thy friend,” since this will bring man to love others, and from the love of others he will come to love of the Creator, and from love of the Creator he can then receive the purpose of creation—to do good to His creations. This is because he will already have the suitable vessels for receiving the upper abundance, as he will have vessels of bestowal, which he has obtained by love of others. And then there will be no room for slander.

Concerning slander, *The Zohar* says that the serpent’s slandering of the woman caused death to the world. It says there that the sword that consumes everything is ready for anyone with a sword in his tongue, meaning who slanders. And *The Zohar* concludes, “As it is written, ‘This will be the law of the leper,’ for afflictions come for slander.” It follows that he began with death and ended with afflictions, which means that only afflictions come and not death.

Certainly, there are explanations for the literal meaning. But in the work, we should interpret that afflictions and death are one and the same. In other words, the purpose of the work is to achieve *Dvekut* with the Creator, to adhere to the Life of Lives. By so doing, we will have suitable vessels for reception of the delight and pleasure that is found in the purpose of creation,

to do good to His creations. And through slander, he becomes a hater of the Creator, and there is no greater separation than that. And certainly, by that he becomes separated from the Life of Lives.

It follows that where he should have received delight and pleasure from the Creator, he receives the opposite. In other words, instead of pleasure, it becomes affliction [in Hebrew “pleasure” and “affliction” contain the same letters]. This is the meaning that through slander, afflictions come instead of pleasures. This is the meaning of “The wicked, in their lives, are called ‘dead,’” since they are separated from the Life of Lives. It follows that in the work, death and afflictions are the same thing.

In other words, if one adheres to the Life of Lives, he receives abundance from Him. And if it is to the contrary and he becomes separated from Him, then he is full of afflictions where he should have been filled with pleasures.

With the above-said, we can interpret what they said (*Arachin* 15), “In the West they say: The talk of a third kills three: it kills the one who tells, the one who receives, and the one about whom it is said.” We know the words of our sages, “The Torah, Israel, and the Creator are one.” It means, as explained in the book, *A Sage’s Fruit* (Part One p 65), that Israel is one who wishes to adhere to the Creator. He achieves this through the 613 *Mitzvot* [commandments] of the Torah, at which time he is rewarded with the Torah, which is the names of the Creator. And then everything becomes one. It turns out that one who slanders causes the killing of three: 1) the one who tells; 2) the one who receives; 3) the one about whom it is said.

The three discernments are to be made between a person and his friend.

However, between a person and the Creator there is also the matter of slander, as mentioned concerning “The Torah, Israel,

and the Creator are one.” When a person comes and looks in the Torah, he sees all those good things that the Creator has promised us in keeping the Torah. For example, it is written, “For this is your life,” and it is also written, “They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb,” and other such verses. If a person is not rewarded and doesn’t feel it, this is called “slandering the Creator.”

It follows that three discernments should be made here: 1) The person who slanders; 2) the Torah; 3) the Creator.

When a person looks in the Torah, if he is not rewarded, he does not see the delight and pleasure that is clothed in the Torah, and he stops studying the Torah because he says he found no meaning in it. Thus, in speaking of the Torah, he is slandering the Creator.

It follows that he blemishes three things: the Torah, Israel, and the Creator. Where one should exert to make the unification of “Are one”—that they will all shine, meaning that the discernment of Israel will obtain the unification that the whole Torah is the names of the Creator—he causes separation in that, through slander.

A person must believe above reason that what the Torah promises us is true, and the only fault is in us—that we are still unfit to receive the delight and pleasure, called “the hidden light” or “the flavors of Torah and *Mitzvot*,” as it is written in *The Zohar* that the whole Torah is the names of the Creator.

To obtain that, we need vessels of bestowal, to have equivalence of form between the light and the *Kli* [vessel]. Obtaining vessels of bestowal is done by love of friends. It is as Rabbi Akiva said, “Love thy friend as thyself is the great rule of the Torah,” for through it we reach love of others, and through love of others we arrive at love of the Creator and the love of

Torah. The Torah is called “a gift,” and gifts are given to loved ones. The opposite of that is slander, which causes hatred of people and hatred of the Creator, as we said above.

Now we can understand what our sages said about slander, “The talk of a third kills three: it kills the one who tells, the one who receives, and the one about whom it is said.” RASHI interprets that out of hatred they provoke one another and kill each other. We can understand that this applies to a person and his friend; but how is it applied to a person and the Creator?

When a person looks in the Torah and tells the Torah that he doesn’t see or feel the delight and pleasure that the Creator said that He is giving to the people of Israel, he is slandering the Creator. There are three things here: the telling person, the receiver, meaning the Torah, and the one of whom it is said, meaning the Creator. And since when a person engages in love of others he obtains the love of the Creator and the love of Torah, in that state, the Creator imparts upon him life, as it is written, “For with You is the source of life.” This is from the side of *Dvekut* [adhesion], as it is written, “And you who cleave.”

In that state, one is rewarded with the law of life. But through slander, the life from the Creator, which he should have been receiving, is withheld from him. Thus, 1) the life from the Torah—where he should have sensed the Torah of life—is withheld from him, 2) he himself becomes lifeless, and this is considered that he is killed, and 3) life stops in three places. And through the love of others, life flows from two places and he is the receiver of the life.

THE SEVERITY OF TEACHING IDOL WORSHIPPERS THE TORAH

Article No. 17, 1986/87

Our sages said (*Hagigah* 13), “Rav Ami said, ‘Words of Torah are not to be given to idol worshippers, as it is written, ‘He has not dealt so with any nation; and as for His ordinances, they have not known them.’ In the Sanhedrin (59), Rabbi Yohanan said, ‘An idol worshipper who engages in Torah must die, as it is written, ‘Moses commanded us a law, an inheritance.’ We are inherited, and not they.’”

The Gemarah asks, “Rabbi Meir says, ‘How so? After all, even an idol worshipper who engages in the Torah is as the high priest, as it is written, ‘If a man does them, he shall live by them.’ It did not say, ‘priests,’ ‘Levites,’ or ‘Israelis,’ but ‘a man.’ This means that even an idol worshipper who engages in Torah is as the high priest.”

We should understand it in the work, according to the rule that in the work we learn the whole Torah within a single person. *The Zohar* says that each person is a small world in and of itself. This means that he consists of all seventy nations of the world. Thus, what is “Israel” and what are “idol worshippers” within a person himself?

Another question about the words of Rabbi Meir is that he brings evidence from the verse, “If a man does them, he shall live by them.” After all, Rabbi Shimon says, “a man refers to Israel,” and he brings as evidence the verse, “You are called ‘man,’ and not the nations of the world.” Thus, how does Rabbi Meir bring evidence from the word “man” as referring to idol worshippers? The Tosfot wishes to explain in the Sanhedrin that there is a difference between “man” and “the man.”

RASHI interprets that there should not be misunderstandings about Rabbi Shimon, who says, “Man means Israel.” It is simple,

he does not differ from Rabbi Shimon—that a man means specifically Israel. Also, we should understand the great disparity between Rabbi Yohanan and Rabbi Meir, where Rabbi Yohanan says, “An idol worshipper who engages in Torah must die,” and according to Rabbi Meir he is not like an ordinary one from Israel but as the high priest. Can it be that he will be greater than an ordinary one from Israel?

The Zohar says (*Aharei*, p 103, and in the *Sulam* Commentary, Item 289), “Rabbi Elazar asked Rabbi Shimon, his father. It is written, ‘He has not dealt so with any nation.’ However, we should ask that since it is written, ‘He declares His word unto Jacob,’ why does it say, ‘His statutes and His ordinances unto Israel?’”

This is a double meaning. And since the Torah is the hidden, high, and precious one, His very Name, the whole of Torah is hidden and revealed, meaning that in it, there is hidden and literal in His Name.

Hence, Israel is in two degrees, concealed and revealed. We learned that three are the degrees that connect to one another: 1) the Creator, 2) the Torah, 3) Israel. This is why it is written, “He declares His word unto Jacob, His statutes and His ordinances unto Israel.” They are two degrees. One is revealed: the degree of Jacob, and one is concealed: the degree of Israel. And what does the text imply by that? He replies, “Anyone who is circumcised and inscribed in the holy name is given into the revealed things in the Torah.” This is the meaning of what is written, “He declares His word unto Jacob.”

However, “His statutes and His ordinances unto Israel” is at a higher degree. Hence, “His statutes and His ordinances unto Israel” are the secrets of the Torah. The laws of the Torah and the secrets of the Torah need not be disclosed except to those at a properly higher degree. And as Israel is so, meaning that they

disclose the Torah only to one who is at a high degree, it is all the more so for idol-worshipping nations.

In Item 303, it is written, “Come and see that the first thing in the Torah that is given to infants is the alphabet. This is something that the people in the world cannot come to wish and conceive in their understanding.” To understand the above-said, we first need to know what Israel is, and what is an idol-worshipper in the work.

Our sages said about the verse (*Shabbat* 105b), “There shall not be a strange God within you, nor will you bow before a strange God.” What is the strange God in man’s body? It is the evil inclination. This means that an idol-worshipper is called “the evil inclination.” It follows that when speaking of a single body, then idol-worshipping, which is called “a foreign God” or “a strange God,” is entirely within man. Accordingly, we should discern the idol-worshipping in the person himself, which is the evil inclination, and the discernment of Israel, which is the good inclination.

However, we should understand why this inclination, which tempts one to delight himself and enjoy life, is called “evil.” After all, it tells a person, “If you listen to me, you will enjoy life.” Thus, why is it called “evil inclination” or “a strange God”? Also, what is the connection between idolatry and the evil inclination, and why is it called “Godliness” and praised and bowed to as one serves idolatry?

It is known that there are two kings in the world: 1) The king of all kings, 2) An old and foolish king, meaning the evil inclination. It is also called “two authorities”: 1) The authority of the Creator, 2) The authority of man.

Our sages said that when a person is born, he is born immediately with the evil inclination, as it is written, “Sin crouches at the door.” In *The Zohar*, it means that as soon as one

comes out of the womb, the evil inclination comes to him. In the work, we should interpret it that immediately, from the day one is born, he works and serves the evil inclination within him with his heart and soul.

However, it is known that the evil inclination is only the will to receive within us, as explained in the “Introduction of The Book of Zohar.” And as soon as one is born, his only purpose is to serve the will to receive. This means that all his senses focus on how to serve the old and foolish king. Also, one bows before him, and bowing means that he subjugates his reason and his mind before him.

This means that sometimes he hears that one should serve the king of all kings, and at times, the mind and heart resolve that the reason we are born is not to serve the will to receive. And yet, he subjugates that view and says, “Although my reason shows me that it is not worthwhile to toil and serve the will to receive my whole life, but that it is worthwhile to serve the Creator, I go above reason. In other words, the body tells me, ‘Drop everything you have received from books and from authors—that you must serve the Creator. Rather, as then, so now, do not defy the will to receive but serve it with your heart and soul.’”

It follows that one bows before the will to receive because subjugating the reason is called “bowing.” And this is considered that a person is serving a strange God who is a stranger to *Kedusha* [holiness]. He is also called “a foreign God,” for he is a foreigner to *Kedusha*.

At that time, the person who serves him is called “foreigner” or “idol-worshipper,” and this is the strange God in a man’s body. In other words, the strange God is not something on the outside—that he is serving something outside his own body. There is a thought that this is actually considered that he is committing idolatry. Rather, *by serving and working for his body, which is called*

“the will to receive,” inside man’s body, it is called that he is committing idolatry, and that person is called “foreigner” or “idol-worshipper.”

This is so because he has no connection to *Kedusha*, since *Kadosh* [holy] is called the Creator, as it is written, “You shall be holy, for I the Lord am holy.” It means, “You shall be dedicated” (as said in Article No. 16, 1986/87). Since the Creator is the giver, to have *Dvekut* [adhesion] with Him, called “equivalence of form,” a person should be a giver, too, and *this* is called *Kedusha* [holiness].

It therefore follows that one who serves and works for the will to receive creates an object, meaning that it is his God. He wishes to serve only it with his heart and soul, and in everything he does, even an act of bestowal, he does not even consider the act of bestowal, except according to the benefit that his will to receive will derive from it. He does not divert his focus from it, God forbid, but clings to his faith that this is all that must be served.

Even though his mind resolves that it is not worthwhile to serve it, he still doesn’t have the power to overcome his God, whom he has been serving since the day he was born. This is why it is called “faith,” since he is serving his will to receive above reason. And there is no reason in the world that can detach and separate him from the adhesion that he is attached to it from the day he was born. This is called “a gentile” or “a foreigner.”

Israel means the opposite of a strange God, meaning *Yashar El* [straight to God]. This means that his sole intention is for everything to be straight to the Creator. In other words, his only thought and desire is to come directly to adhesion with the Creator, and he doesn’t want to listen to the voice of the will to receive. He says that the name that was given to the will to receive, “evil inclination,” suits it because it only inflicts harm upon him.

In other words, the more he tries to satisfy its wish so it will not obstruct him in his work to be a servant of the Creator, it is to the contrary. That is, he constantly makes sure that he gives it what it demands of him, and he gives to it because he thinks that by so doing, it'll stop disturbing him. But then we see the exact opposite—this receiver actually grows stronger by his satisfying its needs, meaning it becomes even more evil.

And now he sees how right our sages were when they said (*Beresheet Rabbah* 25, 8), “Do not do good to a bad one,” meaning do not do good to a bad person. It is the same for us, who learn everything in one person. The meaning will be that it is forbidden to do good to the will to receive, which is the evil inclination, since out of any good that a person does to it, it has more strength to harm him later. And this is called “returning a favor with evil.” They are like two drops in a pond; that is, to the extent that he serves it, just so is its power to harm him.

However, one should always remember what is the evil that the receiver causes him. This is why one must always remember the purpose of creation—to do good to His creations—and believe that the Creator can impart endless delight and pleasure. It is written about it (Malachi 3:10), “‘And test Me now in this,’ says the Lord of hosts, ‘if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.’”

The reason why a person doesn't feel the delight and pleasure that the Creator wishes to give is because of the disparity of form between the Creator, who is the giver, and the receiver. This causes shame upon reception of the delight and pleasure. To avoid the bread of shame, there was a correction called *Tzimtzum* [restriction]—to not receive unless it is in order to bestow contentment upon one's Maker. This is called “equivalence of form,” as our sages said, “As He is merciful, you are merciful.”

This means that as the Creator is the giver and there is no reception in Him whatsoever—since from whom would He receive?—man, too, should strive to reach that degree of not wanting to work for himself, but to keep all his thoughts and desires on pleasing his Maker. And then he receives suitable *Kelim* [vessels] for reception of the upper abundance, which is the general name for the delight and pleasure that the Creator wished to give to the creatures.

In general, the abundance divides into five discernments, called *NRNHY*. Sometimes they are called *NRN*. Also, the upper abundance can simply be called *Neshama* [soul], and the receiver of the *Neshama* is called *Guf* [body], but those are not fixed names, but depend on the context.

Thus, who is the obstructer to receiving the above-mentioned delight and pleasure? It is only the will to receive. It obstructs and doesn't let us out of its authority, called "reception in order to receive." It is on this discernment that the *Tzimtzum* took place—to correct the vessels of reception so they will be in order to bestow, at which time he will be similar to the giver.

And there is equivalence of form here, called *Dvekut*. At that time, through *Dvekut* with the Creator, a person is considered alive, since he is attached to the Life of Lives. And through the receiver in him, he is separated from the Life of Lives. This is why our sages said, "The wicked—in their lives, they are called 'dead.'"

Thus, it is clear who is obstructing us from being given life: it is only the receiver in us, and we should determine that through the above-mentioned calculation. It turns out that it is the cause of all the troubles and afflictions we suffer in life. Clearly, the moniker, "evil inclination," suits it, since it causes all our troubles.

Let us imagine a sick person who wants to live. There is only one cure that can save his life, by which he will be rewarded with

life; otherwise, he will have to perish. And there is one person who is stopping him from having this medicine. Clearly, this person is called “an evil man.” It is the same for us. When one learns that only through the desire to bestow is it possible to be rewarded with spiritual life, that there is where the real delight and pleasure are found, and that this will to receive detains him from receiving, how will we look at it? Of course we should see it as the angel of death. Meaning, it is causing us to not be granted life!

When a person comes to realize this—that our receiver is the evil in us—and wishes to be “Israel,” meaning he doesn’t want to commit idolatry, which is the evil inclination in man’s body, and wishes to repent for having committed idolatry all that time, and wishes to be a servant of the Creator, in that state, when he wishes to exit the domination of the evil inclination, what should he do?

To that, there is the answer that our sages said (*Kidushin* 30b), “So says the Creator to Israel, ‘My sons, I have created the evil inclination, and I have created for it the spice of Torah. If you engage in Torah, you will not be given into its hand, as it is written, ‘If you do well, will it not be lifted up?’ And if you do not engage in Torah, you will be given into its hand, as it is written, ‘Sin crouches at the door.’” In other words, only the engagement in Torah has the power to come out of the domination of the evil inclination and enter *Kedusha*.

It therefore follows that one who engages in Torah—when speaking of the work—the purpose of the study must be clear to a person, meaning the reason that causes him to engage in Torah. This is so because there are two opposites in the Torah, as our sages said (*Yoma* 72b), “Rabbi Yehosha Ben Levi said, ‘Why is it written, ‘And this is the law that Moses put?’ If he is rewarded, it becomes a potion of life to him. If he is not rewarded, it becomes a potion of death to him.’ For this

reason, when a person engages in Torah, he should see that the Torah does not bring him into death.”

However, it is difficult to understand how there can be such a distance between being rewarded and not being rewarded, to the point that they say that if he is not rewarded by engagement in Torah, it becomes a potion of death to him. Wouldn't it be enough that he were not rewarded? Why is he even worse than one who did not engage in Torah at all? That is, one who did not engage in Torah doesn't have the potion of death, and one who engaged in Torah obtained death in return for his work. Can such a thing be?

This question is presented in the “Introduction to The Study of the Ten Sefirot” (p 20, Item 39), “However, their words require explanation to understand how and through what does the Holy Torah become a potion of death for him. Not only are his work and exertion in vain, and he receives no benefit from his labor and strain, but the Torah and the work themselves become a potion of death for him. This is indeed perplexing.”

In the “Introduction to The Study of the Ten Sefirot” (Item 101), “Since the Creator hides Himself in the Torah, since the matter of the torments and pains that one experiences during the concealment of the face are not similar between one who possesses few sins and has done little Torah and *Mitzvot* and one who has extensively engaged in Torah and good deeds. The first is quite qualified to judge his Maker favorably, to think that the suffering came to him because of his sins and scarceness of Torah. For the other, however, it is much harder to judge his Maker favorably.”

It is similar with us. When he places the goal before his eyes, meaning that the upper one wishes to delight His creatures, but to avoid the shame, we must have vessels of bestowal. And since we are born with the will to receive, which is considered a strange

God, whom we serve even above reason and who enslaves us, and we cannot come out of its power, we believe in our sages who said, “The Creator said, ‘I have created the evil inclination; I have created the spice of Torah.’”

This is the reason that makes one engage in Torah, and then the Torah brings him life. In other words, through the Torah he comes out of the domination of the evil inclination and becomes a servant of the Creator, meaning that his intention is only to bring contentment to his Maker. And he will be rewarded with *Dveikut* with the Creator, meaning that at that time, he will adhere to the Life of Lives. Indeed, only in that state, when a person studies about this goal, is the Torah regarded for him as a potion of life, since through the Torah he will be rewarded with life.

And yet, if he does not engage in Torah for that purpose, through the Torah that he is studying, the will to receive will grow stronger and acquire more strength to keep him under its control. This is because the receiver lets him understand that he is not like other people because, thank God, he is a man who has acquired good deeds and Torah, and certainly, the Creator shouldn't treat him as He treats ordinary people. Rather, the Creator should recognize him for who he is.

And if he works in concealment, he is certain to have complaints against the Creator, since if he suffers from something, he tells the Creator, “Is this the reward for the Torah?” Thus, he always has grievances against the Creator, which is called “doubting Divinity.” By that, they are separated from the Life of Lives.

This means that where they should have longed to be annulled before the Creator and to have all that they do be only to serve the Creator, those who work for the receiver wish for the Creator to serve them: all that their receiver needs,

the Creator should satisfy. It follows that they are working opposite from those who want to be rewarded with life by their engagement in Torah.

Therefore, we can understand what we asked about why Rabbi Ami says, “Torah is not to be given to idolaters.” If this is in the work, meaning in the person himself, and he is in a state of idolater, the reason that it is forbidden to learn is that it is pointless. This is so because in the work we learn that we should study Torah in order to come out of the domination of the evil inclination. But if he doesn’t want to break free from the enslavement of the evil inclination, then why does he need the Torah? It follows that if he were to be given Torah, it would be pointless. It is a waste of effort for the one who will teach him.

However, Rabbi Yohanan adds to Rabbi Ami and says, “Not only is it pointless, but if an idol-worshipper engages in Torah, it will harm him.” He is risking his soul because for idol-worshippers, meaning those who study Torah without the goal of exiting the domination of the evil inclination, but wish to stay under it and serve it willingly, this is called “idolatry.”

It is written about it, “A strange God in man’s body.” Thus, he is taking for himself the potion of death. This is why Rabbi Yohanan said, “An idol-worshipper who engages in Torah must die.” It means that he is risking his soul because the Torah will be a potion of death for him. However, what Rabbi Meir would say is, “Where is it from that an idol-worshipper who engages in Torah must die? Rather, he is like the high priest, as it was said, ‘If a man does them, he shall live by them.’”

And we asked about it, A) Why is he saying that he is like the high priest? Isn’t an ordinary priest a high degree? This is so far from the words of Rabbi Yohanan, who thinks that he must die. So what is the reason for this exaggeration that he is as the high priest? B) The interpreters ask, the evidence that Rabbi Meir

brings, where it says, “The man,” Rabbi Shimon says that “the man” actually means Israel and not idolaters.

We should interpret what Rabbi Meir says, “An idol worshipper who engages in Torah,” as referring to what we explained above. Rabbi Meir’s intention is that a person has come to realize that he is an idol-worshipper, that he sees that from the day he was born until now he has been serving idols, a foreign God, meaning the evil inclination, which is inside a man’s body. He sees how he is enslaved and is under its control and has no power that will defy its word. And although he often understands with his mind and reason that it is not worthwhile to serve it, but to the contrary, the evil inclination should serve the *Kedusha* [holiness], he still subdues his reason and serves it as if he realized that it *was* worthwhile to serve it.

When a person comes to realize it, when he sees that there is no power in the world that can help him, and he sees that he is lost and will be cut off from life forever, to deliver himself from death—being “The wicked in their lives they are called ‘dead’”—in that state he comes to believe the words of our sages. They said, “This is what the Creator told Israel, ‘My sons, I have created the evil inclination; and I have created for it the spice of Torah. If you engage in Torah, you will not be given into its hand.’”

It is about *this* kind of idol-worshipper that Rabbi Meir said that he was like the high priest. And he brings as evidence that it is written, “If a man does them, he shall live by them.” He interprets that if one engages in Torah in order to “live by them,” if the reason for his engagement in Torah is that he wishes to be rewarded with life and not be wicked—an idolater, which is a foreign God in a man’s body—but his sole aim is to be rewarded with life, this verse, “If a man does them, he shall live by them,” is about him.

This is so because if he engages in Torah, he will be as the high priest. And not just a priest, but he will be a priest, meaning

obtain the quality of *Hesed* [mercy], which is called “a priest,” meaning he will be rewarded with vessels of bestowal, and he will also be rewarded with *Gadlut* [greatness/adulthood]. This is why he says that he is like the high priest.

Accordingly, we should ask why Rabbi Meir says, “Even an idolater.” As we explained, it is to the contrary, since such an idol worshipper is worthy of being as the high priest. We can explain and say that the word “Even” means that even if a person comes to such lowness that he sees that he is truly an idolater, that he sees that thus far he gained nothing in his life, but only served his evil inclination. In other words, all his thoughts and desires have been only in favor of the receiver. He hasn’t even touched the path of truth, meaning had the ability to believe in the Creator above reason, but only according to what the reason allowed him to see—that specifically by working for it, it will give it energy to engage in Torah and *Mitzvot*. To such a person, Rabbi Meir comes and says, “Do not regret this lowness. Instead, you should believe that even when you have come to such a low, the Creator can still help you out of the exile of being under its domination all this time.” So the reason is to the contrary: The meaning of what he says is, “Even if the world agrees.”

However, in truth, only now is there a need for the Torah. Only now do you have the real *Kelim* [vessels], the real need for the Creator to help you, since you have come to the point of truth, as our sages said, “Man’s inclination overcomes him every day. Were it not for the Creator, he would not prevail over it.” Now he sees the truth, that he really needs the help of the Creator.

Now we can understand the above-mentioned words of *The Zohar*, where he says that on the face of it we should make three discernments in the work: 1) idol-worshippers, 2) Jacob, 3) Israel. The difference between them is that idol-worshippers are forbidden to study even the literal Torah. And we learn that

from what is written, “He has not dealt so with any nation.” In general, it is permitted to teach him the literal, specifically in the revealed matters. It concludes that from the verse, “He declares His word unto Jacob,” which is an inferior degree. When he is at a superior degree, it is permitted to teach him the secrets of Torah. It concludes that from the verse, “His statutes and His ordinances unto Israel.”

It is written in *The Zohar, Yitro* (p 69, and Item 265 in the *Sulam Commentary*), “‘Thus shall you say to the house of Jacob,’ to that place which befits their degree. ‘And tell the children of Israel,’ since Jacob and Israel are two degrees. Jacob is the degree of VAK, and Israel is the degree of GAR. However, Israel is called ‘the perfection of everything,’ which means showing *Hochma* [wisdom] and speaking in the spirit of *Hochma*.”

And it is written in *The Zohar, Yitro* (Item 260), “‘Thus shall you say to the house of Jacob’ is to the females, ‘And tell the children of Israel’ is to the males.” Also in *The Zohar, Yitro* (Item 261), “‘Thus shall you say to the house of Jacob’ meaning with a saying, from the side of *Din* [judgment]. ‘And tell the children of Israel’ is as they said, ‘And he shall tell them his covenant.’ Telling is *Rachamim* [mercy] for the children of Israel, meaning the males that come from the side of *Rachamim*. This is why it states ‘telling’ about them.”

We should understand the distinctions in the words of *The Zohar*, which says in the portion, *Aharei*, that Jacob and Israel are two degrees: 1) Jacob is below, with whom one studies the literal; 2) Israel is the degree above, with whom one studies the secrets of Torah.

It is written in *The Zohar, Yitro* (Item 260), “Jacob is females, Israel is males.” It says (Item 261), “Jacob is from the side of *Din*, which is why it writes, ‘saying,’ and Israel is *Rachamim*, for telling is *Rachamim*.” It says (Item 265), “Jacob is considered VAK and

Israel is considered GAR. This is why it is written, ‘And tell the children of Israel,’ which means to show *Hochma* and to speak in the spirit of *Hochma*, since telling implies *Hochma*.”

First, we will explain what *The Zohar* interprets about the discernment of Jacob. It says, 1) VAK, 2) females, 3) *Din*, 4) a revealed degree, the lower degree, the literal.

The order of the work that a person should begin in order to achieve the goal is to know his state in the work of the Creator and what is the goal that he must reach. In other words, what is the wholeness that a person must achieve?

The first state is for a person to know that he is an idol-worshipper, called “idolater.” This is the evil inclination that exists in man’s body. It is called, “a strange God” or “a foreign God.” This is to clarify his state, where he truly is—that he is truly in a state of idol-worshipping.

However, one should make great efforts to see the truth because it is impossible to reach the truth unless through Torah and work, as our sages said, “From *Lo Lishma* [not for Her name], one comes to *Lishma* [for Her name].” In a state of *Lo Lishma*, when a person exerts in Torah and work, it is human nature to look at people in his surroundings. And he sees that there are no other people like him, dedicating so many hours to the work of the Creator.

In that state, he feels superior to others, and this causes him to forget the goal, meaning that the important thing is to achieve *Lishma*. This is because people on the outside caused him to feel wholeness, and that wholeness is the reason why he cannot feel that he is devoid of the main goal—reaching *Lishma*.

It is especially so if he is respected for being a servant of the Creator. Indeed, all the people who honor him instill their views so that he will believe what they think about him, that he is a highly virtuous man without any faults. Thus, how is it possible

that a person will say about himself that he is in a state of idol-worshipping, that he is still uncircumcised? It follows that his adhesion to the masses, meaning their adhesion to his Torah and work brought him wholeness. In the work, this is called, “a grip to the external ones.”

And what is he losing by their having a grip? The answer is that the grip is the reason why he cannot see his real state, that he is still in a state of idol-worshipping, and seek advice on how to exit the domination of the evil.

The second state of a person is when he circumcises himself. “Circumcision” means that he cuts off the foreskin. The foreskin is the three impure *Klipot* [shells], called “Stormy Wind,” “Great Cloud,” and “Blazing Fire,” and the will to receive comes from there.

However, it is not within one’s power to cut off this foreskin. Baal HaSulam said about it that the Creator should help in order for a person to be able to cut off the foreskin. It is written about it, “And made a covenant with him.” The meaning of “With him” is that the Creator helped him. However, it is for a person to begin.

Yet, if we say that he cannot circumcise himself by himself, then why should a person start, if we say that he cannot finish? It seems as though his work is in vain. However, it is known that there is no light without a *Kli* [vessel], and a *Kli* is called “a deficiency,” since where there is no deficiency, there is no filling.

Thus, a person having to start refers to the deficiency. It doesn’t mean that a person should start with the filling. Rather, when we say, “start,” it is about giving the need and the lack. Afterwards, the Creator comes and gives the filling for the lack. This is called “And made a covenant with him,” that the Creator helps him.

This is also regarded as right line, which is the meaning of “Father gives the white,” as explained in *Talmud Eser Sefirot*. This means that when the upper light shines—meaning *Ohr Hochma* [light of *Hochma*], called *Aba* [father]—it is possible to see the truth, that the foreskin—will to receive—is a bad thing. Only then does one come to realize that he should throw away the self-love. This is the help that a person receives from the Creator—he comes to the recognition of evil.

In other words, before a person comes to the resolution that it is not worthwhile to be using the receiver, one cannot use the vessels of bestowal, since one contradicts the other. For this reason, a person must circumcise himself, and then he can take upon himself the desire to bestow.

It follows that removing the foreskin, called “circumcision,” comes by help from above. In other words, it is precisely when the upper light shines that one sees his baseness, that he cannot receive anything because of the disparity of form. In the worlds, this is called, “Father gives the white.”

And after he comes to the recognition of evil, there comes a second correction: he begins to work in order to bestow. But this, too, requires help from above. This is called, “His mother gives the red.” In *Talmud Eser Sefirot*, he interprets that this relates to the desire to bestow. It follows that *both the power to annul the will to receive and the power that can perform acts of bestowal are given by the upper one*. In other words, the help comes from above.

This brings up the question, “What does the lower one give?” Since it is said that the lower one must start, what does he start with, so that afterwards the Creator will give him the necessary assistance?

As it was said, all that the lower one can give to the Creator is the lack, for the Creator to have a place to fill. In other words, one who wishes to be a servant of the Creator and not an idol-

worshipper must come to feel his lowness. To the extent that he feels this, a pain gradually forms within him for being so immersed in self-love, actually like a beast, and that he has no connection with the discernment of a human.

Yet, sometimes a person comes to a state where he can see his lowness and not care that he is immersed in self-love, and he doesn't really feel the lowness to the point of needing the Creator to deliver him from it.

In that state, a person should tell himself, "I am not inspired; I am like a beast, doing only beastly things, and my only concerns in that state is that I ask of the Creator to let me feel more delight in corporeal pleasures, and I feel no desires otherwise." In that state, a person should tell himself that now he is in a state of unconsciousness. And if he cannot pray for the Creator to help him, there is only one solution: to bond with people whom he believes have the sensation of the lack, who are in lowness and who ask the Creator to bring them closer, to deliver them from trouble to relief, and from darkness to light, although they haven't been delivered yet.

Afterwards, he should say, "Of course they still haven't completed their *Kli* of deficiency, called 'the need to be delivered from this exile.' However, they have probably traversed the lion's share of the way to feeling the real need." Thus, through them, he can receive their sensation, too, meaning that he will feel pain at being in lowness, too. However, it is impossible to receive the influence of the society if he is not attached to the society, meaning *if he does not appreciate them*. To the extent that he does, he can receive from them the influence without any work, simply by adhering to the society.

It follows that in the second state, meaning when he is circumcised and has gone through the two discernments—1) removal of the evil, which is the annulment of the vessels of

reception, and 2) obtaining the vessels of bestowal—it is considered that now he receives the degree of VAK. This is considered half a degree, since a complete degree means that he can use the vessels of reception, too, in order to bestow.

And since he only obtained the vessels of bestowal after he was circumcised to be in order to bestow, it is merely regarded as the degree of VAK. This is called “the degree of Jacob.” It is also called “female,” as in, “His strength is as weak as a female,” which means that he cannot overcome and aim them in order to bestow, but only with the vessels of bestowal.

And this degree, too, is called *Din*. It means that there is still *Midat ha Din* [quality of judgment] over the vessels of reception, that it is forbidden to use them because he cannot aim in order to bestow. It is also called “a revealed degree,” to know that there is another degree, which is hidden from him. It is also called “a low degree,” to know that there is a high degree. We need to know this so that we know that there is more work to be done, meaning to still reach a higher degree.

This degree is also called “the literal,” since now that he has circumcised himself he has become “a simple Jew.” That is, before he was circumcised he was an idol-worshipper, and now he is simply discerned as “Jewish.”

Also, now he is called “Jacob,” as it is written, “Thus shall you say to the house of Jacob,” meaning “saying,” which is a soft speech, since the degree of Jacob is regarded as working only with vessels of bestowal, which are pure *Kelim*. This is why there is “saying” there, which is soft speech.

This is not so with the discernment of “Israel.” *The Zohar* interprets Israel as being 1) the degree of GAR, completeness of everything; 2) males; 3) *Rachamim*; 4) a high and hidden degree, the secrets of the Torah.

We shall explain them one at a time.

1) The degree of GAR. Since each degree comprises ten *Sefirot*, which divide into *Rosh* and *Guf* [head and body, respectively], the *Rosh* is called GAR, meaning *Keter-Hochma-Bina*, and the *Guf* is called ZAT. They are two halves of the degree. This is why VAK is considered the low degree and GAR is considered a high degree. It is known that when speaking of the degree of VAK, it is called “half a degree.” This is a sign that the GAR is absent. For this reason, when saying, “the degree of GAR,” it means that there is a complete degree here, since the rule is that when two degrees are together, the higher one is mentioned and includes the lower one. This is why *The Zohar* calls the perfection of everything, “Israel.”

2) The degree of males. Each degree contains two kinds of *Kelim*: *Zach* [pure/fine]—which are vessels of bestowal, and *Av* [thick], which are vessels of reception. It is possible to use them only if the intention to bestow is placed on them. And since in order to bestow is against nature, it requires great effort with much strength against nature. And when one can overcome only the fine *Kelim*, this is called “a female,” which implies that his power is as weak as a female’s. But when he can overcome the vessels of reception, too, he is called “a man,” “male,” “strong.” And since Israel is considered GAR, the perfection of everything, using the vessels of reception, too, Israel is considered “males.”

3) The degree of *Rachamim*. Since there was a *Tzimtzum* [restriction] and *Din* [judgment] over the vessels of reception, and it is forbidden to use them unless one can do it in order to bestow, when one cannot aim to bestow with vessels of reception, there is *Din* over them and it is forbidden to use them. This is why a female is called *Din*.

But a male means that one can overcome, in order to bestow in vessels of reception, too, and the *Din* is removed from them. He is using the vessels of reception in order to bestow, and this is called *Rachamim* [mercy]. It is considered that the previous *Din*

has been mitigated by the quality of *Rachamim*, that now he is receiving at the degree of in order to bestow. This is why a male is called *Rachamim*.

This means that males are called *Rachamim* and not *Din*, as written in *The Zohar* (Item 261), “Thus shall you say to the house of Jacob,” meaning saying is from the side of *Din*, and “Tell the children of Israel” means that telling is from the side of *Rachamim*.

RASHI interprets the verse, “Thus shall you say to the house of Jacob”: “The name *Mekhilta* [an interpretation on the book, *Exodus*] are the women, tell them with soft speech, and ‘Tell the children of Israel,’ the males, the words are as hard as tendons.”

We should interpret the words, “To the women with soft speech.” It was mentioned above that females are those who don’t have much strength to overcome, but only over the fine *Kelim*. This is called “soft,” meaning it is soft and not so difficult to overcome the vessels of bestowal [“difficult” is the same word as “hard” in Hebrew].

But the vessels of reception are very hard to overcome. Hence, the males—those who are in a state of males, who have the power to overcome—were given work in things that are as hard as tendons, referring to the vessels of reception. But why does *The Zohar* write that males are *Rachamim*? Rather, it says, “As hard as tendons,” and hard means *Din*, not *Rachamim*. Hence, on the one hand, it says that males means as hard as tendons, and on the other hand it says that they are *Rachamim*.

We should interpret that males have the power to overcome the vessels of reception, too, which are hard to overcome. And when overcoming the vessels of reception, called *Midat ha Din* [quality of judgment] that is on them, there is *Rachamim* on that place, and not *Din*. But with females, who have no power to

overcome the vessels of reception, there is *Midat ha Din* on them and it is forbidden to use them.

4) A high and hidden degree, considered “the secrets of the Torah.” “Hidden” means that even if a person has already circumcised himself and has been rewarded with the literal, meaning with being a simple Jew, that is, he’s come to a state where he is not committing idolatry but serves the Creator, the light of *Hochma*—revealed over the vessels of reception—is still hidden from him.

But one who has been rewarded with the highest discernment, who is a male and has the power to overcome the vessels of reception, too, the light of *Hochma*, called “the secrets of the Torah,” appears on those *Kelim*. This is why *The Zohar* says (Item 265), “And tell the children of Israel,” meaning show *Hochma* and speak in the spirit of *Hochma*, since “telling” implies *Hochma*, as it is written, “And he shall tell them his covenant.”

It follows that saying that it is forbidden to teach Torah to idol worshippers should be interpreted in the work as, “It is impossible to teach idol-worshippers Torah.” As Baal HaSulam said, when speaking in matters of the work, where it writes, “forbidden,” it means “can’t.” But after he is circumcised, there are two degrees—upper and lower—meaning literal and hidden.

THE NEED FOR LOVE OF FRIENDS

Article No. 14, 1987/88

There are many merits to it:

1) It brings one out of self-love and to love of others. It is as Rabbi Akiva said, “Love thy friend as thyself is the great rule of the Torah,” since by that he can come to love the Creator.

However, we should know that loving others or working for the benefit of others is *not* the purpose of creation, as the secular understand it. The world was not created for one to do favors to another. Rather, the world was created for each one to receive pleasure for himself. Saying that we must work to benefit others is only the *correction* of creation, not the *purpose* of creation. The correction is so that there will not be the matter of shame, so there was a correction of bestowal, which is the only way for the creatures to receive the complete delight and pleasure for themselves without the flaw of shame.

In that regard, we should interpret what *The Zohar* says about the verse, “‘But sin is a reproach to any people,’ all the good that they do, they do for themselves.”

We can interpret “all the good,” meaning the acts of grace that they do, as referring to their intention, which is called “for them,” meaning for themselves. This means that it is according to their own understanding and not that we were given the keeping of “love thy friend as thyself” as a commandment of the Creator, who created the world with the aim to do good to His creations. The *Mitzvot* [commandments] that we were given are only to *cleanse people*, by which they will achieve *Dvekut* [adhesion] with the Creator, who will help them receive delight and pleasure, and they will remain in *Dvekut* with the Creator.

2) By the friends uniting into a single unit, they receive strength to appreciate the purpose of their work—to achieve

Lishma [for Her name]. Also, the rule by which they were brought up is, as Maimonides said, “Women, children, and ordinary people are taught to work out of fear and to receive reward until they gain knowledge and acquire much wisdom. And then they are taught that secret bit by bit.”

And since we must wait “until they acquire much wisdom” to tell them that they need to work in *Lishma*, and a great number among the masses naturally remains in *Lo Lishma* [not for Her name], and since the minority naturally annuls before the majority, when the friends wish to walk on the path that leads to *Lishma*, to avoid annulment before the collective, the friends unite and each one is dedicated to the others. Their aim is to *achieve love of the Creator, which is the purpose, through the love of others*, as it is written, “And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”

It follows that by becoming one collective, although it is a small collective, they are already regarded as a majority, and this majority is not enslaved to the majority of the collective. Thus, they can work in love of friends with the aim to achieve the love of the Creator.

And although the commandment to love your friend as yourself applies to the whole of Israel, the whole of Israel are not walking on the path of coming from love of others to love of the Creator. Also, there is a rule that when people unite they absorb each other’s views, and the matter of *Lishma*—the essential aim of Torah and *Mitzvot*—has not yet been fixed in a man’s heart, meaning that the main intention is that through keeping Torah and *Mitzvot* they can achieve *Lishma*. Hence, by bonding with others, the views of the others weaken his view of *Lishma*. For this reason, it is better to serve and to bond with the kind of people who understand that the matter of “love thy friend as thyself” is only *a means to achieve the love of the Creator*, and not because of self-love, but that his whole aim will be to benefit the

Creator. Hence, one should be careful in bonding and know with whom one bonds.

This is the benefit of love of friends in a special group, where *everyone has a single goal of achieving love of the Creator*. But when bonding with regular people, although they engage in Torah and *Mitzvot*, they aren't on the path of achieving the aim to bestow upon the Creator, since they were brought up in order to receive, called *Lo Lishma*. Hence, if they unite with them, they will adopt their views, and afterwards they will say that it is better to not walk on the path toward achieving *Lishma* because *Lishma* is more difficult than *Lo Lishma*, since *Lishma* is against nature. For this reason, one should be careful not to bond with people who haven't acquired much knowledge and still haven't come to know that the essence of the work of the Creator is to benefit the Creator and not to benefit themselves.

But the matter of "love thy friend as thyself" applies to the whole of Israel. Yet, we were given the keeping of knowing with whom to bond in advance. And the reason is that before a person is rewarded with exiting self-love, he always feels that it is hard. This is because the body resists it, and if he is in an environment of a group of people who are united under one view, that considers the goal and not the work, then his goal will not weaken in him.

But if he is not always together with his friends, it is very difficult for one to hang on to the goal of bestowal. He needs heaven's mercy to not grow weak in his mind, which previously realized that it was better to work and to walk on the path of the work of bestowal.

And all of a sudden he gets thoughts that it is better to follow the crowd, that one shouldn't be an exception, although while he was united with the friends he thought differently. It is as we said above: While he is not bonded with the collective of the

small group, he immediately surrenders to the collective of the masses and absorbs their views that it is enough to keep Torah and *Mitzvot* in all its details and precisions, and to aim that we are keeping the King's commandment, who commanded us through Moses and through the sages following him. We settle for that, since we will receive reward for it, and we believe in our sages who told us, "Trust your landlord to pay you for your work." And why should we think about anything more than that? As they say, "If we keep that, it is enough."

It is as Rabbi Hananiah, Son of Akashiah says, "The Creator wished to reward Israel, so He gave them plentiful Torah and *Mitzvot*." This means that all the Torah and *Mitzvot* that we were given are so we may have a great reward.

Thus, now the person has become smarter than he was while he was united in the society, when he understood that one simply needs to work for the Creator and not for his own benefit, and one needs to come out of self-love and be rewarded with *Dvekut* with the Creator. And although he saw that it was difficult to come out of self-love, he realized that this was a true path, meaning that a person should come to work *Lishma*.

But while he is separated from that society, he immediately falls into the majority view, which is the majority of the world. In other words, the majority of Israel has not yet come to what Maimonides said, "Until they gain much wisdom, they are told that secret," which is the necessity to work *Lishma*.

And when that person enters the society, whose way is that it is necessary to achieve *Lishma*, the question arises, "How did this person end up in such a place?" We must believe that it came from above.

Accordingly, we should understand why, afterwards, he drifts away from the society. We should say, as Baal HaSulam said, that when a person begins to walk on the path of *Lishma*—and

certainly this aim comes to a person who is given an awakening to the path of truth—and afterwards, for some reason, he is negligent in this work and relapses to the ordinary path of the collective, he asked, “Why is he not given another awakening from above?”

He gave an allegory about that. It is similar to a person who is swimming in the river. Halfway across the river, he grows weak, and a person swimming next to him gives him a push so he will start swimming by himself. The person who is trying to save him gives a few pushes, but if he sees that he doesn't participate, he leaves him and moves away. Only when he sees that when he pushes him, he begins to swim by himself does he keep pushing him each time until he's out of danger. But if he doesn't participate, he leaves him.

It is the same in the work. A person receives an awakening from above so he will come to a place where people work knowingly in order to achieve being in order to bestow contentment upon the Creator. And a person is given several awakenings, but if he doesn't make an effort to reach that, he finds excuses for himself and must escape the campaign. Thus, a person remains righteous; that is, by leaving this society, he is always right. And by justifying himself, he truly feels that he is righteous.

Therefore, *one must cling to the society*. And since they are united, they are regarded as a collective, too. However, theirs is a big collective, while his society is a small collective. And yet, a collective does not annul before a collective.

3) There is a special power in the adhesion of friends. Since views and thoughts pass from one to the other through the adhesion between them, each is mingled with the power of the other, and by that each person in the group has the power of the entire group. For this reason, *although each person is an individual, he contains the power of the entire group*.

WHAT IS THE FOUNDATION ON WHICH KEDUSHA [HOLINESS] IS BUILT

Article No. 16, 1987-88

When building a building in corporeality, we see that anyone who wants to build a building must first dig the foundations, and on the foundation he builds the building. In digging the foundation, we see that we should discern between having to build a one-story building—that is, only the ground floor—or a multi-story building. Thus, the digging of the foundation into the ground should be according to the height of the building. The foundation is not dug at once. Rather, each day the foundation is built so that it will be deeper, and then one can build a higher building.

The same order applies in spirituality. When a person wishes to build a one-story building, he doesn't need to dig very deep. He only digs a little, and he can build his building in keeping Torah and *Mitzvot* [commandments]. And what is digging in spirituality? It is a deficiency, when a deficiency is dug in the heart, since the heart is called "desire," a heart is called *Malchut*, and a heart is called "earth" or "ground."

As in corporeality, you dig a deficiency in the ground. In other words, before we go and build a building, we must first dig in the ground, that is, take out whatever there is in the digging site. Once the place where we want to build is empty, we begin to build. If the place is filled with earth, we mustn't build on it because the building will fall.

Likewise, in spirituality we must dig in the ground, meaning in the heart, and take out the dust in the heart from there, and then the heart remains empty, without any filling. Then begins the time of building. It follows that when the heart is filled with corporeal things, it is impossible to build any construction

on that ground because the whole building will tumble, since nothing is entitled to exist if there is no need for it.

Rather, only where there is a need, and he feels the lack from not having that which he craves, when he obtains it, that thing is entitled to exist, because he needs it. And then he knows—the measure of importance is according to the measure of the need, and he knows how to watch over the building so his enemies will not ruin it.

Here begins the matter of digging the foundations, meaning the depth of the digging in the ground depends on the height of the building that a person intends to build. Sometimes a person says that he is content with a ground-level building. In other words, he wishes to keep Torah and *Mitzvot* by which to be rewarded with a building that is at the ground level, meaning not far from the ground.

Therefore, he wishes to remain in earthliness, which is regarded as vessels of reception, meaning the reward in which he wishes to dwell. As when building a building to live in, the reward is considered the building where he lives. Thus, it is known that a person wants to live only by reward, and reward means that he is receiving delight and pleasure in return for his work, and this is the person's life—that a man wants to live only for delight and pleasure.

The order of the work in Torah and *Mitzvot* begins with *Lo Lishma* [not for Her name], as it is written in *The Zohar*, “Some keep Torah and *Mitzvot* in order to be rewarded in this world, and some work in Torah and *Mitzvot* to have the next world.” However, his reward is only what he will receive in his vessels of self-reception, which is considered earthliness. This manner is called “people of the earth,” meaning that they do not move from the earth, which is called the “will to receive.”

It is as Maimonides said (*Hilchot Teshuva (Penance Laws)*, Chapter 10), “When teaching little ones, women, and people of the earth, they are taught only to work out of fear and to be rewarded.”

This is not so with being a wise disciple, according to what Baal HaSulam said, that a wise disciple is one who is studying the qualities of the Wise, and the Creator is called “Wise.” Therefore, one who goes by the path of bestowal is regarded as learning from the wise. Hence, he is called “a wise disciple.”

It follows that those people who engage in Torah and *Mitzvot* to be rewarded with a building called “reward of this world or reward of the next world for one’s own benefit” are defined as “people of the earth.” This is considered that he wishes to build only the ground floor. Thus, he does not need to dig a deep foundation, meaning dig each day to make the digging deep. Instead, he digs once and the digging is enough for him.

In other words, when he understands that he has a need and desire to keep Torah and *Mitzvot* so as to be rewarded, when he understands that deficiency, that reason, he can already obtain the building of the reward. This is so because as long as a person does not wish to exit self-love, the body does not resist Torah and *Mitzvot*. Therefore, he does not need to dig each day, meaning he does not need to search for a need and desire to engage in Torah and *Mitzvot* because the body doesn’t resist his need, for he understands that it is worthwhile for him to work for his own benefit.

This is considered that his digging does not need to be so deep. Rather, the need to understand that it is good to engage in Torah and *Mitzvot* is enough to motivate him for the work. It follows that the digging he did once always remains with him and he can continue the work. Thus, his digging does not need to be deep.

However, if he wishes to build a multi-story building, meaning to be rewarded with a *Neshama* [soul] that consists of *NRNHY*, he can be rewarded specifically if his intention is in order to bestow, that all his thoughts and desires are only for the Creator's sake and not for his own sake. In this way, when he wishes to create a foundation, to build such a building, the digging of the foundation—meaning the need for it—is not made in a single time.

This is so because after a person works with himself and lets his body understand that it is worthwhile to work to bestow, this digging does not come easily to him. During the digging he hits rocks, which are difficult to make holes in. It is hard to make even a small hole in a rock.

In other words, when he wishes to understand—when he has a big desire, when he sees that he cannot do anything in order to bestow and wishes to ask the Creator to give him what he wants, meaning to give him the light of Torah that reforms him—in the middle of the digging he finds a big rock.

In other words, a thought arises in him that he wishes to understand why he needs to work for the Creator and not for himself. After all, it is known that “Your life and the life of your friends—your life comes first.” And he has nothing to answer to that perception. Thus, he pauses in the digging because that rock is too hard to be able to make a hole in it.

For this reason, he needs a valuable instrument by which it is possible to break the stone. That instrument is called *faith above reason*, and it is *only* this instrument that can break the stone, which is called “external reason,” meaning that this reason is outside of *Kedusha* [holiness] because it only serves the *Kedusha* as a shell that precedes the fruit.

Thus, since only with faith above reason is it possible to break the stone, there is the matter of ascents and descents here,

since one is not always capable of going above reason. It follows that all his digging and finding of some deficiency to ask the Creator to give him strength to go by the path of bestowal has been resealed by the rock.

As a result, he must dig once more, repeatedly. And each time he begins to dig out the earth, in the middle of the digging he finds a rock again. And once again he begins to ask questions within reason. And again, he overcomes and uses the faith above reason. And once more, he obtains a place of lack and begins to pray to the Creator to bring him closer to His work, meaning to do the work of the Creator for the Creator, and not for his own sake.

And since his whole construction is built on above reason, the digging is sealed again, meaning that his need disappears again and he has nothing to ask; that is, he has no need for the Creator to bring him closer. Thus, he must start digging again, meaning to work in order to find a deficiency, so he will have a basis upon which to ask the Creator to build his building.

In this digging, we find that when we dig in the ground, we find dust and rocks. Dust is called “heart,” meaning the will to receive for oneself. This is still not so terrible because with great efforts, one can take out the dust from the earth. But when he finds rocks in the middle of the digging, when the reason begins to ask questions, then he needs heaven’s mercy to receive strength to overcome above reason.

Therefore, there is great work on the foundation because the digging is not finished in a day. Rather, immediately after the digging come the rocks and fall in his mind, meaning he receives foreign thoughts. That is, after he has already overcome above reason, for a time he cannot maintain it but suffers another decline and must begin anew. However, one must believe that no work is lost. Rather, everything remains but there is a correction of not seeing what he has already done.

Therefore, it is considered that each day when a person digs the foundation, he digs into the depth of the ground and does not go back to working on what he has already worked yesterday. But the progress is in deepening, and the measure of the depth of the digging is when he receives a genuine need for the Creator's help to help him have the desire to work in order to bestow.

“Each penny is accumulated into a great account.” Finally, out of all the digging, he arrives at such a depth that it is possible to build a building on it, to be worthy of being rewarded with *NRNHY* of the *Neshama*, which one should be rewarded with.

We understand the construction of *Kedusha* [holiness] in two respects: 1) *Kli* [vessel], and 2) Light.

A *Kli* means that the Creator gives a desire and a craving to bestow upon the Creator.

“Light” means that once he has a desire to bestow, which is called *Dvekut* [adhesion], he receives a degree of *Neshama*, until he is rewarded with *NRNHY*. It is written in the “Introduction to the Study of Ten Sefirot” (Item 133), “So it is in the work of the complete righteous, that the choice that applies during the concealment of the face is certainly not applied once the door for attainment of open Providence is opened. Instead, they begin with the primary part of His work—in disclosure of the face. At that time, one begins to march on the many degrees, as it is written, ‘The righteous go from strength to strength.’ These works qualify them for the will of the Creator, that His thought in creation would be realized in them: to delight His creations.”

Now we can see that there is a degree of being rewarded with *Dvekut* with the Creator, meaning obtaining the degree of wanting to bestow. After that, there is the order of being rewarded with the light, which is called *NRNHY*, which are degrees in the disclosure of the light.

According to the aforesaid, we can interpret what is written (Gen 26:15), “And all the wells which his father’s servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines sealed. ... And Isaac dug again the wells of water which had been dug in the days of his father Abraham, and the Philistines had stopped them up. And Isaac’s servants dug ... And the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with the herdsmen of Isaac, saying, ‘The water is ours!’ ... And they dug another well, and quarreled over it too ... and [he] dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it; and he named it Rehovot, for ‘At last the Lord has made room for us, and we will be fruitful in the land.’ And he went up from there to Beersheba.”

The digging that they did was to find a deficit and a need for the salvation of the Creator; they were for the *Kli*, meaning to ask the Creator to give them the need to bestow. And they see that they cannot because the body resists it by nature, for it is born only with a desire to receive.

However, in that, too, there are two discernments to make: 1) When he prays for the Creator to give him the strength to overcome the will to receive and work in order to bestow, and he wishes for the Creator to give him this power. 2) Sometimes, one cannot ask the Creator to give him the desire to bestow because the body resists the prayer, as well. The body is afraid that perhaps the Creator might help him and he will lose the desire to receive. It follows that he must pray that the Creator will give him the strength to overcome the body and that he *will* have the strength to pray to the Creator for help in overcoming the will to receive and working in order to bestow.

It follows that he is praying, and what is his request? It is to be able to pray. This is called “a prayer for a prayer.” It is called that the Creator should help him with *the Kli*, meaning to understand that what he needs is the strength to bestow. It turns out that the Creator helps him and gives him a desire to want

to understand that all that man needs is the desire to bestow in mind and in heart.

Afterwards, when he has the need and he wishes to work in order to bestow, but cannot, the Creator gives him the light, meaning light that comes for the correction of the *Kli*, to be able to work in order to bestow. *And that light is called Kli*, as it is known that the light is named after the act. And since the light gives him the desire, which is called *Kli*, it is called that the Creator gave him the vessel of bestowal. This is called “the foundation,” and on such a foundation it is possible to build a multi-story building. In other words, once he has obtained the foundation, which is the vessel of bestowal, he begins to be rewarded with a full level of *NRNHY* in his soul.

However, concerning the Philistines sealing the wells that his father’s servants dug in the days of Abraham, we should interpret it in the work. Abraham is the discernment of *Hesed* [mercy/grace]. Abraham’s servants are those who follow the path of *Hesed*, meaning those who wish to go by the path of bestowal, which is called *Hesed*. They dug this deficiency for themselves, meaning the need for vessels of bestowal. But as much as they dug to find deficiencies, their deficiencies were sealed, and they always had to work anew, to dig again, repeatedly.

Now we can interpret the dispute between the herdsmen of Gerar and the herdsmen of Isaac, as it is written, “And Isaac’s servants dug ... And the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with the herdsmen of Isaac... So he named the well Oshek, because they *Hitashku* [contended] with him. And they dug another well, and they quarreled over it too, and he named it Sitnah [Hebrew: enmity]. And [he] dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it; and he named it Rehovot ... And he went up from there to Beersheba.”

We must understand the meaning of “Herdsmen of” in spirituality, and the difference between “The herdsmen of

Gerar” and “The herdsmen of Isaac” in the work, as well as why there was a quarrel over the digging of the first two wells and none over the digging of the third well, as it is written, “And they did not quarrel over it.”

It is known that one cannot live without provision. “Provision” is considered that which sustains one in life and of which he says, “This is worth living for.” Certainly, there are many degrees of man’s provision. Some are content with little, meaning that if a person has the food animals settle for, he says, “This is enough for me and such provision is worth living for.” Compared to the provision of others, he is regarded as settling for little.

And some say that they settle for such nourishments that are enough to provide for little children. This is an addition to animals, since they have interests: they play hide-and-seek, with toys and so on, and they settle for that. They say, “What we enjoy doesn’t have to be real. Even if it’s a lie we can still find our provision there.” On the contrary, it is the real things that we find completely meaningless.

As an allegory, I said many times that we see that there are little girls whose parents bought them toy dolls to play with. Sometimes, the mother is in the kitchen preparing a meal, with a year-old baby in the house, and the baby is crying. The mother says to her little girl, “Go play with the baby. By that, the baby will enjoy and I will enjoy because I’ll be able to prepare the meal.”

But we see that in reality, the girl will not go. If we were to ask the girl, “Why don’t you want to play with the baby? You’re only playing with your doll, kissing it, but why won’t you play with a real baby instead of a toy one? Moreover, you can see that your mother is doing the opposite. She never kisses your doll, but the real baby.” The girl would probably answer, “My mother doesn’t want to enjoy life; that’s why she can’t play with a doll. But I still want to enjoy life, so I can’t play with a real baby.”

Similarly, in the work, one cannot enjoy the truth in the work. Rather, man is impressed specifically by the lie and takes pleasure and liveliness from that. If he is told, “It is unbecoming for you to enjoy work with unreal things,” he says, “I still want to enjoy the world; that’s why I settle for little in my engagement in Torah and *Mitzvot*.”

For the most part, each person in the masses that observe the holy work and keep Torah and *Mitzvot* chooses his own measure of time he must dedicate to Torah and *Mitzvot*. Each one measures for himself what he understands as sufficient for him in both quantity and in quality, and says that he settles for little. He does not have to be among the wealthy, who have great possessions. Instead, each understands his measure in Torah and *Mitzvot* with good reason.

It is as *The Zohar* says about the verse, “Her husband is known at the gates,” each according to what he measures in his heart. This means that according to the greatness of the Creator, he knows how much time he must dedicate to Torah and *Mitzvot* and how much he must exert if it is hard for him to keep the Torah and *Mitzvot*.

However, there are a chosen few who do not settle for the provisions of the masses. According to the Ari, the dissatisfaction that they feel is a matter of the root of the soul. They need to advance more than the masses, and they begin to understand that the main work should be to sustain themselves with man’s food, not with the food of beasts or with the food given to little ones. As Maimonides puts it, “When teaching the little ones, they are taught to work for a reward, and they are not told of the matter of *Lishma* [for Her name].”

However, here begins the exertion when he wishes to go by the path of bestowal upon the Creator and not for his own benefit, and that, the body resists. And then he begins to receive

thoughts that wish to make him see that, “You don’t need to be an exception. As the others settle for the provision of reward for labor in this world and in the next world, this should be enough for you, too. So why are you making noise about wanting to work specifically in a manner of bestowal? Can’t you see that this is difficult? If it weren’t, others would work in bestowal, too.” With these arguments, these thoughts seal the diggings, meaning the deficiencies and the need to obtain the desire to bestow.

Now we can interpret what is “The herdsmen of Gerar” and what is “The herdsmen of Isaac,” and what is the dispute between them. “Herdsman” means provider. “The herdsmen of Gerar” means that their provision is in following the crowd. In other words, thoughts come to them that they don’t need to work like the work of the few, who wish to reach the truth, called *Lishma*, meaning in order to bestow. Instead, they settle for being workers who keep Torah and *Mitzvot* to receive reward in this world and in the next world. This means that here, too, in keeping Torah and *Mitzvot*, he can follow a path of settling for little.

“The herdsmen of Isaac” means what sustains Isaac. This is considered sustaining the discernment of Isaac, the discernment of bestowal. As long as he can bestow upon the Creator, this is his provision, and from this he makes a living.

That was the quarrel between the herdsmen of Gerar, who were telling him that any digging to find deficiency and need to engage only in the path of bestowal is not worth digging and searching for such deficiencies. They seal the need by saying, “We must follow the masses and not be exceptions.”

The herdsmen of Isaac were digging and looking for a need and deficiency to find pain and suffering from not being able to do things with the aim to bestow. This means that they understood that the most important thing was to work

in bestowal, but they did not feel pain and suffering from this deficiency that they found. Thus, they dug and sought advice concerning how to feel suffering, and the herdsmen of Gerar came and blocked the deficiencies that they had found. In other words, they promoted the understanding that it is not so terrible; we can follow the masses and whatever they are saying, since we settle for little.

This caused suffering to Isaac's herdsmen, since they had made great efforts to find that their deficiencies could not work in bestowal and to be pained by it. And they were already able to pray from the bottom of the heart, and they already had a place of blessing, meaning to give thanks to the Creator for revealing a place of lack to them, which is the main part of the work of the Creator. In other words, if they cannot aim the actions to benefit the Creator, they are not considered servants of the Creator, but their own servants. And the herdsmen of Gerar suddenly came and pulled them to follow the provision of the masses. By that, they were sealing all the well of Isaac's herdsmen, and this is the issue with the quarrel that they had between them over the digging of the wells.

And now we will explain what we asked: Why did the herdsmen of Gerar quarrel over the first two wells and did not quarrel over the third well? It is known that the order of the work is in three lines—right and left, which are opposite to one another, then comes the middle line, and then peace is made.

It is also known that we said that the masses belong to a single line. Therefore, there is no one to oppose him, to make contradictory arguments, since he has only one line. This is why the matter of ascents and descents is hardly relevant to them. But with the right line, the left line stands opposite it, which is why in the right line there is already the matter of ascents and descents.

It is known that the right line is a line of truth. A single line, however, is not so true. Also, it is known that anything that is far from the truth is easier to keep. This is why the way of the masses, who are taught to go by a single line, means that they haven't come to know and to understand that there is more than the actions. Rather, when they keep the 613 *Mitzvot*, they aim that the Creator commanded us to keep them, by which we will receive reward, and this is a complete righteous.

The only distinction among the workers is in quantity, in the amount of time each one gives for his engagement in Torah and *Mitzvot*. Therefore, since he is not so close to the truth, to being in *Lo Lishma* [not for Her name], there aren't that many ascents and descents in those states, which are called "provision of the masses." This is so because if he only believes in reward and punishment, to the extent of his faith the body agrees to work and to exert in keeping Torah and *Mitzvot*, since the reward he expects to receive in his vessels of reception are not in contrast with the body, which is called "will to receive for himself." Thus, they can work with great diligence.

And there is another reason why there aren't so many descents in them: they find success in the work. In other words, they see that each day they advance in Torah and *Mitzvot* because it is human nature that when we see that we succeed in some work, there is motivation to work. All this is considered one line.

This is not so when a person begins to work in order to bestow, meaning when the reward that he expects to receive in return for his work is to obtain *Dvekut* [adhesion] with the Creator, when his intention in keeping Torah and *Mitzvot* is to have only the desire to bestow upon the Creator and not for himself. And as much as he exerts to be rewarded with vessels of bestowal, he does not move an inch. On the contrary, he sees

that he is not succeeding in the work. Thus, from where will he receive livelihood so he can continue with the work?

The correction is to know the truth: that he is still immersed in self-love and he is still remote from the Creator. But then he must tell himself, “Although I still don’t see any progress in the work, I have the great privilege of being able to do something in Torah and *Mitzvot*.”

Then he must believe above reason that although he still doesn’t feel His greatness, doing little things in Torah and *Mitzvot*—even if by coercion—makes him happy that he has some grip in Torah and *Mitzvot*. And for that he is grateful to the Creator. This is considered that the gratitude he gives to the Creator is given in truth.

In other words, he knows the truth—that he is remote from the Creator—and yet he is happy that he has the strength to do something in Torah and *Mitzvot*, although he doesn’t do it wholeheartedly. But what is important to him is that he is serving the Creator, even though he still doesn’t feel the greatness of the Creator. Nevertheless, he is thankful to the Creator for allowing him to do anything for Him.

And this is true. He is not deceiving himself into thinking that he is regarded as a servant of the Creator because he knows the truth, that everything he does is completely by coercion and not willingly.

But those who walk on a single line, who give thanks to the Creator for rewarding them with engagement in Torah and *Mitzvot*, there are two drawbacks there: 1) One considers himself a servant of the Creator, and this is not the truth, since he is working for himself. 2) The Creator is not the one who is important in his eyes, meaning that it is worthwhile to work for the Creator. Rather, all the importance of the work is in how much reward he will receive for his labor. In other words, he is

looking at the reward—whether he will receive a weighty salary—and not whether the giver of the salary is important.

But those who go by the right line consider *the giver of the work*, how important *He is to them*. Their desire is always that the giver of the work will be important to them, and this is their reward. This is considered that they always long to see the greatness of the Creator.

It follows that they are not after the reward that they will receive for their work. Rather, when they keep His commandments, they always look to see that the commander, the Giver of the commandments, will be more important in their eyes each time, and this is their reward in their exertion in Torah and *Mitzvot*. For this reason, they say that even a small grip in Torah and *Mitzvot* is a great thing, and they are delighted and receive livelihood.

Now we can explain the quarrel over the first digging, since the matter of the three diggings comprises the whole work. In other words, there are many diggings that belong to the right line, many diggings that belong to the left line, and many diggings that belong to the middle line. The reason for it is that not all the diggings can be done at one time. Rather, in each line there is much to dig until the lines are acquired in full.

Concerning the first well that they dug, it is written, “And he named the well Oshek, because they *Hitashku* [contended] with him.” We should explain Oshek. It means that with the first well, which implies to the right line, they engaged in Torah and *Mitzvot* in these diggings.

This is so because the right line is called “wholeness,” since the left line is called “deficiency.” Right is called “wholeness,” meaning that in the right, they had the strength to engage in Torah and *Mitzvot* with joy for the above-mentioned reason: whatever grip they have in Torah and *Mitzvot*, they believe that it

came to them from above, that the Creator gave them the desire and craving to be able to engage a little in Torah and *Mitzvot*. This is why the herdsmen of Isaac argued, “Whatever grip we have, it is important to us and we thank the Creator for it.”

Conversely, the herdsmen of Gerar were following what the masses say: “We keep Torah and *Mitzvot* by our own strength, and for this reason, we demand of the Creator to pay for our labor in Torah and *Mitzvot*.” By that, they seal the well that the servants of Isaac had dug, who said, “We can receive livelihood from here because even a small thing is important to us, meaning that the Creator gave us the desire and craving to do anything in the work of the Creator. But we see that there are people who don’t have the desire and craving to do anything in the work, since the Creator did not give them this desire.”

This is why the herdsmen of Isaac were receiving life from this well. The herdsmen of Gerar came and sealed that well so they would not be able to receive life from there. They would tell them, “Your insistence on this inferior work is worthless. You will not receive any reward for it because it is completely unimportant, since the majority of people regard it as inferior.”

This is why in the first well, which they called “Oshek” [contending], they said, “It is not contention that it is worthwhile rejoicing with this petite work, about which you are making a fuss. After all, there is nothing to look at, as you yourselves are saying, that it is only a very small work. And your focus on the giver—this, we don’t understand.”

Afterwards, the herdsmen of Isaac’s servants shifted to working on the left line, to criticizing the situation they are in, that they are still immersed in self-love. They see that they are unable to work for the Creator by themselves; hence, they dig in the bottom of their hearts to find deficiencies and pain. In other words, they seek advice on how to torment over

being remote from the path of bestowal. And certainly, when they have suffering, they will receive help from the Creator, as during the exodus from Egypt, as it is written, “And the children of Israel sighed because of the bondage ... and God heard their groaning.”

Thus, by digging into the bottom of their hearts, they found a well, meaning a place where they could pray. “And they quarreled over it too, and he named it Sitnah [enmity].” This means that the herdsmen of Gerar became slanderers to them, not letting them pray that the Creator would fulfill their wish, meaning that the Creator would grant them the strength to overcome the vessels of reception so they could work to benefit the Creator and not for themselves.

It follows that through their quarrel, they sealed the diggings that they had dug in the left line so they would have a need for the Creator to fulfill their wishes for the better. “Good” means in order to bestow, as it is written, “My heart overflows with a good thing. I say, ‘My deeds are for the King.’” The meaning of “My deeds are for the King” is that everything he does will be for the King, that his intention is to bestow upon the King.

And the herdsmen of Gerar were slanderers toward them so they would not be able to pray because they were following the majority saying, “The act is the important thing, and the intention of doing it *Lishma* is not our business. Rather, it is for people who are pure at heart and gifted from birth. And the work in bestowal is not for us.” Thus, they sealed off the need for prayer. And this is why they called the second well, *Sitnah*, from the word, *Satan* [which also means “slandering”].

And in that line, too, they did not make the second well in a single time. Rather, they dug many times in each line. However, all of them, meaning all the diggings, fall under the name of the three wells.

But afterwards, once they completed the process of work in two lines, they were rewarded with the middle line. It is as we said in the previous article, that the right line is called “his father,” the left line is “his mother,” and the middle line is called “the Creator,” as it is written, “Three partake in man—his father, his mother, and the Creator.”

“His father gives the white.” This means that there is no deficiency there. Rather, everything is white, meaning that he is content with his lot, with the little hold of spirituality that he has.

“His mother gives the red.” This means that he is not in a good situation, but rather filled with deficiencies, and then he has room for prayer.

Afterwards, “The Creator gives the soul.” When the Creator helps him, when He gives him the soul, then Satan no longer has room, meaning he has nothing to slander. This is the meaning of the words, “And [he] dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it; and he named its name Rehovot, for ‘At last the Lord has made room for us...’ And he went up from there to Beersheba.”

We asked, “What is the reason that the herdsmen of Gerar did not quarrel over the third well?” Where there is a deficiency in *Kedusha* [holiness], there is room for the *Sitra Achra*. Hence, when a person goes by the right line, he knows that he is immersed in self-love and that all of his actions are not for the Creator, but he wishes to be a servant of the Creator and in the meantime he is serving himself. And despite all the baseness that he is in, he wishes to thank the Creator for giving him some contact with the work of the Creator, even if it is in *Lo Lishma*.

And he believes above reason that the Creator gave him the thought and the desire to engage a little in the work. And since he believes as much as he can in the greatness and importance of the Creator, above reason, although he was not rewarded with

feeling the importance within reason, he still has the privilege of doing simple things. He is thankful and he praises the Creator, and he is delighted and wishes to thank the Creator like those people who are in the form of a single line, meaning those who feel that the work that they do is truly in wholeness and all they need to add is in quantity.

In quality, however, they feel that they are so complete that they need to work on humbleness, as our sages said, “Be very, very humble.” They exert much work on that, on finding some lowliness in them, and it is all because they do not know that they are only from a single line. This is the work of the majority.

But one who wishes to go by the right line, who knows that there is a left line, too, which weakens the right line, must exert great efforts to believe above reason that even a little work in spirituality—even if it is incomplete, as they feel it for themselves—is important. And also, he must thank the Creator and be happy, and feel that now he has a life and that such a life is worth living.

This means that by believing above reason that there is no end to the greatness of the Creator, and it is very important for him that he can serve the King, this is called “right line.” And this is a lot of work. But a person should feel that the work in the right line is important; he should strive to have the same extent of livelihood as when he was working in a single line, or at least no less than when he was working in a single line, before he came to work in the right line.

Yet, here in the right line, there is much work in it, and it doesn’t come as easy as while working in a single line. This is because there he knew that the deeds he was doing were great and important, so it was easier for him to work. But in the right line, he sees for himself that his deeds are worthless in and of themselves, since he is not working wholeheartedly. Thus, he

cannot say that he is doing great things and that the Creator will certainly grant him much reward in return for his work.

However, in a single line, there is no resistance on the part of the body, so he can work easily, without obstructions. But in the right line, he has a lot of work because he says that he wants to work for the Creator and not for the body, so the body naturally resists and he must constantly struggle with the body. Thus, he must always work with it and defeat it.

And there is another issue. If he wishes to continually walk on the right line and have strength for the work, he must make the Creator constantly greater and make great efforts seeking advice on how to obtain the greatness and importance of the Creator. If he appreciates the actions, meaning that he says, “My actions are very important above,” it will certainly be a lie because they are not in *Lishma*, since self-love—instead of love of the Creator—is involved in everything he does.

However, in the single line they do appreciate the deeds because in a single line they speak *only* of actions and not of the intention—whether his intention is in order to bestow or not. There, the order of the work is to not be meticulous about the actions. But when beginning to work on the aim to bestow, which is called “right line,” it cannot be said that the actions are fine, that he is happy with the work he does.

However, if he extols the Creator as much as he can, above reason, he will never overemphasize his faith in the greatness of the Creator, since we must certainly say that the Creator is greater than man can extol Him. Hence, saying that the Creator is important turns out to be the truth, and thus he is going on the path of truth.

And then a person can say, as in corporeality: “We see that concerning an important person, even if one can do a small service for him, it makes him happy and gives him high spirits.”

This means that it is not the act that is the most important, meaning the service that he gives, but the one he serves. Thus, when a person walks on the right line, it is a line of truth.

However, since the right line is a line of truth, there is great resistance on the part of the *Sitra Achra*, who doesn't permit walking on the path of truth, which leads to the correction of the world. This is because the building of the *Klipot* [shells] comes from the world of shattering and corruption. This is why all the things in the world that belong to destruction and corruption have strength to do their deeds. We see it clearly with little children, who can work on breaking and corrupting, but cannot work on things that bring about correction, such as the allegory with the little girl.

This is so because of the shattering that occurred in the upper worlds. Hence, the corporeal branches follow the same routes. This is why there is energy to work on corruption and shattering, but for correction, it is hard to work on things that bring about the correction of the world in the corporeal branches because the correction above has not been completed.

This is why it is very difficult to walk on the right line. In other words, one must see how people exert on the path of one line, while they should have at least as much energy and high spirits while walking in the right line.

And when a person wishes to appreciate the right line, the herdsmen of Gerar come and quarrel. In other words, they make him understand that, "This is the wrong way. How do you want to thank the Creator for such a small work? You're thanking the Creator for something worthless. Conversely, those who walk on a single line know that what they do is important, and they can thank the Creator for it. But for trifling things? After all, you yourself are saying that your actions are worthless, since they are not from the heart, since you are saying that you are not working

for the Creator. Thus, your gratitude is like flattery, and how do you derive joy and high spirits from a lie?"

The herdsmen of Gerar *Gorerim* [drag] him to the view of the majority, who can thank the Creator only for important things. And this is true, "While you are walking in a lie."

This *Klipa* [shell] is a big *Klipa*, and it doesn't allow a person to be happy and receive livelihood from the truth. Instead, it wishes to bring man into sadness and depression. Sometimes it brings him to a point where his life becomes meaningless, and then the only thing that can give a person joy is sleep, since while he is sleeping he enjoys not being in a state of despair and pointlessness in life.

This is similar to a person who must undergo surgery at a hospital. There is a special physician who is called "anesthesiologist." This is the doctor that one wishes to see so he can give him a tip on how he can sleep for at least three months. This *Klipa* completely ruins the *Kedusha* because it is impossible for one to be able to say that the Creator is benevolent. A person defines that state as a descent, but there remains a question, "To where is he descending?"

The answer is that he is descending to the netherworld. If a person becomes stronger in that state, he says (in a Hanukah song), "Lord, you have lifted my soul from the netherworld." Therefore, this is one's duty, when the herdsmen of Gerar come to a person and wish to drag him into the domain of the majority, meaning how they regard a person who is doing something small when they know that it is small and they are unappreciative of such an act.

"So how do you do two opposite things? On the one hand, you admit that when doing such an act while being aware of doing it, it is an act full of faults," since during the action there are many alien thoughts, each according to his degree.

For example, they make a blessing and say, "...who sanctified us with His commandments." But during the blessing, they know that they are not feeling anything during the performance of the commandment, and they give much thanks to the Creator for it. Thus, he says that the blessing and the gratitude that he gives for it are not because he is doing something important.

And afterwards, you say that one should receive livelihood and joy from being rewarded with making a *Mitzva* [good deed/commandment], even if it is unimportant, and to thank the Creator for rewarding you, and say, "Who has chosen us." Moreover, you say, "An everlasting love, Your people, the house of Israel, the love of Torah and *Mitzvot*."

This brings up the question, "If you cannot see anything in the *Mitzva* that you are keeping, why are you saying that the Creator gave us good things because He loves us? What is the point of this *Mitzva*, which you say that He gave you for love? We, the majority, say that He gave us Torah and *Mitzvot* because He loves us. It is as Rabbi Hananiah Son of Akashiah says, 'The Creator wished to reward Israel; thus, He gave them plentiful Torah and *Mitzvot*.'

Thus, since He wished to reward us with having the next world and this world, with receiving great reward without feeling shame—for it is known that when one eats the bread of shame, he is ashamed—He therefore gave us plentiful Torah and *Mitzvot*, by which we would be able to receive a great reward. Yet, we know that with a small and incomplete deed, this would be the bread of shame.

Therefore, when a person walks on the right line and wishes to receive life and high spirits from having done a small thing, he thanks the Creator for having rewarded him with doing something for Him and he believes above reason that the King is a great King, called "The Great, Mighty, and Terrible God."

It is said that a thing is important in one's eyes according to the importance of the King, even if he was only permitted a small service to the King, even one that is not important and with many faults, as long as he has some contact with the King. This is so because he is not seeking reward.

The order is that if one brings something to someone and wants a reward, then the order is that the thing is checked to see whether the reward that is demanded for the object is worth it or not. But those who walk on the right line have no wish for any reward. Instead, what they do for the King is their entire reward. Hence, they believe above reason that they are doing some service for the King, and this gives them livelihood, joy, and high spirits that they are rewarded with doing some service for the King.

And it is true that they say that the Creator is very important, but we don't have the power to appreciate His greatness, and vice versa, that from the perspective of the act, there cannot be a smaller and more trifling act than what they are doing. Hence, it follows that it is true on both sides, and everything is built on the basis of faith above reason. Baal HaSulam said, "Everything that is built on above reason enters *Kedusha* and is considered internality, and within reason is considered externality."

Therefore, since the right is built on the basis of truth, the herdsmen of Gerar immediately awaken and wish to drag a person to the view of the majority. Then this *Klipa* begins to attack a person and make him understand the view of the majority—that what they say is true. At that time, a person begins to believe this *Klipa*, when she wishes to kill him and extract all the vitality of *Kedusha* from him and to throw him to the netherworld. This *Klipa* dresses in false clothing and says that all she is telling you now is only so you will not fool yourself on a path of falsehood.

Hence, all that one can do then is stand guard while the thoughts of the herdsmen of Gerar come to his mind like jagged arrows dipped in poison, which kill a person instantaneously, leaving him without the spirit of life of *Kedusha*.

This *Klipa* comes to a person and sends him her views and ideas, and they don't come, "God forbid," so he will not be a servant of the Creator. On the contrary, they make one understand that, "Since now you clearly know what is the work of truth, that the intention must be for the Creator, and you know for yourself that you cannot aim for the Creator, thus your prayer is certainly worthless, as is the Torah that you are learning. You are wasting your efforts in vain. Therefore, it is better for you to work on the intent you must make. Thus, it is better, instead of praying or studying and doing trifle things, all *Lishma*."

And since he is under her authority, he certainly has no strength to do anything in *Lishma*. Thus, she kills him. "It is better for you to think about the purpose of the work and not act. This is why it is better that you engage in the work of intentions, that you must do everything in *Lishma*."

And since he is in her domain, and he certainly has no strength to do anything in *Lishma*, by that, she kills him. "Thus, when you pray, you don't need to overcome yourself if you wish to speak to someone during the prayer, since your prayer and your Torah are meaningless. Thus, when you are not studying, if you have someone to speak to, or if you have someone to speak to during the prayer, it is a waste trying to refrain from speaking, since you are not losing anything anyway, since both your prayer and your Torah are worthless.

"This is so because in the prayer, you see that you have no connection to the words you are uttering. And in the Torah, what are you losing by stopping in the middle of the study? You

yourself are saying that the important thing is to aim for the Creator. Thus, what are you gaining if you know a few pages of Gemarah or other words of Torah?

“And likewise in actions; why do you need to be so meticulous about actions? I am not telling you that you should eat forbidden things; rather, I am speaking of the rigor of customs, that you want to follow this path. After all, you know that the most important is to aim for the Creator. Thus, leave these actions and do what you understand that you must do. And the keeping of customs rigorously—this is not for you. Rather, those deeds are for simple folk, who do not think and do not know what real work is. Therefore, it is best for you to think about the thought of how to bestow upon the Creator.”

And when a person obeys this *Klipa*, called “the herdsmen of Gerar,” how they speak only in favor of the work of truth, then a person believes what they say and begins to neglect the schedule of the prayer and the Torah studies, and begins to listen to the voice of that *Klipa*. And since now a person has no life at all, since he has no action by which he can receive a life of *Kedusha*, when he begins to contemplate doing something for the Creator, the body laughs at him and shows him only dark depictions of the work for the Creator.

Thus, a person remains without life, and he no longer has the strength to say above reason that the Creator is benevolent, and he falls under the dominion of heresy. At that time, he does not have any strength to contemplate spirituality and comes to a state where the world darkens for him. This is the meaning of what is written, that the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with the herdsmen of Isaac. In other words, they were furnishing Isaac’s servants with their views until they dragged them into their own authority, at which time they would kill them and take all their livelihood from them.

In other words, they would suck out what little faith they had, and they remained bare and empty. This is called “the *Klipa* of the right,” which does not let them follow the path of truth. Thus, although their actions are incomplete, they believe above reason that the Creator is so important that doing even the smallest service for the King is still considered a great thing.

And since that small act is true, and their belief above reason that the Creator is a great and important King is also true, it follows that then they, too, are attached to the quality of truth. And they can rejoice in doing their Master’s will even a bit, since truth is a great thing in and of itself.

This is why we must beware of this *Klipa* when beginning to walk on the right line. Only when a person is strong in overcoming the *Klipa* of the right does the work on the left line begin. Thus, the person himself evokes his criticism on himself, and not the *Klipa*.

Hence, while a person does not have livelihood and can take the right line, he must not walk on the right line. Rather, once he is full of life and joy from the work of the right, the time comes for him to engage in the left line, meaning to see the lowliness of his state and why he has not yet been rewarded with the Creator admitting him into the King’s palace.

Baal HaSulam once said about what is written (Psalm 57), “Awake, my glory ... I will awake the dawn.” Our sages said, “I awaken the dawn, and the dawn does not awaken me.” He said, “The literal meaning is that King David said that he does not accept the *Shahar* [dawn]—from the word *Shahor* [black], and darkness, which comes to him—and he awakens from the blackness. Rather, ‘I awaken the dawn,’ meaning when he feels that he is fine, then he himself evokes the blackness.”

We should interpret his words that a person does not accept criticism that his actions are not in order and that all that he

does is worthless while the *Klipa* comes to him and dresses in a cover of righteousness, and ostensibly wishes for a person to not deceive himself in the work, but to work for the Creator.

But when such thoughts come and he does not evoke them, he should know that they are not coming from the side of *Kedusha*. Rather, since the *Klipa* of Gerar sees that a person receives livelihood from small things, that he settles for little and says that he believes above reason that there is no limit to the importance of the Creator, and he says that it is considered a great privilege that he was rewarded with the Creator giving him even a small desire and thought of serving Him, and he sees that there are many people in the world who do not have this privilege. Therefore, he is grateful and praises, and is very thankful to the King. And he is delighted and receives high spirits from that state.

At that time, the above-mentioned *Klipa* comes and wishes to kill him, to take out all the air of *Kedusha* that there is in him. She doesn't allow him to praise the Creator, but throws him into the netherworld and takes whatever faith he had. And then the person is considered dead because he has no life of *Kedusha*.

And who was the cause of that? Only the *Klipa*, who comes to a person in false appearance and speaks only in favor of *Kedusha*. This is called "The dawn does not awaken me," meaning that he did not wish to receive darkness and blackness from the *Klipot*.

Rather, "I awaken the dawn" will mean, "Whenever I want, I awaken the dawn." In other words, I myself awaken the darkness and the blackness within me—that I am still immersed in self-love and I still do not have love for the Creator. I'm still without the glory of the Torah and I still do not have the importance of the Torah to know that it is worthwhile to do everything to obtain the light of Torah, as well as how to appreciate the importance of keeping the *Mitzvot* that the Creator commanded for us.

And while I need to perform some *Mitzva* and intend that it will be in order to bestow, the resistance in the body promptly awakens in full force. And he has a great struggle to do anything and he sees the ascents and descents each time. And then he has room for prayer. This is so because a person awakens himself at the right time, meaning when he feels that he will be able to pray instantaneously, and not that the black will bring him sadness and depression, that he will not have the ability to pray for the blackness.

One can see for himself whether it comes to him from the side of *Klipa* or not. The sign for it is that something that comes from *Kedusha* is always in the form of “increasing holiness and not decreasing.” In other words, one always asks the Creator to elevate him to a higher degree than the one where he is. But when the blackness comes from the side of *Klipa*, a person is incapable of asking the Creator to raise him above his state.

“Rather, they bring down,” meaning bring him down to the netherworld, and he loses the small part of faith that he had and remains seemingly dead, without the spirit of life. Then his only liveliness is if he can sleep, meaning escape and forget his state of depression.

According to the above, we should interpret the words of *The Zohar* when it says, “It is forbidden to raise the hands without prayer and litany.” We should understand what this means that our sages prohibited the lifting of hands in vain, and only if you can pray and make a request is there no prohibition, since there is prohibition only in emptiness.

According to the above, we should interpret that “hands” comes from the words, “If a hand ... obtains.” This means that when a person raises his hands to see what he has obtained in the work of the Creator, if he has Torah and fear of heaven and good deeds, if he believes in complete faith that the Creator is

benevolent, if he is ready and has the strength to overcome, then if he sees that he has none of the things that he thought he would obtain through his labor in Torah and *Mitzvot*, he will not despair. On the contrary, he will have the strength to pray for the Creator to help him.

And he will have the strength to tell himself, “My seeing that I have nothing good in my hands is because the Creator has now allowed me to see the truth, that I truly am an empty vessel, and there is neither Torah nor fear of heaven and no good deeds in me. Rather, everything I do is only for my own benefit, and now I have a *Kli* [vessel] and a real need, from the bottom of the heart, for the Creator to grant my wish, since the help that I need—for Him to help me—is necessity and not luxury.

Thus far, I thought that I needed the Creator’s help for redundancies, not for necessities, because I knew that I am not like other people, who have no hold of spirituality whatsoever, but now I see within reason that my situation is worse than that of the rest of the people because I *feel* that I have nothing. Therefore, I am suffering and in pain because of my situation. But for the masses, it is not so bad because they don’t feel what I feel. Therefore, I cannot derive satisfaction from the fact that they, too, have nothing, that this is what I think and that this is what my reason makes me understand—that this is the state of the others.”

This means that it is possible that they have good states, since one does not know what is in one’s friend’s heart. But a person determines his friend’s state according to what he sees with his eyes, and from that, he deduces how to behave. For example, if his friend is a hidden righteous, he thinks about him that he is not so orthodox.

And what can one learn from this hidden righteous? Only frivolity. Therefore, when a person is looking at the majority,

regardless of the actual degree of the majority, what is important is what a person thinks about the majority. Therefore, at that time, a person sees that his state is worse than that of the others; hence, he says that the Creator should help him because he is suffering more than the majority.

It follows that if he can assume that while he raises his hands he will see what he has in his hands and he will be able to pray, then he will know that his calculation came from the side of *Kedusha*. And then he is permitted to shift from the right line to the left line. Otherwise, if he does not know in his heart that he has the strength to pray, he must not shift to the left line, since then he will face the *Klipa* called “the herdsmen of Gerar.”

It is written in *The Zohar* (*Vayikra* [The Lord Called], p 131, and Item 401 in the *Sulam* Commentary), “Rabbi Yehuda started and said, ‘Or make his sin known to him.’ He asks, ‘On who’s behalf? Who made it known?’ It should have said, ‘Or knew his sin.’ What is ‘Make his sin known to him?’ He replies that the Creator commanded the assembly of Israel to make the sin that he sinned known to man.”

It is written in *The Zohar* (*Vayikra* [The Lord Called], Item 404 in the *Sulam* Commentary), “Here, too, the Creator said, ‘Make his sin known to him, which he has sinned.’ One who rises at night to engage in Torah, the Torah makes his sin known to him. And not by a way of *Din* [judgment], but rather like a mother who tells her son with soft words, and he repents before his Master.”

We must understand why, specifically, when the Creator alerts him that he has sinned, it is considered that now he is aware of the sin, but if his friend sees that he has sinned and his friend sees that he still did not repent and alerts him to his sin, it is not considered knowing. And what is the reason that if, specifically, the Creator alerts him that he has sinned, he

knows that he has sinned and this is the time to repent, but if the Creator does not alert him, it is not yet time for him to repent for the sin?

And we should also understand what *The Zohar* says, that one who rises at night to engage in Torah, the Torah alerts him, and one who studies all day, the Torah does not make it known to him that he has sinned. But when he studies at night, even when he does not study during the day, the Torah does make it known to him. Thus, we should understand the advantage of studying at night over the day, and we should also understand what is written, that the Torah makes his sin known to him “Not by a way of *Din* [judgment], but rather like a mother who tells her son with soft words.”

RASHI interprets the verse, “Or make his sin known to him.” “When he sinned, he thought it was permitted. Afterwards, he was informed that it was forbidden.” We should understand it in the work. What is this sin? It is known that all the work that was given to the lower ones is in the form of “Which God has created to do.”

It is known that creation is called so because He created existence from absence, which is called “will to receive,” and “craving to receive pleasure.” And because of the equivalence of form, called *Dvekut* [adhesion], another *Kli* [vessel] must be made, so we can receive the light of the pleasure. In other words, we must add the aim to bestow over it, or else it is forbidden to receive the abundance.

And even if we want, it is still not given. However, if we wish to receive in order to receive, this is already called “a sin” in the work. This is so because through this desire, a person becomes more remote from the Creator, and it becomes more difficult for a person to be able to repent, which is called “returning to the root,” meaning the giver.

Thus, one should return to his source, since the disparity of form made him remote from the root, which is about bestowal. Therefore, when a person acts but does not intend for it to be in order to bestow, but instead, his intention is only to receive for himself, he is farther away, and this is his sin.

But in the order of the work, when we begin to work, we begin in *Lo Lishma*. This is why at that time we understand differently, meaning that what appears to a man in the order of the work are only two things: 1) To do, which is the 248 positive *Mitzvot* [commandments to perform certain actions]; 2) Not to do, which is the 365 negative *Mitzvot* [commandments to avoid certain actions].

In other words, there is a sin and there is a *Mitzva* [good deed]. Then, when a person believes in the Creator and in His law, a person knows very well what is a sin and what is not. And should he forget or err in some action because he didn't know that it was forbidden, if his friend sees, his friend can alert him that he has sinned. Thus, he himself did not know, but his friend, who saw, can tell him, and then a person repents for the sin he had committed.

But when speaking of the work on the path of truth, which is with the intention to bestow, which is only an intention, this is hidden from one's friend, since one cannot know what is in one's friend's heart. For this reason, his friend cannot alert him that he has sinned by not intending for it to be in order to bestow.

Now we can interpret what we asked, that this implies that it is specifically the Creator who can alert him that he has sinned, and his friend cannot tell him that he has sinned, since his friend cannot see his friend's intention. Thus, only the Creator knows which intention he had while engaging in Torah and *Mitzvot*.

However, there truly is a profound matter here, in the explanation of *The Zohar* that the Creator alerts him that he has sinned. And since when one sees in the Torah that what one needs to keep are positive and negative *Mitzvot* and he will already know what is a sin and what is not, this is so in the beginning of his studies. It is as Maimonides says, “When teaching women and little ones, they are taught in order to receive reward.” Only afterwards, “When they gain much knowledge, are they told” that they must study *Lishma*, meaning in order to bestow.

It follows that one cannot understand that if he does not have the intention to bestow, it is considered a sin in the work on the path of truth, since the majority are still in *Lo Lishma*, and he wishes to go in *Lishma*. For example, if he doesn’t have the aim to bestow, it is considered a sin, but a person cannot feel it for himself. It is similar to a person performing an act that is prohibited in the Torah, such as desecrating the Sabbath or eating forbidden food, etc., meaning he will have the same feeling while performing some *Mitzva* without intending to bestow, as when committing a grave sin.

This brings up the question, “Who can alert the person that if he does not perform in order to bestow it is considered a sin and he should repent for it, meaning ask of the Creator that he will not sin again?” In other words, here we must understand, a) that if there is no intent to bestow, it is a sin, and b) that he should have the desire to repent so as to not sin again, as our sages said, “Repentance is called remorse for the past and acceptance for the future.”

This matter of a person feeling that it is a sin—that he will feel that this is a general sin, that it is all the evil that exists in man—this is something that only the Creator can understand. The Torah and *Mitzvot* that were given are to correct that evil, which is called “will to receive for oneself,” and it is not within

one's power to understand that it is all the evil that separates the creatures from the Creator.

And this is what *The Zohar* says about the verse, "If the sin that he has sinned is made known to him." In other words, the Creator made his sin known to him will mean that the Creator alerts him what the sin that he has sinned is because for the person himself, it is difficult to accept it and say that if he is working for his own benefit, in the work on the path of truth, it is considered a sin.

Only when the Creator gives him this awareness can he feel that it is a sin. For example, when one person kills another person, of course he feels that he has committed a grave sin, such as if a person has a chauffeur, and that chauffeur hit someone with the car and killed him. However, if it was at night and no one knows about it, it is not necessarily the chauffeur who feels that he has killed a man, but even the landlord, who was travelling with him, feels that sin, as well.

In spirituality, when the Creator alerts him that he has sinned and he is killing the aspect of man each day, only the Creator can give such a feeling in spirituality. But the person himself cannot know or understand it.

Now we can understand what RASHI explains about the verse, "Or make the sin known to him." These are his words: "When he sinned, he thought it was permitted. Afterwards, he discovered that it was forbidden."

To understand his words in the work, we should interpret "When he sinned" as "While he was engaging in Torah and *Mitzvot* in order to receive." He still didn't know it was forbidden. Rather, if he kept Torah and *Mitzvot* only in action, he felt it was permitted. Only afterwards did it become known to him that there was a prohibition here, that his aim was in order to receive reward. But who informed him that it was forbidden, that using

the vessels of reception is prohibited? *The Zohar* interprets that it is the Creator who alerted him, for without the help of the Creator it is impossible to feel it.

It therefore follows that in the work, the primary evil and sin is the will to receive, which is the only cause that stops us from receiving what the Creator wishes to give to the creatures, and why we cannot be rewarded with *Dvekut*. As we learn, the light of *Neshama* divides into five discernments, called *NRNHY*, which clothe only in one's vessels of bestowal.

Thus, for a person to have the sensation of evil and darkness, that it all comes from this harm-doer called, "the will to receive for himself," only the Creator can alert him that it is a sin. This is so for the reason that a person is accustomed to using the will to receive even when he begins with the work of the Creator.

It is as our sages said, "One should always study in *Lo Lishma*." Thus, he already has permission from our sages to study, since by that he will come to *Lishma*. Thus, since there is permission from our sages that we must study in *Lo Lishma*, it is difficult to come to a person and tell him that it's a sin, since they will say that it is permitted to study in *Lo Lishma*. Thus, there is no reason to believe that this is indeed the biggest sin because this is all that obstructs the achieving of *Dvekut* with the Creator.

With the above said, we can interpret what we asked about the words of *The Zohar*, which writes that for one who rises at night to engage in Torah, the Torah announces his sin to him. We asked why specifically those who study at night, and should it be particularly the Torah which alerts his sin to him.

The answer, as said above, is that specifically through the Torah one can come to feel that receiving for himself is called "a sin," meaning that the will to receive for himself is called "a sin." But ordinary people cannot know, as Maimonides says that the matter of *Lishma* is not revealed to women, to little ones, or

to the populace. And the meaning of “not revealing” is because they cannot understand. However, specifically through the Torah means that the Torah can bring such a feeling to a person that will make him see that reception for himself is considered a sin.

But why is it specifically Torah that is studied at night that has the strength to alert him to his sin? In other words, what is the advantage of the night over the day, which implies that specifically at night, as it was written that for one who rises at night to engage in Torah, the Torah makes his sin known to him? To understand it, we must first understand the meaning of “day” and “night” in the work.

“Night” is, as our sages said (*Pesachim* 2b) about the verse, “The murderer arises at dawn ... and at night he is as a thief.” “Does that mean that light is day? The meaning there is this: If the matter is as clear as light to you that he comes to take life, he is a murderer. But if you are doubtful about it, like the night, you must regard him as a thief.” Thus, we see that our sages use “day” and “night” for “certain” and for “in doubt.”

We can interpret that “day” in the work means that when a person engages in Torah and *Mitzvot*, he has the confidence that he will receive reward for his labor. Then he is content and has no room for prayer for the Creator to help him, since what is he lacking? It is, however, possible that one will see that, “I should do more,” but he probably has excuses of not having enough time for some reason or because of health issues. However, on the whole he is fine because he believes that he will receive reward. He believes in reward and punishment in this world and in the next world, and this is called “studying Torah at daytime.”

“Studying Torah at nighttime” means that he has doubts, because doubt is called “night.” This occurs when a person wishes to walk on the path of truth, meaning with the aim to bestow. That is, he wishes to work in Torah and *Mitzvot* on a

different quality level than the way he worked on the path of the majority, with the intention to receive reward in this world and in the next world. Instead, he wishes to engage in Torah and *Mitzvot* not in order to receive reward. But the body resists this path. Hence, alien thoughts always come to him, bringing him constant doubts in his work.

And what are the doubts? Sometimes he thinks that he should walk on the path of bestowal, and then the body begins to resist. Then, thoughts come to him that perhaps the majority is right, meaning that he doesn't have to work in a manner of bestowal because it is hard to fight against the body. Therefore, it is better to follow the majority view, since the majority are certainly more fine-looking and have a more important place in the world. And they chose to walk on the path of aiming the actions to be only for the Creator, and not with the aim to bestow. This means that they keep Torah and *Mitzvot* because the Creator commanded us to keep His commandments and observe His law, and not, God forbid, for money or for honor, meaning that by engaging in Torah and *Mitzvot* he will be respected or will be called, "Rabbi." Rather, they keep Torah and *Mitzvot* for the Creator because He commanded us, and in return, we will receive reward. This must be the best way.

And since this does not contradict self-love, it is not so difficult to walk on this path. But on the path of bestowal one always has doubts because this way is unaccepted by the majority and the body is naturally inclined toward the view of the *Klipot*, which are only about reception. This is why he has constant work in fighting these thoughts.

And even when a person overcomes the body and makes him understand, "But you see that by nature, one wishes to serve the great one without reward, but only in pure bestowal." Then the body stands against him and makes a true argument: "In corporeality, you see that you are 'great,' and you see that

everyone respects you. Thus, you can be influenced by the majority, by the majority appreciating him as great. Therefore, there it is worthwhile to work in bestowal. But here, you are in concealment because the greatness and importance of the Creator is not revealed, and you just want to believe that this is so, that the Creator is important and worth serving without any reward.”

Thus, at that time a person becomes weak against the body and he has no answer, since at that time, there is only one thing to say—that he is going above reason. It follows that he cannot prevail over the body’s argument with his mind, and then it is heaven’s mercy that he needs in order to prevent him from escaping the campaign.

This is called “night,” when a person is in doubt because of the conflict with the body. And then this Torah reveals his sin to him, meaning that his sin is primordial and deeply rooted, since then he sees that he is lacking faith in the Creator. In other words, he cannot believe that the Creator is great and ruling and worth serving and giving to, and that He will have contentment from him.

In other words, there is no contentment for a person in serving a great king. As *The Zohar* says (“Introduction of The Book of Zohar,” p 185, and Item 195 in the *Sulam* Commentary), “Fear is the most important, meaning that he will fear the Creator because He is great and rules over everything, since He is the root from which all the worlds expand, and His greatness appears in His deeds.”

Without Torah, one cannot feel what he is lacking because there is a rule that absence must precede presence, and it is impossible to feel absence, meaning for one to feel that he is lacking something, unless he feels that there is something good in the world, that it is a good thing, and that he doesn’t have it.

Then you can talk about absence. In other words, when there is someone who feels the absence, you can say that he should try to satiate what is missing.

Who created the first absence? The Creator did, in the world of *Ein Sof* [infinity]. We learn that He is one and His name is One. The first absence is the *Tzimtzum* [restriction], when the light departed and left a lack. The light of the line is what should fill up the deficit made by the Creator, who is the presence, and He created a new thing—He created absence.

Thus, when one studies Torah, through the Torah he comes to feel that there is a Creator and a leader, because by studying Torah he receives the light of Torah that reforms him. Then he begins to feel through the Torah that there is the giver of the Torah, and this is when he begins to understand that it is a great privilege to serve Him.

And when he begins to converse with the body concerning this, the small feeling that he begins to feel—that it is worthwhile to serve the Creator—is met with the resistance of the body, which vehemently opposes the sensation of receiving from above in the form of “The light in it.” In other words, it is not all at once that one receives the light of Torah sufficiently to reform the body. Rather, it comes bit by bit. This is why there are ups and downs, and for each ascent that he receives and begins to understand that he must walk on the path of bestowal, the nature of the body immediately resists.

However, this is so deliberately, from the Creator. The reason for this is that “There is no light without a *Kli* [vessel].” What comes from above is called “awakening from above.” In other words, the need and the satisfaction come as one. At that time, he doesn’t have a reason for an awakening of the desire that it is worthwhile to serve the Creator. This is why, when the feeling that comes from above departs, gradually a need builds

in his heart to work in bestowal, and this is when he begins to ask the Creator to give him the strength for it. Then this state is called “light and *Kli*.”

And there is another reason why one needs awakening from below: when the upper one gives without preparation on the part of the lower one, the receiver cannot feel it as important. And according to the rule that anything that a person wishes to enjoy depends on the importance of the matter, before the upper one lets him feel something, it cannot be said that he wants something.

Rather, after one experiences some awakening toward the work of the Creator, one must believe that the fact that a person has awakened to the need to engage in the work of the Creator is because Creator sent him these thoughts, without any messengers. In other words, when no one tells him that he should engage in the work, a person certainly says that it came to him from above.

However, even if some person comes and makes him understand, and explains to him that it is worthwhile to begin with servitude of the Creator and he is awakened by it, he still shouldn't say that so-and-so showed him the merit of the work of the Creator. Rather, that person, too, was a messenger of the Creator to awaken him. Thus, sometimes one must say that the Creator gave him the desire without messengers, and sometimes he should say that this desire came from the Creator through an emissary.

And since that desire came to him without any preparation of his own, he cannot appreciate the importance of the matter. Thus, a person is not so impressed and he cannot enjoy that thing because he doesn't know its value. It is like a person who sends a gift to his friend, but his friend doesn't know how to appreciate it.

Let's say, for instance, that the receiver of the gift thought that it was worth about 100 dollars, but the giver of the gift paid 10,000 dollars for it. Also, the giver knows that the receiver appreciates the value of the gift only according to his own understanding. Thus, we understand that the giver of the gift seeks advice and tactics to make the receiver of the gift understand the value of the gift, so he will be able to enjoy the gift as much as the giver wants him to.

This is the cause for ascents and descents in the work, which are called "day" and "night." When we study Torah during the "night," in that overcoming one sees how remote he is from the Creator by not being able to exit self-love, and the Torah brings him the sense of importance. And when he is in an ascent, he must say that the Creator is bringing him closer, meaning that the Creator is not hiding Himself from him, and this is why he feels that it is worthwhile to have *Dvekut* with the Creator.

It is as we learned in *The Study of the Ten Sefirot*, where he gives an explanation about the four phases of Direct Light and says, "What is the difference between *Hochma* of Direct Light and *Malchut* of Direct Light? If there is the same light in the *Sefirot Hochma* and *Malchut*, then why is one called *Hochma* and the other is called *Malchut*?"

The answer is that in the *Sefira* of *Hochma* there was still no preparation on the part of the lower one, since the lower one still didn't exist, meaning sensed itself as inferior, in need of something and having to receive from the upper one, so he would complement its deficiency. Therefore, the lower one has no pleasure upon receiving the abundance from the upper one, as there is a desire in the upper one for the lower one to enjoy him.

The desire of the upper one is to do good to His creations, meaning for the lower one to enjoy. But because of the lack of

preparation on the part of the lower one—since when the lower one was born it was born along with the abundance—there was no time for it to equip itself with a deficiency, meaning to crave the abundance.

But *Malchut* comes after the abundance has departed from the *Sefirot* above her. Thus, she already had the preparation, meaning the need for the light that illuminated in the *Sefira* of *Hochma*. Thus, only the *Malchut* can receive pleasure from the abundance that the giver wishes for the lower one to enjoy.

With all the above, we discern two things concerning the gift of the giver: 1) One should know what to want, meaning what it is that he needs, and 2) He must want to have that deficiency filled, meaning make all the preparations to be able to receive the gift.

Thus, how can one begin to feel a need for the work of the Creator when he does not know of the work of the Creator whatsoever, meaning that there is such a thing at all? In other words, if he doesn't know about it, how can a desire for it awaken in him?

The answer is that as we learned about the *Sefira* of *Hochma* that the Creator, who is called “desire to do good,” created the light and the *Kli* together, the sensation of the spiritual comes to a person from above. He receives the light and the desire for the light simultaneously. Either the awakening comes to him directly from the Creator, or the awakening for the work comes to him through a messenger that the Creator sent in order to make a person understand, and influences the person that it is worthwhile being a servant of the Creator. However, everything comes to him from the side of awakening, without any preparation on the part of the lower one. And as was mentioned here, it is impossible for the lower one to have real pleasure from the work of the Creator, due to lack of preparation.

However, we said about the *Sefira of Malchut* that she craves the abundance that was in the *Sefira of Hochma*. Hence, when there is preparation on the part of the lower one, she receives the pleasure that the giver wishes to give. Similarly, here in the work of man, a descent comes to him from the awakening that he had and he begins to want what he had before. Then the lower one can prepare to receive the abundance.

Yet, the desire and craving for real *Dvekut*—to really be able to receive, and to regard it as important as the Creator wishes—does not occur at once. This is why there are many ups and downs. However, without the first awakening on the part of the upper one, it would never be possible for the lower one to want something that he didn't know what it was.

Now we will explain what we asked about the meaning of the Torah making his sin known to him, and not by a way of *Din* [judgment], but as a mother who informs her son with soft words. Also, what are *Din* and “soft words?”

As we explained concerning that quarrel between the herdsmen of Gerar and the herdsmen of Isaac, something that provides is called “herdsmen.” The herdsmen of Isaac were saying, “We can receive sustenance only from the truth, and not from falsehood.” Hence, when they wished to work on the right line, they would say, “We are content with little, although in truth, the deeds we do are worthless because they are not done with the real intention.

Still, if we consider to whom we wish to bestow—to a great and ruling King—any work is enough for us and we consider it a great privilege because we are serving such a great and important King. Hence, as much as we are allowed to serve the King, we thank and praise Him even if it is a small service.”

This is called, “The herdsmen of Isaac,” who wish to serve the Creator with Isaac's dedication, but the body doesn't agree

to it. But when they know that they should serve like Isaac, they are content with it and bless the Creator for it.

And when the *Klipa* of the herdsmen of Gerar comes, she sees that they are happy with the Creator and they immediately begin to quarrel with the herdsmen of Isaac saying, “Why are you happy with the Creator? You can see for yourselves that the service you are doing is not as it should be. When serving a King, the proper way is to do everything in full.”

“Therefore,” they ask, “Why this joy? We, who follow the majority, have something to rejoice about, since we say that we settle for keeping the practical part because the Creator commanded us. And in return, we believe that we will receive reward for keeping Torah and *Mitzvot*, and we are happy. But you, who say that the important thing is *Lishma*, and you can see for yourselves that you cannot engage in order to bestow, you see that you are not doing anything. You can see for yourselves how much effort you have already made, and yet you did not advance one inch. Why are you working for nothing? You are not worthy of coming closer to the Creator because you are too immersed in self-love, so it’s just a shame for all the time you are wasting for nothing.”

Thus, what did this *Klipa* do? She extended *Midat ha Din* [quality of *Din*] over that person and killed him. This is considered that the *Klipa* informs the sin with *Midat ha Din*, and then there is nothing he can do but fall into despair and escape the campaign. And she takes from him whatever faith he had, and he remains without spiritual life. But he is also unable to receive corporeal satisfaction, as he did before he entered the work. Thus, he remains melancholic and sad, and all because this *Klipa* came to him in a disguise of righteousness and care only for his well-being.

This is the meaning of what is written, that the *Klipa* makes his sin known to him in a manner of *Din*. But for one who rises

to engage in Torah at night, the Torah makes his sin known to him as a mother who informs her son with soft words, and he repents before his master.

We should understand the meaning of “soft words.” The end of the essay comes and interprets, “He repents before his Master.” In other words, she informs him of the sin not because she wishes to remove him from the work of the Creator like the *Klipa* of Gerar, who informs him of the sin with *Midat ha Din*—that it is impossible to repent and to work in order to bestow, and thus she pushes him away.

Rather, she informs him as a “white mother” who makes him understand with soft words that he should not think that he can’t repent and work to bestow. “In soft words” means that it is not as hard as you think, since the Creator wishes to help a person when he feels that it is hard for him.

However, we must understand it, since the Creator Himself made it difficult, as it is written, “Come unto Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart ... that I might show these My signs.” In other words, the Torah allows one to understand that the fact that he is feeling that it is hard to walk on the path of bestowal is not because he is incompetent, but because “I have hardened his heart.” And why? “That I might show these My signs.”

And Baal HaSulam interpreted that it is in order to have a need for the letters of the Torah; hence, the Creator made the hardening of the heart so that by that, one will be needy of the Torah. Otherwise, he will have no need for the Torah. But since a person wishes to go by a way of bestowal and the Torah alerts him that the will to receive for himself is a sin, that this is the actual evil inclination, and one who wishes to walk on the path of bestowal, it is written (Psalms 1), “Happy is the man who has not walked in the counsel of the wicked, nor stood in the way of sinners.”

We should interpret, “Who has not walked in the counsel of the wicked,” meaning the herdsmen of Gerar—who wish for him to follow them—since they make him understand that it is not worthwhile to follow the path of bestowal. Instead, they wish to hear the herdsmen of Isaac, who say, “One who walks on the path of receiving reward, it is called ‘a sin.’” And when they understand that this is a sin, they immediately cry for the Creator to bring them out of that state and wish to keep what is written, “Nor stood in the way of sinners.”

In other words, they do not wish to remain in the state of sinners, and they ask for the Creator’s help, that He will give them the light of Torah because “The light in it reforms him,” and he, too, wants to serve the King and be a true servant of the Creator.

The Zohar says that one should know the ways of Torah because “One who does not know the commandment of the upper one, how will he serve Him?” It follows that by not being able to come out of his will to receive for himself, and by feeling that he needs the Creator’s help, the need is born within him for assistance of the Creator.

His help is through Torah, in which there are two things: 1) “The light in it reforms him,” meaning he receives vessels of bestowal, and 2) When he has vessels of bestowal and he wishes to bestow upon the Creator but he doesn’t know what the Creator needs for him to give Him. In *The Zohar*, this is called, “One who does not know the commandment of the upper one, how will he serve Him?”

And here we should discern between a) the *Klipa* alerting him that he is a sinner, in *Midat ha Din*, whose aim is to remove a person from the work, and b) the Torah, which alerts a person that he has sinned “As a mother who informs her son with soft words, and he repents before his Master.”

The Torah alerts that he can correct this sin through the Torah in the two above-mentioned manners: 1) through the light in it, which reforms him; 2) by being rewarded with reasons for the Torah and reasons for the *Mitzvot*, for “One who does not know the commandment of the upper one, how will he serve Him?”

This is why *The Zohar* concludes, “And he repents before his Master.” But when the *Klipa* alerts him of his sin, he is incapable of repenting. Instead, he falls into despair and complete departure from the work of the Creator.

It follows that when a person is walking on the right line, he mustn't hear the thoughts of the *Klipa* of the herdsmen of Gerar, as our sages said that David said, “The dawn does not awaken me.” Rather, afterwards, one must shift to the left line, and this is called, “I awaken the dawn.”

This means that he awakens the dawn. That is, a person has a special preparation of wishing to awaken the blackness. This means that he summons it, and not the thoughts of blackness, when the *Klipa* alerts him that he is in the wrong. It follows that he summons the left and examines how to correct his deeds—to see the measure of his remoteness from equivalence of form, and the measure of pain and suffering—he feels all that when he sees the lowliness of his state. He sees that sometimes he doesn't care that he is remote from *Dvekut* with the Creator. This is the time to ask the Creator to deliver him from the exile he is in.

Here, too, we should discern two things: 1) He doesn't feel that he is in exile. In other words, he has no wish to escape self-love. Rather, he is in a state that *The Zohar* calls *Hav, Hav* [“give-give,” but also the sound of a dog bark], like a dog, referring to the words, “The leech has two daughters, who cry like dogs, *Hav, Hav.*” It interprets, “*Hav* [give] us the wealth of this world, and *Hav* us the wealth of the next world.”

This means that they wish to keep Torah and *Mitzvot*, but in order to receive everything in the will to receive for themselves. This is considered that he doesn't feel any exile, so that he should want to be redeemed from the exile.

He feels all that because he entered the left line. But when he walks on the right line, he mustn't scrutinize if his work is complete or not. Instead, he is thankful to the Creator for whatever grip he has.

This state is called "concealment within concealment," as it is written (Deuteronomy 31:18), "And I will surely hide My face in that day." We should interpret that when he is in concealment, he doesn't feel that he is in exile. And what is the exile? It is as it is written, "It is for our sins that we have been exiled from our land and were sent far from our land."

It was written, "It is for our sins." Sin concerns using the will to receive for oneself. This is what caused us the remoteness from "Our land." It is known that "desire" and "land" are called *Malchut* [kingdom], meaning the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven means that a person takes it upon himself to enslave himself to heaven, meaning to the Creator, who is called "heaven," as it is written, "Lift up your eyes on high, and see: who created these?"

This is the meaning of, "We have been exiled from our land," meaning from our land, which is called "the kingdom of heaven," to serve and to toil for the glory of heaven; we have been exiled from this will. But in which desire did we enter? In the desire of "the nations of the world," called "receiving in order to receive."

It is written, "[We] were sent far from our land." *Adamah* [land] comes from the words *Adameh la Elyon* [I will be like the Most High], which is equivalence of form. And since we engaged with our own will to receive, we have become far from our land,

from being in equivalence of form with the upper one. And when a person doesn't feel the exile, that he is under concealment, the exile, which is called "concealment," is hidden from him. Thus, he is in a state of concealment within concealment.

However, concealment within concealment also means a certain measure of disclosure. Indeed, there is concealment within concealment, but we should ask, "Where did this awareness that he is in concealment come from?" We should say that this awareness, too, came from the Creator, either directly or through a messenger.

For that, we should interpret the verse, "Maker of light and creator of darkness." This darkness refers to a person's feeling that he is inside a concealment, that he doesn't feel that the Creator is hidden from him, and he has no desire to search for where He is, so that from this place he will surrender before Him and will have the great reward of serving Him.

He also doesn't feel the concealment in the sense that the Torah is the clothing of the Creator, or regrets it. Instead, he is in a completely different world, meaning the fact that there is a Creator and that the Creator wishes to give delight and pleasure to the creatures doesn't interest him at all. This feeling called "concealment within concealment," is called "darkness," and the Creator created and gave him this darkness.

But we see that a person usually doesn't see the negative in himself. He always knows that he is fine, whether he is religious or non-religious. It is as it is written, "For a bribe blinds them that see." And since a person is close to himself, he can never see the truth. Thus, a person who sees that he is not all right should say that he was notified of that from above.

2) He is in a single concealment. In other words, he feels that he is under concealment. This means that it pains him that he is remote from the Creator, meaning that the Creator

is hidden from him and that he doesn't feel the Creator to the extent that he will wish to annul himself before Him. But at the same time, it pains him that he is remote. At that time, he has no other way but for the Creator to help him, to make him capable of approaching the Creator, which is called "*Dvekut* and equivalence of form."

And all this scrutiny that he does, which is called "left line," should be at a certain time. In other words, particularly after he has walked on the right line that day and praised the Creator extensively for giving him even a small service, and he rejoiced in that. As we said above, this is the path of truth.

Afterwards, he can shift to the left line for a short while, but not for long. In other words, while he engages in Torah and in prayer, he should be careful not to go out to the left line, but to be specifically in the right, for this is called, "The blessed adheres to the blessed."

And this is the time when he can be rewarded with a higher degree, as it is written, "Divinity is present only out of joy." But when he is in the left line, which is a time of criticism, that time is the place to see only faults. But the work of the left should give him the need to pray. Prayer relates specifically to a place where there is a deficiency, and a place of deficit is called "cursed." But then, "The cursed does not adhere to the blessed." For this reason, there is no room to rise to a higher degree. On the contrary, the right line is the place for ascension, for then he is in a state of wholeness.

WHAT BEGINNING IN LO LISHMA MEANS IN THE WORK

Article No. 23, 1987/88

It is written in *Pesachim* (p 50), “Rabbi Yehuda said, ‘Rav said, ‘One should always engage in Torah and *Mitzvot*, even if *Lo Lishma* [not for Her name], since from *Lo Lishma* he comes to *Lishma* [for Her name].’”

Maimonides said (*Hilchot Teshuva* Chapter 10, 5), “Sages said, ‘One should always engage in Torah, even if *Lo Lishma*, since from *Lo Lishma* he comes to *Lishma*.’ Therefore, when teaching little ones, women, and ordinary people, they are taught only to work out of fear and in order to receive reward. When they increase knowledge and gain much wisdom, they will be told that secret with ease, until they attain it and know Him and serve Him out of love.”

And in *Pesachim* (p 50), it is written there in the *Tosfot*, “In Chapter Two of *Berachot* it is said, ‘All who engages in Torah in *Lo Lishma* is better off not being born.’ And Rabbi Yehuda says, ‘There it is about one who is studying in order to brag and to annoy.’” And in *Berachot*, the *Tosfot* explains, “We should ask, for here it is about one who is studying only to annoy his friends, and there it is about one who is studying so as to be respected.”

With the above said, we can see that in general, we should make two discernments in the work of the Creator: 1) *Lishma* [for Her name], 2) *Lo Lishma* [not for Her name]. We should know what exactly is *Lishma* and what exactly is *Lo Lishma*.

In *Lo Lishma*, we see that we have five discernments to make:

1) As Maimonides said, he engages in Torah and *Mitzvot* [commandments] because the Creator commanded us, and he wishes to keep the commandments of the Creator, and this is why he engages in Torah and *Mitzvot*. But we should note what is

the reason that commits him to keeping the commandments of the Creator. Maimonides says that we should tell him, “Because of reward and punishment.” In other words, if he keeps the commandments of the Creator, the Creator will reward him: He will have a long life, wealth and the next world. And if he doesn’t keep, he will be punished for not wanting to keep the commandments of the Creator.

However, we should make two discernments in reward and punishment: 1) As Maimonides says; 2) There is reward and punishment from pleasures of the Torah and *Mitzvot*. These matters, too, cannot be disclosed to beginning students in the work or to little ones and to women.

2) The second discernment in *Lo Lishma*, as the Tosfot says, is that he is studying Torah in order to be respected. This is worse than the first discernment that Maimonides mentions, since here he does not demand of the Creator to pay his reward and this is why he works. Rather, he wants people to respect him—whether with wealth or with honors—and this is the reason that commits him to engagement in Torah and *Mitzvot*. We could say that it appears as though he is keeping Torah and *Mitzvot* because people compel him, for otherwise the people will not reward him, and not because the Creator commanded to keep the Torah and *Mitzvot*. However, that, too, falls under the *Lo Lishma* that brings to *Lishma*.

The third discernment is as the Tosfot says, “One who studies Torah in order to annoy his friends.” This is worse than the previous discernments of *Lo Lishma*. It is said about it, “Anyone who engages in Torah in *Lo Lishma* is better off not being born.”

Let us explain what is *Lishma*, and the five discernments in *Lo Lishma*, and let us begin from the bottom up.

The *Lo Lishma* in order to annoy is the worst. It is so much so, that our sages said that one who walks on this path “is better

off not being born.” We should understand why “in order to annoy” is worse than one who studies “in order to be respected.” After all, he is studying for the creatures and not for the Creator, similar to in order to annoy, which is for the creatures.

We should explain the difference between them. It is known that we were given the commandment, “love thy friend as thyself.” Rabbi Akiva said about it that it is the great rule of the Torah. It is presented in the book, *The Giving of the Torah*, that *this is the transition of exiting self-love and into love of others, which is love of friends, and into the love of the Creator*. This means that it is impossible to work *Lishma* before one exits self-love.

This is why we should make two distinctions concerning love of others: 1) when he has love of others; 2) when he hasn't love of others. But there is a third distinction, which is *hatred of others*. In other words, he does things in order to hurt the other. This is called, “One who takes honor in one's friend's disgrace.” In other words, he enjoys his friend being disgraced and in torment, and derives his pleasure from it. That person is regarded as engaging in hatred of people.

With this we can distinguish between one who is studying in order to be respected and one who studies in order to annoy. The purpose is to reach *Lishma*, and we were given the advice by which we can reach *Lishma*—through love of others. Hence, although one who studies in order to be respected is not engaging in love of others, he is still not acting towards hatred of people, since those who respect him enjoy him, and this is why they respect him. Therefore, he still has a chance to reach *Lishma*, simply because of the doing—that he engages in Torah and *Mitzvot*, since the Torah and *Mitzvot* themselves bring him a spirit of purity so he will be able to rise in the degrees and reach the love of others and the love of the Creator.

This is why they said about it, “From *Lo Lishma* he comes to *Lishma*.” But one who is studying in order to annoy, which

is an act that brings him to hatred of others, yet still wishes to be honored with his friend's disgrace, will certainly never reach the love of the Creator, since his actions detain the exit from self-love. Thus, how will he exit self-love and come to love of the Creator?

And yet, there is one more discernment to make in *Lo Lishma*: by way of coercion, as written in Article No. 19, 1986/87. For example, if a person works for an orthodox person and receives a good salary from him, and the employer tells him, "I want you to keep Torah and *Mitzvot*. Otherwise I will not want you to work for me."

He comes home and tells his wife that the employer wants to fire him. His wife says, "What does it mean, keeping Torah and *Mitzvot* because you have an orthodox employer? We don't believe in it. Are we going to sell our conscience for money?" But when he says to his wife, "I've been to several other places and it's very hard to find a job these days, so if we don't accept the employer's condition, we will starve."

"Therefore," says the husband, "We shouldn't sacrifice ourselves for our conscience, but we know the truth, that we do not believe in Torah and *Mitzvot*. Instead, we will keep Torah and *Mitzvot* not because the Creator told us to keep Torah and *Mitzvot*, but because the owner of the factory instructed us, and this is why we keep Torah and *Mitzvot*. We don't have to believe in the employer. So what if we keep Torah and *Mitzvot*? The act doesn't blemish our conscience or suddenly makes us believers. We remain nonbelievers in the Creator even when we do those deeds."

On the face of it, what kind of importance is there to such Torah and *Mitzvot*, when he explicitly says that in his views, he remains like the rest of the secular? What is the value of such deeds, according to our mind?

However, from the perspective of the law [religious law], we must force him even if he says that he doesn't want to. It means that by that, he still keeps the commandments of the Creator, but it is called *Lo Lishma*. It is as Maimonides wrote (*Hilchot Deot*, Chapter Six), "But in matters of holiness, if he doesn't repent in secret, he is shamed in public, and he is disgraced and cursed until he reforms."

This means that even this manner is called *Lo Lishma*, since from that *Lo Lishma*, one also comes to *Lishma*, more than one who studies in order to annoy—of whom our sages said, "He is better off not being born." And here we should interpret that by keeping Torah and *Mitzvot* in *Lo Lishma*, he isn't doing something against the love of others. Rather, this does give pleasure to others. That is, the orthodox, who see that now he has become observant of Torah and *Mitzvot*, do not look at the reason, but at the act. Thus, they enjoy it. But one who studies in order to annoy acts contrary to what one should do.

By that, we explained the difference between one who studies in order to annoy, which is the worst, and one who works by coercion, who is forced to work by others, which is *Lo Lishma* and stands above the one who is studying in order to annoy. And although it is difficult to say so, he is keeping Torah and *Mitzvot* out of his will, and not by coercion, but his will is to annoy, which is only a thought and not an action. But why is one who is keeping Torah and *Mitzvot* by coercion, who is pressured by the public, better than one who is studying in order to annoy, if he acts not of his own free will?

Perhaps we should say that nevertheless, through the deed that he is doing, albeit coercively, the act itself has the power to bring him a good will and thought, as our sages said about the verse, "Will offer him at his will before the Lord." And they said (*Arachin* 21), "Will offer him" implies that he is forced, and you can say it is against his will. The Talmud says it is of his

will. How is he forced? Until he says, ‘I want.’” For this reason, we can say that he is more important than one who is studying in order to annoy.

However, we should ask, “At the end of the day, he is performing the act in full, but thinks that by that he will receive honors from showing that he knows and the other doesn’t. Why is it so difficult to achieve the goal called *Lishma* with *Lo Lishma* that is in order to annoy, to the point that they said that he would be better off not being born?”

We could say that one who is studying in order to annoy must be completely immersed in the Torah and probably considers himself a complete man in the Torah. If so, he will never think about the matter of *Lishma* because he sees that he delves in the Torah more than his friends, who are not putting in that many hours, as well as quality. And he observes himself, that he is making greater efforts in the Torah than the friends by delving in, to know the right meaning that should be understood in the Torah, and he is not studying superficially like the others, but straining his brain. Thus, how can he think of himself as lacking? He can never come to the recognition of evil, to know that he should reach *Lishma*. For this reason, he is doomed. This is why they said about him, “He is better off not being born.”

And the most important in the *Lo Lishma* is that it brings to *Lishma*. It is as Maimonides said, “To receive reward and to not be punished.” The *Lo Lishma* that the Tosfot speaks of, which is to be respected, does things *so people will see him and appreciate him*. Thus, it seems as though he is keeping the commandments of people, that he is working for them, and that people will pay his reward.

But one who works with the intention of reward and punishment is working for the Creator, except he wants the Creator to pay his reward for his labor in Torah and *Mitzvot*. He

doesn't want people to pay his reward because he isn't working for people to pay his reward. Rather, he is working and keeping Torah and *Mitzvot* because the Creator has given us Torah and *Mitzvot* to keep. And by that, we will receive reward for our labor in Torah and *Mitzvot*.

Hence, this is certainly a higher degree than the one the Tosfot speaks of, the *Lo Lishma* in order to be respected. This is because there he is working for people to respect him, but in reward and punishment, he is working for the Creator, which is called *Lishma*, meaning for the Creator, except he still wants reward for his work, and this is why it is still not considered "actual *Lishma*."

However, we should note another discernment that is called *Lo Lishma*, as Maimonides said, though the reward and punishment are of a different form. Normally, we understand reward and punishment as being clothed in corporeal dresses, such as eating, drinking, etc.. *The Zohar* says that our ability to enjoy corporeal desires is only a tiny light, from what had fallen from the world of shattering, the breaking of holy sparks into the *Klipot* [shells], and this is all the pleasure that is in them. And the whole world chases these pleasures. When it is written that the majority of the light is clothed in Torah and *Mitzvot*, this is the kind of reward and punishment that he wants.

And we should always pay attention, while speaking to someone about keeping Torah and *Mitzvot*, we should first think which reason is suitable for that person. Everyone has his own thing that interests him, a reason for which he sees that it is worthwhile to keep Torah and *Mitzvot*, since by that he will receive something that is worth a great effort and toil. And he will be willing to give anything to obtain what he sees as worthwhile for him.

For this reason, we should always say to a person that which is important for him to an extent that it is worth his giving

everything that he is asked for. Otherwise, without providing a reason that will make him see the profitability, he will not hear what is being said to him. Man settles for what he has and it is hard to change habits, unless he gains from it something that is important enough to give him the energy to change his ways and to start working differently than what he is accustomed to.

Hence, there are five discernments in *Lo Lishma* before us:

1. By coercion;
2. One who studies in order to annoy;
3. One who studies in order to be respected, as mentioned in the words of the Tosfot;
4. For reward and punishment, as in the words of Maimonides;
5. Reward and punishment from non-corporeal things, which is something that everyone understands. But he wants reward and punishment of spiritual pleasures, as written in the "Introduction to The Book of Zohar" (Item 31), "And the final degree in this division," in *Lo Lishma*, "Is that he falls passionately in love with the Creator, as one falls passionately for a corporeal love, until the object of passion remains before one's eyes all day and all night, as the poet says, 'When I remember Him, He does not let me sleep.'"

But with the fifth discernment in *Lo Lishma*, we cannot tell a person to begin in this *Lo Lishma*, since not every person can understand it, meaning believe that there is pleasure in the light that is clothed in Torah and *Mitzvot*, more than one can enjoy the pleasure that is clothed in corporeal pleasures. That is, if the light of the pleasure that is clothed in Torah and *Mitzvot* would be immediately apparent, it would be called "open Providence." In that state, it would be impossible for a person to be able to work *Lishma* because the pleasure he would feel in Torah and

Mitzvot would force him to do everything, and not because the Creator commanded to keep.

It is as he says in the “Introduction to The Study of the Ten Sefirot” (Item 43), “If, for example, the Creator were to establish open Providence with His creations in that, for instance, anyone who eats a forbidden thing would immediately choke, and anyone who performed a commandment would discover wonderful pleasures in it, similar to the finest delights in this corporeal world. Then, what fool would even think of tasting a forbidden thing, knowing that he would immediately lose his life because of it? ...Also, what fool would leave any commandment without performing it as quickly as possible, as one who cannot retire from or linger with a great corporeal pleasure that comes into his hand, without receiving it as quickly as he can?”

It follows that then there would be no possibility for choice, since the great pleasures that are clothed in Torah and *Mitzvot* are great lights. This is why this pleasure is concealed. Conversely, in corporeality, the pleasure in each act is revealed, which makes us crave any place where we see that there is some pleasure. And the body doesn't tell whether it is forbidden or permitted. Because of it, there is the matter of choice and the matter of reward and punishment.

It follows that while speaking to someone about taking on the burden of Torah and *Mitzvot*, one should thoughtfully consider which type of *Lo Lishma* to tell him, since, as said above, each one should be given the *Lo Lishma* that suits his character, so he will see that this *Lo Lishma* is worth taking upon himself the Torah and *Mitzvot*. For example, the first discernment (by coercion) is suitable for everyone. In other words, if one can force another, in coercion, it makes no difference whether the other understands or doesn't understand. In any case, it is called “coercion,” meaning that one can do it even if he understands one hundred percent that he is right, but he has no choice. This

is called “coercion.” But with the other forms of *Lo Lishma*, each one has a different character, and it’s important to say what is acceptable.

We can understand the three other forms of *Lo Lishma*—1) in order to annoy, 2) in order to be respected, and 3) to receive corporeal reward and punishment. However, each person has a different nature, so one should pay close attention to know which type of *Lo Lishma* he should tell him, meaning which *Lo Lishma* that person can see as worth toiling for.

But with the fifth type of *Lo Lishma*, craving the love of the Creator because he feels pleasure in Torah and *Mitzvot*, this we cannot understand because it depends on the feeling. And before a person begins to taste, there is no point speaking to him. This is why it is called “the final form of *Lo Lishma*,” meaning that afterwards one enters the degree of *Lishma*.

However, we should understand that if a person reaches the degree where he craves Torah and *Mitzvot* in the measure that was said above, “When I remember Him, He does not let me sleep,” why is this still considered *Lo Lishma*? Indeed, it is because the pleasure in Torah and *Mitzvot* is what compels him to keep the Torah and *Mitzvot*. *Lishma* means that the greatness of the Creator, because He is great and ruling, causes him to keep Torah and *Mitzvot*. Thus, it is not the pleasure that is the reason that compels him, but the Creator is the reason that makes him keep Torah and *Mitzvot*.

The discernment of *Lishma* is described in the “Introduction to The Book of Zohar” (Item 32), “The work in Torah and *Mitzvot Lishma*, in order to bestow and to not receive reward, and he becomes worthy of receiving the five parts of the soul called *NRNHY*.”

However, according to the rule that man is a small world, comprised of seventy nations, he is comprised of Israel, too.

Thus, we said that there are five discernments in *Lo Lishma*, that there are people who belong to a special type of *Lo Lishma*, but we should also say that all these types of *Lo Lishma* exist *within* one person, but come one at a time. Sometimes, the “in order to annoy” acts in a person. Sometimes, he is working with the *Lo Lishma* in order to be respected, and sometimes he is using the *Lo Lishma* by coercion, as Maimonides said, “He is shamed in public, disgraced, and cursed until he reforms.”

In other words, when a person comes to pray in the synagogue or comes to study Torah so that the friends will not despise him, since everyone will despise him in their hearts although no one will tell him, “Why aren’t you coming to the Torah lessons at the synagogue?” But he will know that for certain, everyone is looking at him as inferior. Thus, the disgrace that he will feel makes him come to the synagogue. It follows that the cause of *Lo Lishma* that forces him is the coercion, as Maimonides says.

It is easier to use this *Lo Lishma* as an effective *Lo Lishma*, since *Lo Lishma* that is connected to suffering—the disgrace—gives more energy to overcome the obstructions that he has. Therefore, at times when a person is in the lowest decline, the *Lo Lishma* of shame can still act in him. It is considered coercion because of the shame, meaning the shame—which is the suffering—forces him to do things even though the body disagrees.

And sometimes a person strengthens himself with the *Lo Lishma* of reward and punishment, as Maimonides said. And sometimes he has reward and punishment from finding meaning in the work, while if he doesn’t keep the Torah and *Mitzvot* he lacks the meaning, and this is the final *Lo Lishma*.

Reward and punishment of pleasure in the work: when he engages in Torah and *Mitzvot*, he feels pleasure. And if he doesn’t keep Torah and *Mitzvot*, he suffers. It is like a person who is

feeling the taste of a meal and this is the reason that he goes to the meal, since he wants the pleasure of the food. It follows that the pleasure of the food is the cause for going to the meal.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN THE ASSEMBLY OF FRIENDS

Article No. 30, 1987-88

Our sages said (*Avot*, Chapter 1, 6), “Make for yourself a *rav* [teacher], buy yourself a friend, and judge every person favorably.”

We should understand the attachment of “Judge every person favorably” to “Buy yourself a friend.” Also, in *Matan Torah* (*The Giving of the Torah*, p 30), it is written that the *Mitzva* [commandment], “love thy friend as thyself” is in order to achieve the love of the Creator, which is *Dvekut* [adhesion] with Him. He writes, “It is reasonable to think that the part of the Torah that deals with man’s relationship with his friend is more capable of bringing one to the desired goal. This is because the work in *Mitzvot* [commandments] between man and God is fixed and specific, and is not demanding, and one becomes easily accustomed to it, and everything that is done out of habit is no longer useful. But the *Mitzvot* between man and man are changing and irregular, and demands surround him wherever he may turn. Hence, their cure is much more certain and their aim is closer.” Thus far his words.

This means that man must come to be rewarded with equivalence of form; that is, that all his thoughts and desires will be only for the benefit of the Creator and not for his own benefit. This stems from the correction of the *Tzimtzum* [restriction]. It means that from the perspective of the Creator, He created the worlds with the intention of wanting to do good to His creations.

As our sages explain, the Creator said to the ministering angels that the creation of the world is like a king who has abundance, but no guests.

In other words, He has pleasure when the guests dine at His place, but to avoid shame there was a correction that they must receive delight and pleasure with the aim of delighting the Creator. But the first degree is bestowing in order to bestow. One should enjoy while bestowing, just as the Creator enjoys. It is as our sages said (*The Zohar*, Part 1, *Beresheet*, p 115), “There was no such joy before the Creator since the day the world was created as the joy that He is destined to rejoice with the righteous in the future.”

We see that on the day when the world was created, there was great joy before the Creator. In other words, He had great joy in wanting to bestow. It follows that if a person performs acts of bestowal but is not feeling joy, there is no equivalence of form here. Although in the act he is bestowing and engaging in love of others, the act should be with joy, like the joy that the Creator has. Thus, the equivalence in joy is missing here.

Hence, there are two things that one must do.

1. Even though the body does not wish to work in the form of bestowal, it must be forced. However, there is a rule that when a person does things coercively, he cannot be happy, since he would be happier if he did not have to do those deeds. Still, man must work coercively. This is called “coercing and subduing the evil in him.”

However, as we said above, the joy that should come with each act of bestowal is missing here, and when it comes to joy one cannot force himself to be happy in a place where there is an act of coercion. Joy is a result of a person’s enjoyment, and where there is pleasure, “coercion” is out of the picture. Hence, no joy or pleasure comes from coercion.

2. We say that we need joy for the work of the Creator, and as we said, joy is only a result of something that a person enjoys. Thus, since man can only perform acts of coercion, this is called “an action.” An act is something to which the mind *does not agree*. It is considered that when one begins to coerce himself, he comes into a state of “He who comes to be purified.”

Thus, what else is missing? Only something that will evoke his gladness. We should interpret about that that this is given to him from above. This is called “He is aided.” In what is the aid? *The Zohar* says, “In a holy soul.” When one is rewarded with that, then he is glad. It follows that when we say that one should work with joy, it means that through one’s actions, he should evoke the awakening from above, for only by help from above can he come into gladness while engaging in acts of bestowal.

Indeed, there is a question here: “Why is it necessary to perform acts of bestowal with joy?” The reason is simple: there is no equivalence of form here because when the Creator gives, He feels joy. But when man gives and has no joy, the equivalence of form is absent.

However, there is an even graver issue here than equivalence of form. When a person is in a state of sadness, when he sees his life as pointless because wherever he looks, he sees only black—in corporeality as well as in spirituality—it is like a person who wears black glasses. Wherever he looks, he sees only black.

In that state a person is considered heretical in regard to the Creator’s guidance, since he cannot say that the Creator leads His world in benevolence.

In that state, he is considered faithless. Thus, here the issue is no longer equivalence of form, but rather faithlessness, since he is in a state of heresy. It follows that man must *always* be in gladness and believe above reason that everything that the

Creator does is done only in benevolence. But we should also believe that this is what we need—to believe above reason.

By our reason, it seems it would be better if the Creator treated us with open guidance. But Baal HaSulam said that we must not say that the Creator cannot give everything into the vessels of reception, called “within reason,” meaning that the corporeal body, too, will understand that the Creator treats the whole world only with benevolence.

Why did He choose specifically the *Kelim* [vessels] of above reason? The Creator chose those *Kelim* because they are indeed the best, for by them we achieve the real wholeness, and then the verse, “And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,” will come true. Our sages said, “With both your inclinations—the good inclination and the evil inclination.”

At that time, the body, too, feels the delight and pleasure that the Creator gives to the creatures and then there is no need to believe above reason. It follows that the main requirement is for man to be in gladness while doing the work of bestowal, when he does not see what self-reception—called “within reason”—would receive from it, since otherwise he is in a state of heresy.

It follows that one must perform the holy work above reason because these are the *Kelim* that are suitable for bringing man to wholeness. It was said earlier that only above reason can he take pleasure in the guidance of the Creator, which is in the form of benevolence. And this is called “right.”

As Baal HaSulam said, one must try to walk on the right line, called “faith above reason,” and picture that he has already been rewarded with complete faith in the Creator, that his organs already feel that the Creator leads the whole world in benevolence.

Thus, we should ask, “Why must we walk on the left line, too, if the right line is the most important? What is the purpose

of the left line?” The answer is that it is to know our state within reason—the measure of our faith, how much Torah we have acquired, and how we feel the Creator during prayer, etc.

And then we come to feel that we are in utter lowliness, the lowest possible. This is the reason why, when we later shift to the right line, we have the work above reason. In other words, as the left line shows us our state within reason, here there is room to go above reason. But if we were always in the right line, it would not be regarded as right, but as a single line.

In other words, we would think that this is truly where we are, and we would think that we are truly within reason, in the perfect *Gadlut* [greatness/adulthood]. But in truth, that only above reason are we in wholeness; hence, when we have the two lines, we can say that there is the matter of above reason, which is the right line.

It follows that the right line helps the left line because once he pictures himself already in gladness, enjoying the perfection of his work, when he shifts to the left line he sees that he is in a world of total darkness. That is, he sees and feels that he is still immersed in self-love and that he has no hope of exiting self-love.

Then there is room for prayer from the bottom of the heart. The state of the right was when he imagined being in a state that he pictured for himself the perfection of the work. In other words, he believed above reason in the commandment of faith in the teacher, who told him to go in that state although his reason told him, “Why do you compare your situation to that of a person who has already been rewarded with complete faith when you know that you are in the lowest possible baseness that can ever be?” He feels that he is in a state of lowliness that is unbecoming to a person who wants to ever be a servant of the Creator.

And afterwards he moves to the right line, and the left gives him room to work in the right line. However, we must remember that anything that is a path of truth is hard to walk on without effort. Therefore, after those two lines he arrives at the middle line called “the Creator gives him the soul.” And then he comes into complete faith, specifically through God’s salvation. But by nature, man cannot achieve this by himself.

With all the above, we can understand the matter of the assembly of friends. When they gather, what should they discuss? First, the goal must be clear to everyone—this gathering must yield the result of *love of friends*, that each of the friends will be awakened to love the other, which is called “love of others.” However, this is only a result. To beget this lovely offspring, actions must be taken to produce the love.

And concerning love, there are two forms: 1) Natural love, for which one does not have to exert. He should only be careful not to spoil nature. 2) One that comes by one doing good things to the other. There is nature in that, too, since one who gives a present to another causes him to love him. Hence, when a group of people gathers and wishes to work together on love of friends, they must all help one another as much as they can.

And there are many discernments about that, since not everyone is the same, meaning what one needs, the other does not. However, there is one thing in which all are equal: each and every one of the friends needs high spirits. That is, when the friends are not in a good mood, they are not all the same in their needs. Rather, each has his own reason for being unhappy.

Therefore, each one must contemplate how he can bring about a good mood to the other. Thus, they should be careful and avoid discussing things that can bring sadness to the society, for by that one causes the others to feel bad. And then, after he goes home, he will ask himself, “What have I gained by going to

the society? To know that I am in a state of lowliness and that I should regret it? It is as though I went to the society so they would bring me into a state of sadness. In that case, it was a waste of time. It would probably be better if I did not go.” Then he probably says, “The next time I have to go to the society, I’ll make up excuses to avoid them.”

It therefore follows that *each one should try to bring into the society a spirit of life and hopefulness, and infuse energy into the society.* Thus, each of the friends will be able to tell himself, “Now I am starting a clean slate in the work.” In other words, before he came to the society, he was disappointed with the progress in the work of God, but now the society has filled him with life and hopefulness.

Thus, through society he obtained the confidence and strength to overcome because now he feels that he can achieve wholeness. And all his thoughts—that he was facing a high mountain that couldn’t be conquered, and that these were truly formidable obstructions—now he feels that they are nothing. And he received it all from the power of the society because each and every one tried to instill a spirit of encouragement and the presence of a new atmosphere in the society.

But what can one do when he feels that he is in a state of sadness—both in terms of the corporeal state and the spiritual state—and the time when he must go to the society has come? And yet, our sages said, “A worry in a man’s heart? Let him speak of it with others.” In other words, he should tell his friends, and perhaps they can offer some help.

But if this is so, why do we say that everyone should bring high spirits into the society when one has none? And moreover, there is a rule that one cannot give that which one does not have.” Thus, what should he do to give something to the society that will give high spirits to the society?

Indeed, there is no other way but for man to *walk on the right line*. Thus, before he goes to the love of friends, he should read Baal HaSulam's essay (from 1943) where he clarifies what is the right line, that this is the meaning of above reason. And he should draw strength from there so that when he comes to the society, each and every one will more or less be able to infuse a spirit of life, and by that, the whole of society will feel joy and greater confidence.

During the assembly, it is forbidden to evoke the left line. Only when one is alone is he permitted to use the left line, but not more than half an hour a day. But the essence of man's work is to go specifically by the right line, as is written (in the 1943 essay). But two people together must not speak of the left, for only thus can they receive assistance from the society.

But the worst is when a person comes to the society and sees that the whole society is in a state of decline, so how can he be strengthened by them? At that time, he must judge everyone favorably.

Now we can understand what we asked about the proximity of "Buy yourself a friend" and "Judge every person favorably." With the above written, we can understand that when one wishes to acquire something from the society, he should judge everyone favorably. Then he can acquire from the friends so they will help him in the work, since he has someone from whom to receive. But when he sees that he is far above the whole society, from whom will he receive? Our sages came and said about it, "Judge every person favorably."

It follows that the main reason why a person needs to buy a friend and work in love of others is that thus he can be rewarded with the love of the Creator. But the friends should primarily speak together about the greatness of the Creator, because according to the greatness of the Creator that one assumes, to

that extent he naturally annuls himself before Him. It is as we see in nature that the small one annuls before the great one, and this has nothing to do with spirituality. Rather, this conduct applies even among secular people.

In other words, the Creator made nature this way. Thus, the friends' discussions of the greatness of the Creator awaken a desire and craving to annul before the Creator because he begins to feel longing and desire to bond with the Creator. And we should also remember that to the extent that the friends can appreciate the importance and greatness of the Creator, we should still go above reason, meaning that the Creator is higher than any greatness of the Creator that a man can imagine.

We should say that we believe above reason that He leads the world in a benevolent guidance, and if one believes that the Creator wishes only man's best, it makes a person love the Creator until he is rewarded with, "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul." And this is what a person needs to receive from the friends.

And in the matter of obtaining greatness, it should be obtained specifically through the society. It is as it is written in *Matan Torah (The Giving of the Torah, p 141)*, where he speaks concerning the teacher and the students. It is the same primarily with regards to the greatness of the Creator. He writes, "Obtaining the greatness depends entirely on the environment, and a single person cannot do a thing about it whatsoever.

"Yet, there are two conditions to obtaining the greatness:

1. Always listen and assume appreciation of the environment to the extent of its greatness.
2. The environment should be great, as it is written, 'In the multitude of people is the king's glory.'

"To receive the first condition, each student must feel that he is the smallest among all the friends. In that state, one can receive

the appreciation of the greatness from everyone, since the great cannot receive from a smaller one, much less be impressed by his words. Rather, only the small is impressed by the appreciation of the great.

“And for the second condition, each student must extol the virtues of each friend and cherish him as though he were the greatest in the generation. Then the environment will affect him as a sufficiently great environment, since quality is more important than quantity.”

However, what should a friend do if he needs help from his friends? We have said above that it is forbidden to speak of bad things that bring sadness at the assembly of friends. The answer is that one should tell a close friend, and that friend will speak to the society, but not at the time of the assembly of friends. In other words, he can speak to the whole of society together, but not during the regular assembly of friends. Instead, he can arrange for a special meeting in favor of the friend who needs assistance.

And regarding “Buy yourself a friend,” we should interpret that “Buy” means that he must be paid and through the payment, he buys him. What does he pay him? We can say that payment is received in return for exertion. In other words, sometimes a person wishes to buy, for example, a new closet, which is worth around 2,000 dollars. He tells the seller, “Since I have no money to pay, but I heard that you are looking for an employee for two weeks, I will work for the amount that I have to pay you in return for the money for the closet,” and the seller will probably agree. Thus, we see that the payment can be by exchange.

It is the same with love of friends. It is a great effort when one should judge the friends favorably, and not everyone is ready for it.

Sometimes, it is even worse. At times, a person sees that his friend is disrespectful toward him. Even worse, he heard a

slandorous rumor, meaning he heard from a friend that that friend, who is called so and so, said about him things that are not nice for friends to say about each other. Now he has to subdue himself and judge him favorably. This, indeed, is a great effort. It follows that through the exertion, he gives the payment, which is even more important than a payment of money.

However, if that person slanders him, where will his friend muster the strength to love him? He knows for certain that he hates him, or he would not be slandering him, so what is the point in subduing himself and judging him favorably?

The answer is that love of friends that is built on the basis of love of others, by which they can achieve the love of the Creator, is the opposite of what is normally considered love of friends. In other words, love of others does not mean that the friends will love me. Rather, *it is I who must love the friends*. For this reason, it makes no difference if the friend is slandering him and must certainly hate him. Instead, a person who wishes to acquire love of others needs the correction of loving the other.

Therefore, when a person makes the effort and judges him favorably, it is a *Segula* [remedy/power/virtue], where by the toil that a person makes, which is called “an awakening from below,” he is given strength from above to be able to love all the friends without exception.

This is called, “Buy yourself a friend,” that a person should make an effort to obtain love of others. And this is called “labor,” since he must exert above reason. Reasonably thinking, “How is it possible to judge another favorably when his reason shows him his friend’s true face, that he hates him?” What can he tell the body about that? Why should he submit himself before his friend?

The answer is that he wishes to achieve *Dvekut* [adhesion] with the Creator, called “equivalence of form,” meaning to not think

of his own benefit. Thus, why is subduing a difficult thing? The reason is that he must revoke his own worth, and the whole of the life that he wishes to live will be only with the consideration of his ability to work for others' benefit, beginning with love of others, between man and man, through the love of the Creator.

Moreover, here is a place where he can say that anything that he does is without any self-interest, since by reason, the friends are the ones who should love him, but he overcomes his reason, goes above reason, and says, "It is not worth living for myself." And although one is not always at a degree where he is able to say so, this is nonetheless the purpose of the work. Thus, he already has something to reply to the body.

It therefore follows that before each friend comes to the assembly of friends, he must contemplate what he can give to the society to uplift the spirit of life in it. In that, there is no difference between one who is unschooled or schooled, since the thought that he thinks, though he may not know anything, he must pray to the Creator for help and believe that the Creator hears the prayers.

WHY ARE FOUR QUESTIONS ASKED SPECIFICALLY ON PASSOVER NIGHT?

Article No. 22, 1988/89

As we see, when does one ask questions? When he is lacking. He is asking, "Why do I need to suffer from not having what I think I need?" He comes to the Creator with complaints and demands and asks, "Why do I need to suffer?" But when a person has abundance, what questions are there to ask when he feels that he is free, that he is not enslaved by anything, or feels that what he doesn't have pains him, giving him room to ask, "Why"?

Therefore, we should understand why we ask questions specifically on Passover night, which is the festival of freedom? Also, they are called “four questions,” meaning four times “Why,” precisely when he is not lacking anything.

According to what the Ari says, Passover night is more complete than the eve of Shabbat. He says that on the eve of Shabbat there is an ascent of *Malchut* to *Mochin de Neshama*, but on Passover night, there is an ascent of *Malchut* to *Mochin de Haya*, such as on the day of Shabbat (see, *Shaar HaKavanot*). Thus, we should understand why we ask questions specifically at a time of wholeness. Certainly, there are many answers to that, and we will interpret it in the work.

It is known that the work we were given in Torah and *Mitzvot* [commandments] is so that through them we will correct ourselves and be worthy of receiving delight and pleasure, since this is the reason why man was created, as it is known that the purpose of creation is to do good to His creations. However, to avoid the shame upon reception of the pleasures, since every branch wishes to resemble its root, and since the root bestows upon the creatures, there is disparity of form between the giver and the receiver. And this causes us the shame.

Therefore, to correct it, a *Tzimtzum* [restriction] and concealment were placed on the upper Providence. Thus, through the *Tzimtzum* and concealment, a place was made in which we are so far from the Creator that it causes us to have very little understanding of His guidance over His creations. It is written about it in the “Introduction to The Study of the Ten Sefirot” (Items 42-43), where he says that if Providence were revealed, and for instance, one who ate something forbidden instantly choked, and one who performed a *Mitzva* [commandment] immediately discovered a wonderful delight in it, similar to the greatest pleasures in our corporeal world, what fool would even think of tasting something forbidden when he knew he would

immediately lose his life for it, or wait to receive a great corporeal pleasure when it came into his hand? Thus, the *Tzimtzum* and concealment that were made to correct the shame cause us all the labor and remoteness from the Creator.

It follows that the *Tzimtzum* and concealment were made to benefit the lower one. Thus, there is no point in asking about Providence, “Why is the Creator treating us as it seems to us, for we don’t see the good and we suffer in exile, poverty, and so on?” In other words, everyone complains about why the Creator He behaves with undisclosed guidance toward us, which is only for the better.

For this reason, it is forbidden to slander His guidance—the way He behaves with the creatures. Instead, we must believe with faith above reason that it should be precisely as we see it. And concerning what we feel, we should walk in the ways of Torah, as the sages have instructed us how to behave with all those feelings that we feel, and to say about them with faith above reason, “They have eyes and do not see,” as is written in the article from 1943.

It is known that there is a prohibition on slander. However, it is commonly thought that slander, which is so bad, is between people. But in truth, slander is primarily between man and the Creator, as it is written (*Shemot Rabbah*, Chapter 3, 12), “Moses caught the act of the serpent, who slandered his Creator, as it is said, ‘For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be as God, knowing good and evil.’”

With the above-said, we can see why slander is worse than other things. It is because slander is primarily from the serpent, who slandered the Creator and told him, “The Creator commanded you not to eat from the tree of knowledge, but to keep it in concealment and in hiding.” The serpent told him

about that, “You shouldn’t obey what He told you, that the tree of knowledge should remain hidden from the lower ones.” Instead, his argument was that everything should be open.

That was the serpent’s slander. It follows that he spoke about Providence, that the Creator’s conduct with the creatures of undisclosed guidance was wrong. But in truth, the concealment is only so that the creatures will be able to receive the delight and pleasure without shame. And this can only be when the creatures receive everything for the Creator, meaning that the whole reception will be only in order to bestow.

It follows that the serpent’s slander is not a part. Rather, he was speaking about the entire correction that was executed on *Malchut* so that the lower ones, who extend from her, would be able to achieve *Dvekut* [adhesion], called “equivalence of form,” by which there would be the correction that enables them to receive the delight and pleasure without any unpleasantness, called “shame.”

Because of this correction, we were given the Torah and *Mitzvot* by which to be able to come out of self-love, which is separation from the Creator, and achieve equivalence of form. It is as our sages said, “I have created the evil inclination; I have created the spice of Torah.” And according to the serpent’s slander, there will be open Providence, meaning everything will be disclosed, even though the Creator explicitly told Adam, “But of the tree of knowledge you shall not eat.” Instead, this discernment must be covered and only at the end of correction will it be possible to illuminate this discernment.

And about that, too, the serpent told him not to obey the Creator. In other words, the Creator didn’t do it in Adam’s favor, that the Creator’s guidance over the creatures—the Good who does good—will be undisclosed, but for other reasons. It turns out that the serpent’s slander was a general thing, meaning

he said that all the corrections that we should do by the power of Torah and *Mitzvot* are not for the purpose of man.

This is the reason why slander is the most severe of all prohibitions, since it encompasses the whole of the Torah. In other words, with this slander, all the corrections that were made should not be made. Thus, since it is so grave between man and the Creator, the prohibition between a person and his friend is a grave matter, too, as we said about “love thy friend as thyself,” which Rabbi Akiva said was the great rule of the Torah.

It follows that one who slanders acts the opposite of the rule, “Love thy friend as thyself.” Hence, slander between a person and his friend is also a rule. This is why it is such a grave prohibition.

With the above, we can interpret what our sages said (*Sanhedrin* 38), “Rav Yehuda said, ‘Rav said, ‘Adam HaRishon was heretical.’ And RASHI explains, “Was heretical’ means that he leaned toward idolatry.””

This is very difficult to understand. Adam HaRishon spoke to the Creator. How can one who speaks to the Creator be heretical—that his heart will lean toward idolatry? After all, *the Creator* spoke to him, so how can he be mistaken to the point that his heart leaned toward idol worship?

As we said above, the Creator told him that the tree of knowledge should be in concealment and must not be disclosed before the end of correction. When the serpent came to him and told him not to obey the Creator, that this great pleasure was found in the tree of knowledge, which the Creator hid from him, he took to heart the serpent’s slander. This is called that he “was heretical.”

RASHI interpreted that his heart leaned toward idolatry, meaning that his heart leaned toward what the serpent was telling him—that it would be better if there were open Providence in the world, as the serpent advised him. This is called a “heretic,”

one who does not like His governance. This means that he was thinking according to the serpent's advice, that if the tree of knowledge were revealed and there were open Providence, many would engage in the holy work. It would be for the above reason that everyone would keep Torah and *Mitzvot* because it would all be clothed in reason, within reason, and not that everything must be above reason.

In other words, the tree of knowledge means that everything is revealed within reason, and on that was the commandment to refrain from eating. That is, our work toward the Creator should be above reason and not within reason, although it is reasonable to think that if everything were clothed within reason, the servants of the Creator would proliferate.

This is the meaning of the serpent's slander, who spoke badly about Providence. Since the Creator made the work of the Creator above reason, it doesn't mean that the Creator could make everything within reason. Instead, we must believe, although we don't understand, that this guidance is the best.

And so did Baal HaSulam say—that the Creator chose the way of faith above reason because the Creator knows it is the most successful way for the lower ones to reach the goal called “*Dvekut* with the Creator,” which is equivalence of form, called “receiving in order to bestow.”

And although the sin of the tree of knowledge relates to high degrees—the light of the end of correction—as explained in the “Introduction to the Book, *Panim Meirov uMasbirot*,” with regards to our work—we should interpret that one who slanders Providence, saying that he doesn't want to believe that His guidance over the creatures is benevolent, and that it is so to believe above reason.

However, a person says, “If there were open Providence, if I could see with my mind that the Creator bestows benevolently

upon all creations, and if it were within reason, only in this way would I be able to keep Torah and *Mitzvot*.” This came because of the sin of the tree of knowledge—that a man wants to go specifically within reason and to not believe above reason. Hence, when he doesn’t believe that it is in benevolence, he is slandering the Creator. This is rooted in the time when the serpent slandered to Adam HaRishon against the Creator.

And a person wanting to go within reason is called “the sin of the tree of knowledge.” This sin appears in two ways, in two questions that extend from it: 1) Pharaoh’s question, who asked, “Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice?” meaning it is hard for him to believe anything that contradicts reason. And another thing extends from it, a second question, “Why should one work to benefit the Creator and not himself?” In other words, he is asking, “What will I gain by working for the Creator and not for me?”

With the above said we can understand what we see, that even after man has overcome and said that he is taking upon himself to walk on the path of truth, and begins to believe in faith in the sages, reason dictates that each day he should advance and move forward. Yet, one sees that it is actually the complete opposite—each day he is regressing. Thus, reason makes him say, “This work of going in bestowal is not for me. Rather, it is work for a chosen few.” He understands that he’d be better off escaping the campaign.

And what is he told? That he should once again go with faith above reason and disregard what reason compels him to do. And as it is written in the essay, “Faith in His Rav” (1943), one cannot see his true state. Instead, he should go above reason, and only in this way can we reach the goal and be rewarded with *Dvekut* [adhesion] with the Creator.

However, we should understand what it gives us to feel within reason that we are regressing instead of progressing. In

other words, for what purpose does one need to feel that he is in decline? What is the benefit in that? We see that in a state of ascent, when one has a desire for spirituality and regards mundane pleasures—which the whole world chases so as to obtain these pleasures—as though they were created needlessly, meaning that it would be better if the Creator created all creations enjoying spiritual things.

Thus, regarding thoughts of declines, what does one gain by the fact that after each ascent, he comes to a descent? As a result, a person always asks, “How many are the ascents and descents and why are they needed anyway? It would be better if I could stay in the state of ascent.”

But the answer is that it is impossible to appreciate anything without knowing its importance. In other words, there is a rule that the joy that a person takes in something depends on the importance of the matter. Sometimes a person is given something important, and if he could appreciate it, he could receive great pleasure from it. But since he doesn’t know the value of the thing, that person cannot enjoy it, except to the extent that he understands its importance.

For example, a person buys an object, a book, which is not so beautiful on the outside, and later that book is reprinted and costs more, but since he didn’t have much money, he bought this book. And the seller, too, was not aware of the importance of the book and sold it to him for a low price. But sometime later, a man comes to his house, sees the book, and says, “Since this book was printed 300 years ago, this book is worth a fortune, as there are only three such books in the world.” Now that he hears about the great value of the book, he begins to enjoy the book.

The lesson is that we don’t have the knowledge to appreciate the ascent. That is, we don’t have the knowledge to understand the value of a single minute of having the power

to believe in the Creator, and to have some sensation of the greatness of the Creator, that in a state of ascent we have the desire to annul before Him without any rhyme and reason, like a candle before a torch. Naturally, we cannot enjoy the fact that the Creator has brought us closer and has given us some nearness, from which we should derive the joy and elation that it should bring us. However, since we haven't the importance to regard it, we can only enjoy according to the importance, as explained in the allegory.

This is why we were given descents, to be able to learn the importance of the ascents, as it is written, "As the advantage of the light from the darkness." Specifically through descents, one can come to know and to appreciate ascents, and then he can enjoy the ascents and come to feel that "They are our lives and the length of our days." But when one doesn't know the need for faith because he thinks that engaging in Torah and keeping *Mitzvot* is enough for him to be among the servants of the Creator, he is not given descents from above so as to appreciate the ascents.

Their work is on the outside. They have no intention of entering the inside. In other words, their aim is not to be completely annulled before the *Kedusha* [holiness]—where holy means "retired and separated from himself," as it is written, "You will be holy for I am holy,"—at which time there will be only the authority of the Creator because the lower one wishes to annul before the root, and all he sees is that it is worthwhile to live only to benefit the Creator.

For a person to be in a state where he wants to live only in order to give contentment to the Creator, he must provide himself with great faith in the greatness of the Creator, to make it worthwhile to annul himself for the benefit of the Creator. And the faith that he has acquired during the upbringing is not enough for him. For the faith that he has acquired during the

upbringing, he can already work and keep the Torah and *Mitzvot* in all its details and precisions. This is because he doesn't have to annul himself before the Creator. Instead, he asks of the Creator that since he is keeping the Torah and *Mitzvot* that the Creator commanded us through Moses, for this the Creator will grant all his wishes.

He believes in reward and punishment, and certainly, as our sages said (*Avot*, Chapter 2, 21), "If you studied much Torah, trust your landlord to pay you the reward for your work." Hence, since the basis that compels him to keep Torah and *Mitzvot* depends on the reward, not on the giver of the reward, he doesn't have to engage in the greatness of the faith of the Creator, but only in the greatness or smallness of the reward. Then, there is no question of ascents and descents, believing in the greatness and importance of the Creator. Rather, the only thing that is pertinent is that he engages in Torah and *Mitzvot* or that he grows weaker in observance because he doesn't always believe in the reward.

This causes those who engage in Torah and *Mitzvot* in order to receive reward—that sometimes they are among people who do not believe in reward and punishment—to be able to influence a person with their thoughts, which causes him to even stray completely from Judaism. Hence, they must not come in contact with people who are free in their views, since they bring them alien thoughts about faith in reward and punishment. But on the whole, those who engage in *Lo Lishma* do not experience ups and downs, meaning there is no need for the presence of descents.

But those who wish to work because of the importance of the Creator, who always need to increase the faith in the importance and the greatness of the Creator, that only the importance and the greatness of the Creator obligates them to keep Torah and *Mitzvot* in order to achieve *Dvekut* with the Creator, those people

must always assume and value the greatness of the Creator. They must always assess that if they have some grip on spirituality, it is because the Creator is bringing them closer, while they themselves are completely powerless unless they see that they will derive from it some benefit for themselves. It follows that the main work is to annul himself. Yet, this is against nature; only by His salvation can they reach it.

Thus, during the ascent, a person thinks that it is a natural thing already, and that he doesn't need the Creator's help at all. Hence, a correction was made, called "descents," that one is always shown the measure of his strength—what he can do by himself and how he sees it. But when he is tossed off from his state, where he thought he was already a human and not like the beasts that work for themselves, suddenly he cannot even feel that they wish to throw him down into this baseness, in which he discovers himself afterwards.

And yet, during the decline, he doesn't see that he is beginning to decline. Rather, when he descends, he remains unconscious. And after being down for some time, he also gets help from above and he is told, "You should know that now you're in decline." And before he is told that he is unconscious, he doesn't know a thing. However, one should believe that this, too, is so, since knowing doesn't come by itself. Instead, one should know that these descents were given to him to learn how it is possible to appreciate the state of ascent. But during the decline, one cannot learn anything from it.

However, during the ascent he can make a true judgment and say, "Now I am in a state of faith, and this came to me from the Creator. Otherwise, I would immediately fall into a state of self-love." If he does not make this calculation and thank the Creator for bringing him closer, he is immediately thrown. It turns out that it is impossible to obtain real pleasure from

nearing the Creator unless he can appreciate it, as said above, “As the advantage of the light from the darkness.”

It follows that for the creatures to receive the delight and pleasure and feel it, those descents were all necessary. They are called “exile,” and this is called “Divinity in the exile” or “Divinity in the dust.” And only by that will one have the *Kelim* [vessels] to feel the delight and pleasure.

With the above-said, we can understand why specifically at the time of freedom, which is Passover night, the complete wholeness, as the Ari says, that *Malchut* has the same *Gadlut*, since *Malchut* has *Mochin de Haya*, and so it is on Passover night.

The answer is that precisely during an ascent, when one thinks of descents they have the power to bring out the importance of the ascents. Otherwise, it is akin to one who is given something that is worth a fortune and he uses and enjoys it as if its worth was a few pennies.

Thus, specifically at the time of freedom, it is possible to ask the questions. That is, it is not about the question, but we need the questions in order to understand the answers, as Baal HaSulam said about what is written, “Speak now in the ears of the people, and let them ask every man of his neighbor.” RASHI interprets that he warned them that that righteous will say, “And they shall serve them, and they shall afflict them,” and it will come true in them, and “Afterwards they will come out with great possessions” will not come true in them. And there is a question, “If the Creator wished to give great possessions to the people of Israel, couldn’t the Creator give them? Did he have to tell the people of Israel to be fraudulent and take vessels of silver and vessels of gold from the Egyptians?”

The answer is that when the Creator told Abraham, “To give this land unto you to inherit it,” Abraham asked, “By what will I know that I shall inherit it?” “And he said unto Abram,

‘Know for certain that your seed will be a stranger in a land that is not theirs ... and afterwards they will come out with great possessions.’” And he asked, “What do we see in the Creator’s reply to Abram’s question, ‘By what will I know...,’ that by being in a land that is not theirs, meaning in exile, Abram could be certain that they would inherit the land?”

He said that since there is no light without a *Kli* [vessel], meaning no filling without a lack, and Abram said to the Creator that he didn’t see that they would need such great lights, called “the land of Israel.” For this reason, the Creator told him that by being in exile and by asking the Creator to deliver them from exile, how will He deliver them? Only with great lights, since “The light in it reforms him.” Thus, then they will have the need for the great lights.

And he explained about it that this is why the Creator said that they will borrow *Kelim* [vessels] from the Egyptians—meaning take the hardness of the Egyptians, though as a loan—to receive the lights, and then return the *Kelim* to them. In other words, they took the hardness in order to understand the answers. It is as was said above that it is impossible to understand the light if not from within the darkness. This is why all the questions come specifically at the time of freedom.

WHAT PLACING THE HANUKAH CANDLE ON THE LEFT MEANS IN THE WORK

Article No. 11, 1989/90

Our sages said (*Shabbat* p 22), “The Hanukah candle is on the left, so that the Hanukah candle will be on the left and the *Mezuzah* [a piece of parchment (contained in a case) inscribed with specified verses from the Torah] on the right.” RASHI interprets, “*Mezuzah* is on the right, as it is written, “*Beitecha* [your house]—*Derech Bi’atcha* [the way by which you came], when a person begins to walk, he begins to walk with the right leg.”

In the book, *Shaar Hakavanot* (p 326), he says, “But the matter of Hanukah and Purim is different, since both are in *Hod*, even though in regards to the morning prayer, we explained that Jacob is in *Netzah* and *Malchut* is in *Hod*. Accordingly, a regular day is holier than Hanukah and Purim, both of which are in *Hod*.

But the issue is that at that time, she receives her illuminations by herself, not through her husband, since on a regular day Jacob suckles his illumination and her part of illumination from the *Netzah* and from *Hod*. Afterwards, he gives her illumination to her and it extends from *Hod* through him. But now, on Hanukah and Purim, she suckles the share of her illuminations from the *Hod* by herself and not through her husband.

We should understand what it means in the work that the *Mezuzah* is on the right and the Hanukah candle is on the left. What does it come to teach us? Also, we should understand according to what is written in *Shaar HaKavanot*, that Hanukah and Purim are both one discernment, as it is written, that both Hanukah and Purim are a single discernment that extends from *Hod*.

Why do both suckle from the same root if on Purim there is joy, a feast, and one must eat the Purim meal, while on Hanukah,

our sages said, “These candles are holy, we have no permission to use them”? In the work, we learn that *one person contains the whole world*. This means that *Israel and the seventy nations are in one person*.

In other words, a person consists of all the bad qualities that exist in the seventy nations. It is known that the seventy nations extend from the opposite of the seven qualities of *Kedusha* [holiness], as in “God has made them one opposite the other,” and each quality consists of ten.

This is the meaning of the seventy nations, meaning when the seventy nations govern the Israel in a person, it is considered that the people of Israel is in exile under the governance of the nations. This means that the desires and cravings control the Israel in him, and the part of Israel cannot work for the sake of the Creator, but only for its own sake.

It is completely impossible to understand with reason how it will ever be possible to break free from the dominion of the nations of the world within him. This is because as much as one has toiled to come out of their governance, it was futile. On the contrary, each time he could see more that it is impossible to come out of their exile. This is why we must always remember the exodus from Egypt, as it is written, “that you may remember the day when you came out of the land of Egypt,” meaning believe what is written, “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt ... to be a God unto you.”

This means that just as the Creator brought the people of Israel out of Egypt and they were rewarded with, “To be a God unto you,” He can deliver us, too, from the dominion of the seventy nations, to be rewarded with “To be a God unto you.”

One must not say that he is worse than the people who were in Egypt, or that the Creator had the power to deliver only them out of their rule. But when a person sees his own

lowness, he despairs and says that he must be worse than those who were in Egypt.

Here we must believe the words of the Ari who says that the people of Israel prior to the exodus from Egypt were already in forty-nine gates of impurity, until the Creator appeared to them and redeemed them. It follows that even when one sees that he is in utter lowness, he shouldn't escape the campaign and believe that the Creator will deliver him from exile, from being among the nations of the world.

Thus, we can see that the whole basis is founded entirely on faith, that only by faith is it possible to come out of exile. We shouldn't mind our reason, although a person is judged according to it. But when a person has intellect to see his true state, it enables him to go above reason. In other words, one cannot go above reason without the help of the Creator. But if he sees that he cannot move forward with his reason then he needs His help.

And the main thing that is required of a person is to achieve his own completeness, meaning to be rewarded with *NRNHY de* [of] *Neshama*. And this comes specifically by needing the Creator. Our sages said about it, "One who comes to purify is aided." And *The Zohar* says, "How is he aided? With a holy soul. When one is born, he is given a soul from the side of a pure beast. If he is rewarded more, he is given *Ruach*," etc.

This is why it is a great thing when a person needs the Creator to help him, since one's salvation is in being given greater powers from above. And by receiving new powers each time, meaning a new soul, in the end he will receive the whole of the *NRNHY* that belong to the root of his soul. It follows that "a miracle" implies something that a person cannot obtain. That is, it is impossible for one to obtain it unless through a miracle from above. Only in this way is it called "a miracle."

For this reason, when a person comes to a state where he already has recognition of evil, that it is impossible for him to come out of the domination of the nations of the world in him, that Israel in him is in exile under them, and he sees no way that he can come out of their power, when the Creator helps them and brings them out from the nations of the world and turns it around so that the people of Israel governs them, this is called “a miracle.”

This is regarded as being as it was in the land of Egypt, that the Creator delivered them from the land of Egypt, meaning that the Creator brought them out from under the afflictions of Egypt. One should believe that as this miracle happened at the exodus from Egypt, every single one who is walking in the work of the Creator must believe that the Creator will deliver him, for it is truly a miracle that one exits the governance of self-love and cares only about that which belongs to the benefit of the Creator.

And *when a person comes to that, it is considered that this person has achieved Lishma* [for Her name]. This means that he has already been rewarded with faith in the Creator and he has the power to work in favor of the Creator, and this is called *Lishma*. It is also called “right,” when one engages on the path of bestowing upon the Creator, meaning that everything he does is to benefit the Creator. That is, he wants to do *Hesed* [grace/mercy] to the Creator, meaning give contentment to the Creator.

However, we should know that a person wanting to do everything for the Creator is only the correction of creation. It is not the purpose of creation. The purpose of creation is for man to receive delight and pleasure in the vessels of reception. However, there must be a correction on the vessels of reception, which is called “in order to bestow.”

The abundance of the purpose of creation is called *Hochma* [wisdom], which is the light of life, as in, “Wisdom will give

life to one who has it.” Also, light of *Hochma* is called “left,” since anything that requires correction is called “left,” as in “the weak hand, whose strength has weakened like a female’s.” This is called “left.”

And what is the correction that should be placed on the light of *Hochma*? It is the right, which is called *Hassadim*. In other words, once he has already been rewarded with the purpose of creation, which is the delight and pleasure called *Hochma*, the light of *Hassadim* must be drawn once more—the abundance that comes into the vessels of bestowal—since we said that we were given the work in Torah and *Mitzvot* in the form of “We shall do and we shall hear.” This means that by doing and keeping Torah and *Mitzvot* in action, we will be rewarded with the state of hearing, too.

In other words, one must keep Torah and *Mitzvot* even by coercion. There is no need to wait for a time when he has a desire to keep Torah and *Mitzvot*, and then to keep it. Rather, one must overcome and keep it only in action, but the doing will later bring him hearing, meaning that afterwards he will hear about the importance of Torah and *Mitzvot*. In other words, he will be rewarded with the delight and pleasure that is found in Torah and *Mitzvot*. This is the meaning of Israel’s saying, “We shall do and we shall hear.” Thus, in the right, which is called that he engages in *Hesed*, in vessels of bestowal, it is a keeping so that one can do everything for the benefit of the Creator and not for his own benefit.

It follows that according to the rule, “We shall do and we shall hear,” the act affects the aim. This necessarily means that when one receives *Hochma* from above, the act must be done, so that the aim will be like the act. It follows that the act of reception affects the intention, making it in order to receive, as well. Therefore, even during the act, when he draws the light of *Hochma* with the aim to bestow, because of the rule, “We

shall do and we shall hear,” he must still receive abundance from the act.

This is why care is needed, to extend clothing, meaning to clothe the light of *Hochma*, where there is “We shall do.” “We shall do” is the act of bestowal, and we will be rewarded with the intention being in order to bestow, as well. And also, “We shall hear,” that the aim will be to bestow, as well, like the act. This will keep the vessel of reception, which receives the light of *Hochma*, so it may keep the intention to bestow upon reception of the delight and pleasure, and for it to be in the form of receiving in order to bestow.

With the above said, we should interpret the meaning of the *Mezuzah*, which must be on the right. Since the *Mezuzah* is keeping and guarding a person, there is a hint that the *Mezuzah* is on the right. In other words, keeping belongs to the right, which is considered *Hesed*, and *Kelim de Hesed* are considered right, meaning that they do not require correction. But *Hochma* is considered left because *Hochma* comes in vessels of reception, and vessels of reception require keeping.

This is why RASHI interprets, “*Beitecha* [your house]—*Derech Bi’atcha* [the way by which you came],” meaning that a person begins to walk on the right. It should be interpreted that the beginning of a person’s arrival at the holy work is with the right, that is, that the vessels of bestowal will be in order to bestow. Afterwards, one begins to walk in the left, meaning correct the vessels of reception to be in order to bestow.

This is why it is written that as one begins to walk in corporeality, he begins with the right leg. And this points to spirituality, meaning that in the beginning of one’s arrival at the work of the Creator, he should begin with the right, meaning in wholeness. In other words, for everything he does in the work, he should give thanks to the Creator for having given him some

thought and desire to work in the holy work, that still, he has some grip in Torah and *Mitzvot*, in the practical part.

At that time, he still doesn't think about the aim, for there are two issues to be discerned in the intention, too.

1. The intention, meaning who it is who obligates the engagement in Torah and *Mitzvot*. Is it the environment he is in, since all the friends engage in Torah and *Mitzvot*, and everyone prays and keeps the Torah lessons at the seminary, etc., or is he keeping Torah and *Mitzvot* only because the Creator commanded us to keep the Torah and *Mitzvot*, and he believes in everything that the sages said, and based on that he keeps Torah and *Mitzvot*?
2. The intention for the reward, what to receive for keeping Torah and *Mitzvot*. Some expect to be rewarded for their work, as it is written in *The Zohar* that there are three reasons for engaging in Torah and *Mitzvot*: a) to be rewarded in this world; b) to be rewarded in the next world; c) to not be rewarded, but only because of the greatness of the Creator, because He is great and ruling.

Hence, the beginning of one's work in Torah and *Mitzvot* is in order to be rewarded. And in that, too, we said that there are two discernments to make:

1) Sometimes a person is not yet strong in faith or able to work for the Creator, so He will reward him, since subconsciously he lacks the faith to make him able to do good deeds. However, he works because of the friends, since he doesn't want to be despised by them. It is not the Creator who commits him to doing good deeds, but the shame from the friends that does it.

One must think that this is utter lowness that the friends commit him to work and not the Creator. However, this should not be slighted, either. For such deeds, too, a person should be

thankful to the Creator—that the Creator gave the friends the power to commit him to act as they wish. It is considered that the Creator is watching over him in concealment. In other words, the Creator is hiding Himself in the clothing of the friends who compel him to do good deeds.

Here we should interpret what our sages said, (*Avot*, Chapter 3, 20), “And they collect from a person knowingly and unknowingly.” “Knowingly” means that a person knowingly wishes to keep Torah and *Mitzvot*. In other words, he says that he is doing good deeds is because it is according to the view of the Creator. In other words, the Creator is the one who commits him. “And they collect from him unknowingly” means that a person does good deeds without knowing that he is keeping the Torah and *Mitzvot* of the Creator, since he is thinking that he is keeping the Torah and *Mitzvot* of the friends, meaning that the friends commit him.

This is considered that without one’s knowledge, he is keeping the Creator’s will, although he thinks that he is keeping the friends’ will. And if he believed it—that unknowingly he is doing the Creator’s will—meaning if he knew that he wouldn’t keep it because he thinks he is keeping only the will of the friends, this is called “concealment of the face.” In other words, the Creator hides Himself in the clothing of the friends, and in this way he does the Creator’s will.

2) If he gives thanks to the Creator for helping him through the concealment—meaning that now he has the choice to say that he is working because of the friends and he has no contact with the Creator, or that he believes that the Creator hid Himself in the clothing of the friends, and by that he engages in Torah and *Mitzvot*, and if he chooses and says that only the Creator helped him to be able to do good deeds by Him clothing in a clothing of friends, and he thanks the Creator for it—this brings upon him a great ascent: *to be rewarded with the revelation*

of the face of the Creator. In other words, the Creator gives him a thought and desire to do the Creator's will, since now he has some illumination from above by sentencing above reason. This is why the Creator helped him, so that through the *Achoraim* [posterior], he will later be rewarded with the *Panim* [anterior/face] of the Creator. This means that he has been rewarded with being collected unknowingly.

It therefore follows that the *Mezuzah* is keeping, which is right, called *Hassadim* [mercy], at the time when one is in a state of bestowing in order to bestow. This is considered the "correction of creation." But Hanukah and Purim, says the Ari, are both considered *Hod*, which is left. This implies to the purpose of creation, which requires correction to be able to receive the delight and pleasure in a corrected manner, implied in the abundance called *Hochma*. This is why Hanukah is on the left, to indicate to the light of *Hochma*.

However, on Hanukah there was the state of *Hanu Koh* [parked thus far], which means, as Baal HaSulam explained, that it was only a pause there and not the end of the war. In other words, the light of the sun, called "left," was shining but lacked the clothing, the keeping over the *Hochma* that comes in vessels of reception, since there is a grip to the *Sitra Achra* in the vessels of reception and there was light of *Hassadim* there, called "right."

This is why the miracle was only about spirituality. It means that the light of the purpose of creation was shining, but they couldn't use it for lack of the clothing of *Hassadim*, since it is forbidden to use it. This discernment is called "spirituality," when it has not yet materialized so it can be used. This is why it is written that it is forbidden to use the Hanukah candles but only to see them, for lack of clothing.

But on Purim, they did have the clothing, called *Hassadim*, as it is written (*Talmud Eser Sefirot*, end of Part 15), "Hence, since

the matter has already been materialized, meaning they could use the light of *Hochma* in order to bestow, on Purim there is a feast and joy.”

WHAT THE TORAH BEING CALLED “THE MIDDLE LINE” MEANS IN THE WORK

Article No. 19, 1989/90

It is written in *The Zohar* (Yitro, 76 and Item 293 in the *Sulam* Commentary), “The Tanna Rabbi Yehuda says, ‘The Torah was given on the side of *Gevura*.’ Rabbi Yosi says, ‘Thus, the Torah is on the left.’ He told him, ‘She returned to the right, as it is written, ‘On his right hand, a fiery law unto them.’ And it is written, ‘Your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power.’” Thus, we find that left is included in the right, as it is written, ‘On his right hand,’ and the right in the left, as it is written, ‘Your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power.’ Thus, *Gevura*, which is left, is included in the right.”

The Torah is the middle line, meaning it included both lines—right and left.

It is also written (p 62, and Item 235 in the *Sulam* Commentary), “On the third month, on this month, Uriel governs, since Nissan, Iyar, Sivan correspond to HGT—Michael governs *Hesed*, Gabriel on *Gevura*, and Uriel on *Tifferet*. And this is the meaning of “A whole man,” who is called Jacob, who is *Tifferet*. Also, “Whole” is from the word “wholeness.”

And it is written (Item 242), “And was given on the third month, to the third people, who were included in three degrees, meaning three patriarchs, the triple Torah, which is Torah [Pentateuch], Prophets, and Hagiographa, and it is all one.” Thus, the Torah is considered the middle line.

It is also written (p 76, and Item 296 in the *Sulam Commentary*), “‘And the whole people saw the voices.’ It asks, the writing says, ‘Saw,’ but it should have said, ‘Heard.’ He replies, ‘So we learned. These voices were engraved in darkness, cloud, and mist, and they appear in them as a body appears.’”

We should understand what it means to us in the work that the Torah consists of right and left. Also, what does it mean that the Torah was given on the third, who is Jacob, a whole man, who is called “Wholeness.” And what does it mean that they were engraved in darkness, cloud, and mist, which is the body, where the voices are engraved.

It is known that in the order of the work, first one must take upon himself the burden of the kingdom of heaven, and then he should study Torah. This is so because if he doesn’t have the kingdom of heaven, we should ask, “Whose Torah is he studying?” because first, *one must believe in the giver of the Torah, and then he can keep the Torah*. Thus, the kingdom of heaven is called *Assiya* [action], which he takes upon himself to go above reason.

In other words, although one’s reason may come to him with many questions, he answers them, “You are asking me questions from reason, and I’m going above reason, from a place where reason cannot reach, attain, or understand, which is called ‘faith.’ Thus, there is no place to all the questions you are asking me.”

This is called “right,” that he believes that the Creator watches over the world benevolently. And although, when he looks at the world, he has many questions, he goes above reason and says, “They have eyes and do not see.”

Instead, he thanks and praises the King for giving everyone only good. This is called “right,” *Hesed*, meaning that the guidance of the world is in *Hesed* [grace/mercy]. That is, the Creator leads

the world only with *Hassadim*. And he says about that, “I will bless You every day.”

However, if there is evil *Yetzer* [inclination] in a person, Baal HaSulam interpreted it as being from the word *Tziur* [drawing]. In other words, it shows a person bad images of the guidance of the Creator, of how the Creator is behaving with the world. It also gives an image of the inferiority of the work in general, which is called “Divinity in the dust.” Thus, how can one overcome and walk on the right, called “wholeness,” and be able to say, “Only goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life”?

Our sages said about that, “The Creator said, ‘I have created the evil inclination; I have created the spice of Torah.’” It follows that the Torah that he is now engaged in is so it will be a spice, meaning that *through the Torah, he will be able to overcome the evil and walk on the path of Hesed, called “right.”* In that regard, it can be said that the Torah was given on the right, named after the action. In other words, it qualifies a person to walk on the right path. This is called, “the first discernment in the Torah,” where right is called “wholeness,” when he feels no lack at all.

The “second discernment” in the Torah is the left, called *Hochma* [wisdom]. This is considered the wisdom of the Torah. In other words, once he already has the right, which is *Hesed*, meaning faith above reason, and he believes in the Creator—that the Creator leads the world benevolently—he is rewarded with *the giver of the Torah*, called “the wisdom of the Torah,” as it is written, “The Torah comes out of wisdom.”

In other words, once he believes that there is the giver of the Torah, this is the time to be rewarded with the Torah. It is known that the Torah comes out of *Hochma*, and this discernment can be called “left,” meaning it comes after a person has been rewarded with the right, which is faith above reason, called “covered *Hassadim*.”

However, when speaking of a time when there is already disclosed *Hochma*, called “left,” there is another issue, called “middle line,” which means that the *Hochma* must be clothed in *Hassadim*. Prior to that, there is a big distance between *Hassadim*, which are called “right,” and *Hochma*, regarded as “left.”

It is as our sages said, “One who studies Torah *Lishma* [for Her name]” means that he is studying Torah with the aim to be rewarded with *Lishma* through the Torah, that his intention in the Torah that he is studying is to achieve the degree of *Hesed*, meaning to have the power to do everything in order to bestow, which is called *Hesed*. It is as our sages said, “Who is a Hassid [pious/follower]? He who says, ‘What’s mine is yours and what’s yours is yours,’ who wants nothing for himself.” Afterwards, when he is rewarded with *Hesed* through the Torah, “He is shown the secrets of the Torah” (*Avot*, Chapter 6, 1).

This is already called “left.” At that time, this left must be incorporated into the right. This means that the light of *Hochma*, which is left, is clothed in *Hassadim*, which is right, and this is called Torah, the middle line, between the right and the left. This is why it is considered that the Torah consists of *Hesed* and *Gevura*.

It follows that the first state is when he wants to reach the degree of *Lishma*, meaning in order to bestow. This is considered that a person is in exile, governed by the evil inclination. At that time he needs the Torah. This is called “studying Torah in order to achieve *Lishma*,” meaning that he believes in what our sages said, “I have created the evil inclination; I have created the spice of Torah.” It is called, “Torah in the form of right,” meaning *Hesed*, in order to bestow.

And when he has already attained the degree of *Lishma*, a second state arises and he is rewarded with revelation of the secrets of the Torah. Thus, after he has been rewarded with the

giver, meaning that there is a giver in the world, there comes a state where the giver gives the person the Torah.

But there is more. He needs a third state, called “*Hochma* having to be included in the right,” which is called *Hassadim*. This is so because the Torah comes out of *Hochma*, which means that the Torah comes out of *Hochma* and must be clothed in light of *Hassadim*. Also, *Hassadim* are called “action,” and Torah is called “*Hochma*.” One’s Torah must not be more than one’s actions. Our sages said about it (*Avot*, Chapter 3, 12), “Anyone whose *Hochma* [wisdom/knowledge] is greater than his actions, his *Hochma* does not persist.” It also follows that the Torah, which is called *Hochma*, shines in the middle line. This is considered that the Torah consists of *Hesed* and *Gevura*, that she contains both.

There are two discernments to make in regard to one who is studying Torah *Lishma*:

1) He sees that he has no connection with doing things for the sake of the Creator. Instead, he sees that he is under the governance of the evil inclination, which claims, “She is all mine.” It doesn’t let him do anything in order to bestow. Rather, where he sees that there will be self-gratification, he can work. But if he doesn’t see any benefit for his will to receive, he has no energy to work. Put differently, his measure depends on what his will to receive will gain.

And when a person tries to come out of its dominion, as it is written in the essay, “What Does It Mean that the Speaking of Shabbat Will Not Be as the Speaking of a Regular Day, in the Work?” (*Beshalach*, Article No. 18, 1989/90), “To the extent that one tries to come out of enslavement and exile, he sees that he is placed in darkness, cloud, and mist.”

In that state, he sees the opposite of what our sages said, “I have created the evil inclination; I have created the spice of Torah.” In other words, the evil in him has grown too strong,

meaning he never dreamed that if he began to work, to toil, and to do good deeds with the aim to achieve *Lishma*, that now he sees the opposite—that he never thought he could fall into such baseness.

Indeed, this came to him from the discernment, “For I have hardened his heart.” And although the reason he is now in lowness comes from above, in the sensation of the lower one, who feels in the dark—that nothing shines for him—he is tasting the taste of exile, even though it is coming from above.

With the above said, we can interpret what we asked, “What does it mean that *The Zohar* says, “These voices were engraved in darkness, cloud, and mist, and they appear in them.” We should interpret that “These voices” are the voice of the Torah, which comes to give strength so one can act in order to bestow. This is called “the second discernment of *Lishma*,” meaning darkness, cloud, and mist,” which is the need and the *Kli* [vessel] to obtain the voice of Torah.

Two discernments come from above, which is called *Lishma*: 1) The *Kli* [vessel], meaning the darkness. This is the need—when he can no longer tolerate the darkness. 2) The light, meaning the power. This is the voice, the voice of Torah, which gives him the strength to aim in order to bestow, the light that reforms him. This is, “I have created the evil inclination; I have created the spice of Torah.” In other words, the voice of Torah “spices” the evil inclination with the ability to intend *Lishma*.

This is why it is written, “These voices were engraved in darkness, cloud, and mist, and they appear in them as it appears in a body.” This means that if they previously had *Kelim*, which are called “darkness” and “a place of lack,” then the voice of Torah could enter the darkness and illuminate.

But when there is no dark place, meaning when he still doesn’t feel the deficiency of not being able to do anything

in order to bestow, it cannot be said that the light comes and illuminates, since the light has nowhere to enter. This belongs to the discernment of right, meaning *Hesed*. That is, he has already obtained the vessels of bestowal, and *Hesed* is called “bestowal,” when he acts mercifully with others. In that respect, he has already completed the *Kelim*.

Afterwards begins the third discernment, when he is rewarded with the secrets of the Torah, called “left.” Since this light comes in vessels of reception, it must certainly be in order to bestow. Yet, even though he has already been rewarded with being a receiver in order to bestow, it is still considered left, since the correction of clothing the *Hochma* in *Hassadim* is missing here. Otherwise, it will be, “His *Hochma* is greater than his actions.”

Here begins the matter of the middle line, where *Hochma* is clothed in *Hassadim*. That is, the left, called “vessels of reception that receive *Hochma*,” will be clothed in *Hassadim*. This is the meaning of what is written, “The Torah comes from the right, which is *Hesed*, and comes to the left, which is *Gevura*. This is called ‘disclosure of *Hochma*.’”

However, the right must be mingled with the left, and the left with the right. This is considered that the Torah is called “middle,” meaning comprising *Hochma* and deeds, as we said that his *Hochma* must not be more than his deeds.

Baal HaSulam explained the verse, “And the whole people saw the voices.” It is known that “voice” means *Hesed*, which comes from “hearing,” which is called *Bina*. “Seeing” is called *Hochma*, as it is written, “The eyes of the congregation are the sages of the congregation.” Also, *Hochma* that shines in vessels of reception requires keeping, so as not to receive them in order to receive. Hence, clothing of *Hassadim* must be extended to it, called “voice” and “hearing.”

Therefore, the words, “And the whole people saw the voices” mean that they saw that they received the light of *Hochma* when it is clothed in a voice, in *Hesed*. This is why it is written that they saw the *Hochma* when it was clothed in voices, meaning in *Hassadim*. This is called “middle line,” comprising *Hochma* and *Hassadim*.

With the above said, we will understand what we asked, “What does it mean that he says that the Torah was given on the third, which is *Tifferet*, which is the meaning of “A whole man,” Jacob, who is *Tifferet*, and whole means wholeness. We asked, “What is wholeness, that Jacob is called ‘A whole man?’”

The answer is that the Torah is the middle line and Jacob is the middle line, comprising right and left, hence there is wholeness. In other words, there is a mingling of *Hochma* and *Hassadim*. In the work, it means that a person should consist of both actions—called *Hassadim*—and of *Hochma*, since it is forbidden for his *Hochma* to be greater than his deeds.

However, one should believe that “there is none else besides Him,” that the Creator does everything. In other words, as Baal HaSulam said, before each act one should say that man was given only choice, since “If I am not for me, who is for me?” Thus, everything depends on one’s choice. However, after the fact, one should say that everything is private Providence, and that one does nothing on his own.

We should interpret this as the Ari writes (*Talmud Eser Sefirot*, Part 13, p 1367, Item 152), “There is the matter of *Se’arot* [hairs], which cover the light, so they will not enjoy the light as long as they are unworthy, since they might blemish.” The thing is that we must believe that the Creator gave us a desire and craving to do good deeds. And as long as one is unworthy, he must not feel that the Creator compels him to do good deeds. This is the reason why the Creator hides Himself in dresses, and this

dressing is called *Lo Lishma* [not for Her name]. In other words, sometimes the Creator hides Himself in a clothing of friends.

For example, there is a situation where a person doesn't want to get up and study before dawn. So the Creator hides Himself in a dressing of friends and he gets out of bed, even though he's tired, since a thought came to his mind that it is not nice to the friends that they all come to study, and he isn't, since then everyone will look at his lowness. Hence, he gets up and goes to the seminary and studies. It follows that he doesn't have the energy to get out of bed because of the commandment of the Creator, so the Creator doesn't force him to go to the seminary, since if this were the reason, he'd be lying in bed. But the friends do obligate him.

And similar to this example are all other things when a person acts in *Lo Lishma*, although there are many degrees in *Lo Lishma*, but we will speak of this example. Here we should look at the person who is going to study and to keep *Mitzvot* [commandments] not because the Creator commits him. In other words, if it were because of the commandment of the Creator, he wouldn't have the strength to overcome the body and to compel it to do good deeds. However, because of other people, he does have the strength to do good deeds. Thus we see what importance there can be to the *Lo Lishma*.

And yet, one must believe what was said above, that "there is none else besides Him," meaning that it is the Creator who compels him to do the good deeds, but since he is still unworthy of knowing that it is the Creator who commits him, the Creator dresses Himself in flesh and blood clothes. Through them, the Creator performs these actions. Thus, the Creator acts in the form of *Achoraim* [posterior].

In other words, the person sees people's faces but he should believe that behind the faces stands the Creator, who performs

these actions. That is, behind the man stands the Creator, who compels him to do the deeds that the Creator wants. It follows that the Creator does everything, but the person regards what he sees and not what he should believe. For this reason, a person says that he is doing the deeds in *Lo Lishma*, as with the example of the friends who commit him.

Also, it doesn't have to be friends. Rather, everyone has his own external appearance, which suits him. Hence, when, for instance, one comes to the seminary because the friends committed him to come, he says, "The Creator was the reason that he went to study, but the Creator only dressed in a clothing of friends." Thus, now he thanks the Creator for being the reason.

It follows that when a person did the deed in *Lo Lishma*, when the Creator was not the reason that compelled him to perform the *Mitzva* [commandment], but he acted because, for instance, the friends ordered him and he had to obey, one must believe that he did this because the Creator commanded him to keep the *Mitzva*, and he had to obey what the Creator commanded him to do. However, the Creator hid Himself in a clothing of *Lo Lishma*, such as the friends, so that through this clothing he would think that he must obey the voice of *Lo Lishma*.

But in truth, one must believe that it was all the Creator's doing. Thus, after he performs the *Mitzva*, he should say that it was the Creator who acted behind the clothing of *Lo Lishma*. It follows that then one should thank the Creator for giving him the desire to keep His commandments through this clothing.

With the above said we can understand the great importance of *Lo Lishma*. That is, it is not as one thinks—that he does everything for the *Lo Lishma*. Rather, *he is doing everything because the Creator commanded him, except he was not rewarded yet with feeling that the Creator is actually the commander*. For this reason, a person

thinks that the *Lo Lishma* is the commander, and hence the act is not so important in his eyes.

However, if he believes that “there is none else besides Him,” as was written in previous articles in this portion, then in truth, he is keeping the commandments of the Creator, and he should appreciate his actions in *Lo Lishma*. And one’s imagination that he is only keeping an act in *Lo Lishma* is only because he was not rewarded yet with feeling that he is keeping the King’s commandment and that he is serving the King.

Hence, if he believes that the *Lo Lishma* is truly the Creator committing him to engage in Torah and *Mitzvot*, then he can give much thanks to the Creator for dressing in a clothing of *Lo Lishma*. And from that, one can come to appreciate the importance of Torah and *Mitzvot* even in *Lo Lishma*. Our sages said about it, “And they collect from a person knowingly,” meaning *Lishma*, and “Unknowingly,” meaning *Lo Lishma*.

This is the meaning of what is written, that the *Se’arot* [hairs], meaning the *Lo Lishma*, cover the light, so they will not be fed by the light as long as they are unfit for it. In other words, the *Se’arot* are a clothing, and under that clothing, the light stands and shines. But in the meantime, the light is covered.

WHAT “THERE IS NO BLESSING IN THAT WHICH IS COUNTED” MEANS IN THE WORK

Article No. 31, 1989/90

It is written in *The Zohar* (*Bamidbar* p 4, and Item 13 in the *Sulam* Commentary), “Come and see, they said that there is no blessing of above on something that is counted. But should you say, ‘How were Israel counted? How was ransom taken from them?’ First, they would bless Israel, then count the ransom, and then bless Israel again. Thus, Israel were blessed in the beginning and in the end, and there was no death among them. He asks, ‘Why is there death because of the counting?’ He replies, ‘It is because there is no blessing in counting, and when the blessing is gone, the *Sitra Achra* is on him.’” Thus far its words.

RASHI brings the reason why He counts Israel. He says, “Out of fondness for them, He counts them every hour.” This means that RASHI wishes to explain that if we say that there is danger in something that is counted, that there could be death there, why did the Creator count Israel and place them in a place of danger? This is why RASHI explains, “Out of fondness for them, He counts them every hour, despite the danger in it. But for the love that He has for Israel, and for His wish to know their number, He said that He would count Israel.”

Outwardly, it is hard to understand it, meaning to say that since the Creator wants to know their number, He said that they need to be counted through a correction so there will not be a hindrance among them, so He will count them through ransom. We should understand how it is possible to say that because the Creator wishes to know their number, they need to be counted and give the amount of Israel, and then the Creator knows, for otherwise He doesn’t know the number of the children of Israel in advance but needs the creatures to inform Him. Can this be?

Also, we must understand what a blessing is in the work, what a count is in the work, and why it causes death when there is no blessing on the count. And we should also understand why there cannot be a blessing on something that is counted.

It is known that there are two matters in the work of the Creator: 1) the purpose of creation; 2) the correction of creation. The purpose of creation means that the creatures receive delight and pleasure, as it is written, “His will to do good to His creations.” The correction of creation is for the creatures to walk on the path of the Creator, meaning equivalence of form. Therefore, as the Creator gives to His creations, the creatures, too, should give to the Creator. Otherwise, there is disparity of form, and in spirituality, disparity of form causes separation, meaning causes separation from the Life of Lives.

It is written about it in *The Zohar* (presented in *Talmud Eser Sefirot* p 19, Item 17), “Hence, the wicked, in their lives they are called ‘dead,’ since out of their disparity of form—being completely at the other end from their root, where they have nothing in the form of bestowal—they are severed from Him, and they actually die.” However, it was already said about them in *The Zohar*, “‘All the grace that they do, they do for themselves,’ meaning that their aim is primarily for themselves and for their own glory.”

In other words, what we ascribe to the Creator, meaning everything that the Creator does, is in a state of wholeness. This means that the Creator wishes for the creatures to receive delight and pleasure, hence He created in them a desire to receive and a great craving for delights. By that, He is certain that they will want to receive pleasure. But the correction of creation, the *Kli* [vessel] and the desire that the creatures should make—the desire with which they will be able to receive delight and pleasure—this desire is called “the will to bestow.” Obtaining that desire happens gradually because the lower one doesn’t have the strength to go

against the will of the upper one—the will to receive for oneself, which the Creator created.

Thus, we see that there are two kinds of *Kelim* [vessels]:

1. Vessels of reception. However, a correction is placed on them, meaning that on the vessels of reception there is the opposite intention from the *Kli*. In other words, a person is actually receiving, but in the intention, he is now giving. It follows that *the aim is the very opposite of the act*, and the light that is received in those *Kelim* is now called “receiving in order to bestow.”

The name of this light is *Hochma* [wisdom], and this is the light of the purpose of creation. Also, it is sometimes referred to as “mitigation of the *Dinim* [judgments].” That is, there were *Dinim* on the vessel of reception, meaning that there was a *Din* [judgment] that it is forbidden to use this *Kli* because it creates disparity of form and separation, and now it has been mitigated. And what is the mitigation? It is placing on the *Kli* the intention called “in order to bestow.”

This means that before one places the aim to bestow on the will to receive, that desire caused him bitterness. Anything spiritual that he wanted to touch tasted bitter because there were concealment and restriction on the will to receive for himself, so it was impossible to taste a good flavor in spirituality. In other words, anything holy felt remote, inaccessible, and impossible for the will to receive to enjoy. This is called “bitter.”

However, if he places the aim to bestow over this desire, he sees and feels that there is sweetness in everything in holiness. But in matters that do not belong to holiness, he must turn away from them, meaning that he cannot tolerate them.

It follows that after he corrects himself so he can now aim in order to bestow, we should discern a light and a *Kli* here, which consists of *Aviut* [thickness] and *Masach* [screen].

The *Aviut* is called *Dinim*, where there are restriction and concealment, and the light doesn't shine there. This is why *Aviut* is called "darkness."

In other words, wanting to receive for himself is called "being *Av* [thick]," and wanting to bestow is called *Zach* [pure/clean/immaculate]. Afterwards, when he places the will to bestow over this *Av*, the *Din* is mitigated and what was previously dark becomes a place where the light shines in the *Kli*. This is called "mitigation of the *Dinim*."

2) We should also note that there are vessels of bestowal in a person, things that a person gives to his friend so his friend will enjoy. The giving itself is called "bestowal." A man who is *Zach* is one who tries to make people happy, to make them feel good. On these *Kelim*, it cannot be said that there is *Din* in these actions, meaning that there is a judgment that prohibits using *Kelim* that wish to bestow.

However, here, too, there is a matter of intention, meaning whether he is sincere. That is, when he gives, is his aim that others will enjoy it without a care for himself, for he cares only about others? This discernment is called "bestowing in order to bestow," when the act and the aim are both in order to bestow.

Sometimes, everything he does is for the good of others, but the aim is to obtain respect or similar things. It is as *The Zohar* writes about the wicked, that all the good that they do, they do for their own benefit, "All the good that they do, they do for themselves." And here, there is no *Din* from the side of the *Kli*, meaning no deficiency. In other words, in terms of the act, there is nothing to correct.

However, in the intention there needs to be a correction. That is, from the perspective of the aim, there is no difference whether the act is bestowal or the act is reception. Both actions need corrections—that the aim, too, will be in order to bestow.

This is so because the work is primarily in the heart. That is, a person should reach the degree of love of the Creator, as it is written, “And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.” *Everything we do in Torah and Mitzvot [commandments] is to correct the heart.* It is written about it (“Introduction to the Book, Panim Meiros uMasbirot,” Item 10), “Come and see the words of the sage, Rabbi Even Ezra ... ‘Know that all the Mitzvot that are written in the Torah or the conventions that the fathers have established ... are all in order to correct the heart, ‘For the Lord searches all hearts.’”

With the above said, we can generally detect the two matters—the purpose of creation, to do good to His creations, this light is called *Hochma*, and “seeing,” which means that he sees what he has in his hand, meaning he can already count how much he has obtained, since the purpose of creation is to do good, and then one should feel and attain what he has in his hand.

For example, let us say that there are two brothers, one of whom is rich and lives in the United States, and the other is poor and lives in Israel. The rich brother deposits a million dollars in the bank under the name of the poorer brother. However, he did not let the poor brother know about it, nor did the bank inform the poor brother that he has money in his name. So this brother remains poor because he doesn’t know about it.

It is the same here with the purpose of creation to do good to His creations. If they don’t know and don’t feel the delight and pleasure, what kind of benefit is it? This is why this light is called *Hochma* [wisdom] and “seeing,” and it is named “light of *Panim* [face/anterior], as in, “A man’s wisdom illuminates his face.”

In the work, this is called “something that is counted,” meaning something that is received in the vessels of reception. This means that if he receives it, he will see what he has received and will count what he has.

It is also called “a gift.” Usually, when someone gives his friend a gift, he wants his friend to count and appreciate the value of the present for the simple reason that he gives the present to his friend because he wants to show his love for him. According to the value of the gift, a person can appreciate the measure of the love. It follows that if one is not looking at the gift to see the greatness of the gift, he is blemishing the measure of the love.

Therefore, when a person receives a gift, if he doesn’t see or doesn’t try to see the importance of the gift, he blemishes the measure of love that the giver wants to show by it. For instance, our sages said, “Buy yourself a friend.” And that person wants to buy his friend by sending him gifts. If that person doesn’t see and appreciate the greatness and importance of the gift that he receives from him, how can he come to a state of “Buy yourself a friend”? It follows that in the gift, one should count and measure what he has received from his friend.

Therefore, if the creatures cannot count and measure what the Creator gave them, then the purpose of the Creator doesn’t reach a state where the creatures attain that He created creation with the aim to do good to His creations.

This is called, “light of *Hochma*,” and this light is received in the vessels of reception. However, one must also use it with the correction that was placed on the vessels of reception, called “receiving in order to bestow.” This means that one should put an aim to bestow on the vessel of reception. And if he doesn’t place the aim to bestow, he becomes separated from the Life of Lives, since disparity of form causes separation. Thus, by becoming a receiver, it causes him spiritual death, as was said above, “The wicked, in their lives they are called ‘dead.’”

However, the light that is received in the vessels of bestowal is called, “light of *Hassadim* [mercy].” *Hesed* [mercy/grace] means that he is giving, like a person who performs an act of mercy

or grace toward his friend. This is called “covered *Hassadim*,” meaning that the *Hassadim*—what he receives in vessels of bestowal, meaning what he gives—the light has the same value as the *Kli*.

In other words, it is known that there is charity and there is a gift. With a gift, we explained above that a person must see what he received and not simply receive a gift from his friend. If a person says, “It doesn’t matter what he gave me,” he is blemishing his friend’s gift. Thus, the purpose for which he sent him the gift is not realized. The gift was meant to buy him a friend, as was said above, “Buy yourself a friend,” but if he doesn’t see the importance of the gift, then he cannot buy him as a friend. Hence, he must count and measure the gift.

But when a person sends charity to his friend, the giver should try—if he truly wants to give charity—for the receiver of the charity to not know who sent him the charity. And the receiver of the charity will also be very happy if he knew that the giver of the charity did not know to whom he gave.

Similarly, sometimes people collect donations for an important person and they don’t want the receiver of the charity to be shamed. Those who collect the money say, “We are collecting for someone anonymously.” Thus, with charity, when neither of them knows—the giver and the receiver—it is considered true charity, and there is no unpleasantness on the part of the receiver.

It follows that in *Hesed*, we speak from the perspective of the giver, meaning the lower one, and then a person is in a state where he acts above reason. In other words, he gives, but he doesn’t know to whom, but he believes that everything he is giving goes to its purpose. This is called “charity in concealment.”

Charity is considered *Hassadim*, that he gives. That is, we speak of a time when a person is working with the vessels of

bestowal, meaning we are only speaking of a person who is giving to the Creator. This is called “a blessing,” like a person blessing another, speaking to him in a favorable manner, meaning blesses [greet]s him. He doesn’t actually give to him, but it is still considered that he blesses him verbally, and this is already regarded as a blessing in the heart. In other words, what he cannot give in actual fact, he gives with the heart, and he shows him verbally what he has in his heart.

It follows that *blessing means giving, bestowal*. That is, at that time, he engages in vessels of bestowal. This means that a blessing is when he wants his friend to have more than he can actually give. Hence, when a person engages in bestowal, he wants to give contentment to the Maker, so he says to the Creator, “More than the good deeds that I can give You, I bless You that I will be able to give You more than good deeds.” In other words, one should always bless the Creator, which means that he wants to be able to give more contentment to the Creator than he is actually giving Him.

This is why there is no issue of counting on a blessing, since vessels of bestowal are called “charity,” and charity should be giving in concealment, meaning that the giver doesn’t know to whom he is giving and the receiver doesn’t know from whom he is receiving. Thus, there is no issue of counting here, for counting brings the excitement and bond of love, as is said regarding a gift.

In the gift, our sages said, it is completely the opposite: “He who gives a present to his friend must let him know.” This is so because the result of the gift should be love, which connects the two, unlike charity, where he must be entirely to bestow. This means that in charity, it is best if one does not know the other, to avoid any counting.

Therefore, when speaking in the work, charity means vessels of bestowal, when the *Kli* wishes to do *Hesed*, and the light that is poured into the *Kli* is called “light of *Hassadim*.”

This is called “the correction of creation,” when everything is in order to bestow.

But the purpose of creation is for the *Kelim* to receive delight and pleasure, and here they must certainly see what they are receiving because one speaks about the purpose of creation, that it is benevolent, according to what he receives. If he cannot count what he received, it means that he still did not receive in a way that the delight and pleasure are felt in him. Thus, he still cannot say that now he sees that he received from the Creator only delight and pleasure. This is why light of *Hochma*—the purpose of creation—is also called “seeing,” since the purpose of creation is considered seeing.

But it is to the contrary with the correction of creation. It is called “covered *Hassadim*,” meaning that he still doesn’t see everything that he is receiving and it is still covered from him. In the work, it is called “desiring mercy [*Hesed*],” meaning only to bestow. It is of no interest to him if he is receiving anything from above. It is considered that he is content with his share, meaning that he is happy that he can do something in the work of the Creator.

In other words, he is content with his share of being able to say that he is doing something that is not for the needs of his material body, as our sages said, “He who walks and does not do, the reward for walking is in his hand” (*Avot*, Chapter 5, 14).

The interpreters explain, “The reward for walking is in his hand.” Even though he isn’t doing, he still has the reward of walking, for even going to the seminary is a *Mitzva* [commandment/good deed] in itself, since there he is in an atmosphere of Torah. It follows that it should be noted if a person engages in vessels of bestowal—called *Hesed*, where there is no issue of counting because he wants to work in charity—it is regarded as “the correction of creation.”

With the above said, we will understand what we asked, why they said, “Out of fondness for them, He counts them every hour.” We asked, “If the Creator wants to know the number of Israel, does He have to wait until Israel counts and then submit the sum to the Creator, and only then He will know Israel’s number?”

Indeed, “Out of fondness for them” means that He sees that they are doing everything in order to bestow. This means that they have already made the correction of creation, and this is why He wants to give them the purpose of creation, which is light of *Hochma*, called “light of seeing.” In other words, they should already be counting what they have because this light is received in vessels of reception.

However, they should receive in order to bestow, and according to the rule that the act follows the aim while one is engaged in acts of reception of pleasure, the act of reception might cause the aim not to be in order to bestow but in order to receive. And reception for oneself causes separation from the Life of Lives, which is considered death, as it is written, “The wicked, in their lives they are called ‘dead.’”

It was written, “Why does death increase because of the counting?” The answer is that since something that is counted is called “light of *Hochma*,” which is received in vessels of reception, the act might govern the aim and he will not be able to aim in order to bestow. Thus, naturally, it will be death.

And it was written, “He replies, ‘It is because there is no blessing in counting, and when the blessing is gone, the *Sitra Achra* is on him.’” In other words, there is the matter of the middle line, when *Hochma* shines in the vessels of reception, which is called “left.” They need correction so that one is not drawn after the act of reception. In that state, the light of *Hassadim*—which works with the vessels of bestowal—must be

drawn, and we have said above that acts of bestowal affect the thought to be like the act.

This is the keeping over the light of *Hochma* that is received in the *Kelim* of the left line, which requires correction. However, one cannot be rewarded with the light of *Hochma* before one has been rewarded with the degree of *Lishma*, meaning that everything one does is *Lishma*. In other words, the order of the work is that first, one is rewarded with *Katnut*, considered that he can only aim the vessels of bestowal to be in order to bestow. Afterwards, one is rewarded with *Gadlut*, which means that he can aim in order to bestow in vessels of reception, too, where the light of *Hochma* shines—the light of the purpose of creation.

It follows that before one is rewarded with the light in the count, one must be rewarded with the light of *Hassadim*, called “blessing,” meaning that he blesses the Creator and doesn’t want to receive anything from Him. Instead, he is all about bestowal and doesn’t want to receive anything for himself. Afterwards, he is rewarded with the light of *Hochma*, which is a light of counting. This means that this light comes in vessels of reception, at which time the light in the counting requires keeping so it will not be drawn after the act. Because it is an act of reception, a light of blessing must be drawn once more, meaning light of *Hassadim*, which is the keeping.

Now we can interpret what we asked:

1) Did the Creator want to know the number of the children of Israel, and is this why He wished to count the children of Israel, so that the people of Israel would tell Him the number, and the Creator didn’t know by Himself? The answer is that since He loves them, He wanted the people of Israel to know their number. In other words, the Creator wants them to obtain the light of *Hochma*. It follows that He wants to know, that they will know and attain the light there is in counting, meaning that

they themselves will count and see what they have attained, for this is called “the light of seeing,” which comes to the vessels of reception. He doesn’t need to know for Himself, but so that the people of Israel will know.

2) Why is there death where there is no blessing? The answer is that something that is counted is light of *Hochma*, which comes into vessels of reception. When using vessels of reception, one might be drawn after the act of reception and thus be separated from the Life of Lives. This is called “death,” and this is why keeping is required. The keeping is the blessing, meaning extension of light of *Hassadim*, which is an act of bestowal that keeps the act of reception from straying from the aim to bestow.

3) Why is there a need for a blessing before and after? The order of the work begins with a need to achieve *Lishma* [for Her name]. Our sages said about it, “He who studies Torah *Lishma*, the secrets of Torah are revealed to him.” Also, *Lishma* means that all his actions are in order to bestow, which is called “blessing.” When he gives, this is the meaning of blessing, meaning oral blessing. That is, since he cannot add in action, he tries to give a blessing with the mouth, which indicates that what he is giving is with all his heart. This is called “light of *Hassadim*.”

Thus, the order is as follows:

1. A blessing before, which is called “right line,” *Hesed*.
2. He is rewarded with the secrets of Torah, which is called *Hochma* [wisdom], which is a gift, as it is known that Torah is called “a gift” that is received in vessels of reception. For this reason, it is called “a count.” In other words, he is looking to see what he received so as to know how to thank Him.

This is called “left line,” since here is a place where he can come into death, called “separation,” such as there was in the death of the seven kings in the world

of *Nekudim*. For this reason, there is a need to extend *Hassadim*, and these *Hassadim* are the keeping so there will not be death in them, meaning separation from the Life of Lives.

This is why it is written that there is a need for a blessing at the end. It follows that Israel were blessed in the beginning and in the end, and there was no death in them.

In general, it is called “correction of lines,” which are called “correction of the world,” since by that there is persistence to the world.

3. What is a blessing in the work? It is light of *Hassadim*, when a person is in a state of giving.
4. What is counting in the work? It is the light that comes in vessels of reception. At that time, one needs to see what he has received and count them. This is considered “a gift.”
5. Why is there no blessing in something that is counted? Something that is counted means the light and abundance that come into vessels of reception, and blessing is the abundance that comes into vessels of bestowal, and they are opposites. In *The Zohar*, it is considered that the two lines are in dispute, since the right line, called *Hesed*, is only to bestow and doesn't wish to use the vessels of reception; but the left line is the opposite—it wishes to use specifically the vessels of reception, since it says, “But the purpose of creation is to receive!” However, there should be a correction to be in order to bestow. For this reason, afterwards there comes the middle line, which makes peace between them. And this is the reason why there is a need for a blessing in the beginning, and a blessing at the end.

WHAT THE KING STANDING ON HIS FIELD WHEN THE CROP IS RIPE MEANS IN THE WORK?

Article No. 10, 1990/91

Our sages said about the verse, “The Lord stood over him” (presented in *The View of Elders*, from the authors of the Tosfot, *VaYetze*), “We did not find this in the rest of the patriarchs. Rabbi Simon said, ‘The king does not stand on his field, neither when it is plowed, nor when it is sowed, but when the crop is ripe.’ This is how Abraham plowed it, as it is said, ‘Arise, walk through the land.’ Isaac sowed it, as it is said, ‘And Isaac sowed.’ Jacob came and he is the ripening of the crop, as it is said, ‘The holiness of Israel is for the Lord, its first fruits,’ he stood over it.”

We should understand what it comes to teach us in the work: What is “a field,” what is “When the crop is ripe,” and what is the allegory of the King who stands over his field? It is known that our work is essentially only on the kingdom of heaven, which is called “faith.” Our sages said about it, “Habakkuk came and founded them on one: ‘A righteous lives by his faith.’” Faith means the necessity to believe in the Creator, that He leads the world in benevolent guidance.

And even though one still doesn’t have this feeling, he should still believe and say that the fact that he isn’t seeing how the good is revealed in the world, he should still believe above reason that he doesn’t see the good revealed before his eyes because as long as he is not out of the dominion of self-love, he cannot see. This is because there was a *Tzimtzum* [restriction] on the vessels of reception so that the light cannot shine there due to disparity of form, as it is written in the *Sulam* Commentary (“Introduction of the Book of Zohar,” Item 138).

For this reason, one cannot see the truth. Instead, he must believe that this is so. And in the work of the collective, the states

of guidance of reward and punishment are not so apparent. But in individual work, meaning when a person wishes to try to achieve the degree where all his actions are in order to bestow, when he begins to strain to reach the degree of a giver, then his entire basis should be built on the greatness of the Creator. It is said about it in *The Zohar*, “One should fear Him because He is great and ruling,” and then begins the work primarily on this faith—that the Creator leads the world benevolently.

And then states of ascents and descents come to him. In other words, at times, he has reward and he can believe in the Creator, that He is benevolent, and one can love the Creator because of His greatness. This comes to a person through great efforts in faith in reward and punishment. This means that if one works with faith above reason, he is rewarded, and his reward is that he comes to feel the Creator’s love for him. And the punishment is that if he wants to go specifically within reason, he thus becomes remote from the love of the Creator.

Worse yet, sometimes he becomes the opposite, meaning a hater of the Creator, since he has many complaints against the Creator because he has already prayed to the Creator many times and he sees that the Creator is not hearing the prayer. And from that, a person comes to a state of ascents and descents. However, if one overcomes, goes above reason, and says “They have eyes and do not see,” he is temporarily rewarded and feels close to the Creator.

It is written about it in the “Introduction to The Study of the Ten Sefirot” (Item 132), “We must know that the above attribute of medium applies even when one is under Providence of concealment of the face. By great exertion in faith in reward and punishment, a light of great confidence in the Creator appears to them. For a time, they are granted a degree of disclosure of His face in the measure of the medium. But the drawback is that they cannot permanently remain in

their degrees, since standing permanently in a degree is possible only through repentance from fear.”

It follows that the order of our work comprises three periods before we reach the exit from the work, which is the discernment of Adam [human being]. Our sages said about it (*Nidah* 31), “There are three partners to a person—the Creator, his father, and his mother. His father gives the white; his mother gives the red; and the Creator places a spirit and a soul [*Ruach* and *Neshama*, respectively] within him.” This is explained in the work, as we learn that there are three lines—*Hesed* [grace], *Din* [judgment], and *Rachamim* [pity/mercy].

It is as we said in previous essays, that for a person to be able to walk, one needs two legs, right and left. These are like the two verses that refute one another until the third verse comes and sentences between them. Thus, the two lines have given birth to the decisive line.

With that, we can interpret the meaning of plowing, sowing, and the ripened crop in the work. The right line is the plowing. This is the man’s work of wanting to be admitted into the work of bestowal. Man is created to care only for himself. And since there was a correction over the will to receive for himself, to avoid the matter of shame due to disparity of form from the Creator—since what we see of Him is only how He bestows upon the creatures and there is no self-reception in Him whatsoever—hence, a *Tzimtzum* [restriction] and concealment were made over the will to receive for oneself so the creatures cannot receive the delight and pleasure that He wishes to impart upon the creatures.

This was in order to enable man to correct the vessels of reception to be only in order to bestow. In other words, man must turn the will to receive in him upside down, and receive a desire to bestow, instead. That is, what was previously of highest

importance to him—the will to receive—will now be of inferior importance. He will not wish to use it, but on the contrary, the will to bestow, which was of lowest importance for him and which he didn't want to use, will now be of high regard. This means that now this will to bestow is important for him and he wants to use only the desire to bestow.

This is called “plowing,” when the soil is turned and what was above becomes below, and what was below becomes above. This is called “right line,” Abraham, *Hesed*. In other words, now he wishes to engage only in *Hesed*, called “the will to bestow,” and the right line is called “wholeness.” Thus, although one sees that he still cannot perform *Hesed*, he should imagine that he has already been rewarded with bestowal, called *Hesed*, and thank the Creator for rewarding him with doing things in order to bestow.

All this is only above reason. And although if he considers the situation he is in, he will see otherwise, it is a matter of above reason. This means that he must imagine that he has already been rewarded with a desire to bestow, as though he has already been rewarded with plowing.

Also, one should lower himself and say, “I am content and thankful for whatever thought and desire to do something in spirituality the Creator gives me, for rewarding me with doing a little service to the Creator, meaning that I can do something for the Creator.” And he is happy with that because he sees that the Creator didn't give the rest of the people the chance to serve Him. This is why he is happy with that. This is regarded as “wholeness,” since now he believes above reason that the Creator is leading the world benevolently, and thus he can now show the love for the Creator and be always happy.

However, at the same time one needs to walk with the other leg, the left, meaning to criticize his actions. He should have a

desire to see the truth, how much effort he can give in order to bestow, and how much is the importance of spirituality. Does he really understand that it is better to work only for the Creator and not for himself?

In that state, he sees very differently: All his actions while he was walking on the right line, when he thought that he was truly a whole man, now that he has shifted to the left line he sees that he has nothing that is truly in order to bestow.

This is called “sowing.” For example, when taking good wheat seeds and sowing them in the field, if there is a person who does not know about field work, he would look at the person who took the wheat and sowed them in the ground as though he were insane. Similarly, here, when one takes good states that contain wholeness, for which he has already thanked the Creator, now he cancels them. It is like that man who took good wheat seeds and sowed them in the field.

But in truth, one cannot walk on a single leg. Those two legs are considered two verses that refute one another. This is why Isaac is regarded as sowing his seed, which is left. Our sages said about it, “One should always repel with the left and attract with the right” (*Sotah* 47). We should interpret that when one feels that he is close to the Creator, it is called, “attracting with the right.” “Repelling with the left” means that when he criticizes, he sees that he is being repelled from the work of bestowal. This means that our sages come to tell us that man needs two things, right and left, since we cannot walk on a single leg. This is considered Isaac, which is called “sowing.”

Abraham, who is called “right,” meaning *Hesed*, wholeness, is called “whiteness,” as was said above that there the three partners are his father, his mother, and the Creator. His father is the first discernment—the first line, which is *Hesed*—showing wholeness. Wholeness is called “white,” as it is written,

“Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.” This is called, “The right attracts,” when he feels that he is being brought closer to the Creator.

“And his mother gives the red.” Red points to a deficiency, *Nukva*, where he sees that he is being completely repelled from the work of bestowal. Thus, he is in a state of ascents and descents. This is regarded as having only partial faith, as he says (“Introduction to The Study of the Ten Sefirot,” Item 14) that it is because he has many descents, and during the descent he is without faith.

However, one must not spend much time on the left line, called “the second line,” since at that time one is in a state of separation. Thus, for the most part, one’s work should be in a state of wholeness. This is called “the renewal of the moon.” It means that one must constantly renew the white in him, the right line, which is whiteness.

But during the descent, faith departs from him and he sometimes remains unconscious, like a person who falls under a truck and is hurt, though he doesn’t know that he has fallen. The lesson is that the person lies under his load, as it is written, “If you see the donkey of him who hates you lying under its burden” because it cannot go above reason, as the work of going above reason is an intolerable load and burden to him. Hence, if he gets distracted from it, he immediately falls under the truck. This is called, “being injured in a road accident.” Hence, one must always be careful and keep to the right.

It follows that the correction of a person walking on the left line is because he is not waiting to get a decline and fall, and then he’ll wait until an awakening from above comes to him. Instead, he draws the left upon him, and then he sees that he is in a state of descent, meaning that he doesn’t have a single spark of desire to work in order to bestow and not for his own benefit. And then he can pray.

It is as Baal HaSulam said about what our sages said of David, who said, “I awaken the dawn, and the dawn does not awaken me.” That is, King David did not wait for the dawn, which is called “black,” which is darkness, meaning that the darkness awakens him. Instead, he awakens the darkness. He prays for the Creator to illuminate His face for him and thus he gains time from having the preparation for the darkness, and then it is easier to correct it.

And the two above-mentioned lines—right and left—beget a third line, the middle line. It is as our sages said, “And the Creator places the spirit and soul within it.” Thus, after a person has completed the work in two lines, all the evil is revealed in him. This came to him because those two lines are as two verses that refute each other. And one sees that there is no end to the ups and downs, and then he makes an honest litany for the Creator to help him receive the desire to bestow.

When the Creator helps him, he is rewarded with complete, permanent faith, since he already has the vessels of bestowal. Before one obtains the vessels of bestowal, it is impossible for him to have permanent faith, since during the descent he loses his faith and cannot permanently believe in the Creator.

It is explained (“Introduction of The Book of Zohar,” Item 138), “Since we use the vessels of reception contrary to how they were created, we necessarily feel the acts of Providence as evil, against us. Hence, when a person feels bad, he is accordingly heretical against His Providence, and the Operator is hidden from him.”

Thus, we see that before one is rewarded with vessels of bestowal, he cannot have permanent faith. However, by being rewarded with the desire to bestow—which extends from the work in the two lines, by which all the evil appears completely—one comes to a resolution that only the Creator can help him.

Then he toils in this work and doesn't escape the campaign, and he is rewarded with the middle line, called "the Creator gives the spirit and the soul." This is called "disclosure of the face." It is regarded as what is written, "How is there repentance, when He who knows the mysteries will testify that he will not turn back to folly."

With that, we can interpret what we asked, "What does it mean in the work that it is written, 'Jacob came and he is the ripening of the crop,' as it is said, 'The holiness of Israel is for the Lord, its first fruits,' he stood over it." Our sages gave an allegory about that, "The King does not stand on his field, unless when the crop is ripe."

We should interpret that the king standing on his field refers to a man. Man extends from *Malchut*, and *Malchut* is called "a field." And man should come to a state of "A field which the Lord has blessed." This is done by labor in the above-mentioned two lines—the plowing of Abraham and the sowing of Isaac.

And afterwards comes the discernment of "When the crop is ripe," when you can already see the reward from the work—the crop—which is Jacob. It is as we said above—after he has been rewarded with help from the Creator, when the Creator has given him the soul, called "disclosure of the face," it is considered that the Creator stands over him permanently, meaning that then he is rewarded with permanent faith. This is the meaning of what is written, "And the Lord stood over him." In other words, once a person has reached the degree of the middle line, which is considered Jacob, the Creator is over him, as mentioned in the allegory above, where the king stands on his field when the crop is ripe.

It is written ("Introduction to The Study of the Ten Sefirot," Item 54), "When the Creator sees that one has completed one's measure of exertion and finished everything he had to do in

strengthening his choice in faith in the Creator, the Creator helps him. Then, one attains open Providence, meaning the revelation of the face. Then, he is rewarded with complete repentance.”

He says (“Introduction to The Study of the Ten Sefirot,” Item 56), “In truth, one is not absolutely certain that he will not sin again before he is rewarded with the above attainment of reward and punishment, meaning the revelation of the face. And this revelation of the face, from the perspective of the Creator’s salvation, is called ‘testimony,’ ...it guarantees that he will not sin again.” This means that at that time he is rewarded with permanent faith.

Now we can interpret what is written, “The Lord lives, and blessed be my Rock.” “My soul shall be glorified in the Lord.” We should understand the meaning of “The Lord lives,” in regards to the Creator. What kind of praise of the Creator is it? In the work, we should interpret “Lives.” Who is He who is called “The Lord lives”? It is one who believes in the Creator, that He watches over the world benevolently. This person is called “Lives.”

“Blessed by my Rock” is one who receives from the Creator the shape of this faith, where the Creator is His desire to do good to His creations. That man blesses the Creator for giving him the faith, since alone he would not be able to take upon himself faith above reason, for this is the gift of God.

We should also interpret, “My soul shall be glorified in the Lord.” “In the Lord” means in the Creator bringing him close to Him. For that, his soul is glorified, meaning that man’s soul is deeply thankful to the Creator for bringing him close. This is called, “The Creator gives the spirit and the soul.” With his own strength, a person would not be able to achieve it. For this, he praises the Creator—that now that he has faith. He blesses the Creator only for what the Creator gave him. Also, the Creator is called “the middle line,” as was said above, that only by working

in the two previous lines, one is later rewarded with the Creator giving the spirit and the soul.

Thus, only the Creator can help one exit the dominion of the vessels of reception. Therefore, during the descent one must not argue with his will to receive and plead that it is better for him that the will to receive left the premises and made room for the desire to bestow, and he wants to make it understand so it will surrender before him. One should know that the body will never agree to that; it is a waste of words.

Instead, he should ask the Creator, for only He has the strength to annul it, and none other. In other words, the body will never agree to it, hence it is pointless to argue with the body. But when he wishes to do something for the Creator, he should ask the Creator to give him the strength to overcome the will to receive for himself.

With the above said, we should interpret what they said (*Avot*, Chapter 1, 5), “Do not extend in conversation with the woman.” This was said about his woman. It is all the more so about his friend’s woman. Although the literal meaning is the main one in the work, we can interpret that the woman and the man are in one body. Man’s woman is called “the will to receive,” which is called “a female,” and which always wants only to receive.

Hence, sometimes, when one wishes to do something in order to bestow, which is called “male,” a man, and the will to receive resists, and a man wishes to extend in discussion with his will to receive to make it understand that it is better for it to let him work in order to bestow, our sages said that it’s a waste of words. They said, “This is said about his own woman,” meaning the will to receive in himself. “It is all the more so in his friend’s woman,” meaning to argue with the friends’ will to receive—that he will argue with them and make them see that it is better to do

everything in order to bestow—since only the Creator can help them out of the domination of the will to receive for oneself.

Hence, such people—who wish to walk on the path of reaching a state where all their actions are in order to bestow—must not reproach their friends about why they don't engage in the work of bestowal. This is because if they want to correct a friend's will to receive, it is as though that man has power. But in truth, what a person does in order to bestow is only by the power of the Creator. This is why it is forbidden to rebuke one's friend.

WHAT “YOU HAVE GIVEN THE STRONG TO THE HANDS OF THE WEAK” MEANS IN THE WORK

Article No. 13, 1990-91

Here is the order of the work: When a person wishes to do everything for the Creator, that his actions will be in order to bestow and not to receive reward, it is against nature because man was created with a desire to receive for his own benefit. This is why we were given the work of exiting self-love and working only in order to bestow for the sake of the Creator.

To be able to perform this work of exiting the domination of self-love, we were given the commandment, “love thy friend as thyself,” which, as Rabbi Akiva says, “Is a great rule in the Torah.” As it explains in the book, *The Giving of the Torah*, through it we will exit the domination of the will to receive for ourselves and will be able to work for the sake of the Creator.

And concerning “love thy friend as thyself,” we should make two interpretations:

1. Literally, between a man and his friend.

2. Between man and the Creator, as our sages said, (*Midrash Rabbah*, *Yitro*, 27:1), “Do not leave your friend and the friend of your father.” “Your friend” is the Creator, as it is written, “For the sake of my brothers and my friends,” which is interpreted as the Creator, who called them “brothers” and “friends.” It follows that “love thy friend as thyself” refers to achieving *love for the Creator as for yourself*.

Thus, there are two discernments in “love thy friend as thyself”:

- 1) We should say, as a cure. In other words, the reason why one must love his friend is only because through it, he will be able to come to love the Creator, too, as presented in the book, *The Giving of the Torah*. Hence, as with love of friends, when a person wishes to cling to friends, he chooses with whom to bond. In other words, when a person himself chooses friends, he searches for those who will have good qualities.

Likewise, when one wishes to love the Creator, he should try to see the greatness and importance of the Creator. This evokes the love of the Creator in a person. If he cannot see the greatness and importance of the Creator because the evil in man indicates to slandering the Creator, one must pray for the Creator’s help, that He will help him have the strength to overcome and say above reason, “I want to believe in the greatness and importance of the Creator so that I will be able to love Him,” as it is written, “And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.” In other words, love of friends is a means by which to attain the goal, which is the love of the Creator.

By that, we can interpret what our sages said, “It is good to have Torah with the right conduct, since toil in both makes iniquity forgotten.” This means that toiling in the right conduct, which is the work between a man and his friend, is a cure by

which one can come to love the Creator, who is called “Torah.” The essence of the teaching is that through the Torah, one bonds with the giver of the Torah. Our sages said about that, “The Creator said, ‘I have created the evil inclination; I have created the spice of Torah.’” In other words, through the Torah, which is the spice, one is rewarded with adhesion with the Creator, which is regarded as “reforming him.”

This is the meaning of, “Toil in both makes iniquity forgotten.” In other words, through labor between a man and his friend and between man and the Creator, meaning by exerting in the Torah, it makes the iniquity forgotten. Therefore, the iniquity of the tree of knowledge, from which the iniquities extend, is corrected by both.

The writing says (Psalms 33, *Rejoice ... You Righteous*), “Behold, the eye of the Lord is toward them that fear Him, toward them that await His mercy; to deliver their souls from death, and to keep them alive in famine.” We must understand what is meant by, “The eye of the Lord is [specifically] toward them that fear Him.” After all, the eyes of the Creator roam everywhere. We must believe that the Creator watches over the whole world in private Providence, in benevolence, and not necessarily those who fear Him.

We should interpret that we speak of the Creator only from the perspective of “By your actions, we know You.” This means that it is specifically those who fear Him who feel that the eye of the Creator is watching over the whole world. In other words, only those who fear the Creator attain that the Creator watches over the world in private Providence, in benevolence. But as for the rest of the world, for them there is concealment of the face, since they cannot attain His Providence, which is benevolent.

It is written in the “Introduction to The Book of Zohar” (p 138), “As long as the receivers have not come to completeness,

being able to receive His complete benevolence, which He had planned for us in the thought of creation, the guidance must be by way of good and bad.”

In other words, as long as our vessels of reception are littered by self-reception, it is impossible to see Providence as benevolent. Rather, those who can see the eye of the Creator, that His guidance is benevolent, are only those who “Await His mercy.” This is because “His mercy” means that they yearn to receive the quality of *Hesed* [mercy/grace] from the Creator—the quality of bestowal—which is called “equivalence of form,” known as “*Dvekut* [adhesion] with the Creator.”

Therefore, when they are rewarded with the quality of bestowal, their vessels of reception are no longer littered. At that time, they are rewarded with “The eye of the Lord,” to feel that His Providence is one of benevolence. But those who do not wish to obtain the quality of *Hesed*, meaning vessels of bestowal, are under the influence of good and bad.

But to whom does the Creator give the *Hesed*, called “vessels of bestowal,” which is the second nature? Not to everyone. There are many people who await His mercy—for the Creator to give them the quality of *Hesed*. However, the Creator does not give the *Hesed*, called “vessels of bestowal,” to those people who think that the matter of *Hesed* is only an addition, meaning those who consider themselves whole and need the Creator to give them the quality of *Hesed* as a fair supplement.

This is so because only those with *Kelim* [vessels] for the filling are given from above. In other words, if there is no real deficiency, it is impossible to fill it. So precisely when is it possible to satiate a need? When a person does not ask for luxuries but for necessity. Then a person receives because luxuries are not considered a deficiency.

When it is written, “The eye of the Lord is toward them that fear Him, toward them that await His mercy,” who are these

above-mentioned people who await His mercy? That is, for what purpose are they yearning for the Creator to give them the quality of *Hesed*? It is specifically such people who feel that they need the quality of *Hesed*, “To deliver their souls from death.”

In other words, it is precisely in those people who wish to achieve *Dvekut* with the Creator, to adhere to the Life of Lives. Otherwise, if they have no *Dvekut*, they feel that they are tantamount to the dead, as our sages said, “The wicked, in their lives, are called ‘dead.’” For this reason, they ask of the Creator to deliver them from death because disparity of form separates them from the Life of Lives.

Dvekut with the Creator is considered life, as it is written, “But you that did cleave unto the Lord your God are alive every one of you this day.” It follows that the reason they are asking for the quality of *Hesed* is because they do not wish to be as “The wicked, in their lives, are called ‘dead,’” and it is to them that the Creator gives the quality of *Hesed*, meaning vessels of bestowal.

When it is written, “To deliver their souls from death,” meaning his request of the Creator to give him the quality of *Hesed* is in order to “Deliver their souls from death,” this is called “a deficiency,” which is a *Kli* [vessel] that can receive the filling. But those people who need the help of the Creator as a luxury have no real *Kelim* [plural of *Kli*], no real need for the Creator to give them the *Kelim*, “To deliver their souls from death,” but as a luxury.

Hence, they remain with the vessels of reception, caring only for their own benefit. They do not feel that they have soiled *Kelim*, that it is impossible to insert *Kedusha* [holiness] into these *Kelim*, since *Kedusha* and self-benefit are two opposites.

It therefore follows that only those who understand that if they cannot perform acts of bestowal they will become separate from the Life of Lives will ask the Creator to give them the power

to bestow. This is a second nature, as Baal HaSulam said that as the Creator gave the first nature, the desire to receive, it is impossible to change the first nature into a second one. Rather, only the Creator can do it.

As in the exodus from Egypt, the Creator Himself delivered them from the dominion of Pharaoh, King of Egypt, as our sages said in the Passover Hagadah [Passover narrative], “The Lord brought us forth from Egypt, not by an angel, not by a seraph, and not by a messenger, but the Creator Himself.”

However, when does one receive the help that the Creator will deliver him from the rule of Egypt, which is the will to receive for himself? It is precisely when a person has a real need and not a redundancy. Hence, if one wishes to achieve *Dvekut* with the Creator, one receives help for the need. In other words, he should feel that he is lacking, meaning not lacking completeness, but lacking life, since the evil in him is so extensive. Hence, he is informed from above that he is a sinner, as it is written in *The Zohar* about what is said, “If his sin, which he has committed, is made known to him.” It asks, “Who made it known to him”? And it replies, “The Creator made it known to him that he is a sinner.”

This means that the Creator shows him the truth of how remote he is from the Creator and that he is in real need of a life of *Kedusha*. Thus, then one asks of the Creator to help him and give him the desire to bestow because he is deficient of life. And then, since he already has a real need, the Creator gives him the desire to bestow, which is the second nature.

According to the above, we should interpret what is written (in “And of the Miracles”), “And You, in Your great mercy, have placed the strong in the hands of the weak, the many in the hands of the few, and the impure in the hands of the pure.” This comes to tell us that before a person comes to a state where he

sees how weak he is, how the evil in him is in such profusion that he cannot overcome, and how impure he is, it is impossible to receive the filling from above. This is because he still doesn't have a complete *Kli* that can receive the filling, which relates to the deficiency of the *Kli*.

This is why it is written, "For you were the fewest of all peoples." In other words, "The Lord did not set His love upon you, nor choose you because you were more in number than any people, for you were the fewest of all peoples." Thus, when a person sees that he is worse than the whole world, specifically in the state of lowliness does the Creator choose you and deliver you from the domination of Egypt, as it is written, "I am the Lord your God, who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, ...to be your God."

It is written (in the psalm, *Hanukah Song*), "I will extol You, O Lord, for You have lifted me up, and have not let my enemies rejoice over me." We must understand who are David's enemies, of which David said, "And have not let my enemies rejoice over me." We should interpret that it is known that David is considered *Malchut*, meaning the kingdom of heaven. That is, that the creatures should take upon themselves the burden of the kingdom of heaven with the aim to not receive reward, but because "He is great and ruling," and not for self-gratification.

But the whole world resists that and hates doing everything for the Creator and not for self-gratification. Therefore, *Kedusha* is entirely to bestow, meaning to benefit the Creator, as it is written, "You shall be holy for I the Lord am holy." Thus, as the Creator only bestows upon the creatures, the creatures should bestow upon the Creator, for this is called, "equivalence of form," which is considered *Dvekut* [adhesion] with the Creator.

It turns out that all those who wish to work only for themselves and not for the Creator are called "the Creator's enemies,"

meaning the enemies of the kingdom of heaven. By that, they are called “David’s enemies,” and this is the meaning of David’s words, “And have not let my enemies rejoice over me.”

Generally speaking, there are only two discernments to speak of: 1) the Creator; 2) the creatures. In other words, the Creator created the creatures to impart them with delight and pleasure, as it is written, “His desire to do good to His creations.” Prior to the sin, *Adam ha Rishon* had wholeness of his *Neshama*, for at that time, he had *NRN* from *BYA* and *NRN* from *Atzilut*. Only after the sin was there departure of his *NRN* and he remained with only *Nefesh*.

Then he had to repent, to raise his *Kelim*, which fell to the *Klipot*, and reunite them with the *Kedusha*, meaning to adhere unto Him once more in order to bestow, and this is called “repentance” [in Hebrew—“to return”], as it is written in *The Zohar*, “The *Hey* shall return to the *Vav*.”

Hey means *Malchut*, which receives in order to receive and all the souls extend from her. This is why *Malchut* is called “the assembly of Israel,” which contains all the souls. A correction was placed over this *Malchut*, to correct her into being in order to bestow, and this work was given to the creatures, where by engaging in Torah and *Mitzvot* [commandments] in order to bestow, they cause each one to be in order to bestow at the root of his soul in *Malchut* of *Atzilut*. In so doing, they cause unification above, which is called “the unification of the Creator and His Divinity,” meaning *Malchut*, who is called “Divinity,” with *ZA*, who is called “*Vav* of *HaVaYaH*.” This is the meaning of “repentance” when *The Zohar* says, “The *Hey* shall return to the *Vav*.”

In general, we should make three distinctions: “one,” “unique,” and “unified.” It is written in *The Study of the Ten Sefirot* (Part 1, Item 1), “One indicates that He is in uniform equivalence. Unique indicates what extends from Him, that in

Him, all those multiplicities are uniform, like His essence. And Unified indicates that although He affects the many actions, a single force operates all of them and they all return and unite in the form of unique.”

The meaning of One is that He is in uniform equivalence, meaning that He created creation with a single desire—to do good to His creations. Unique means that although we see that there are many actions, meaning good and bad, that is, He appears as doing good and bad, He is called “Unique” because His various actions all have a single result—doing good. It follows that He is unique in every single action and does not change through all His various actions. Over each act, there rides a single form—doing good.

One must believe that. In other words, even though a person feels that this action comes from the Creator and it is not a favorable action, one should still believe that this action will enable him to attain the good. *This is man’s work, to believe that this is so, even though he doesn’t understand it, and to give thanks to the Creator for it.*

Our sages said, “One should bless for the bad as one blesses for the good.” In other words, a person must believe that it is for his own good, or the Creator would not let him feel those states, since His desire is to do good to the creatures, for that was the thought of creation.

“Unified” means that a person has already been rewarded with seeing how all the many singular ones have adopted the shape of the Unique, meaning he was rewarded with seeing how for each bad, he already received the good that belongs to it. One is rewarded with being unified only after he has corrected his *Kelim* to be in order to bestow. At that time, a person is rewarded with the purpose of creation, which is entirely good.

This is the meaning of what is written in the psalm, *The Opening of the House for David*. The “opening of the house” refers to the Temple, that in the work, *a man’s heart should be a Temple for the Creator*, as it is written, “And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.” One should be rewarded with the presence of Divinity, as our sages said, “The Merciful one needs the heart,” meaning that all the Creator needs is man’s heart, so as to give him what He wishes to give him.

And when a person is rewarded with being Unified, he sees that he has been rewarded with the construction of the Temple. David said about that, “I will extol You, O Lord, for You have lifted me up, and have not let my enemies rejoice over me.” This means that all the enemies—which are desires for self-reception—who were obstructing the *Kedusha*, the Creator has saved him from all the enemies and he was rewarded with admittance into *Kedusha*. This is the meaning of the words, “O Lord, You have brought up my soul from the nether-world; You have kept me alive, that I would not go down to the pit.”

We say (in “Help of Our Fathers”), “You are the first; You are the last; and besides You, we have no King who redeems and delivers.” We also say, “You are before the world was created; You are after the world was created; You are in this world; and You are for the next world.” We understand it literally as relating to the greatness of the Creator. However, what does that come to tell us in the work?

It is known that the order of the work is that one must correct his vessels of reception so as to have the strength to do everything in order to bestow. And one should exert and do all that he can. At that time, he comes to a resolution that without the help of the Creator, there is no way that he will exit the dominion of the will to receive for himself. This is called “redemption,” when he comes out of the exile in Egypt, that is, the domination of the will to receive.

Everyone understands that redemption is a matter for the Creator, since a person sees that it is utterly impossible to come out of exile by himself. And yet, we should ask, “How does one know that coming out of the exile of the will to receive depends solely on the Creator and is beyond man’s capabilities?”

The answer is that in his view, he has already done what he could do but did not move an inch from his will to receive. On the contrary, he sees that since he started the work, in order to reach the degree that all his actions will be for the Creator, now he sees very differently—that he is regressing!

In other words, he sees that now he is more immersed in self-love than ever. For this reason, when a person is rewarded with redemption, with coming out of this exile, he says that only the Creator can deliver the people of Israel from Egypt, meaning that redemption belongs to the Creator.

However, entering the exile, meaning surrendering to the dominion of the will to receive, this certainly belongs to man. In other words, it is man’s fault that he cannot overcome the will to receive for himself. Thus, a person goes into exile by himself.

To that, the writings tell us that this is not as we understand it. And although one should say, “If I am not for me, who is for me?” meaning that everything depends on man’s decision, one should still believe that everything is under Providence, meaning that everything depends on the Creator. It is said about that, “You are before the world was created.” It is known that *Olam* [world] comes from the word *He’elem* [disappearance] and concealment. And we should know that concerning the exile, there are two discernments to make: 1) When a person doesn’t feel that there is disappearance and concealment, and 2) when a person feels that he is in a state of disappearance and concealment.

This is the meaning of the words, “You are before the world was created.” In other words, the fact that a person does not feel

that he is in a state of concealment is the Creator's doing. But this is for man's benefit, since before a person can correct the evil in him, there is a correction of not seeing the bad. Thus, the Creator created the situation that precedes man's entrance into the disappearance and concealment.

This is the meaning of, "You are before the world was created," meaning before the concealment was created. Afterwards, a person comes to a state of disappearance and concealment. One comes into that state precisely according to his effort in Torah and *Mitzvot* to reach a degree where all his actions are in order to bestow.

This is the meaning of the words, "You are after the world was created." Thus, the fact that one came into disappearance and concealment was from You. This is the meaning of, "You are after the world was created." And after he is already in exile, then comes redemption, and this is, "You are the first; You are the last."

LETTER NO. 5

February 24, 1955

To my friend,

I read your letter from after Shabbat of this week, and I find pleasure in your need to disclose the states that pass over time from letter to letter. Certainly, the Creator will open our eyes with His law.

My view on that is that you should do more in love of friends. *It is impossible to achieve lasting love, unless through Dvekut [adhesion], meaning that you will unite the two of you with a tight bond.* And this can be only if you try to "undress" the clothing in which the inner soul is placed—the clothing called "self-love"—for only this clothing separates two points. But if we go on the straight

path, the two points, which are discerned as two lines that refute one another, become a middle line, which contains both lines together.

And when you feel that you are at war, each of you will know and feel that he needs the help of his friend, and without him, his own strength will weaken, too. Then, when you understand that you must save your life, each of you will forget that he has a body he must keep, and you will both be tied by the thought of how to use the enemy. Therefore, hurry, and the truth will show its way and you are certain to succeed.

And do continue corresponding.

Baruch Shalom HaLevi Ashlag

LETTER NO. 8

May 26, 1955, Tel-Aviv, on the 48th day of the Omer Count, a day before *Shavuot*

Hello and all the best to my friends,

In response to your letter, I must tell you that for now, I have nothing to add in writing. Rather, as it is written, "Speak to the children of Israel and they will journey." Concerning journeys, you know that it refers to going from state A to state B, that this is the meaning of changing places, as Baal HaSulam said in an interpretation to the verse, "Day to day expresses speech." He wrote there that it is impossible to have another day without having a state of night in between, meaning that there is a break in the middle. Otherwise, it is called "a long day" and not "day after day." But the order of the work is precisely day after day. "And night to night reveals knowledge" means that there is a day in between, thus far his words.

This is the order of the journeys. Therefore, do not be afraid of any states, but only, as we said above, "journey," go forward. Each time, a new current must be streamed, as ... wrote me in

his last letter, the verse, “They are new every morning; great is Your faith.”

Incidentally, I am disclosing my thoughts and will to you although it is not usually my way. And yet, I wish to disclose before you what I thought about the people of Tiberias, to know how they regard us, amiably or rudely. In this letter, I will write to you how I picture and what I see of the people of Tiberias. And even though I did not describe the essence of Tiberias, still, I will write my thoughts to you.

Currently, I am becoming a little more relieved from my personal and general problems, and I am taking some time off to raise my head and behold the spectacle that is unfolding there. It is as though I see three kinds of people there, three images and forms clothed in three different types of bodies.

1) A large share, the vast majority, I do not think considers us unfavorably or favorably, or that they respect or disrespect us. In all honesty, I think we are beneath attention in their eyes. In other words, they neither think nor even feel us. It is as though we don’t exist with them together in the world, on earth.

Even if they happen to hear that there is such a thing as students of the Rav Ashlag, it is of no interest to them. They are preoccupied with their own provision all day long—in their passions, or pursuit of respect, or in their spirituality. They have no need to consider such trifling matters as us—this tiny group of people—especially since they heard that there is a dispute within this tiny group.

“Scraps do not satisfy the lion.” That is, the tiny group is too small and insignificant in their eyes to provide them with satiation and mental satisfaction if they let us into their minds to decide if we are good or bad. This is how inferior we are in their eyes—completely beneath scrutiny, unworthy of a moment’s notice. And even though I think that this lion has all kinds of schemes in regard to us, there is actually nothing of the kind.

2) The second kind is those who respect us and in whom we already take up space in the world. They regard us as worthy people, respectable, and of certain stature. They do us the big favor of allocating time for us in their minds and in their thoughts during their free time. They take interest in us and note our stance and our activities to see if we are truly virtuous and with integrity, to criticize us with an air of criticism if they find anything in us.

When they think about it, they see that at the end of the day, this is a group of people who have gathered in a certain place, under a certain leader, to be together. With superhuman courage they face up to all those who rise against them. Indeed, they are brave men with a strong spirit, and they are determined not to retreat one inch. They are first-class fighters, fighting the war against the inclination to their last drop of blood, and their only wish is to win the battle for the glory of His name.

However, along with all those contemplations, when they begin to consider themselves—according to their prejudices and their self-interests regarding desires and pursuit of honors—they must unanimously agree and unite against us. Thus, they wholeheartedly and unequivocally resolve that it is better for them not to unite with us. This is so, although among themselves they are very remote and so different from one another that they can never agree on anything. They might even hate each other to such an extent that they cannot bear being in the same room with one another, and all wish to kill each other. Still, against us they all unite.

And since they are biased because of the will to receive in them, and “Bribe blinds the eyes of the wise,” they promptly see the opposite of what they thought of us. And after all the praises and virtues that they found in us—that each of us is praiseworthy and honorable—once they have made their resolution, they quickly execute the verdict passionately and zealously, since we

spoil their reputation with our views. Thus, on the one hand, they see that truth is on our side; on the other hand, our way is burdensome to them.

To excuse themselves, they have no other choice but to destroy us and obliterate our name from the face of the earth. They toil and strain for that, to disperse us to every direction, and they plot and conspire how to fail us and place stumbling blocks on our way, using all sorts of means—legitimate and illegitimate alike, even if these means contradict the human spirit and the spirit of Torah. They do not care because they see that there will be no persistence to their will if we have any domination and expansion of our goal to wholehearted and honest people, for then we will have the power to show them the truth.

And this is bad for them, for it is better for them to do what their hearts wish and at the same time be “the face of the generation”—influential and spiritual leaders. For this, they conspire plots of ruin and destruction for our future and say, “The sooner the better; it is better to degrade them while they are still small, so not a trace of them remains.”

Still, we should be very grateful to them for respecting us and for appreciating our view by at least admitting that there is something to be revoked. In other words, they do not ignore us as though we were dust, but at least we are sort of real to them. This is unlike the first kind of people, who give us no thought and believe that what happens around us is not worth *any* attention. They are also not impressed by our weakness of thinking that they are following our actions, which is why we avoid taking certain actions, lest they find them displeasing, and that this often causes us to escape the campaign for fear of the first kind of people.

To be honest, none of them pays us any attention or any thought. Perhaps it is as it is written, “You will flee when no

one is pursuing you.” Therefore, we should be glad about such people as the second kind, for at least they joke, mock, despise, and slander us. In other words, at least we have a reality in the world and it is not so easy for them to resolve to obliterate our name from the face of the earth.

3) The third kind are people who wish for our well being and our favor. However, they are very few, as in “Two is a plural.” And I call them by initials, BShMA, meaning B..., Sh..., M..., and A... In the holy tongue [Hebrew], they are called *Bosem* [perfume], and in translation [Aramaic], *BoSMA*, for translation is considered *Achoraim* [posterior]. In other words, they should be rewarded with the light of *Panim* [anterior light], that all their actions will be in *Kedusha* [holiness], which is called “the holy tongue.”

And what should I do when I see that I wish to describe and to picture our loved ones who are in Tiberias? At that time, I feel that Tiberias is a bustling city, and the above-mentioned third kind that are clothed in two bodies are mingled in a whirlpool, roaming among all the wishes and whims that are clothed in other bodies, meaning the first and second kinds. And then it is hard for me to find them because it is as though they are in a big stack of straw and hay, and how can one find two precious pearls, two wheats, which vanish in the vast majority? And although the rule is that even one person out of a thousand counts, they should still endure and cry out as a crane, which are truly lively creatures.

From this we can understand the allegory that our sages present, that the straw and hay and wheat deliberate for whom the field was sown. The argument of the straw and the hay seems so correct that they cannot be persuaded, and at times there is fear that the wheat will surrender under the rule of the straw and the hay. The straw and the hay argue, “We are the majority, and you, wheat, are as nothing compared to our numbers. We are of

higher status and we were born before you came into the world. In other words, while you were still nonexistent, we were already grown and handsome, and our greatness could be seen by all. From afar, we dazzle the eye with the beauty that we give to the whole field. But you, wheat, are so tiny and indistinguishable that only through special attention can one see you, when one comes near. This must be due to your incompetence. But we give a place and a shelter for people who are weary and lost on the road, and have no place to rest their heads. We take them in our midst and cover them from winds and from evil beasts so they will not be seen. But who can enjoy you?"

But when it was time to harvest, everyone knew for whom the field was sown, since the straw and the hay are only fit for being animal food; they have no hope of being greater than their current measure of greatness. Wheat, however, after a few corrections, when it is broken, sifted, mixed with wine and oil, and placed in the oven, is placed on a table of kings and is worthy of serving as an offering to the Lord. And all the merit that can be attributed to the straw and the hay is their service to the wheat, which they nurtured and fed.

In other words, they took nourishment from the earth and transferred the nourishment to the wheat. It was a burden and a load to them that the wheat was riding the backs of the straw and the hay, and their value is the same as a servant who serves the king or a maid who serves her mistress.

But prior to harvest time, before the conclusion, it was impossible to clarify the truthfulness and sincerity of reality itself. Rather, each was to his own, arguing according to his own sensation. And being considerate with the truth without noticing if this might cause some lowness and unpleasantness is not such a simple task, except when one can analyze each element into many details until the truthfulness and justness of the matter are brought to light. And this requires being rewarded from above

with not being trapped in the net of self-love and being carried away in the flow of the collective.

From all the above-said, it is hard for me to find you when you are on your own, without any mixture of desires and views, since everyone is hiding you, as described in the wheat allegory.

However, I have found a tactic similar to the harvest-time that was mentioned earlier. Only at night, after midnight, when the night-breeze blows and scatters the stack of straw and hay, and everyone lies flat over the field like carcasses, that is, sleeping in their beds, the two wheats break free and pour out their hearts before their Father in heaven. They enter the flame of the fire of Torah until the morning light, when it is prayer time. At that time, their souls come out as they speak the words of the living God. I believe that this is the right time for entertaining with the precious pearls that glow as flames of fire to be mingled with the whole of Israel with the help of the Rock of his Redeemer, and may the Creator give.

Let me write a few more words concerning love. It is known that there is no light without a *Kli* [vessel], meaning that each pleasure must have a clothing in which the light of pleasure might clothe. For example, when a person wishes to gain some respect, to be honored in the eyes of people, his first move is his clothes. In other words, he must dress in honorable attire, as our sages said, “Rabbi Yohanan called his garments ‘My honorers.’”

Thus, one must give a certain measure of toil until he obtains the honorable garment, and even after he has acquired the garment, he must keep it from any harm and damage. That is, each day he must dust it, and if it is stained or becomes dirty, he must clean it and iron it.

But most important, he must keep it from the most dangerous saboteur—the clothes moth! In Yiddish, it is called “a Mol,” which is a tiny mosquito that can’t be seen. The first

amendment is that it must not come in contact with old clothes. And there is also a wonderful remedy called “naphthalene,” which keeps it from the damagers, called “Mols.” And when he has this garment, he is ready to receive the light of the pleasure that is clothed in honorable apparel.

It is similar with love. To be rewarded with the light of love, one must find clothing in which the light might clothe. And the same rules of keeping apply to that apparel: avoiding the “dust” of slander, and especially the sabotaging mosquito known as Mol [in Yiddish, Moil means “mouth,” so there is a pun here], which are people of good appearance, who speak beautifully. You’d think that they have already “circumcised” themselves in the covenants of forbidden couplings and slander, and from the uncircumcised heart, but deep within them is the saboteur that can harm you, and you cannot guard yourselves from it because it is all handsome and beautiful.

This is why this mosquito is so tiny that without special attention it is impossible to detect this harm-doer, which comes from those circumcised ones who can spoil this precious garment. Indeed, it is known that this mol does more damage to wool [Hebrew: *TzeMeR*] garments, meaning the letters *MeReTz* [Hebrew: energy], which spoil the energy for the work. And *Yatush* [mosquito] comes from “*VaYitosh* [and he forsake] the God who made him,” or in Aramaic, “And he ceased worshipping the God that he served.”

Ordinarily, one who has a precious wool garment must avoid contact with old clothes. In other words, he must avoid contact with “old adherents” who spoil the energy because they are no longer competent for the work, so all their words are only to lessen the energy. And even one with strong garments of love, who is like a tree—meaning he is self-asserted—that mol should still be watched. If that mol gets into the wood, it can

do harm, too, as we see that wood decays and disintegrates because a mol enters it.

And the only medicine is Naphthalene, from the word, *Naftoley*, which Onkelos interprets as *Tefilah* [prayer], meaning to pray to the Creator that this damager will not be permitted into his garment.

One should be careful with an honorable garment, for if there are rooster feathers on it, they should be removed. Also, one mustn't enter a place where there are rooster feathers while wearing these clothes. In a garment of the light of love it is interpreted as *Notzot* [feathers], from the word *Nitzim* [quarreling], as in cockfights. This refers to the singing and chanting of people who are still in exile from the path of truth and are enslaved to self-love. All the singing and the praise that they show during their Torah and prayer only inflict quarrels in your soul until you begin to make war in your views—on whose side is truth and justice. This spoils and ruins your garment, which can inhabit love. Therefore, you must be careful and avoid places where there are rooster feathers, so that afterwards you will not have to work on cleaning yourselves up from those feathers.

We can see that for people who strain to acquire the light of honors, if they do not keep their clothes properly when they go outside, the external ones immediately cling to their clothes when they see that it is not proper clothing, suitable for honoring people. In other words, people will see that he is accepting their authority over him and that he is so enslaved to those people who are standing outside, he is compelled to make great efforts to obtain the clothes but also to keep them. Even the mode, meaning the design and manner of wearing, must be precisely according to the liking of those people under whom he stands. Thus, it is precisely those from whom he wishes to receive respect that he must worship with great toil to be favored by them, so

they will impart upon him the light of the pleasure that is dressed in clothes of honors.

And if, God forbid, he did not serve them sufficiently, this could yield unpleasant outcomes. That is, not only will they not give him the respect he wants from them, but on the contrary, they will all degrade him, humiliate him, and make him feel low and inferior. And that sensation of inferiority will first make him sad, then idle, and then he will feel that the whole world has grown dark on him until he sees no hope for obtaining pleasure in life. Then, he finds only one counsel—to go home, lie in his bed, and plead bitterly that his prayer will be granted—meaning that the angel of sleep, which is one sixtieth of death, will impart him with the light of the pleasure of sleep. This is the only pleasure he can hope for.

And if, alas, the angel of sleep has no mercy on him and he finds no remedy for himself, then, for the bitterness of his soul, he has no other choice but to take pleasure in a cure that is popular among the desperate who seek relief for their sadness. They fight with the inclination that wishes for one's persistence, overcome it, and extend pleasure from the angel called "suicide." That is, they feel that only this angel can deliver them from their melancholy. Evidently, it is impossible to obtain pleasures from the angel just mentioned without terrible torments and a mighty and awful emotional struggle.

Hence, "The eyes of the wise are in his head," and he knows and sees ahead of time what he can acquire and what he might obtain if he doesn't keep the laws and conditions of his contemporaries. That is, he must surrender and assume everything that the external people demand of him, or they will promptly punish him in this world. In other words, reward and punishment are revealed in this world and do not require faith above reason.

From this we can deduce the boundless care and watchfulness, and the great and special attention required to obtain the clothing that clothes the light of love—a garment that is made of such a fine and delicate fabric—lest the outer ones grip and ruin this precious garment, which has literally been bought by so much sweat and blood.

And now let me to clarify to you how and in what way I begin to obtain that clothing of love: The order of making a proper garment is to first, weave a piece of cloth. In other words, we take threads and place them together in a warp and weft manner (crisscross). Through the warp and weft, a piece of clothing is woven.

Therefore, I take a thread of warp into a thread of weft. A *Nima* [Aramaic: “thread” as well as “say”] comes from the words “Say a word about it.” *Shti* [weft] comes from the word *Tashi* [forgetfulness], as in “You forgot the Rock who begot you.” In other words, I begin to act with the power of my memory and soon remember that my friends spoke unfavorably about me, that these words made them do bad things to me, and this saying [also “warp”] wears out the friendship, the camaraderie, and the brotherhood.

Afterwards, a thread of *Erev* [weft] comes to my mind, meaning I heard that my friend spoke favorably about me, which made him do good things, which are *Arevim* [pleasant] and sweet to my taste. That is, I hear and see that my friend has left all his engagements and thinks and acts only in my favor so that I will have pleasant pleasures. And these two threads create a mixture in me, and I don’t know which way to decide, saying, “Is truth on the side of the warp or on the side of the weft?”

It is known that everything that exists in our world is in a form of positive and negative—right and left, true and false, light and dark, Israel and the nations, holy and secular, impurity and

purity, and bad and good. This is so because it is impossible to detect a good taste without tasting the bitter taste of the bad. This is the meaning of what our sages said, “To avenge the wicked and to give a good reward to the righteous.”

The word *Para* [avenge] comes from the verse, “*Para* [let loose] the hair on the head of the woman.” In other words, it is possible to receive help from the wicked in order to discover the real flavor and sensation of the good reward of the righteous.

For this reason, when weaving the garment, I stand bewildered and await the verdict that will eject the poverty of mind that is clothed within me. And since I am now engaged in weaving a garment of love, to place the light of pleasure there, I am already biased and an interested party. For this reason, I decide according to the words of the weft, as the Torah implied to us that “Bribe blinds the eyes of the wise.”

Thus, I no longer care if the truth is what it is; rather, I care about the goal that I desire at this minute, during the weaving of the garment of love. In that state, I have a deciding line in the middle, meaning the goal is the very thing that always decides between right and left.

And once I have acquired this above-mentioned clothing, sparks of love promptly begin to shine within me. The heart begins to long to unite with my friends, and it seems to me that my eyes see my friends, my ears hear their voices, my mouth speaks to them, the hands embrace, the feet dance in a circle, in love and joy together with them, and I transcend my corporeal boundaries. I forget the vast distance between my friends and me, and the outstretched land for many miles will not stand between us.

It is as though my friends are standing right within my heart and see all that is happening there, and I become ashamed of my petty acts against my friends. Then, I simply exit the corporeal

vessels and it seems to me that there is no reality in the world except my friends and I. After that, even the “I” is cancelled and is immersed, mingled in my friends, until I stand and declare that there is no reality in the world—only the friends.

I must be brief because the holiday is approaching.

Your friend, Baruch Shalom HaLevi

LETTER NO. 16

December 21, 1955

Let a driven leaf heal and let them say that I am in the delegation of their Maker, flying among flyers, The Great Tamarisk, to whom the Upper One assists, our glorified teacher, Rav...

I received your letter, and may the Creator illuminate that our way is the right way and we will strain our memory for the day of memorial. Then we will be granted the light of memory, which is good for cleansing the material air, and we will breathe the air of holiness, which is the true and eternal life.

I would like to add to what you wrote as follows, “I am certain that if I had met the greatest agnostic, etc.

We know that there is a custom, applied all over the world, that it is not good for a highly skilled professional to be among poorly skilled workers and learn from their actions. For example, when a cobbler is among unskillful cobblers, they let him understand that it is not worthwhile to make a good shoe, but do it however it comes out, and it is not worthwhile to make a good and handsome shoe.

Or a tailor, if he is skillful, when he is among unskillful tailors, they let him understand that it is not worthwhile to strain to make the clothing neat, tidy, and fitting its owner. Hence, he should be wary of being in contact with them.

But when a builder is among tailors, he cannot learn from their bad actions because there is no connection between them. However, within the same profession, each one should watch himself and be in contact only with pure-hearted people.

According to the above, with any person that you consider a servant of the Creator, you should be watchful and see if he is a skilled professional, meaning wishes his work to be clean and pure and intended for His Name. At the very least, he should know that he is not a good worker and seek advice in his soul by which to be a skillful worker, and not an ordinary worker who aims only for the reward.

But a good, skillful worker is one who does not consider the reward, but enjoys his work. If, for example, a skillful tailor knows that the clothing fits its owner at every point, it gives him spiritual pleasure, more than the money he receives.

Thus, with people who are not from your profession, it is not important if you are among them, since you engage in building and they engage in tanning. But with people who engage in Torah but are not meticulous about keeping the clothing fit for its owner, they only have a mind that is against the Torah, opposite from the view of Torah. And here you must always be watchful... and keep a good distance away from those people, as it were a bowshot. And this is not so with ordinary people.

- Hence, since you have no contact with the people of Mizrahi, you do not need such a careful watch.
- But from the people of Agudat Israel, you do need to keep away.
- And with Hassidim, you need even greater vigilance.
- And with people who were close to my father (Baal HaSulam) you need to keep a very watchful eye.

And this is the reason: In the world of *Nekudim*, *Melech ha Daat*, the level of *Keter*, which is the first *Melech* (king), fell lower

than all the *Melachim* (kings) during the breaking. This is so because while the coarser is also higher when it has a *Masach*, it is the worst when losing the *Masach*. For this reason, it fell lower than all the *Melachim*.

And we can interpret these words. When they walk in the path of the Creator, they have a twofold will to receive: for corporeality and for spirituality. Hence, those who were close to Baal HaSulam, while they were leaning, had a *Masach* and *Aviut* (coarseness). But now that they are not surrendering and have no interest in having a *Masach*, their whole work is to become “handsome Jews” or “Rebbes” (great rabbis).

Thus, this is *Aviut* without a *Masach*, and they naturally give off what they do. And as for me, I have no trust in them, and there is no one to hold them down. I am being brief because I do not wish to have them in my thoughts, for you know the rule: “One is where one thinks.”

To understand the matter more clearly, I shall give you a brief example: It is known that between each two degrees there is a medium made of both discernments together.

- Between the still and the vegetative, there is a medium called “corals.”
- Between the vegetative and the animate, there is the stone of the field, which is an animal that is tied to the earth by its navel and nourishes off it.
- And between the animate and the speaking, there is the monkey.

Hence, there is a question: What is the medium between truth and falsehood? What is the point that is made of both discernments together?

Before I clarify, I shall add another rule: It is known that it is impossible to see a small object and it is easier to see a large object. Hence, when a person commits few lies, he cannot see

the truth—that he is walking on a false path. Rather, he says that he is walking on the path of truth. But there is no greater lie than that. And the reason is that he does not have enough lies to see his true state.

But when a person has acquired many lies, the lies grow in him to the extent that he can see them if he wishes. Thus, now that he sees the lies—that he is walking on a false path—he sees his true state. In other words, he sees the truth in his soul and how to turn to the right path.

It follows that this point, which is a point of truth—that he is treading a false path—is the medium between truth and falsehood. This is the bridge that connects truth and falsehood. This point is also the end of the lie, and from here on begins the path of truth.

Thus, we can see that to be rewarded with *Lishma* (for Her Name), we first need to prepare the biggest *Lo Lishma* (not for Her Name), and then we can achieve *Lishma*. And similarly, *Lo Lishma* is called a “lie” and *Lishma* is called “truth.”

When the lie is small and the *Mitzvot* and good deeds are few, he has a small *Lo Lishma*, and then he cannot see the truth. Hence, in that state, he says that he is walking on the good and true path, meaning working *Lishma*.

But when he engages in Torah all day and all night in *Lo Lishma*, then he can see the truth, since by the accumulation of lies, his lie increases and he sees that he is indeed walking on a false path.

And then he begins to correct his actions. In other words, he feels that everything he does is only *Lo Lishma*. From this point, one passes to the path of truth, to *Lishma*. Only here, at this point, does the issue of “from *Lo Lishma* one comes to *Lishma*” begin. But prior to that, he argues that he is working *Lishma*, and how can he change his state and his ways?

Hence, if a person is idle in the work, he cannot see the truth, that he is immersed in falsehood. But by increasing Torah in order to bestow contentment upon his Maker, one can then see the truth: that he is walking on a false path, called *Lo Lishma*. And this is the middle point between truth and falsehood. Hence, we must be strong and confident on our way, so every day will be as new to us, as we need to always renew our foundations, and then we shall march forward.

Your friend, Baruch Shalom HaLevi Ashlag

LETTER NO. 24

November 7, 1946, Manchester

Hello and all the best.

To my friend,

In response to your letter from October 27 regarding your first question about having to stand guard and evoke the love in the hearts of the friends, which you find unbecoming, I actually see that as necessary for you. You know what Baal HaSulam said, that from between man and man one learns how to behave between man and the Creator.

This is so because the upper light is in complete rest, and it is necessary to always evoke the love, "Until the love of our wedding pleases." In other words, you are being shown from above that on this way, you must always evoke the love of His name, since everyone awaits your awakening.

That is, as you see that in love of friends you have the rights as you see it, meaning as it is being shown to you from above, you are the evoker (although the truth is not necessarily so; if you ask the friends, I am not so sure they agree with your evidence that it is only you who desires them and not the other way around).

This is the meaning of “A judge has only what his eyes see.” That is, as far as judgment goes, you must judge only by your evidence. This is why it is being shown to you from above that you have to keep awakening the love of the Creator in this way, that you must always stand guard, all day and all night, when you feel a state of day or feel a state of night.

We say to the Creator, “Yours is the day, and Yours is also the night.” Thus, the night, too, the darkness of night, comes from the Creator to man’s favor, too, as it is written, “Day to day utters speech, and night to night expresses knowledge” (See the *Sulam* Commentary, Part 1, Item 103).

It follows that you must evoke the heart of the friends until the flame rises by itself, as our sages said about it, “When you light up the candles.” By that, you will be rewarded with awakening the love of the Creator upon us.

And regarding your second question about your always having to evoke the heart of the friends, who, after they have already been rewarded with seeing the importance of the study, etc., still do not respect the lessons—that, too, stands to your merit.

In other words, you had to see for yourself that the Creator has given you His proximity several times already. There have already been several times when you felt that you had no other concern in the world but to remain adhered to Him forever, for you are unworthy of serving the King even in the simplest of works because why should you be more privileged than your contemporaries?

And yet, you wait for the Creator to awaken you to work, meaning to have an awakening from above, and then you will begin to study the lessons.

Namely, just as you must awaken the students, you are saying that the Creator should awaken you. That is, if the Creator gives

you a reason and good taste in the work, you will agree to work. But before that, you cannot. Then, you are shown from above how low and inferior you consider the students to be.

And regarding the third question, about keeping the party with great exaggeration, it is so because this is how people behave when they are afraid that the baby will leave the house alone at night. They tell him, “There is a bear outside and other wild beasts,” since the baby cannot understand any other way. In other words, if he were to know the truth, that there is no lion or bear outside, but it is best for the baby to go to sleep, and most importantly, to remain indoors, the baby wouldn’t be able to accept the truth.

Therefore, you should know my brother, that to accept the path of truth and the words of truth of Baal HaSulam, there aren’t many people who can hear the words of truth, for you are only seeing many kids. And what can I tell you while you are in kindergarten, and you are impressed by them, writing to me that they are cheerful and gay? Indeed, so is the way of babies—to be cheerful and gay. But it is known that a baby is not taken seriously when crying or when happy because its excitement and feelings are about unimportant matters.

And when you see that the baby is crying during service, you are impressed, and when he is glad and dances, you are impressed, and you write that you envy the children for being cheerful and dancing. And what do you want? To be a baby all over again? You should know, my brother, that your childhood days are over, since before you walked into Baal HaSulam’s room, you were dancing, just as they are.

And may the Creator assist us in the corporeal and in the spiritual.

Your friend, Baruch Shalom HaLevi Ashlag

Son of Baal HaSulam

LETTER NO. 34

Eve of *Rosh Hashanah* [Jewish New Year's Eve], September 14, 1947

To the friends, may they live forever.

After I have come close to you in the imaginary corporeal place, let us hope for bringing the hearts closer, as for a long time now we have not had correspondence, and the physical act brings unity, as it is said in *Rosh Hashanah* prayer [Hebrew New Year's Eve service], "And they shall all become one society." In that state, it will be easier "To do Your will wholeheartedly."

This is so because while there is not just one society, it is difficult to work wholeheartedly. Instead, part of the heart remains for its own benefit and not for the benefit of the Creator. It is said about it in *Midrash Tanhuma*, "You stand today,' as the day at times shines and at times darkens, so it is with you. When it is dark for you, the light of the world will shine for you, as it is said, 'And the Lord shall be unto you an everlasting light.' When? When you are all one society, as it is written, 'Alive everyone of you this day.'

Usually, if someone takes a pile of branches, can he break them all at once? But if taken one at a time, even a baby can break them. Similarly, you find that Israel will not be redeemed until they are all one society, as it is said, 'In those days and at that time, says the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the sons of Judah together.' Thus, when they are united, they receive the face of Divinity."

I presented the words of the Midrash so that you don't think that the issue of a group, which is love of friends, relates to Hassidism. Rather, it is the teaching of our sages, who saw how necessary was the uniting of hearts into a single group for the reception of the face of Divinity.

Although there is always one of the friends who stands out and yells, "Join your hands for a single group!" and always

attributes the negligence to the friends, I still cannot exclude him from among the friends who are negligent in the matter, and this should suffice for the understanding.

Primarily, let us hope that in the new year, *Shin-Tav-Het-Yod* ["May you live" but also the year in the Hebrew calendar, counted in letters (1949-50)], the Creator will give us eternal life, as it is written, "For God has appointed me another seed instead of Abel," etc., and "May you live" shall come true.

The meaning of *Rosh Hashanah* [New Year's Eve] is a new beginning, when a person begins to build a new structure. It is as our sages said, "One should always consider oneself half sinful, half righteous. If he performs a single *Mitzva* [good deed/commandment], happy is he, for he has sentenced himself and the whole world to the side of merit. If he commits one transgression, woe unto him for he has sentenced himself and the whole world to the side of fault."

We should understand what it means that one should always consider oneself fifty-fifty. 1) If he performs one *Mitzva* and sentences to the side of merit, how can he be said to be fifty-fifty again? After all, he has already sentenced and already has a majority of merits. Conversely, if he committed one transgression, how can it later be said that he is fifty-fifty? 2) How can it be said that he is fifty-fifty when one knows about himself that he is full of sins and transgression? At the same time, one is compelled to confess, "We are guilty, we have betrayed," and "For the sin."

The thing is that our sages are letting us understand the order of the work. There is no issue of a court and judgment above, here. Only when one comes before the court above are his transgressions and merits sentenced.

Rather, here our sages are teaching us that one should always begin the work and choose the good and loathe the bad. This is so because choice is pertinent *precisely* in something that is fifty-fifty,

for then he has the power to choose. But when one of the sides already has the majority, he can no longer decide because man follows the majority and then it is irrelevant to speak of choice.

This brings up the question, “How can he deceive himself and say that he is fifty-fifty when in fact he knows that he is full of sins?” However, we should know that the matter of choice that one is given is permanent and always existing, as in, “He who is greater than his friend, his inclination is greater than him.” According to this rule, if one has many sins, then he has a small inclination, which is not greater than the good inclination, but is precisely fifty-fifty, so he will be able to decide.

And since the transgressions come through the evil inclination and the *Mitzvot* [good deeds/commandments] come through the good inclination, as RASHI interpreted, “You have created righteous through the good inclination; You have created wicked through the evil inclination,” hence our sages said, “One should always consider oneself half sinful half righteous.” In other words, regarding the choice, it is always, and if the transgressions are from ... then the evil inclination diminishes. Thus, he is fifty-fifty.

Similarly, if he performs a single *Mitzva* and has already sentenced to the side of merit, he is promptly given great evil inclination, as it is written, “He who is greater than his friend, his inclination is greater.” Thus, now he has fifty-fifty, so he will be able to sentence to the side of merit.

Therefore, on *Rosh Hashanah*, one begins one’s work anew. Additionally, the days of the ten penitential days are called “days of forgiving and atonement of sins,” so a man will have every opportunity to join in the work of the Creator once more, even though he’s been so remote from the work.

And the essence of the work is prayer, since only by prayer can one exit the public domain and enter the domain of the

Single one. This is so because when it comes to prayers, great and small are equal. Moreover, one who feels one's lowness can offer a more genuine prayer from the bottom of the heart, for he knows about himself that he cannot deliver himself from the strait on his own. Then, he can say that actually, those who were created with special talents and qualities of subtlety can do something on their own, whereas those without the special gifts and good qualities need heaven's mercy. Thus, only this person can offer an honest prayer.

However, one should be careful not to escape the campaign, since it is the conduct of the inclination that where one can offer a true prayer, it brings him sparks of despair and provides him with evidence, conclusions, and inferences that his prayer will be useless. Finally, a person becomes incapable of believing in "For You hear the prayer of every mouth." Our sages said, "The Creator longs for the prayer of righteous." This is so because a prayer is the primary tool for the inspiration of Divinity because it is considered a prayer for the poor.

And prayer applies even to the greatest of the greatest. Without it, one cannot achieve a state of "standing" in the work. This is the meaning of, "For the poor shall never cease from the land." We should understand why the Creator promised us this—that it is necessary to always have the poor. Wouldn't it be better if there was no such thing in Israel?

However, in the above interpretation, "poor" means a place for prayer, and if there is no place of deficiency, there is no place for prayer. Thus, is there no place for prayer once one is rewarded with greatness? In that regard, the Creator promises us, "The poor shall never cease," meaning there will always be a place where it is possible to find a need so that one can rise to a higher degree.

This is the meaning of, "Poverty befits Israel like a red strap for a white horse." This means that even if he is already a Jew

in utter greatness, still, poverty is befitting, for it is a place of deficiency so that he will be able to offer a prayer.

This is the issue presented in the Gemarah (*Berachot* 9b): “Rabby Ela said to Ulla, ‘When you go up there, give my greeting to my brother, Rabbi Berona, in the presence of the whole group, for he is a great man and rejoices in *Mitzvot* [commandments/good deeds]. Once he succeeded in joining redemption with prayer, and a smile did not leave his lips the whole day.’” In other words, his being a great man is when he is already in a state of redemption, redeemed from all the deficiencies, with nothing more to do. In that state, he has work finding some fault in himself so as to pray for it. And when he was “Joining redemption with prayer,” he promptly found a place for prayer and had endless joy, as it is written, “For the poor shall never cease from the land.”

It follows from all the above that the most important thing is the prayer. Be strong in prayer and believe in, “You hear the prayer of every mouth.”

May we be inscribed in the book of life.

Your friend, Baruch Shalom HaLevi

Son of Baal HaSulam

LETTER NO. 37

October 25, 1957

... as for separating love of friends from the work of the Creator, I do not understand it at all because it was never the custom with Baal HaSulam to connect those two together.

On the contrary, it was always forbidden to speak words of Torah or of states of greatness and smallness among the friends. Our way has always been, “Walk humbly.” It was barely permitted

to speak of matters of work among the friends, as said in several of Baal HaSulam's essays in that regard.

Rather, the devotion of the friends was that of ordinary people, where each one cares only about his friend's corporeality, not about his spirituality. Drawing closer among the friends was actually through meals and drinking of wine, not through words of Torah.

Therefore, I am not sure what innovations you are trying to make. Perhaps until now you believed that for love of friends there shouldn't be discussions or engagements in matters of work, and now you know for sure that this is the *only* way it should be, meaning by walking humbly.

The way is as one who goes to his friend's occasion. He doesn't think of himself—whether or not he is in a good mood—but must take part in his friend's joy. He must not frown, but show a happy face. It is the same here: bonding among the friends should be such that each wishes to delight his friend, and precisely with corporeal things, since precisely here is the matter of “Buy yourself a friend.”

“Make for yourself a rav” is a different story. That is, sometimes among the friends, one wishes to execute, “Make for yourself a rav” toward another. However, this is specifically among friends who have great care and strict rigor, and not everyone is suitable for it. But this is no longer considered “love of friends,” meaning what love of friends requires, since there is no connection to the work, as you wrote to me.

Baruch Shalom HaLevi

Son of Baal HaSulam

LETTER NO. 40

31st day of the Omer Count, Manchester

To the students, may they live,

I received a telegram from ... that we won. Let us hope that we will win the war on the inclination, too—that here, too, we will succeed and achieve the goal of bringing contentment to the Maker.

It is about time that we started moving forward toward our sacred goal like mighty strong men. It is known that the paved road that leads to the goal is love of friends, by which one shifts to love of the Creator. And in the matter of love, it is through “Buy yourself a friend.” In other words, through actions, one buys one’s friend’s heart. And even if he sees that his friend’s heart is like a stone, it is no excuse. If he feels that he is suitable for being his friend in the work, then he must buy him through deeds.

Each gift (and a gift is determined as such when he knows that his friend will enjoy it, whether in words, in thought, or in action. However, each gift must be out in the open, so that his friend will know about it, and with thoughts, one does not know that his friend was thinking of him. Hence, words are required, too, meaning he should tell him that he is thinking of him and cares about him. And that, too, should be about what his friend loves, meaning what his friend likes. One who doesn’t like sweets, but pickles, cannot treat his friend to pickles, but specifically to sweets, since this is what his friend likes. And from that, we should understand that something could be unimportant to one, but more important than anything to another.) that he gives to his friend is like a bullet that makes a hollow in the stone. And although the first bullet only scratches the stone, when the second bullet hits the same place, it already makes a notch, and the third one makes a dent.

And through the bullets that he shoots repeatedly, the dent becomes a hollow in his friend's heart of stone, where all the presents gather. And each gift becomes a spark of love until all the sparks of love accumulate in the hollow of the stony heart and become a flame.

The difference between a spark and a flame is that where there is love, there is open disclosure, meaning a disclosure to all the peoples that the fire of love is burning in him. And the fire of love burns all the transgressions one meets along the way.

And should you ask, "What can one do if he feels that he has a heart of stone toward his friend?" Forgive me for writing, "Each and every one feels that he has a heart of stone," I mean except for the friends who feel and know that they have no objection that their friend will love them and will give them presents (not necessarily in action, but at least in good words and special attention only to him). I am referring only to those who feel that they have very cold hearts in regard to loving their friends, or those who had a heart of flesh but the coldness from the friends affected them, as well, and their hearts have frozen still.

The advice is very simple: The nature of fire is that when rubbing stones against each other, a fire starts. This is a great rule, since "From *Lo Lishma* [not for Her name] one comes to *Lishma* [for Her name]." And this is so particularly when the act is *Lishma*, meaning imparting a gift to one's friend, and the aim is *Lo Lishma*.

This is so because one gives a gift only to one that we know and recognize as someone we love. It follows that the aim of the gift is like gratitude for the love that his friend gives him. However, if one gives a gift to a stranger, meaning he doesn't feel that his friend is close to his heart, then he has nothing to be grateful for. It follows that the aim is *Lo Lishma*, meaning ... the intention that should be.

Ostensibly, it could be said that this is called “charity,” since he pities his friend when he sees that there is no one who is speaking to him and greets him, and this is why he does that to him. Indeed, there is a prayer for it—that the Creator will help him by making him feel the love of his friend and make his friend close to his heart. Thus, through the deeds, he is rewarded with the aim, as well.

But while at the time of doing the giver of the gift intended that the gift to his friends would only be as charity (even if he is giving his time for his friend, since it is sometimes more important to a person than his money, as it is said, “One cares for his lack of money but not for his lack of time.” However, regarding time, each has his own value, since there are people who make one pound an hour, and there is more or less. And likewise with their spirituality—how much spirituality they make in an hour, etc.), then one is testifying about himself that he isn’t aiming for love of friends, meaning that through the action, the love between them will increase.

And only when both of them intend for a gift and not for charity, through the wearing out of the hearts, even of the strongest ones, each will bring out warmth from the walls of his heart, and the warmth will ignite the sparks of love until a clothing of love will form. Then, both of them will be covered under one blanket, meaning a single love will surround and envelop the two of them, as it is known that *Dveikut* [adhesion] unites two into one.

And when one begins to feel the love of his friend, joy and pleasure immediately begin to awaken in him, for the rule is that a novelty entertains. His friend’s love for him is a new thing for him because he always knew that he was the only one who cared for his own well being. But the minute he discovers that his friend cares for him, it evokes within him immeasurable joy, and he can no longer care for himself, since man can toil only where

he feels pleasure. And since he is beginning to feel pleasure in caring for his friend, he naturally cannot think of himself.

We see that in nature, there is love until the yearning becomes unbearable. And if you wish to ask, “How can it be that through love, a person will develop a desire to revoke his own existence?” there is only one answer to that: “Love deviates from the right path.” In other words, it is irrational and is considered not right.

Only then, when there is such a love, each and every one walks in a world that is all good and feels that the Creator has blessed his share. Then the “blessed adheres to the blessed” and he is rewarded with *Dvekut* with Him forever.

And through the love, one is willing to annul his entire reality. It is known that as a whole, man divides into two parts: reality and the existence of reality. Reality means that a person feels himself as a deficiency, a desire to receive pleasure. The existence of reality is the delight and pleasure that he receives, by which the body is nourished and can persist. Otherwise, he will have to destroy himself and become absent from the world. This is the meaning of, “Which God has created,” meaning the reality, “To do,” referring to the existence of reality.

The existence of reality divides into three parts:

1) Necessity, without which reality will be cancelled. In other words, he must eat at least a piece of dry bread and a cup of water a day, and sleep for a few hours on a bench, with his clothes on, and not even at home, but outside, on the street or in a field. During the rains, to avoid getting wet and cold, he should go inside some cave to sleep. His clothes, too, can be rags, and this is enough for him because he wants only the existence of reality and nothing more.

2) Being ordinary, important bourgeois—having a home and furniture, household appliances, respectable clothes, etc.

3) Having a desire to be like the well-to-do who have many houses and servants, fine-looking furniture, and fine-looking paraphernalia. And although he cannot obtain what he wants, his eyes and heart aspire to it and his only hope is to lead a life of luxury, and he toils and labors only to achieve the level of the well-to-do.

And there is a fourth discernment within all those three above-mentioned discernments: If he has already made enough for the day, then he no longer cares about tomorrow. Rather, he regards each day as all the years of his life, like seventy years. And as man's nature is to care for his necessities for all his seventy years, but not for the time past his demise, each day is regarded by him as his whole life and he thinks that he will not live longer than that.

And if he is revived the next day, it is as if he has been reincarnated and must mend what he corrupted in the first incarnation. That is, if he borrowed money from someone, he has become indebted. So tomorrow—in the next life—he pays him, and it is considered a merit. In the next life, he primarily mends all the debts that he caused others or that others have caused him. And the day after tomorrow is considered a third incarnation, and so on.

And now we will explain the above-mentioned matter, that through love, man is willing to make concessions. Sometimes, when a person has love for the Creator, he is willing to relinquish the third discernment, meaning the life of luxuries, since he wants to dedicate time and energy to give some gifts to the Creator by which to buy the love of the Creator (as mentioned above regarding love of friends). In other words, although he still doesn't have love for the Creator, it shines for him as surrounding light that it is worthwhile to acquire the love of the Creator.

Sometimes a person feels that to buy the love of the Creator, he is willing, if necessary, to concede the second discernment,

too, meaning the life of important bourgeois, and to live on necessity alone.

Sometimes one feels the greatness of the love of the Creator to an extent that if need be, he would agree to relinquish even the first part—the basic needs of life—even though by that, his own existence would be cancelled if he did not give the body the nourishment it needs.

And sometimes a person is willing to give up his very existence; he wants to give his body so that through it, the name of the Creator will be sanctified in the masses, if he had a chance to carry it out. It is as Baal HaSulam said, “One should follow the quality of Rabbi Akiva who said, ‘My whole life, I regretted this verse, ‘With all your soul.’ When would I come to keep it?’”

Now we can understand the words of our sages, “‘And you shall love ... with all your heart,’ with both your inclinations. And, ‘With all your soul’ means ‘even if He takes your soul.’ ‘And with all your might’ means ‘with all your possessions.’” As we said above, the first degree of love is the existence of reality, meaning the nourishment of the body by property and possessions, means relinquishing the three above-mentioned discernments in the existence of reality. The second degree is, “‘With all your soul,” meaning conceding one’s very existence.

And we can keep that through the good inclination, meaning by coercion, when one lets the body understand that there is more delight and pleasure in delighting and giving to the Creator than in delighting and giving to oneself. However, without delight and pleasure, one cannot do anything. When one afflicts himself, we must say that in return he receives some kind of pleasure, or that he feels or hopes to feel the pleasure during the act, since suffering cleanses, so afterwards he will be rewarded with a wonderful pleasure in return for the suffering.

In other words, either he will obtain pleasure in this world or he will take pleasure in believing that he will receive pleasure in the next world. Put differently, either he has pleasure in the form of inner light or in the form of surrounding light—from the future.

However, one should not think that one can do anything without pleasure. In fact, (one should know that) there are many discernments in *Lishma*, meaning in bestowal: “bestowing in order to bestow” means receiving pleasure from giving to the Creator. “Bestowing in order to receive” means that he gives to the Creator and by that will receive something else, whatever it may be—this world, the next world, attainments or high degrees.

However, one should be bestowing in order to bestow, meaning derive wondrous pleasure from giving to the Creator, as it truly is for those who are rewarded with it. One should plead to the Creator from the bottom of his heart to give him this feeling of loving the Creator because of His greatness.

And if he is still not rewarded, he should believe and compel his body that this is a wonderful pleasure and of great importance, and to love the Creator because of His greatness and sublimity. But one should know one thing: without pleasure, one cannot do anything to the fullest.

Let us return to the above-mentioned, “‘With all your heart,’ with both your inclinations,” meaning that one should be complete in the love for the Creator; that is, that the evil inclination, too, will agree to bestow upon Him.

I will be brief due to the approaching Shabbat. I think that ... will be able to get answers to two letters that I received from him, and which I truly enjoyed. I am surprised that ... who was used to writing me letters, it’s been a while since I received a letter from him. Please let me know if he is well and healthy.

Also, many thanks to ... for his letters, which I receive from time to time from him, and to ... for the telegram. I suppose ... doesn't have my address.

Your friend,

Baruch Shalom, son of Baal HaSulam, the Rav Ashlag

THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL

January 15, 1972

It is written in *The Zohar*, “The tree of knowledge of good and evil, if they are rewarded—good, if they are not rewarded—bad.”

It is explained in the *Sulam* Commentary that if he is rewarded, *Midat ha Din* [quality of judgment]—the unmitigated *Behina Dalet*—is concealed, and *Midat ha Rachamim* [quality of mercy] is revealed; that is, *Malchut* that is mitigated in *Midat ha Rachamim* is revealed. But if he is not rewarded, it is to the contrary.

We should understand the meaning of “disclosure” and “concealment.” It is known that man consists of virtues and good qualities, as well as of bad qualities. This is because “There is not a righteous man on earth who will do good and will not sin.”

In other words, there is always a deficiency in a person, something more to correct; otherwise, there is nothing more for him to do in the world.

It is as two people who unite with each other and there is friendship between them, and suddenly one of them hears that the other did something bad to him. He immediately moves away from him and cannot look at him or stand near his friend. But afterwards they make up.

Our sages cautioned, “Do not appease your friend while he is angry.” The question is “Why?” During his anger, he sees his friend’s fault and cannot forgive him anyway, since his friend’s fault is disclosed and his friend’s good qualities—for which he chose him as a friend—are now covered and only his friend’s fault is revealed. Thus, how can he speak to someone who is bad?

But after some time, when he forgets the harm that his friend caused him, he can rediscover his friend’s good qualities and conceal his friend’s bad qualities, meaning revive the sensation of his friend’s good qualities.

Naturally, when not giving power and sustenance to his friend’s bad qualities, they are pushed aside and concealed. This is because when speaking of something, the speech gives strength and livelihood to the thing being discussed. Hence, when the anger is forgotten, meaning when the sorrow that his friend caused him loses its sting, it is possible to begin to speak of the pleasure that he received from his friend’s good qualities.

This picture is better sensed between a husband and his wife. At times, they are in such disagreement that they wish to part from one another. But afterwards they make up. The question is, “What about the bad things that happened between them while they were quarrelling? Have they passed away from the world?”

Indeed, we must say that they concealed the reasons, meaning the bad qualities that each saw in the other, and now, during peace, each of them remembers only the good qualities between them, the virtues for which the match between them was made.

But even then, if someone from the family came and began to speak to the man or the woman and show the other’s faults, he would give power and vitality to things that they suppress and

conceal, and he would expose them. In that state, one can cause separation between them.

Similarly, between two friends, if a third person comes and begins to show one of the friends the faults and drawbacks of his friend by speaking of things that are concealed in them, he would give them power and vitality, and that third person would cause separation between them.

And perhaps this is the reason why slander is forbidden even when it is true, since it discloses things that were previously hidden. It causes the opposite—conceals the virtues and discloses his friend's faults—thus causing separation and hatred between them. And although everything he says is true, the reason is as was said above—that it all depends on what is revealed and what is concealed.

It is the same between man and the Creator. While man's evil is covered and a person considers himself virtuous, he feels qualified for engagement in Torah and *Mitzvot* [commandments/good deeds], since he is worthy of ascending in degree. But when it is to the contrary, and his virtues are covered and only his drawbacks are disclosed, he cannot engage in Torah and *Mitzvot* because he feels that he is unfit for anything.

Thus, he will at least enjoy this world like a beast, since he cannot be a human being. Baal HaSulam said about it that usually, as long as one engages in Torah and *Mitzvot*, he feels his baseness, and when he engages in corporeal matters, he doesn't feel any lowness.

But it should have been to the contrary—while engaging in corporeal matters, he should feel his lowness and naturally do everything without any liveliness, and while engaging in Torah and *Mitzvot*, he will regard himself as whole. Indeed, it is the same issue as we mentioned above.

REPROVING ANOTHER

“‘Who does not know how to be reprov’d.’ It did not say, ‘To reprove,’ but ‘To be reprov’d’” (*Zohar, VaYeshev*). Man wants to reprove others. Everyone wants everyone else to work with vessels of bestowal, for if all the friends worked in bestowal, they would give him everything he needs. However, if he reprov’d himself, that he should be the giver, then his will to receive would lose. But when the vessels of others work in bestowal, his will to receive profits. This is why everyone wants everyone else to be pure.

MAN AS A WHOLE

As a whole, man consists of two discernments: 1) his own existence; 2) the existence of reality.

The existence of reality is divided into three parts:

1) Necessity, without which reality would cease to be. For this, it is enough to eat a small slice of dry bread and one cup of cold water a day, to sleep on a bench for a few hours with one’s clothes still on, and not even in a house, but in a field or in some cave during the rains to keep from getting wet. His clothes, too, can be nothing but rags.

2) Behaving as ordinary bourgeois, but not wanting to resemble the rich, who have many rooms, handsome furniture, fine paraphernalia, and nice clothes, and not wanting to eat and drink everything the way the rich are accustomed to eating and drinking.

3) Craving and demanding in his body to resemble the rich. And although he cannot obtain what he wants, his eyes and heart are dedicated to it, and he waits and labors to obtain that—to be admitted into the class of the rich.

4) This one exists in all of the three previous discernments: if he has made enough for the day, he does not worry about tomorrow. Rather, each day is regarded by him as his entire life span.

Usually, people are concerned with satisfying their needs for only seventy years. But past one hundred and twenty years, a man is not concerned with his provision. Also, sometimes a person thinks that each day should be in his eyes as new, meaning as a new creation.

It is like a reincarnation—that yesterday's person has incarnated into today's person and he must correct everything he did the day before, both in good debts or in merits, meaning whether he did *Mitzvot* [good deeds] or transgressions.

For example, if he took something from his friend, he must return it. And if he lent something to his friend, he should receive it from him, since collecting a debt is a *Mitzva* [singular of *Mitzvot*], so he must collect from his friend.

And now we will speak of love for the Creator. First, one must know that love is bought by actions. By giving his friends gifts, each gift that he gives to his friend is like an arrow and a bullet, making a hole in his friend's heart. And although his friend's heart is like a rock, still, each bullet makes a hole. And the many holes join into a hollow into which the love of the giver of presents enters.

And the warmth of the love draws to him his friend's sparks of love, and then the two loves weave into a garment of love that covers both of them. This means that one love surrounds and envelops the two, and they naturally become one person because the clothing that covers them both is a single garment. Hence, both are annulled.

It is a rule that anything new is exciting and entertaining. Hence, after one receives the garment of love from another, he

enjoys only the love of the other and forgets about self-love. At that time, each of them begins to receive pleasure only from caring for his friend, and cannot worry about himself because every person can labor only where he receives pleasure.

And since he is enjoying the love of others and receives pleasure specifically from that, he will take no pleasure in caring for himself. And if there is no pleasure, there is no concern and he cannot labor.

This is why you sometimes find in nature that during love of others that is exceptionally strong, one might commit suicide. Also, in love for the Creator, sometimes a person is willing to give up the above-mentioned third discernment. Afterwards, he is willing to concede the second discernment and then the first discernment, meaning all three discernments in the existence of reality.

But how can he cancel his own existence? The question is, "If his existence is revoked, who will be receiving the love?" But the Creator grants love with power to divert a person from the right path. In other words, he stops being rational and wants to be cancelled out from reality by the power of the love, and his rational mind has no strength to detain him.

This is why if we ask, "How is it possible for one to come to such a state?" There is one answer to that: "Taste and see that the Lord is good." This is why nature necessitates annulment, even though one doesn't understand it rationally.

Now we can understand the verse, "And you shall love ... with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might." "Your might" means the existence of reality, "Your soul" means his own existence," and "Your heart" is already a high degree, meaning with both your inclinations—the good inclination and the evil inclination.

WE SHALL DO AND WE SHALL HEAR 2

It is written, “And the man Moses was very humble.” Humbleness means lowness, when a person annuls himself before another. It is not necessarily external annulment, but internal, too. “External” means what is seen on the outside, that which is revealed, when everyone can see that he thinks nothing of himself, but regards his friend as being at a more important degree than his own. This is shown by the acts that he does before his friend.

And there is also internality, called “hidden.” These are the thought and the mind, which he must annul before his friend, as well. This is the meaning of what is written, “My soul shall be as dust before all.” The question is, “How can a reasonable and rational person say that his reason is annulled before each and every one, while he knows and feels about himself that he is at a degree that is a hundred times higher than his friend’s?”

However, there is a discernment called “part,” and a discernment called “whole.” The whole is higher than the part, and one must annul himself before each and every part by being part of the whole. In other words, individually, the whole of Israel are not so important, but with respect to the whole, each person is very important from the perspective of the whole.

One must annul his own needs before the needs of the collective. And since a person must annul his reason and his thoughts before the Creator, he must accustom himself on the outside. This is called “doing,” which is called, “We shall do.” And all those annulments will enable him to annul his reason and thoughts before the Creator.

Thus, it turns out that one who has more knowledge has more work annulling himself before the Creator. But one who is a fool doesn’t need to annul his reason, since he has no reason. It follows that the only merit of reason is that one has something

to annul, and this is the only reason why one should aspire for knowledge. And one who is not ready for that, it is better for him to have no knowledge.

This is called “His wisdom is more than his deeds.” This means that he has more knowledge than he can annul, since the annulment is considered doing and not hearing. “Hearing” means understanding, and doing is only by force, without reason. This is called, “We shall do and we shall hear.” Therefore, if he has the power of doing, he will be able to receive hearing because his basis is faith and not knowledge.

INTERNALITY AND EXTERNALITY

Humbleness means that in every way—in action and in mind—one annuls oneself before the other. This means that he should also annul his reason before his friend.

There is internality and there is externality. They are called “revealed” and “concealed,” “act” and “thought.” Something that everyone can see belongs to the part of acting, but the thought is not revealed. This is why thought is considered internal, meaning that it is in man’s internality. But an act is considered externality, when there is an inner thought within it.

Hence, when one must annul before his friend, it is not really considered annulment, unless in two manners—in thought and in action.

It is not necessarily the act, but his mind, too, should be revoked, and he should say that his friend’s view is more important than his own view. Otherwise, it is not regarded as annulment. When he displays annulment before his friend, it is nothing but sycophancy [flattery], meaning that on the outside he appears as though his friend is more important, but inside, he knows his friend is nowhere near his level.

FURTHER READING

To help you determine which book you would like to read next, we have divided the books into six categories—Beginners, Intermediate, Advanced, Good for All, Textbooks, and For Children. The first three categories are divided by the level of prior knowledge readers are required to have in order to easily relate to the book. The Beginners Category requires no prior knowledge. The Intermediate Category requires reading one or two beginners' books first; and the Advanced level requires one or two books of each of the previous categories. The fourth category, Good for All, includes books you can always enjoy, whether you are a complete novice or well versed in Kabbalah.

The fifth category—Textbooks—includes translations of authentic source materials from earlier Kabbalists, such as the Ari, Rav Yehuda Ashlag (Baal HaSulam) and his son and successor, Rav Baruch Ashlag (the Rabash). As its name implies, the sixth category—For Children—includes books that are suitable for children ages 3 and above. Those are not Kabbalah books per se, but are rather inspired by the teaching and convey the Kabbalistic message of love and unity.

Additional material that has not yet been published can be found at www.kabbalah.info. All materials on this site, including e-versions of published books, can be downloaded free of charge directly from the store at www.kabbalahbooks.info.

BEGINNERS

A Guide to the Hidden Wisdom of Kabbalah

A Guide to the Hidden Wisdom of Kabbalah is a light and reader-friendly guide to beginners in Kabbalah, covering everything from the history of Kabbalah to how this wisdom can help resolve the world crisis.

The book is set up in three parts: Part 1 covers the history, facts, and fallacies about Kabbalah, and introduces its key concepts. Part 2 tells you all about the spiritual worlds and other neat stuff like the meaning of letters and the power of music. Part 3 covers the implementation of Kabbalah at a time of world crisis.

Kabbalah Revealed

This is the most clearly written, reader-friendly guide to making sense of the surrounding world. Each of its six chapters focuses on a different aspect of the wisdom of Kabbalah, illuminating its teachings and explaining them using various examples from our day-to-day lives.

The first three chapters in *Kabbalah Revealed* explain why the world is in a state of crisis, how our growing desires promote progress as well as alienation, and why the biggest deterrent to achieving positive change is rooted in our own spirits. Chapters Four through Six offer a prescription for positive change. In these chapters, we learn how we can use our spirits to build a personally peaceful life in harmony with all of Creation.

Wondrous Wisdom

This book offers an initial course on Kabbalah. Like all the books presented here, *Wondrous Wisdom* is based solely on authentic teachings passed down from Kabbalist teacher to student over

Further Reading

thousands of years. At the heart of the book is a sequence of lessons revealing the nature of Kabbalah's wisdom and explaining how to attain it. For every person questioning "Who am I really?" and "Why am I on this planet?" this book is a must.

Awakening to Kabbalah

A distinctive, personal, and awe-filled introduction to an ancient wisdom tradition. In this book, Rav Laitman offers a deeper understanding of the fundamental teachings of Kabbalah, and how you can use its wisdom to clarify your relationship with others and the world around you.

Using language both scientific and poetic, he probes the most profound questions of spirituality and existence. This provocative, unique guide will inspire and invigorate you to see beyond the world as it is and the limitations of your everyday life, become closer to the Creator, and reach new depths of the soul.

Kabbalah, Science, and the Meaning of Life

Science explains the mechanisms that sustain life; Kabbalah explains why life exists. In *Kabbalah, Science, and the Meaning of Life*, Rav Laitman combines science and spirituality in a captivating dialogue that reveals life's meaning.

For thousands of years Kabbalists have been writing that the world is a single entity divided into separate beings. Today the cutting-edge science of quantum physics states a very similar idea: that at the most fundamental level of matter, we are all literally one.

Science proves that reality is affected by the observer who examines it; and so does Kabbalah. But Kabbalah makes an even bolder statement: even the Creator, the Maker of reality,

is within the observer. In other words, God is inside of us; He doesn't exist anywhere else. When we pass away, so does He.

These earthshaking concepts and more are eloquently introduced so that even readers new to Kabbalah or science will easily understand them. Therefore, if you're just a little curious about why you are here, what life means, and what you can do to enjoy it more, this book is for you.

From Chaos to Harmony

Many researchers and scientists agree that the ego is the reason behind the perilous state our world is in today. Laitman's groundbreaking book not only demonstrates that egoism has been the basis for all suffering throughout human history, but also shows how we can turn our plight to pleasure.

The book contains a clear analysis of the human soul and its problems, and provides a "roadmap" of what we need to do to once again be happy. *From Chaos to Harmony* explains how we can rise to a new level of existence on personal, social, national, and international levels.

Kabbalah for Beginners

Kabbalah for Beginners is a book for all those seeking answers to life's essential questions. We all want to know why we are here, why there is pain, and how we can make life more enjoyable. The four parts of this book provide us with reliable answers to these questions, as well as clear explanations of the gist of Kabbalah and its practical implementations.

Part One discusses the discovery of the wisdom of Kabbalah, and how it was developed, and finally concealed until our time. Part Two introduces the gist of the wisdom of Kabbalah, using ten easy drawings to help us understand the structure of the spiritual worlds, and how they relate to our world. Part Three

Further Reading

reveals Kabbalistic concepts that are largely unknown to the public, and Part Four elaborates on practical means you and I can take, to make our lives better and more enjoyable for us and for our children.

INTERMEDIATE

The Kabbalah Experience

The depth of the wisdom revealed in the questions and answers within this book will inspire readers to reflect and contemplate. This is not a book to race through, but rather one that should be read thoughtfully and carefully. With this approach, readers will begin to experience a growing sense of enlightenment while simply absorbing the answers to the questions every Kabbalah student asks along the way.

The Kabbalah Experience is a guide from the past to the future, revealing situations that all students of Kabbalah will experience at some point along their journeys. For those who cherish every moment in life, this book offers unparalleled insights into the timeless wisdom of Kabbalah.

The Path of Kabbalah

This unique book combines beginners' material with more advanced concepts and teachings. If you have read a book or two of Laitman's, you will find this book very easy to relate to.

While touching upon basic concepts such as perception of reality and Freedom of Choice, *The Path of Kabbalah* goes deeper and expands beyond the scope of beginners' books. The structure of the worlds, for example, is explained in greater detail here than in the "pure" beginners' books. Also described is the spiritual root of mundane matters such as the Hebrew calendar and the holidays.

ADVANCED

The Science of Kabbalah

Kabbalist and scientist Rav Michael Laitman, PhD, designed this book to introduce readers to the special language and terminology of the authentic wisdom of Kabbalah. Here, Rav Laitman reveals authentic Kabbalah in a manner both rational and mature. Readers are gradually led to understand the logical design of the Universe and the life that exists in it.

The Science of Kabbalah, a revolutionary work unmatched in its clarity, depth, and appeal to the intellect, will enable readers to approach the more technical works of Baal HaSulam (Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag), such as *The Study of the Ten Sefirot* and *The Book of Zohar*. Readers of this book will enjoy the satisfying answers to the riddles of life that only authentic Kabbalah provides. Travel through the pages and prepare for an astonishing journey into the Upper Worlds.

Introduction to the Book of Zohar

This volume, along with *The Science of Kabbalah*, is a required preparation for those who wish to understand the hidden message of *The Book of Zohar*. Among the many helpful topics dealt with in this text is an introduction to the “language of roots and branches,” without which the stories in *The Zohar* are mere fable and legend. *Introduction to the Book of Zohar* will provide readers with the necessary tools to understand authentic Kabbalah as it was originally meant to be—as a means to attain the Upper Worlds.

Further Reading

The Book of Zohar: annotations to the Ashlag commentary

The Book of Zohar (The Book of Radiance) is an age-old source of wisdom and the basis for all Kabbalistic literature. Since its appearance nearly 2,000 years ago, it has been the primary, and often only, source used by Kabbalists.

For centuries, Kabbalah was hidden from the public, which was deemed not yet ready to receive it. However, our generation has been designated by Kabbalists as the first generation that is ready to grasp the concepts in *The Zohar*. Now we can put these principles into practice in our lives.

Written in a unique and metaphorical language, *The Book of Zohar* enriches our understanding of reality and widens our worldview. Although the text deals with one subject only—how to relate to the Creator—it approaches it from different angles. This allows each of us to find the particular phrase or word that will carry us into the depths of this profound and timeless wisdom.

GOOD FOR ALL

The Point in the Heart

The Point in the Heart; a Source of Delight for My Soul is a unique collection of excerpts from a man whose wisdom has earned him devoted students in North America and the world over. Michael Laitman is a scientist, a Kabbalist, and a great thinker who presents ancient wisdom in a compelling style.

This book does not profess to teach Kabbalah, but rather gently introduces ideas from the teaching. *The Point in the Heart* is a window to a new perception. As the author himself testifies to the wisdom of Kabbalah, “It is a science of emotion, a science of pleasure. You are welcome to open and to taste.”

Attaining the Worlds Beyond

From the introduction to *Attaining the Worlds Beyond*: “...Not feeling well on the Jewish New Year’s Eve of September 1991, my teacher called me to his bedside and handed me his notebook, saying, ‘Take it and learn from it.’ The following morning, he perished in my arms, leaving me and many of his other disciples without guidance in this world.

“He used to say, ‘I want to teach you to turn to the Creator, rather than to me, because He is the only strength, the only Source of all that exists, the only one who can really help you, and He awaits your prayers for help. When you seek help in your search for freedom from the bondage of this world, help in elevating yourself above this world, help in finding the self, and help in determining your purpose in life, you must turn to the Creator, who sends you all those aspirations in order to compel you to turn to Him.’”

Attaining the Worlds Beyond holds within it the content of that notebook, as well as other inspiring texts. This book reaches out to all those seekers who want to find a logical, reliable way to understand the world’s phenomena. This fascinating introduction to the wisdom of Kabbalah will enlighten the mind, invigorate the heart, and move readers to the depths of their souls.

Bail Yourself Out

In *Bail Yourself Out: how you can emerge strong from the world crisis*, Laitman introduces several extraordinary concepts that weave into a complete solution: 1) The crisis is essentially not financial, but *psychological*: People have stopped trusting each other, and where there is no trust there is no trade, but only war, isolation, and pain. 2) This mistrust is a result of a *natural process* that’s been evolving for millennia and is culminating today. 3)

Further Reading

To resolve the crisis, we must first *understand* the process that created the alienation. 4) The first, and most important, step to understanding the crisis is to *inform* people about this natural process through books, such as *Bail Yourself Out*, TV, cinema, and any other means of communication. 5) With this information, we will “*revamp*” our relationships and build them on trust, collaboration, and most importantly, care. This mending process will guarantee that we and our families will prosper in a world of plenty.

Basic Concepts in Kabbalah

This is a book to help readers cultivate an *approach to the concepts* of Kabbalah, to spiritual objects, and to spiritual terms. By reading and re-reading in this book, one develops internal observations, senses, and approaches that did not previously exist within. These newly acquired observations are like sensors that “feel” the space around us that is hidden from our ordinary senses.

Hence, *Basic Concepts in Kabbalah* is intended to foster the contemplation of spiritual terms. Once we are integrated with these terms, we can begin to see, with our inner vision, the unveiling of the spiritual structure that surrounds us, almost as if a mist has been lifted.

This book is not aimed at the study of facts. Instead, it is a book for those who wish to awaken the deepest and subtlest sensations they can possess.

The Wise Heart:

Tales and allegories by three contemporary sages

“Our inner work is to tune our hearts and our senses to perceive the spiritual world,” says Michael Laitman in the poem *Spiritual Wave*. *The Wise Heart* is a lovingly crafted anthology comprised of tales and allegories by Kabbalist Dr. Michael Laitman, his

mentor, Rav Baruch Ashlag (Rabash), and Rabash's father and mentor, Rav Yehuda Ashlag, author of the acclaimed *Sulam* (Ladder) commentary on *The Book of Zohar*.

Kabbalah students and enthusiasts in Kabbalah often wonder what the spiritual world actually feels like to a Kabbalist. The allegories in this delicate compilation provide a glimpse into those feelings.

The poems herein are excerpts from letters and lessons given by these three spiritual giants to their students through the years. They offer surprising and often amusing depictions of human nature, with a loving and tender touch that is truly unique to Kabbalists. Indeed, *The Wise Heart* is a gift of wisdom and delight for any wisdom seeking heart.

TEXTBOOKS

Shamati

Rav Michael Laitman's words on the book: Among all the texts and notes that were used by my teacher, Rav Baruch Shalom Halevi Ashlag (the Rabash), there was one special notebook he always carried. This notebook contained the transcripts of his conversations with his father, Rav Yehuda Leib Halevi Ashlag (Baal HaSulam), author of the *Sulam* (Ladder) commentary on *The Book of Zohar*, *The Study of the Ten Sefirot* (a commentary on the texts of the Kabbalist, Ari), and of many other works on Kabbalah.

Not feeling well on the Jewish New Year's Eve of September 1991, the Rabash summoned me to his bedside and handed me a notebook, whose cover contained only one word, *Shamati* (I Heard). As he handed the notebook, he said, "Take it and learn from it." The following morning, my teacher perished in

Further Reading

my arms, leaving me and many of his other disciples without guidance in this world.

Committed to Rabash's legacy to disseminate the wisdom of Kabbalah, I published the notebook just as it was written, thus retaining the text's transforming powers. Among all the books of Kabbalah, *Shamati* is a unique and compelling creation.

Kabbalah for the Student

Kabbalah for the Student offers authentic texts by Rav Yehuda Ashlag, author of the *Sulam* (Ladder) commentary on *The Book of Zohar*, his son and successor, Rav Baruch Ashlag, as well as other great Kabbalists. It also offers illustrations that accurately depict the evolution of the Upper Worlds as Kabbalists experience them. The book also contains several explanatory essays that help us understand the texts within.

In *Kabbalah for the Student*, Rav Michael Laitman, PhD, Rav Baruch Ashlag's personal assistant and prime student, compiled all the texts a Kabbalah student would need in order to attain the spiritual worlds. In his daily lessons, Rav Laitman bases his teaching on these inspiring texts, thus helping novices and veterans alike to better understand the spiritual path we undertake on our fascinating journey to the Higher Realms.

Rabash—the Social Writings

Rav Baruch Shalom HaLevi Ashlag (Rabash) played a remarkable role in the history of Kabbalah. He provided us with the necessary final link connecting the wisdom of Kabbalah to our human experience. His father and teacher was the great Kabbalist, Rav Yehuda Leib HaLevi Ashlag, known as Baal HaSulam for his *Sulam* (Ladder) commentary on *The Book of Zohar*. Yet, if not for the essays of Rabash, his father's efforts to disclose the wisdom of Kabbalah to all would have been in vain. Without those essays,

few would be able to achieve the spiritual attainment that Baal HaSulam so desperately wanted us to obtain.

The writings in this book aren't just for reading. They are more like an experiential user's guide. It is very important to work with them in order to see what they truly contain. The reader should try to put them into practice by living out the emotions Rabash so masterfully describes. He always advised his students to summarize the articles, to work with the texts, and those who attempt it discover that it always yields new insights. Thus, readers are advised to work with the texts, summarize them, translate them, and implement them in the group. Those who do so will discover the power in the writings of Rabash.

Gems of Wisdom:

words of the great Kabbalists from all generations

Through the millennia, Kabbalists have bequeathed us with numerous writings. In their compositions, they have laid out a structured method that can lead, step by step, unto a world of eternity and wholeness.

Gems of wisdom is a collection of selected excerpts from the writings of the greatest Kabbalists from all generations, with particular emphasis on the writings of Rav Yehuda Leib HaLevi Ashlag (Baal HaSulam), author of the *Sulam* [Ladder] commentary of *The Book of Zohar*.

The sections have been arranged by topics, to provide the broadest view possible on each topic. This book is a useful guide to any person desiring spiritual advancement.

FOR CHILDREN

Together Forever

On the surface, *Together Forever* is a children's story. But like all good children's stories, it transcends boundaries of age, culture, and upbringing.

In *Together Forever*, the author tells us that if we are patient and endure the trials we encounter along our life's path, we will become stronger, braver, and wiser. Instead of growing weaker, we will learn to create our own magic and our own wonders as only a magician can.

In this warm, tender tale, Michael Laitman shares with children and parents alike some of the gems and charms of the spiritual world. The wisdom of Kabbalah is filled with spellbinding stories. *Together Forever* is yet another gift from this ageless source of wisdom, whose lessons make our lives richer, easier, and far more fulfilling.

Miracles Can Happen

"Miracles Can Happen," "Princes Peony," and "Mary and the Paints" are only three of ten beautiful stories for children ages 3-10. Written especially for children, these short tales convey a single message of love, unity, and care for all beings. The unique illustrations were carefully crafted to contribute to the overall message of the book, and a child who's heard or read any story in this collection is guaranteed to go to sleep smiling.

ABOUT BNEI BARUCH

Bnei Baruch is an international group of Kabbalists who share the wisdom of Kabbalah with the entire world. The study materials (in over 30 languages) are authentic Kabbalah texts that were passed down from generation to generation.

History and Origin

In 1991, following the passing of his teacher, Rav Baruch Shalom HaLevi Ashlag (The Rabash), Michael Laitman, Professor of Ontology and the Theory of Knowledge, PhD in Philosophy and Kabbalah, and MSc in Medical Bio-Cybernetics, established a Kabbalah study group called “Bnei Baruch.” He called it Bnei Baruch (Sons of Baruch) to commemorate his mentor, whose side he never left in the final twelve years of his life, from 1979 to 1991. Dr. Laitman had been Ashlag’s prime student and personal assistant, and is recognized as the successor to Rabash’s teaching method.

The Rabash was the firstborn son and successor of Rav Yehuda Leib HaLevi Ashlag, the greatest Kabbalist of the 20th century. Rav Ashlag authored the most authoritative and comprehensive commentary on *The Book of Zohar*, titled *The Sulam* (Ladder) *Commentary*. He was the first to reveal the complete method for spiritual ascent, and thus was known as Baal HaSulam (Owner of the Ladder).

Bnei Baruch bases its entire study method on the path paved by these two great spiritual leaders.

The Study Method

The unique study method developed by Baal HaSulam and his son, the Rabash, is taught and applied on a daily basis by Bnei Baruch. This method relies on authentic Kabbalah sources such as *The Book of Zohar*, by Rabbi Shimon Bar-Yochai, *The Tree of Life*, by the Ari, and *The Study of the Ten Sefirot*, by Baal HaSulam.

While the study relies on authentic Kabbalah sources, it is carried out in simple language and uses a scientific, contemporary approach. The unique combination of an academic study method and personal experiences broadens the students' perspective and awards them a new perception of the reality they live in. Those on the spiritual path are thus given the necessary tools to study themselves and their surrounding reality.

Bnei Baruch is a diverse movement of tens of thousands of students worldwide. Students can choose their own paths and intensity of their studies according to their unique conditions and abilities.

The Message

The essence of the message disseminated by Bnei Baruch is universal: unity of the people, unity of nations and love of man.

For millennia, Kabbalists have been teaching that love of man should be the foundation of all human relations. This love prevailed in the days of Abraham, Moses, and the group of Kabbalists that they established. If we make room for these seasoned, yet contemporary values, we will discover that we possess the power to put differences aside and unite.

The wisdom of Kabbalah, hidden for millennia, has been waiting for the time when we would be sufficiently developed and ready to implement its message. Now, it is emerging as a

solution that can unite diverse factions everywhere, enabling us, as individuals and as a society, to meet today's challenges.

Activities

Bnei Baruch was established on the premise that “only by expansion of the wisdom of Kabbalah to the public can we be awarded complete redemption” (Baal HaSulam). Therefore, Bnei Baruch offers a variety of ways for people to explore and discover the purpose of their lives, providing careful guidance for beginners and advanced students alike.

Internet

Bnei Baruch's international website, www.kab.info, presents the authentic wisdom of Kabbalah using essays, books, and original texts. It is by far the most expansive source of authentic Kabbalah material on the Internet, containing a unique, extensive library for readers to thoroughly explore the wisdom of Kabbalah. Additionally, the media archive, www.kabbalahmedia.info, contains thousands of media items, downloadable books, and a vast reservoir of texts, video and audio files in many languages.

Bnei Baruch's online Learning Center offers free Kabbalah courses for beginners, initiating students into this profound body of knowledge in the comfort of their own homes.

Dr. Laitman's daily lessons are also aired live on www.kab.tv, along with complementary texts and diagrams.

All these services are provided free of charge.

Television

In Israel, Bnei Baruch established its own channel, no. 66 on both cable and satellite, which broadcasts 24/7 Kabbalah

TV. The channel is also aired on the Internet at www.kab.tv. All broadcasts on the channel are free of charge. Programs are adapted for all levels, from complete beginners to the most advanced.

Conferences

Twice a year, students gather for a weekend of study and socializing at conferences in various locations in the U.S., as well as an annual convention in Israel. These gatherings provide a great setting for meeting like-minded people, for bonding, and for expanding one's understanding of the wisdom.

Kabbalah Books

Bnei Baruch publishes authentic books, written by Baal HaSulam, his son, the Rabash, as well as books by Dr. Michael Laitman. The books of Rav Ashlag and Rabash are essential for complete understanding of the teachings of authentic Kabbalah, explained in Laitman's lessons.

Dr. Laitman writes his books in a clear, contemporary style based on the key concepts of Baal HaSulam. These books are a vital link between today's readers and the original texts. All the books are available for sale, as well as for free download.

Paper

Kabbalah Today is a free paper produced and disseminated by Bnei Baruch in many languages, including English, Hebrew, Spanish, and Russian. It is apolitical, non-commercial, and written in a clear, contemporary style. The purpose of *Kabbalah Today* is to expose the vast knowledge hidden in the wisdom of Kabbalah at no cost and in a clear, engaging style for readers everywhere.

Kabbalah Lessons

As Kabbalists have been doing for centuries, Laitman gives a daily lesson. The lessons are given in Hebrew and are simultaneously interpreted into seven languages—English, Russian, Spanish, French, German, Italian, and Turkish—by skilled and experienced interpreters. As with everything else, the live broadcast is free of charge.

Funding

Bnei Baruch is a non-profit organization for teaching and sharing the wisdom of Kabbalah. To maintain its independence and purity of intentions, Bnei Baruch is not supported, funded, or otherwise tied to any government or political organization.

Since the bulk of its activity is provided free of charge, the prime sources of funding for the group's activities are donations and tithing—contributed by students on a voluntary basis—and Dr. Laitman's books, which are sold at cost.

HOW TO CONTACT BNEI BARUCH

1057 Steeles Avenue West, Suite 532
Toronto, ON, M2R 3X1
Canada

Bnei Baruch USA,
2009 85th street, #51,
Brooklyn, New York, 11214
USA

E-mail: info@kabbalah.info
Web site: www.kabbalah.info

Toll free in USA and Canada:
1-866-LAITMAN

Fax: 1-905 886 9697

