

# **\*\* Shaar Avodas HaElokim - Gate of Service of G-d \*\***

*(with select classic commentaries)*  
**from Chovos Halevavos - Duties of the Heart**  
**by Rabeinu Bahya ibn Paquda zt'l**

original english translation by Rabbi Moses Hyamson, former chief Rabbi of British Empire, New York, 1925  
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## **Rabbi YS's Foreword:**

The following is a translation of the third gate of one of the earliest of the classic mussar works, Chovos Halevavos by Rabeinu Bahya. The book has inspired many great men to walk in its ways and review it throughout their lives.

This translation is based on the brilliant translation by Rabbi Moses Hyamson O.B.M., the former chief Rabbi and head Dayan of England between 1911 and 1913 which I obtained with permission from hebrewbooks.org (only gates 2 and 3 are available there). I have tried to add classic commentaries and adapt the translation based on those commentaries. Rabbi Yosef Sebag studied in various yeshivas under great Torah scholars such as Rabbi Dov Shwartzman zt'l (~2 years), Rabbi Nachman Bulman zt'l, Rabbi Nissan Kaplan (~5 years). He also completed a degree in physics at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and was a research associate in nuclear physics for some time before heading off to yeshiva.

- Yosef Sebag, Jerusalem Tamuz 5774 - July 2014

## **Abbreviations used in this translation:**

**MH** - Manoach HeLevavos commentary by Rabbi Manoach Hendel (1540-1611)  
**TL** - Tov HaLevanon commentary by Rabbi Yisrael Halevi (1700-1777)  
**PL** - Pas Lechem commentary by Rabbi Chaim Avraham Hacoen (1740-1815)  
**ML** - Marpe Lenefesh commentary by Rabbi Refael Mendel (1825-1895)  
**LT** - Lev Tov commentary by Rabbi Pinchas Lieberman (1929-2005)

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On the service of G-d, expounding various grounds for the obligation to assume the service of G-d, blessed be He.

## **\*\*\* INTRODUCTION \*\*\***

Having, in the previous treatises, expounded the obligation of wholeheartedly acknowledging the unity of G-d and the obligation of examining the various modes of His benefits to mankind, we have next to indicate what a human

being's conduct should be, once the foregoing has become clear to him - and that is to assume the obligation of the service of G-d, as reason would require from a beneficiary to his benefactor.

It is proper to open this treatise with an exposition of the various kinds of benefits human beings render each other, and the corresponding obligations of gratitude. We shall then ascend to the consideration of what we owe to the exalted Creator in praise and thanksgiving for His abounding kindness and great goodness to us.

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: i.e. once all this has become clear to a person, namely, that there is a G-d above and below and He alone created everything, and it has also become clear how much abounding beneficence He has bestowed on us, as written in the previous two gates - the consequence of this is that a human being is under duty to assume on himself the yoke of the service of G-d.)

We assert, as a truth generally recognized, that if anyone benefits us, we are under an obligation of gratitude to him in accordance with his intent to help us. Even if he actually falls short, owing to some mishap which prevents his benefiting us, we are still bound to be grateful to him, since we are convinced that he has a benevolent disposition towards us and his intention is to be of benefit to us. On the other hand, should we obtain any benefit through one who had no such intention, the duties of gratitude to that person would cease and we are under no such obligation.

(*Pas Lechem*: "he has a (1) benevolent disposition towards us and (2) his intention is to be of benefit" - these are two different modes, for it is possible to find someone who loves his friend and has a benevolent disposition towards him, but nevertheless never has intent to try to actually benefit him, whether due to laziness or due to inability. Likewise, it is possible to find someone who has intent to be of actual benefit to his fellow, but not because he has a benevolent disposition towards him, but rather due to some outside interest, either to appear noble, or to annoy his enemy who desires evil for that fellow... Hence, the author wrote two expressions: "*benevolent disposition*" and "*intent to benefit*". Or perhaps the intent is for positive benefit and saving from harm.)

*Marpe Lenefesh*: [According to reason] everything goes after the intent. If he benefits him without outside interest, even though sometimes he falls short and is prevented from this due to some incident or mischance, nevertheless - we are under duty to thank him for his good intention and faithful heart.)

When we consider the benefits human beings render each other, we find that these fall into five classes:

- (1) a father's beneficence to his child;
- (2) a master's to his servant;
- (3) a wealthy man's beneficence to the poor for the sake of heavenly reward;
- (4) the beneficence rendered by human beings to each other in order to gain a good name, honor and worldly reward;
- (5) the powerful man's beneficence to the weak, induced by pity for the latter and sympathy with his condition.

(*Pas Lechem*: When the powerful man sees the pain of the weak, then his heart is moved by the latter's pain. And even when he no longer sees him, nevertheless, whenever he remembers him, he feels pain at his plight and bad lot.)

*Tov Halevanon*: The powerful man is pained by him and feels the wretchedness of this weak person and that he has no helper.)

Let us now consider the motive in each of the classes mentioned:

Is it disinterested, the sole aim being to help the beneficiary, or is it not so?

First, a father's beneficence to his child: It is obvious that the father's motive in this is to further his own interest. For the child is a part of the father, whose chief hope is centered in his offspring. Do you not observe that in regard to its food, drink, clothing and in warding off all hurt from it, a father is more sensitive about his child than about himself? To secure ease for it, the burden of toil and weariness is lightly borne by him, the feelings of tenderness and pity for their offspring being naturally implanted in parents.

(*Pas Lechem*: "whose chief hope is centered in his offspring" - he hopes to receive from his offspring a future and a hope, either by having a name and a remnant in the world through his offspring, something human beings naturally long for. Or, he hopes through torah law, that "a son brings merit to his father" (Sanhedrin 104a), for "the crown of elders is grandchildren" (Mishlei 17:6). He first

mentioned the reason that the child is a branch of his tree, and it is a logical reason that the Understanding obligates a bit. Afterwards, he brought the second reason of "natural instinct" - that even if it were without any logical reason, for natural love is without any reason.) 3

Nevertheless, the Torah and reason impose upon children the duty of serving, honoring and revering their parents, as Scripture says: *"Ye shall, everyone, revere his father and his mother"* (Vayikra 19:3); *"Hear, O my son, the instruction of your father and forsake not the law of your mother"* (Mishlei 1:8) ; further, *"A son honors his father, and a servant his master"* (Malachi 1:6). (And these duties are enjoined) despite that the father is impelled by a natural instinct and the benefaction comes from G-d, while the parent is only the agent (i.e. G-d provides the benefits He decreed for the child through the father - TL).

(*Pas Lechem*: *"Ye shall, everyone, revere his father and his mother"* - the author did not bring the commandment "honor your father and your mother" (Levit. 20:12) from the Ten Commandments. The reason being that his intent is to demonstrate that the torah commanded this from the perspective of human understanding not as a statute (without reason) like other statutes of the torah (such as shatnez or milk and meat). In the Ten Commandments, it says "honor your father... in order that you lengthen your days". Once the torah designated reward as such, the status of the commandment appears to be as a Biblical precept (i.e. not a precept derived from reason). But in the verse, "Ye shall, everyone, revere his father and his mother", there it reveals that the torah obligates this from the side of Reason. Hence, the torah wrote the mother first, since she toiled more in his upbringing. And on "honor", he brought the verse "A son honors his father, and a servant his master", which clearly shows from the language of the verse that the intent is from Reason, since it was not stated as a command but rather in a language of "custom of the world", as a natural duty derived from common sense...[see there for more].)

The kindness of a master to his servant: It is obvious that the master's intent is to improve his property by an outlay of capital, since he needs his servant's work, and his motive in this is to further his own interest. Nevertheless, the Creator, blessed be He, imposes upon the servant the duties of service and gratitude, as it is said, *"A son honors his father and a servant his master"* (Malachi 1:6).

(*Pas Lechem*: It appears the author's intent is to bring a proof from this verse that the servant is under duty to show gratitude to his master. The reason being that it is learned out from the verse's context of a son's honor for his father. If so what "honor" is a servant obligated in besides his service? Thanking him verbally.)

The rich man's beneficence to the poor man for the sake of a heavenly reward: He is like a merchant who acquires a great and enduring pleasure which he will enjoy at the end of a definite time by means of a small, perishable and inconsiderable gift which he makes immediately. So the rich man only intends to win glory for his soul at the close of his earthly existence by the benefaction which G-d entrusted to him, in order to bestow it upon anyone who will be worthy of it. Yet it is generally recognized that it is proper to thank and laud a benefactor. Even though the latter's motive was to gain spiritual glory hereafter, gratitude is, nevertheless, due to him, as Job said: *"[because I delivered the poor who cried for help, and the fatherless who had none to help him:] the blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me"* (Job 29:13); and further, *"did not his heart bless me, when he warmed himself with the fleece of my sheep?"* (Job 31:20).

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: *"for the sake of a heavenly reward"* - i.e. even if his intent is for heavenly reward [which is the highest of the ulterior motives], nevertheless, he is like a merchant who purchases merchandise with little money with intent that he will profit afterwards with this merchandise a lot of money. So too, for one who gives charity to receive heavenly reward. With the small donation he gives to the poor person, he intends to acquire a great and enduring pleasure, namely, the afterlife.

*"the benefaction which G-d entrusted to him"* - Certainly the extra benefits a person has in his possession which are beyond his needs are only like a deposit by him, and he is like a manager and dispenser of it, to give them to those who are worthy of receiving it, as Rabbi Moshe Alshich expounded on the verse: "that your brother may live with you" (Vayikra 25:36), i.e. the life of your brother, i.e. his sustenance, is with you and by you. For G-d wants to bring merit to the wealthy person through the mitzvah of charity...)

Kindness men show each other for the sake of praise, honor and worldly rewards: This is as if one were to deposit an article in another's care or entrust him with money, because of the depositor's apprehension that he may need it later on.

(*Pas Lechem*: He fears that if it remains in his hand, perhaps it will be lost through some mishap, and it will not be his at a time of need.)

Although, in benefiting another person, the aim is to further his own interests, the benefactor is nevertheless entitled to praise and gratitude for his kindness, as the wise king said, "*Many beseech the generous man, and everyone is a friend to him that gives gifts*" (Mishlei 19:6) ; and he also said, "*A man's gift makes room for him and brings him before great men*" (Mishlei 18:16).

(*Pas Lechem*: "*praise and gratitude*" - [Regarding gratitude] "*many beseech the generous man*" - Even though this verse makes no mention of praise, nevertheless, since the way of the world is to beseech a generous man, if so, reason obligates that when one beseeches him and he accedes to your request that you must thank him for it.

[Regarding praise] - "*A man's gift makes room for him and brings him before great men*" - it appears from this verse that his giving acquires for him nobility, hence the receiver must praise him.)

The kindness of one who has compassion on a poor man in pain: The benefactor's motive is to get rid of his own distress that results from depression and grief for the one he pities. He is like one who cures a pain which has attacked him by means of the bounties that G-d bestowed upon him. Nevertheless, he is not to be left without praise, as Job said, "*Could I see any perish for want of clothing or any poor without covering? Did not his heart bless me, when he warmed himself with the fleece of my sheep?*" (Job 31:19-20).

(*Pas Lechem*: "*nevertheless, he is not to be left without praise*" - the author's intent in using this expression is that for this category, Reason has the tendency to deem him least worthy of praise than all the previous categories, because here the benefactor is acting to relieve an immediate pain he has. Unlike the previous cases, where the benefactor's benefit was not immediately felt and apparent. Even so, he is not to be left without any praise.

*Tov Halevanon*: "*Could I see any perish for want of clothing or any poor without covering?*" - even though the author already brought a proof from Job previously on someone giving charity to receive heavenly reward (and here he is bringing a proof for one who acts out of pity). [Answer:] There he brought a proof from the verse "The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me", namely that it is proper for the blessing of the poor to come on him as a reward for the mitzvah (good deed) he did, since certainly, he also had intent for heavenly reward in giving charity to the poor in the case when he did not feel his pain. For a man is not so moved to feel pity in giving food to a poor person because the suffering of hunger is not so visible to the eye. Whereas here, the verse is speaking of a case where a person is distressed and feels pain on seeing the poor man perishing without any clothing, and the eye sees his predicament, naked and destitute.)

From what has here been advanced, it is clear that anyone who bestows benefits on others has first his own interest in mind - either to secure an honorable distinction in this world or hereafter, or relieve himself of pain, or improve his material possessions. Yet all these considerations do not absolve the beneficiaries of their duty of praising, thanking, respecting and loving their benefactors and making them some return. And this, despite that the benefit was only loaned to the benefactors (since everything belongs to G-d as written "gold and silver is Mine" Chagai 2:8 - *PL*); that they were compelled to dispense it, as we have pointed out; and that their beneficence is not permanent, their generosity not prolonged, and their benevolence is mixed with the intent either to further their own interest or to ward off harm. If so, how much more then does a human being owe service, praise and gratitude to Him who created the benefit and the benefactor, whose beneficence is unlimited, permanent, perpetual, without any motive of self-interest, or purpose of warding off injury, but only an expression of grace and loving-kindness emanating from Him towards all human beings.

(*Pas Lechem*: "*and their benevolence is mixed*" - it seems that this is the same as what he wrote before "that they were compelled to dispense it", but in truth, they are two categories. Because in the latter he was referring to their free choice - that their free choice is not completely free since necessity compels them, either due to natural instinct or worldly necessity. On the other hand, this case [that "*their benevolence is mixed*"] means, even if we you were to suppose they had free will

(and nothing compelled them) and we will say that they are being benevolent in this, nevertheless, it is not true benevolence since certainly, "their benevolence is mixed, etc."

*Tov Halevanon: "who created the benefit and the benefactor" - since all good that manifests in the world comes from G-d's decree [as will be explained in the Gate of Trust]*

We should furthermore come to understand that any human being who renders a kindness to another in any of the modes above specified is not superior to the person whom he benefits, except in some incidental detail, while in their humanity and essence (i.e. body and soul - *PL*) they are alike and akin to one another, in substance and form, in physical construct and figure (or mentality - Gen. 1:27) in their natures and in a larger part of what happens to them. Nevertheless the beneficiary, as we have set forth, is under an obligation of service to his benefactor.

And if we thought that the beneficiary was extremely defective and imperfect in his physical conformation, figure and appearance [we would conclude that], the obligation of service on his part would be so much the greater. So also, if we should deem the benefactor the best and most perfect of all beings, while the beneficiary was the most defective of all things and the weakest of all creatures, reason would require that the service to the benefactor should be increased to an infinite degree.

Following this analogy, when we investigate, through reason, the relation of the Creator, blessed be He, to human beings, we will find that the Creator, blessed be He, is infinitely exalted and glorified above everything existing, above all that can be apprehended by the senses or conceived by the intellect as has been expounded in the first treatise of this book; and that a human being, in comparison with other species of animals, is the most defective and weakest of them all.

This can be demonstrated in three respects:

(1) In respect to his infancy and early childhood: For we find that other species of living creatures are stronger than he is, better able to endure pain and move independently, and do not trouble their parents in their period of growth to the same extent as a human being does.

(2) In respect to the filth and foulness within the human body and the similar appearances on the skin when one has neglected to wash and cleanse himself for a length of time, as also in respect to the state of the body after death-the discharge of a human corpse being more nauseating than that of the carcasses of other creatures, and a human being's excrement more offensive than that of other creatures. Likewise for his other waste matter (such as waste from the nose or ears - *PL*).

*(Marpe Lenefesh: "and the similar appearances on the skin" - i.e. it is similar to the filth and foulness inside the body if he does not wash himself for a long time, such as skin diseases, or the like, unlike the animals even if they don't bathe.)*

(3) In respect to a human being's incompetence when, due to a brain injury, he loses the rational faculty which G-d bestowed upon him and which constitutes his superiority to the other creatures that are irrational. For at such times he is stupider and more senseless than other animals. He may inflict serious injuries on himself and even kill himself. Most animals, too, we find, possess an apprehension of what will be to their advantage, and show an ingenuity in obtaining their food, while many intellectual men fall short in this regard, not to speak of one who has lost his intellect.

*(Marpe Lenefesh: "due to a brain injury" - hence, he lost his ability to reason, then he is "stupider and more senseless", like the way of the crazy people. For then he is worse than an animal, because despite that an animal does not have an intellect, nevertheless, it does not act crazily. Sometimes he inflicts on himself serious injury or even kills himself, unlike the animals who recognize what will be to their advantage and show ingenuity in obtaining their food such as the spider's web or the honeycomb of the bee, or the like, something which many wise men cannot do like them.)*

When we comprehend in our thoughts on the greatness of the Creator, exalted be He, on His infinite might, wisdom and wealth [i.e. resources]; and then turn our attention to a man's weakness and deficiency, in that he never attains perfection; when we consider his poverty and lack of what he needs to supply his wants and then investigate the numerous benefits and favors which the Creator has bestowed on him; when we reflect that the Creator has created man as he is with deficiencies in his very being - poor and needing for his development all necessities which he can

only obtain by exerting himself - this too stems from the Creator's mercy to him, so that he may know himself, examine all his conditions and cleave, under all circumstances, to the service of G-d, and so receive for it the reward of the world to come, for the attainment of which he was created, as we have already set forth in the second treatise of this book - how much indeed then does a human being owe to the blessed Creator, in service, thanksgiving and continuous praise, in view of the demonstration already given of the obligation of praise and gratitude that human beings owe to each other for favors rendered them.

(*Tov Halevanon*: "has created man with deficiencies" - even this that He created man lacking everything, poor and destitute - this is out of mercy for man, in order that he examine his matters and sees his lacking, and that he has no other option than to lift his eyes to his Father in heaven.

*Pas Lechem*: i.e. everything that G-d does with man - it is all for man's good and due to G-d's compassion for him. Whether that which man is born lacking everything, or whether that which he is forced to toil and exert himself for all of his needs and for his livelihood.

*Tov Halevanon*: "so that he may examine all his conditions" - i.e. his intellect will push him to assume the service of G-d after he examines all these things.

*Pas Lechem*: "and cleave to the service of G-d" - in everything man does, big or small, G-d is with him, and he can examine through it the kindness of G-d. Hence, after he realizes and it is clear to him that it is all from G-d, and no created being can advise any plan or exercise any control except through G-d's permission - if so, he will place his trust firmly in G-d [and cleave to His service].

"under all circumstances" - whether G-d benefited him or harmed him, as written: "all the ways of G-d are kindness and truth" (Tehilim 25:10), as will be explained in the Gate of Trust.

"receive the reward of the world to come, the attainment of which he was created" - i.e. for this man was created - to cleave to the service of G-d and receive his reward in the next world.)

Should anyone be so foolish as to contest this obligation of a human being towards the Creator - when he examines and closely studies the subject, and acknowledges the truth to himself, the sleeper will surely awake, the negligent will be aroused, the ignorant will investigate, the intelligent will understand, the demonstration of the obligatory character of the service of G-d, through the clear proofs (from reason - *PL*), well known testimony (from scripture - *PL*), and true signs (miracles of the Exodus from Egypt - *ML*); as the prophet, peace be unto him, said concerning one who neglects to reflect upon the obligation of the service of G-d, "Do you thus repay the L-ord, O foolish and unwise people? [is not he your Father that has acquired you? has He not made you, and established you?]" (Devarim 32:6).

Thus the obligation to assume the service of G-d, incumbent on human beings in view of the continuous benefits He bestows on them, has been demonstrated.

In dealing with the subject-matter of this treatise, we have now to expound ten topics:

- (1) the necessity of arousing men to G-d's service, and the methods to be employed to this end;
- (2) the need for each of these methods;
- (3) definition of the service (of G-d); its divisions and degrees;
- (4) the form which the Torah takes to arouse us; its divisions; and the excellencies which men attain through knowledge of the Torah and comprehension of its contents;
- (5) the way in which the exercise of our reasoning faculties prompts us in this regard, set forth in the form of questions and answers;
- (6) the various classes of obligations to the service of G-d, corresponding to the various kinds of benefits received, and their divisions;
- (7) exposition of the minimum of service which the recipient of any benefit owes to the benefactor;
- (8) the difference in the views of the learned in regard to (the problem of) necessity and (divine) justice, and which of these views is nearer the truth;
- (9) the mystery of the purpose for which the human species was created on earth, concisely set forth;
- (10) an account of the use we should make of all our capacities, each in its right place.

(*Tov Halevanon*: "the minimum of service" - i.e. the least and minimum service of G-d which a person does not fulfill his obligation less than this.)

## CHAPTER 1

7

Arousing man to G-d's service and its various branches are necessary on the following grounds. The understanding and the faculty of perception both instruct on human beings the duty of serving G-d. But between the time when the benefits that man receives and the time when he has sufficient intelligence to realize the services he should render in return for them, a long period intervenes. Hence, it is a duty to arouse human beings to their obligations of deeds and inward faith which make the service of G-d complete, so that a human being should not be without religion up to the time when his mental powers have become fully developed.

(*Tov Halevanon*: From the time a human being is born, the beneficence that G-d bestows on him is apparent, but the time when he will be able to comprehend this good through intellectual inquiry is only after he has matured and is able to grasp intellectual things, to understand wisdom, to examine the greatness of the Creator and His benevolence towards him... [*Rabbi YS*: in our era of ketchup and hotdogs, the time when a person thinks on these things starts much later in life if at all])

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: Hence it is proper and a duty to teach him the path he should walk, and the deeds he should do - to stir him and stand him on the true faith from his early years so that he does not walk without religion and without good deeds for a long time. For otherwise it is possible that he will become ingrained in this like a wild horse.)

(now he will explain the 2 divisions of this arousing:)

This calling attention is twofold.

(1) One of them is inherent in the understanding, implanted in the human faculty of cognition, innate from the beginning of his existence.

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: It is in human nature, for every person with intelligence, that just like he knows and can discern between good and evil, so too he knows that it is proper to humble himself before his Benefactor.)

(2) The other is acquired through instruction, namely, the torah, which the prophet conveys to human beings, so as to teach them the mode of service which it is their duty to render to the Creator, blessed be He.

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: There is something additional which arouses him, namely, what he hears and learns from other people, i.e. what we heard from Moshe Rabeinu, peace be unto him, the master of all prophets - how we should serve G-d.)

## CHAPTER 2

Both methods (understanding and torah - *TL*) of calling attention to the service of G-d are necessary because the innate urge of the understanding is weak in three respects; and we are therefore under duty to strengthen it by religious instruction.

First, man is made up of diverse entities, natures conflicting and mutually antagonistic. These entities are his soul and his body.

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: "*natures conflicting*" (literally: overpowering each other) - the nature of the body is to be drawn after the physical, while the nature of the soul is to be drawn after the spiritual. Each tries to overcome the other and wants to conquer the other, that it will be drawn after it, because each one needs the help of the other.)

(*[natures] mutually antagonistic*" (literally: essences which are enhanced in conflicting ways) - this yearns for physical delights and is enhanced by them, while this yearns for spiritual yearnings and is enhanced by them. Hence, they are enhanced in conflicting ways.)

The Creator has implanted in his soul qualities and forces which make him yearn for things, the use of which will promote his physical well-being, so that he will develop vigor to populate the earth, in order that the race may continue while individuals perish. This quality is the desire for bodily pleasures common to all living creatures that propagate their species.

(*Tov Halevanon*: i.e. to build, to plant, in all types of acts and works of his, which deplete his

strength. And even though there is foolishness in this, that he strains himself for a world which is not his, and it should be enough that he troubles himself only for things that endure for the duration of his lifetime. Nevertheless, it is a nature, which the Creator implanted in the hearts of human beings which is necessary for the propagation of the human race, for without this, the world would be desolate.

*"common to all living creatures"* - even other creatures have a nature to amass and hoard more than their needs as we see by the bees and its honey, and other living creatures.

Alternative interpretation:

*Marpe Lenefesh*: without the lust for physical pleasures man would not procreate and the human race would become extinct.

*"The Creator has implanted in his soul"* - the Rambam writes in the Shemonei Perakim that: "even though the nefesh (human soul) is essentially one (i.e. not physically divisible. This is why it is invisible), nevertheless it has 5 "powers", namely, sustenance which allows [the organism] to grow (i.e. an underlying spiritual power which drives and animates the biological cells), feeling, imagination, awareness, and intellect. The intellect is the primary essence while the other powers are implanted by the Creator in order to guide the body, for without this, the body could not endure..." the Rambam ends off there: "and if a man uses all his powers except for the intellect, then it is all for nothing. And this is what scripture says: (Mishlei 19:2) "Also, that the soul be without knowledge is not good; and he that hastens with his feet sins".

*Rabbi YS*: The book Shaarei Kedusha explains that life forms (plants, animals, humans) are a composite of physical and spiritual "souls" of varying degrees and powers. It is simply too complicated for any kind of purely physical machine to (1) grow and (2) reproduce. Physical machines necessarily function in a direct manner, namely, one thing reacts, which causes another to react, etc. motorically. With this limitation it is impossible to build the above. Likewise for things like consciousness. Therefore, it is necessary for a spiritual component to be added to life forms which animates the body and drives the countless simultaneous processes. The soul is able to integrate all these aspects because its essence is not physical and its knowledge is unbound to physical matter and existence. See Gate 1 ch.5 for more.)

The Creator has also engrafted in the human soul other qualities and forces, which, if he uses them, will make him loathe his position in this world and yearn to separate himself from it. This is the desire for perfect wisdom.

*(Marpe Lenefesh*: This is the intellect and understanding, through them he will yearn for lofty spiritual things, not for the body and its pleasures, and he will desire to part from the body and this world, because it yearns for its root [in the higher worlds] as the nature of all things is to yearn for its root.)

Since, however, bodily pleasures come to a man's soul first, already in early youth, and the attachment to them is, from the outset, strong, great and extremely urgent, the desire for sensual pleasure overcomes his other faculties, until it overpowered the intellect, for the sake of which man was created. And so his spiritual sight fails and the indications of his desirable qualities disappear.

*(Marpe Lenefesh*: Hence, the lusts overpowered the intellect, for the intellect is likened to a poor youth [in scripture as in "better a poor and wise child than an old and foolish king who no longer knows to receive admonition" (Koheles 4:13)], while the lusts, which are the yetzer hara (evil inclination) is a foolish elder, since he came before the yetzer tov [good inclination which starts to come after 13 years of age].)

Man therefore needs external means, by the aid of which he may resist his despicable instinct - the lust for animal enjoyments - and vitalize the marks of his noblest endowment - the intellect. These aids are the contents of the Torah, whereby G-d, through His messengers and prophets, taught His creatures the way to serve Him.

*(Pas Lechem*: "vitalize the marks of his noblest endowment" - i.e. to bring out from potential to actual. He used the term "vitalize" (literally: bring to life) since a trait which exists in potential only, is without movement, like a dead thing. But when he takes it out to actual, it moves like a living thing.)

Secondly, the intellect is a spiritual entity, originating in the higher, spiritual world. It is a stranger in this world of gross material bodies. Sensual lust in man is the product of natural forces and of a combination of his physical elements.



Its foundation is in this world, its root in this abode. Food gives it strength. Physical pleasures add to its vigor while the intellect, because it is a stranger here, stands without support or ally, and all are against it. Hence it follows that it must become weak and that it needs an external means to repel the mighty power of lust and overcome it. The Torah is the remedy for such spiritual maladies and moral diseases.

(*Marpe Lenefesh: "the intellect is a spiritual entity"* - As written, "And He breathed into man the soul of life" (Bereishis 2:7), this is the soul which originates from the higher spiritual worlds. And it includes within it all the levels of the spiritual worlds. It has 248 spiritual limbs and 365 spiritual sinews. Therefore, the body was also created in this form, as a tailor who makes a garment like the measure of the man. The body which is physical matter from the ground, is mixed and synthesized from the four elements and their spiritual components. This is called the "foundation soul" (nefesh yesodit). On this, the intellect, or "neshama" abides. The intellect does not benefit from physical pleasures, therefore it has no support or ally in this world, and all of the worldly pleasures are against it. This nefesh (foundation soul) is called the "nefesh bahamit" (animal soul), and it is an intermediary between the physical body and the soul (intellect), as is well explained in the book "Shaarei Kedusha" (essential reading) and in the book of Moshe Alshich.

*Rabbi YS:* the following commentary is not so clear to me, but since he ended off: "understand all this", I tried to translate it anyways.

*Pas Lechem: "Sensual lust in man is the product of natural forces and of a combination of his physical elements"* - "natural forces" is general [physical] human nature. Afterwards he wrote: "combination of his physical elements". Hence, the foundation of lust is in this world. Therefore, he continued "Its foundation is in this world". He added "its root in this abode", because the foundation of something is that which that something is built upon. This corresponds to the "general [physical] human nature", because on top of the necessary needs [of food, etc.] of human nature, lust builds a desire for the superfluous. Hence, to lust, the natural needs are at the level of "foundation". He wrote "root of its abode", a term connotating "dwelling place", corresponding to "combination of his physical elements". Since in them is the power of lust and there is its dwelling place. He used the term "root" because the power of lust which is in potential, is the root of the [active] movements of lust which go out from potential to actual. Understand all this.

"food gives it strength" - corresponding to the potential, while "Physical pleasures add to its vigor" refers to the actual pleasure a man enjoys. This pleasure strengthens the power of desire, namely, lust in its actual state, which then strengthens and vigorates [more] to attain its desires.)

The Torah therefore prohibits many kinds of food, clothing, sexual relations, certain acquisitions and practices, all of which strengthen sensual lust; it also exhorts us to use those means which resist lust and are its opposite. These are prayer, fasting, charity-giving, [acts of] kindness; by which the intellectual faculties are revived and man is aided in this world and for the world to come, as David said: "Your word is a lamp to my feet (in this world - MH) and a light to my path (in the next world - MH)" (Tehilim 119:105) ; "For the commandment is a lamp and the torah is light" (Mishlei 6:23) ; "I saw that wisdom is preferable to folly as light is preferable to darkness" (Koheles 2:13).

(*Pas Lechem: "Prayer"* is opposite to the lust for unbridledness (hefker), wildness, and prikas ol (removal of the yoke of G-d's law) which is found among immoral people, as written "the vile person says 'there is no G-d'" (Tehilim 14:1). "Fasting" is opposite lust for food. "Charity-giving" is opposite the lust for amassing possessions. "Kindness" is the opposite of jealousy and love of harming other people (i.e. cruelty), as written "For they cannot sleep unless they are doing evil, and they are robbed of their sleep unless they cause someone to stumble" (Mishlei 4:16).

*Marpe Lenefesh: "For the commandment is a lamp and the torah is light"* - like a candle which dispels darkness and then one can see what to do, so too the torah enlightens a man, and then he will be able to use his understanding, and not be blinded [by the lusts].)

Third, the sensual desire, constantly employed in feeding the body, never ceases working by day or night (in eating, drinking, or sleeping - TL). The intellect, on the other hand, is only called into activity to help one gratify his passions. Now it is well known that physical faculties which are constantly exercised in accordance with their nature, improve and become more efficient, while those that are less frequently used deteriorate and become inefficient. It logically follows therefore that the sensual desire would become stronger because it is continually exercised, while the intellectual faculty would weaken, because it is so seldom used, and so little for its proper purpose.

Hence it was necessary for there to exist something, whose true (proper) use would not involve man's physical

organs nor the animalistic lusts, but only the exercise of his intellect, freed from the predominance of lusts. This aid is the Torah, the study of which will make the intellect stronger, purer, and more luminous and will drive away from man the folly that masters his soul and prevents him from seeing things as they really are and placing them in their proper relations. As the Psalmist said, "*The law of the L-ord is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of the L-ord is faithful, making wise the simple; the ordinances of the L-ord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the L-ord is pure, enlightening the eyes*" (Ps. 19:8-9).

(*Pas Lechem*: there needs to exist something which will be an aid to the intellect, that this thing can only be employed by an intellect saved from the overpowering of lust - this is the torah. For the torah cannot be employed (studied) unless one throws off of himself all the vanities of this world, at least for that study time period.

[*Rabbi YS*: since he has no hope for monetary profit nor any physical indulgence etc. from torah study. Unlike intellectual study of science or other subjects where he may have hope to get money or honor, etc. Sometimes these subjects may even give intellectual pleasure but they don't carry any moral responsibility. Unlike the torah whose study makes demands on how one should lead his life. One who desires to be morally "free" and follow his lusts, will find nothing but guilt feelings in the study of torah.]

"*whose true (proper) use*" - i.e. the true use, since actually, some employ the crown of torah also for physical things and make it into a spade with which to dig. [a reference to Pirkei Avot 4:7]

"(1) *The law of the L-ord is perfect, restoring the soul; (2) the testimony of the L-ord is faithful, making wise the simple; (3) the ordinances of the L-ord are right, rejoicing the heart; (4) the commandment of the L-ord is pure, enlightening the eyes*" - four terms corresponding to the four things he mentioned above [(1)stronger, (2) purer, (3) more luminous...(4) seeing things as they really are"].

"*restoring the soul*" - corresponding to "*the study of which will make the intellect stronger*", for the term 'restoring the soul' teaches on this.

"*making wise the simple*" - corresponding to "*purer*", that the intellect will be pure through torah study from the impurities of simpletonness.

"*rejoicing the heart*" - corresponding to "*more luminous*" since joy is the spreading out of the inner power towards the outside, as known. This is called "zohar" in Hebrew, as written "And they that are wise shall shine as the brightness (zohar) of the firmament" (Daniel 12:3).

"*enlightening the eyes*" - corresponding to "*will drive away from man the folly*". Since the fool walks in darkness, and there is no blindness like the overpowering of foolishness, as he wrote "*and prevents him from seeing things as they really are*".)

From what has been said, it is clearly established how necessary it is that a human being should be aroused to the service of G-d by the Torah, which includes rational precepts as well as those accepted on authority (prophecy), so that through these we may rise to the service of G-d which, our reason demonstrates, is man's duty and the main purpose for which the human species has been called into existence in this world.

### CHAPTER 3

Definition of the Service of G-d; explanation of its parts; the merits of each of these parts.

Service may be defined as a beneficiary's submission to his benefactor, expressed in rendering good that is within his power to the latter in return for the favor received (i.e. all that is in his power to render - *ML*) . This submission is of two kinds. The first is submission induced by fear, hope, necessity or compulsion. The second is submission arising from a sense of duty, from the conviction that it is right to aggrandize and exalt the person to whom submission is rendered.

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: "*fear, hope, necessity or compulsion*" - that he submits due to fear of punishment. "*hope*" that he hopes for and waits for good reward. Hence, he submits out of necessity and compulsion.

"*the second*" - that it is a duty and the understanding dictates that it is right and proper to submit to this benefactor even without any fear and compulsion.

*Tov Halevanon*: "*fear, hope, necessity or compulsion*" - i.e. that this submission comes from fear of hope, which means something which will come in the future, namely, reward and punishment. It pains him that instead of reward, he will get punishment. These things submit him out of necessity

Of the first kind is that submission to G-d which has been induced by an external stimulus (the torah), as we have mentioned, and the obligation of which arises from hope of reward or fear of punishment in this world and the next (since the torah is built on the foundation of reward and punishment - *ML*). But the second kind is the submission which arises from an inward urge in the intellect (conscience), innate in the nature of a human being in whom body and soul are joined together.

(*Tov Halevanon*: because the soul is joined to the body, i.e. the intellect in the soul causes submission of the body. [*Rabbi YS*: like the rider on a horse])

Both kinds of submission are praiseworthy and lead to salvation in the life hereafter, the world of eternal rest. But one of these leads to the other and is a step by which we ascend to it. The former is the submission induced by the study of the Torah. The [latter] submission which is induced by the urge of the understanding and based on rational demonstrations, is nearer to G-d and more acceptable on seven grounds:

(*Tov Halevanon*: "one of these leads to the other" - i.e. submission due to fear of punishment and hope for reward induced by the torah leads to the submission induced by the understanding. Because before a person will be straight in his intellectual perception, he was not able to resist the lusts which naturally overpowered his intellect, as the author mentioned last chapter. Only when he has submitted his lusts using the torah way (of fear and hope), then this will cause him to ascend to the submission induced by the intellect. Hence it is like a ladder to it.)

(1) First, For the service (of G-d) induced by the study of the Torah, it may be that the person will be *l'shem shamayim* (devoted to G-d alone). It may, however, be hypocritical; the aim may possibly be to obtain praise for it and honor among one's fellow-men, since this kind of service is rooted in, and founded on, hope (of reward) and fear (of punishment). But the service of G-d induced by the intellectual urge is wholly and solely devoted to G-d. No hypocrisy is mingled with it, nor any false pretense for the sake of self-glorification, since this service is not founded on hope or fear, but is based on wisdom and knowledge of what service a created being owes to its Creator.

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: i.e. not that he will certainly always serve out of hypocrisy, only that we find it is so for most people who serve G-d only due to the stimulus of the torah - that their intent is for honor and praise of other people, since the torah is built on the foundation of reward [and punishment], as written many times "if you will listen to My commandments...I will send the rain in its time" (Devarim 11:13-14), and "if you will walk in My statutes..." (Vayikra 26:3), and many curses and punishments if they will not listen. All these things apply to the body. And all the time a person's heart is not perfect with G-d, to serve Him for His sake and His greatness, and the person serves only due to the study of torah, then he will also serve sometimes for honor and praise of other people, since his primary intent is for his own benefit. He will think to himself "what's the difference between receiving benefits from G-d and benefits from human beings?", because he is primarily seeking his own glory. But if he serves G-d from inducement of the understanding, namely, what a created being is obligated to his Creator, if so, certainly he is not serving out of expectation of any reward from his Master. As to why the torah is built on the foundation of reward and punishment, this will be explained soon.

*Pas Lechem*: Since all of his drive is due to desire for reward and personal benefit or the opposite, namely, to flee from punishment. If so, when the opportunity comes for some potential good in this world such as reward from people or praise from them, his heart will turn to this, since who cares whether it is reward in this world or in the next? This is unlike the inducement from the understanding, however, whose aim is not for any hope of personal gain whatsoever.

*Tov Halevanon*: Hence, it is possible that he will combine his fear of punishment and hope for reward from G-d with the fear and hope from human beings since he is habituated in this.)

(2) Secondly, service of G-d induced by the Torah is only rendered as the result of hope of reward or fear of punishment; but the service urged by the understanding comes from volunteering of the soul and its desire to strive with all its might to serve its G-d for His own sake after knowledge and comprehension (of G-d and His greatness and exaltedness - *ML*). For the soul will not freely give all it has, unless it is convinced that what it receives

(*Rabbi YS*: Many commentaries here. Each one adds something important. It seems to me the Lev Tov rendering is closest to the text. Decide for yourself.

*Lev Tov*: The service of G-d which is a result of being stirred by the torah, since it springs from hope for reward and/or fear of punishment, a man does not do it with all his strength and ability. But the service of G-d which is a result of being stirred by the understanding, it can only spring from volunteering of the soul, after knowledge and understanding of the greatness and exaltedness of G-d - out of good will to endeavor with all of its strength, and with great enthusiasm in the service of G-d for His own sake. The reason being that the soul does not volunteer to serve G-d unless it is first convinced that the exchange it will receive for the service, namely, that G-d will be pleased with it, is greater than the service. And the soul will not attain this goal unless it gives itself over to serve G-d with all of its ability and strength. [*Rabbi YS*: i.e. since G-d is pleased only when someone does all that is in his ability to do. The proof is that G-d does not abundantly help a person until the person does everything in his power to do as the Vilna Gaon explained here: [dafyomireview.com/276](http://dafyomireview.com/276) ]

*Tov Halevanon*: i.e. if the soul does something not motivated by reward and punishment, but rather only by willing generosity, such as in the case where a man gives a gift to his friend due to love that he feels towards him, not because he fears him or hopes for some reward in exchange - certainly this is because the contentment he feels that the receiver favorably accepts his gift weighs as much or more than the gift he donated. So too, one who serves G-d out of love, that which G-d desires in his service is [the reward] he receives in exchange for it, and the person who serves thus chooses this exchange more than the toil of his service. (hence he is primarily motivated to please G-d not for self serving reward and punishment - Rabbi YS)

*Manoach Halevavos*: the difference between this case and the first case is that in the first case he pointed out the difference from the aspect of hypocrisy, not from the aspect of strengthening and zeal in the service with all of one's heart and ability. In this second case, he wrote that one who serves from the inducement of the understanding strengthens himself with all of his heart, because he grasps with his intellect that reward and punishment naturally follow the soul (since the favor of G-d is the reward in the afterlife as explained in Gate 4 - Rabbi YS). But one who serves only due to the stimulus of the torah, knows only what is written in the torah, which promised on reward and punishment. But he does not understand that this follows from logic and necessity. Therefore, he is only a "hoper" that the promise will be kept. Therefore his strengthening is not so intense.

"*For the soul will not freely give all it has etc.*" - For example, if one volunteered to donate tzedaka (charity) with money he has. He will not do so unless he is convinced that the reward he will receive in exchange for the deed is greater, and that he will receive more benefit in this than the benefit he would have received if he held on to his money and did not give tzedaka. Apply this example to all others deeds. So too here, the soul will not give all it has (of its powers, efforts) unless it is convinced, etc.

*Marpe Lenefesh*: i.e. if a person did not learn the torah and the rewards and punishments mentioned there, he would not, on his own, be stirred to serve and fulfill the commandments written in the torah. Rather, only after he hopes for reward and fears from the punishment. And after he has been stimulated by the torah, and reached the level that he is not serving in order to get reward as mentioned in #1. This is the difference between the first and this second case. In this second case, he is on a higher level than the first. But if he served G-d through inducement of the understanding, he does not need to be stirred by reward and punishment. Rather, he volunteers on his own and willingly endeavors with all his might in the service of G-d with great enthusiasm.

But this only occurs, "*after knowledge and comprehension*" - "*knowledge*" of G-d and His greatness and exaltedness; and "*comprehension*" that it is fitting to serve G-d, and that man is lacking everything while G-d rules over everything, and the other things which arouse a person to serve G-d, as the author mentioned in Gate 10 ch.3, see there. This knowledge and comprehension is a prerequisite, for without it, the soul will never come to this level, to serve G-d out of love and generous willingness. Nevertheless, even with this knowledge and comprehension, the soul will not freely volunteer all it has, unless it is convinced that what it receives in exchange is greater than what it gives, namely, that it recognizes that through this, it will attain that the Creator will be pleased with it and love it, like a father is pleased with his [righteous] son, as the author wrote in the end of the introduction, namely, that the greatest possible good attainable is that G-d is pleased with him, and likewise for the converse [the greatest evil is that he kindled G-d's wrath due to his sins]. see

there. And this is the main thing of all, to strive that G-d be pleased with him, not that one's intent is to receive any reward, but only to do G-d's will. To understand this fully, it is proper to cite the words of Rabeinu Tam in Sefer Yashar shaar 5: "after we have reached the ultimate purpose.. there is no greater attainment than the Creator's love for a person. For in this love, all good reward is included..." see there powerful words.)

Third, the service due to the urge of the Torah is manifested in external good deeds rather than in inward thoughts and feelings, hidden in the heart. But in the service induced by the understanding, that which is hidden in the heart, namely, the duties of the heart, is many times as much as what is seen in the external activity of the bodily limbs.

*(Pas Lechem: "service due to the urge of the Torah is manifested in external good deeds" - since his motive is on the reward. If so, his intent is only in fulfilling his obligation in the external act. But his heart is not so complete, for if it were possible for him to attain the reward without the deeds, he would prefer that.*

*Tov Halevanon: i.e. for good deeds which are induced by the torah and their cause is hope for reward or fear of punishment, the picture in the man's mind of reward and punishment will only be of a physical character, related to his body, just like he feels now (since he is superficial), and so too will be his service. But he whose service is induced by the understanding and by love, this [reward and punishment] is pictured by him spiritually. Therefore, all of his service is from his spiritual side. Understand this.)*

Fourth, the service induced by the Torah is to be regarded as a path to the service prompted by the understanding. The former is like seed planted in the ground. The study of the Torah is as cultivation is to the soil - ploughing and clearing it. The aid that comes from G-d is like the rain that waters the field. And the fruit that is produced and brought forth is what establishes in the heart - the service of G-d for His sake only, and not prompted by hope (of reward) or fear (of punishment). So our wise men have exhorted us, "Be not like servants who minister to their master upon the condition of receiving a reward . . . and let the fear of Heaven be upon you." (Ethics of the Fathers 1:3).

*(Marpe Lenefesh: This is the purpose of all his toil, which he ploughed, and soughed, etc. so that it produces good, blessed fruits. So too, the main thing, and ultimate purpose of all the torah study and service is - the service of G-d for His sake alone, not for any reward or punishment, even in the afterlife. This kind of service is the main purpose of everything.*

*Tov Halevanon: The torah is like an opening and a path to the service prompted by the understanding. The fear/submission placed in a man's heart induced by reward and punishment is like a seed which is planted. A man's heart is like the field. The torah is like the working of the land, namely, plowing, for the torah teaches the heart which matters bring punishment and which bring reward.*

*"the aid that comes from G-d" - who breaks his physical lusts (food, drink, rest, etc.) which are contrary to the torah, is like the rain.*

*"And the fruit that is produced" - i.e. after it grew successfully and bore fruit, then the service will be established in his heart out of love, not out of reward and punishment alone. Therefore, now, the service induced by the understanding is greater than the service induced by fear (reward and punishment) just like the produce of a field exceeds the seeds planted.)*

Fifth, the commandments of the Torah are limited. They are a known number, 613 precepts. But the duties imposed by the understanding are almost countless, for a person daily increases his knowledge of them; and the more his faculty of perception develops and the more he comprehends G-d's beneficences, mighty power and sovereignty, the more will a man submit and humble himself before Him. Hence you find that David (peace be upon him), besought G-d to arouse him to the knowledge of these duties and remove the curtain of folly from his eyes; as it is said, "Open my eyes that I may gaze at the wonders of Your Torah" (Tehilim 119:18); "Teach me, O L-ord, the way of Your statutes..." (ibid. 119:33); "Incline my heart unto Your testimonies, and not to covetousness" (ibid. 119:36). Furthermore it is said "To all perfection have I seen an end; but Your commandment is exceedingly broad" (ibid. 119:96); that is to say, our obligation of service to You for Your continual benefits to us is without limit because there is no limit to the varieties of Your favors to us.

It is also related of some ascetics that they spent the whole of their lives in repentance. Each day they were moved

to renewed repentance, because every day their recognition of G-d's greatness increased, and they realized how much they had fallen short in the fulfillment of their obligation of service in the past, as David said, "*Day communicates knowledge unto day*" (Ps. 19:2). Furthermore, it is said, "*Streams of water run down mine eyes, because they kept not Your laws.*" (Ps. 119:136).

(*Pas Lechem*: "*Streams of water*" - "*streams*", the term connotes wellsprings, which have no end to their water.)

Sixth, the service instructed by the Torah is within the range of a human being's capacity. Provided he is intent upon it and sets about it, it is not withheld from any one who seeks to fulfill it. But the service prompted by the understanding can only be performed with great strength and with the help of G-d, since human power is insufficient to attain it. Hence you find that David repeatedly imploring G-d in Psalm 119 to give him this aid.

(*Tov Halevanon*: "*with great strength*" - if so, it is more acceptable to G-d, as our Sages said: "according to the difficulty is the reward" (Pirkei Avot ch. 5). "*and with the help of G-d*" - And that which G-d helps on it is an indication that certainly it is more precious in His eyes, and more important before Him.

*Marpe Lenefesh*: "*with great strength*" - Because the main thing of all the service is - that a man be complete and right with G-d always, in his inner being and outer being, when he lies down and when he gets up, and that all the actions he does, even matters of his body and all his needs - that they all be devoted to G-d, as David said: "I have placed G-d before me always" (Tehilim 16:8). And this is something beyond the power of a man to attain unless G-d helps him. It comes only after one does all that is in his power to do, and afterwards to increase this in zeal and exertion - then G-d will help him to attain what is beyond his ability, etc. See later in Gate 8 accounting #23 all these words well explained.)

Seventh, when service is only derived from the Torah, a person can never be sure that he will not stumble. For in that kind of service, the force of evil passion is always lurking in ambush, waiting for the time when he will neglect it. But when the service is prompted by the understanding, a man can be sure that he will not stumble and sin, for the soul is attracted to service of G-d only after physical lust has been slayed (overcome) and the intellect has obtained the victory over it, and controls it according to his will and desire. Hence, this type of service affords a guarantee against stumbling, and one who has attained it, is guarded from sin, as Scripture says, "*There shall no evil happen to the righteous*" (Mishlei 12:21).

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: i.e. when he is not learning torah or praying, then the power of lust strengthens over him when he is engaged in matters of the body.

*Pas Lechem*: perhaps some periods he will weaken in the service, and then the power of lust will strengthen against him to ensnare him.

*Manoach Halevavos*: "*after physical lust has been slayed (hemyas)*" - "*hemyas*" connotes moaning. that the body howls and screams on the deprivation of its lusts. Some books have the text "*hamis*" (slayed) which connotes death. That text is correct.

*Rabbi YS*: "*the force of evil passion is always lurking in ambush*" - this is the yetzer hara (evil inclination) which is lust. See Vilna Gaon commentary on Esther 1:1)

It is necessary, however, that I should expound some of the advantages of instruction in the Torah, as these occur to me. The grounds that necessitate the urge of the Torah to service of G-d are also seven.

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: The inducing by the torah is also necessary. Even though the inducing by the understanding is more acceptable to G-d, but without Torah a man will never get to this.)

First, man is composed of soul and body. Among his tendencies there are some that tempt him to surrender himself to physical pleasures, indulge in lowly desires, and break the restraining bonds of the understanding. There are also other tendencies that will make him abhor this world and renounce society, because of reverses that he has sustained and continued troubles and sorrows that have befallen him, and so he would turn to the higher spiritual

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: When a man is calm and contemplates the swift changing of matters in this world, that each day brings greater troubles than the previous one, and the never ending grievings - through this he desires to tend towards the next world and he abhors this world altogether.)

Neither of these plans is praiseworthy. The latter (if generally followed) would bring about destruction of the societal order. The former would lead to his ruin in this world and in the next. The exalted Creator, in His compassion and infinite goodness to man, favored him with a means by which he may improve his condition and direct aright his ways, leading to happiness here and hereafter. This means, which points out the middle road between the understanding and physical desire, is the Torah which is faithful, preserves righteousness outwardly and inwardly, keeps man away from his lusts in this world and reserves for him his reward at his latter end, as Scripture says, "*Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise ... or it is a pleasant thing if you keep them within you . . . That your trust may be in the L-ord, I have made known to you this day . . . Have not I written to you excellent things in counsels and knowledge, That I might make you know the certainty of the words of truth; that you might answer the words of truth to them that send unto you*" (Mishlei 22:17-21).

Second, the inducing by the understanding does not lead to the recognition of active obligations in the service of G-d such as prayer, fasting, tzedaka (charity), maaser (tithing), acts of kindness. Nor does one attain knowledge of the types of punishments incurred by one who is negligent in the service (such as Gehinom and Kaf Hakela hinted in the words of the prophets - *TL*). In all this, there is need of a framework and a boundary in the way set forth by the Torah and the prophet's instruction, so that by their combination (the urge of Torah and of the Understanding - *TL*) the Divine purpose may be explained in orderly fashion - that purpose being the service of G-d, exalted be He, as it is said, "*And G-d made it, so that man should fear before Him*" (Koheles 3:14) ; that is to say, G-d gave us a law to teach us His service.

(*Tov Halevanon*: Without the torah, the intellect does not understand the benefit of prayer. Because G-d will not change nor be affected by his prayer. And if the man is not worthy of the good [that he is praying for], due to his [insufficient] deeds, how can he possibly entice G-d with his words, and ask before Him to grant him his request? And if he is worthy of the good due to his deeds, certainly G-d will not corrupt justice, and will not withhold support to a righteous man. But from the torah, we see that the forefathers and the prophets (who were exceedingly righteous) were answered in their prayers. And we were commanded on it, and it is a positive Biblical commandment according to that view, as the Talmud (Taanit 5a) expounds on the verse "to serve Him with all your heart": "what service is with the heart? This is prayer". And even though our understanding falls short of being able to grasp its full matter, just like the understanding does not understand other precepts in the torah. Likewise, for the fast which we fast on Yom Kippur which atones for all our sins. And for Tzedaka (charity) as a certain heretic asked Rabbi Akiva (Bava Basra 10a): "if your G-d loves poor people, why doesn't he support them?", etc. until he brought the verse: "Is it not to share your bread with the hungry...[Then shall your light break forth as the morning]" (Yeshaya 58:7), see there. Likewise, tithes and acts of kindness is because of this. And even though there are many other matters which the understanding cannot grasp, the author took as examples primary pillars that the world almost stands on.

*Manoach Halevavos*: If we were not commanded in prayer by the torah and the Rabbinical decrees, we would not know through our understanding what would be the order of the tefila, shacharit (morning), mincha (afternoon), and arvit (evening), and the other times. And even prayer itself, the understanding does not dictate that we should pray to G-d, because the understanding obligates that G-d gives to each creature and each thing in the world the portion fitting for it. And if it is not fitting for it, prayer should not help in this. Furthermore, according to the divine wisdom (Kabala), and the Moray Nevuchim wrote on this (Part 1 ch.5), that G-d does not "change". Hence, the whole matter of prayer seems to the understanding as if there is "change" in G-d, similar to a request which a man begs before a flesh and blood king, to arouse favor and pity in the heart of the king. All this does not apply by G-d. Therefore, he wrote that if the torah did not command this, and that we did not see from the torah that prayer does help, regarding the prayer of Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Moshe, and others, and that our Sages did not institute its order, we would not know at all through the understanding neither its order not its matter. The reason we have been commanded in it is hidden, it is among the hidden precepts of the torah. It has great benefits to arouse a person to awareness of G-d's existence, and His almighty power, and that it is proper to serve Him, and many other fundamentals and good traits which are aroused through prayer. In kabala it is known that by a hitorerut (stimulus) from below, one causes a hitorerut (stimulus) above (i.e. that G-d made the world

in such a way that man's actions have repercussions in the mystical worlds which in turn affects this world. see the book Shaarei Kedusha for more details.) This is sufficient for the wise person.)

Third, the intellectual urge cannot include equally all who are under the obligation of service, because some human beings are of limited intelligence, while some are superior in understanding. But the urge of the Torah applies equally to all who have reached the status subjecting them to this service (i.e. us Jews - PL), even though they vary in their understanding of it, as we have noted at the close of the first treatise of this book.

*(Pas Lechem: "some are of limited intelligence, while some are superior in understanding (literally: recognition)" - limited intelligence applies to many people. While "superior in recognition" is a different aspect, namely, since one person may recognize the nature of the world and its creatures more than his fellow, and he may have superior ability to contemplate them than his fellow despite that his fellow may have a stronger intellect.)*

It sometimes also happens that an individual falls short in some duties and exceeds in others. The intellectual stimulus varies in different individuals in accordance with their capacity of recognition. But the urge of the Torah is not subject to variation. Its form is the same for the child, the youth, one advanced in years and the old man, the wise and the foolish, even though the resulting practice varies in different classes of individuals. And so Scripture says in regard to the all encompassing character of the instruction of the Torah for all the people, *"Gather the people together, men and women, and children, and the stranger that is within your gate, (that they may hear and that they may learn and fear the Lord your G-d . . .)"* (Devarim 31:12). Further, it is said, *". . . you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing."* (Devarim 31:11).

*(Marpe Lenefesh: Even though we find that through the stimulus of the torah, some people do alot while others do few commandments of G-d despite that they were all equally commanded. The reason is because this one's understanding is strong and he does the commandments of G-d with zeal and with simcha (joy) without diminishing, while this one's understanding is weak and he does not understand how to do the commandments of G-d. Therefore, he does them sluggishly and sometimes not at all. All this is due to the understanding, but the torah itself does not change, rather it commands everyone equally to do the service of G-d and each one does according to his understanding and recognition. But if there were only the urge of the understanding, without the torah, most people would remain ignorant, without any service of G-d.)*

Fourth, it is recognized that the obligations of human beings to render service are proportionate to the degrees of benefits bestowed upon them. In every period there have been events which occasioned one people to be singled out from all other peoples for special benefits that G-d bestowed on it. It follows that individuals belonging to that people are on that account under special obligation to render additional service to the Creator beyond that required of other peoples. There is no way of determining by the intellect alone what this service should be. Thus G-d chose us from among other nations by bringing us out of the land of Egypt, dividing the Red Sea and bestowing other benefits subsequently, too well known to be mentioned. Furthermore, the exalted Creator specially distinguished us from all other nations by designating us for the service for which we are under an obligation of gratitude to Him; and, in return for our acceptance of this service, He has assured us a reward in this world and in the next, - an abundance of grace and goodness, emanating from Him, that is indescribable. All this can only be clearly made known to us by the Torah, as Scripture says, *"You have seen what I did unto the Egyptians and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself. Now, therefore, if you will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, (then you shall be a treasure unto Me above all people) and you shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation"* (Ex. 19:4-6).

Fifth, the stimulus of the Torah is a preparation for, and introduction to that of the Understanding, the reason being that a man in his youth needs training and guidance, and restraint from yielding to his passions, until the time comes when his understanding has become strong and firm. So, too some women and frivolous (superficial) men do not follow the intellectual lead, because its control over them is weak and loose. This condition made it necessary to provide guidance of a medium character which they can endure and which will not be impossible for them to stand. Hence, the instructions of the Torah revolve around hope and fear - the poles of its axis.

Whoever does not fall short in fulfilling the obligations of this service (who diligently performs the torah commandments according to his ability - TL) belongs to the class of the pure pious ones and is worthy of reward in this world and in the next. But one who rises from this stage to the service of G-d, induced by reason, reaches the degree of the prophets and the elect of the Supreme - the saints (whose reward is infinitely great - ML). His reward



here on earth is joy in the sweetness of the service of the L-ord, as the prophet said, "*Your words were found, and I did eat them; and Your word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; for I am called by Your name, O L-ord G-d of hosts*" (Jeremiah 15-16); furthermore, "*The righteous shall be glad in the L-ord and trust in Him; and all the upright in heart shall glory*" (Ps. 64:11) ; furthermore, "*light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart*" (Ps. 97:11). His reward in the world to come will consist in his attaining the highest illumination which we are unable to describe or picture, as it is said, "*If you will walk in My ways and if you will keep My charge... I will give you a place to walk among these that stand by*" (Zachariah 3:7); further, "*How great is Your goodness which You have laid up for them that fear You, which You have done for them that trust in You before the children of men*" (Ps. 31:20). Furthermore, "*Eye has not seen, O G-d, beside You, what He will do for one that waits for Him*" (Isaiah 64:3).

Sixth, the Torah includes matters, the obligation of which reason cannot explain, namely, the received commandments (such as shatnez, milk and meat, or the like which reason does not prescribe or reject - TL) and the general principles, of the roots of rational precepts. This is because the people to whom the Torah was given were at that period in such a condition that animal lusts dominated them and they were too weak in their knowledge and perceptive faculties to understand many of the rational precepts. The Torah, therefore, used one method only for both the rational precepts and the received commandments. The people were stimulated in the same way in regard to both classes of duties. An individual whose understanding and perception are strong, will exert himself and undertake the obligation of fulfilling them on both grounds that they are rational and received. And one whose intellect is too weak to perceive their rational ground will accept them because the Torah exhorts him, and will treat them as received precepts. Thus all classes will be benefited, as it is said, "*Its ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its paths are peace*" (Mishlei 3:17).

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: the torah included together the received commandments, i.e. the statutes such as the red heifer, shatnez, pork meat, and the like, which reason does not obligate them at all. Likewise the torah clarified general principles and roots of the rational precepts such as the existence of the Creator, His Unity and eternity, love and reverence [of Him], even though these things can be deduced by reason, nevertheless the torah did not refrain from mentioning them because a person whose understanding is not complete due to overpowering of the lusts as was the case at the time of the giving of the torah. Otherwise, they would not seek them because they require some introductions. Therefore, the torah included them in general principles.

*Tov Halevanon*: "*Its ways are ways of pleasantness*" - the ways of commandments in it are ways of pleasantness, many of them are explained by reason; "*and all its paths are peaceful*" - even he who lacks understanding will be rectified through it, and will complete the service of G-d in fulfilling it, for it is complete. No instruction is lacking in it, even those which depend on the understanding.)

Seventh, we come to the Torah through a human intermediary (Moses) by whom were shown signs and miracles equally perceived by all the people with their senses, the evidence of which they could not deny. Hence, the message which he brought with him in the name of G-d was demonstrated to them through the senses as well as the intellect. The demonstration through the senses was an addition to the intellectual stimulus which human beings naturally possess.

Whoever considers G-d's bounties, bestowed upon him, which are in common with all other human beings, will faithfully accept the obligation of the service of G-d in the ways indicated by his intellect. Whoever reflects on the Creator's special bounties to him by which his nation has been distinguished from other nations, will faithfully accept the special obligation to obey the precepts that are binding on his people, on the authority of the Torah (i.e. the received commandments in the torah) and which are not binding on other peoples (except the 7 commandments of Bnei Noach).

And when one considers G-d's bounties to him, by which his tribe has been distinguished from the remaining tribes of his people, such as, priesthood (for a Kohen) or the Levitical degree (for a Levi), he will faithfully accept the obligation to fulfill precepts by which G-d has distinguished his tribe. Hence you find twenty four priestly ordinances corresponding to twenty-four special benefits which the Creator bestowed upon the priests. These are the twenty-four priestly dues.

Analogously, any individual whom G-d has distinguished by special favors beyond those enjoyed by other human beings, should undertake a special service not incumbent on them, striving at the same time, according to his capacity and perception, to fulfill the duties in the obligation of which he is included with them and thanking G-d, blessed be He, for the benevolence with which G-d specially favored him. Thus will he insure its continuance and increase, and will also receive his reward in the world to come.

A person should not behave like the one of whom it is said, "*And silver I gave her in abundance and gold which they prepared for Baal (idols)*" (Hosea 2:10). One who falls short in the special service which he has to render for the bounty with which he has been specially favored, will be induced to fall short in the service specially incumbent upon his tribe and afterwards in that incumbent upon his people, and at last he will renounce the Torah altogether. Not accepting the Torah, he will not even accept the obligation of the precepts that reason dictates. (as the sages said (Avot 4:2): "sin leads to more sin" - TL)

And when he does not accept the obligations dictated by the understanding with which he is endowed, and its rebuke, he loses the character of a rational creature; and the cattle understand how to improve their condition better than he does, as it is said, "*The ox knows his owner, and the donkey his master's trough; but Israel does not know; My people does not consider*" (Isaiah 1:3). Such a person's fate will be like that of one, concerning whom it is said, "*But the wicked shall perish; and the enemies of the L-ord shall be as the fat of lambs, they shall be consumed; into smoke shall they be utterly consumed*" (Psalm 37:20).

(*Tov Halevanon*: i.e. woe to him for bringing evil on his soul, since he is left with neither torah, nor rational precepts, and he is analogous to the animals of the field, and even worse than them. For then, his soul is singled by matters of the body and its lusts until when the body dies, nothing will be left for it. Rather, his soul will separate and be destroyed like his body and go up like smoke, similar to what our sages said (Rosh Hashana 17a): "their souls are burned and its 'ashes' scattered under the feet of the righteous".

#### CHAPTER 4

It is now proper for us to explain the form in which the Torah urges one to the service of G-d, and its divisions; the various levels attained by those who study the Torah, their characters, their faith in the Torah and their acceptance of it.

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: "*its divisions*" - Even though the torah appears to have 613 commandments, and likewise many commandments of the understanding, but the thinking person will categorize them all into only 2 categories - good and evil, namely, the positive commandments and the negative commandments, as he will explain.

"*various levels*" - there are 10 levels of those who study the torah, as will be explained. That this person learns and toils like this, and another person like that.

"*their faith and acceptance of it*" - since this person believes in the torah like this and that person like that, their acceptance, i.e. fulfillment of the torah varies, namely, this person fulfills the torah more than that one as will be explained.)

I assert that the urge of the Torah is a revelation from G-d, through the medium of a certain individual who, among them, was good in G-d's eyes, a revelation which makes known to human beings the service to be rendered by them to Him, so that, out of His kindness, generosity, and goodness, He may bestow upon them, for their acceptance of it, a reward in this world and in the world to come.

(*Manoach Halevavos*: "*who, among them, was good in G-d's eyes*" - i.e. G-d chose in that man (Moshe Rabeinu) because he behaved better in G-d's eyes than other human beings, namely, he served G-d more than other human beings.

*Tov Halevanon*: He was complete with all qualities and traits which bring a person to Ruach Hakodesh (enlightenment) and prophecy, as they said in Sotah (end of mishna ch.9). Fear brings to purity, etc. [*Rabbi YS*: see the book "Path of the Just" for the road map to these levels.]

"*kindness, generosity, and goodness*" - i.e. the purpose of creating the human race in this world, is only in order to bestow on man kindness, generosity, and goodness - the eternal life of the next world.

*Pas Lechem*: "*out of His kindness, generosity, and goodness* - "kindness" from the aspect of the receiver who was not deserving of this. "*Generosity*" from the aspect of the Giver who receives no good whatsoever from this. It is only out of His generosity of heart. Or the opposite. "*goodness*" because it is the nature of the Good to bestow good.)

The Torah divides human actions into three classes: (1) those that are commanded (positive commandments - *ML*), (2) prohibited (negative commandments - *ML*) and (3) permitted (not a commandments and not a sin - *ML*).

## POSITIVE COMMANDMENTS

These commanded fall into two divisions.

(1) One of these consists of duties of the heart. These, which are grounded in genuine faith are: acceptance of the Unity of G-d; being whole-heartedly with Him, trusting in Him, surrendering to Him, accepting His decrees, believing in His prophets and in His law, revering Him, keeping His commandments, meditating on His wondrous deeds, examining His beneficence and many more duties of the same character too numerous to set forth in detail.

*(Pas Lechem: "whole-heartedly with Him" - not to suspect Him.*

*"trusting in Him" - for all his needs.*

*"surrendering to Him" - in a general way, to unload all one's ways on Him, and surrender all one's guidance to His hand, yisborach. [Rabbi YS: Gate 4 will discuss this at length]*

*"accepting His decrees" - after the act (of surrendering to Him), to accept with joy and a good heart all that G-d sends his way, as the Sages said (Berachos 54a): "a man is under obligation to bless [on the bad just like on the good]"*)

(2) The second, those duties that involve devotion of the heart together with physical activities, such as consistency in speech and thought, reading and studying the book of the Torah; praying, fasting, giving tzedaka (charity); rest from labor on Sabbaths and Festivals, building a Tabernacle (Sukkah), taking the Lulav (palm-branch, and the three other plants on the festival of Sukkot); wearing Tzitzit, and similar precepts.

*(Marpe Lenefesh: "consistency in speech and thought" - when he recites the Shema Yisrael, and declares that G-d is One, that the heart (mind) should be with him, i.e. that he understands what he is saying - that G-d's Unity is not like other unities which are also called "one" as explained in Gate 1.*

*Marpe Lenefesh: "reading and studying, fasting, giving tzedaka, rest from labor, etc." - all these things need intent of the heart, that in them, his heart needs to be l'shem shamayim (devoted to G-d.)*

## NEGATIVE COMMANDMENTS

Prohibitions also fall into two divisions.

(1) One division consists of duties of the heart. (2) The other comprises active duties.

Prohibitions in the category of duties of the heart are, for example, associating with G-d either secretly or by flattery, loving to do that which G-d has forbidden; pride, haughtiness, arrogance contempt for human beings, mocking the prophets and the messages they utter which come from G-d; abhorring good and those who do good; finding pleasure in evil doers; jealousy, covetousness, desiring to hurt human beings (that he feels pleasure when evil befalls others. alternatively, he enjoys doing bad to others - *PL*); resentment at the Creator's decrees (when suffering befalls him - *TL*), and many sentiments and emotions of a similar character.

*(Tov Halevanon: "associating with G-d either secretly or by flattery" - such as one who serves G-d outwardly, but also has intent in this so that other people will praise and honor him. Hence, he associates in his worship, [two motives: devotion to] G-d and benefit from human beings. Likewise, one who flatters other people in matters of religious worship because he fears them - this person also associates fear of G-d with fear of flesh and blood...*

*"loving to do that which G-d has forbidden" - that he lusts in his heart to do what the torah prohibits.*

*Marpe Lenefesh: he longs constantly to do sins, even though he doesn't actually do them.*

*Pas Lechem: "pride, haughtiness, arrogance" - 3 terms corresponding to the 3 levels mentioned in Yirmiya (9:22), which are wisdom, might, and wealth. i.e. pride in wisdom, haughtiness in might, and arrogance in wealth.*

*"contempt for human beings" - this is also due to arrogance, that other people are worth nothing in his eyes.)*

The following are examples of prohibitions of actions: revealed association of anyone with G-d, false swearing, lying, tale bearing, eating forbidden food, forbidden relations, bloodshed, and many offenses of similar character.

| (*Pas Lechem*: "revealed association of anyone with G-d" - this is idol worship.

| [alternatively]

| *Tov Halevanon*: he transgresses the commandments of G-d openly due to fear of human beings or love of them.)

## PERMITTED THINGS

Things permissible also fall into three divisions, namely, the sufficient, the excessive and the deficient. The sufficient is that which is indispensable for preservation of the body or management of one's affairs, in food and drink, clothing and covering; necessary speech in conducting one's business, activities and commercial transactions; all kinds of physical movements and their proper employment to the extent needed for the proper maintenance of one's welfare, as Scripture says, "*Good is a man who is gracious and lends; he measures his affairs with measure?*" (Tehilim 112:5).

| (*Manoach Halevavos*: he measures and weighs all his affairs with justness)

The second division applies to cases where one crosses the border of the sufficient to the domain of the superfluous which one has no need for, such as excess in food and drink, against which the sage warned us when he said, "*Be not among winebibbers; among gluttonous eaters of meat*" (Mishlei 23:20). So, too, extravagance in personal adornment, dress, luxurious homes, and superfluity in speech, in regard to which there is no assurance that one will not stumble because of them, as the wise man said, "*In the multitude of words there lacks not sin*" (Mishlei 10:19). Furthermore, excess in sexual relations, concerning which the sage said, ". . . *He that keeps company with harlots destroys his substance*" (Mishlei 29:3), and "*do not give your strength to women*" (Mishlei 31:3). It is also said concerning kings, "*Neither shall he multiply wives unto himself*" (Devarim 17:17).

Striving for large possessions and accumulation of money, of which it is said, "*Labor not to be rich, cease from your own wisdom*" (Mishlei 23:4). Concerning the king, it is said, "*Neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold*" (Devarim 17:17). All these superfluous things we mentioned which are for the improvement and enjoyment of the body transform in the end to evil because they mislead one to that which the Creator warned us against, and forbade (as written: "*But Jeshurun grew fat, and kicked: you are grown fat, you are grown thick, you are covered with fatness; then he forsook G-d who made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation*" (Devarim 32:15).

| (*Tov Halevanon*: "*do not give your strength to women*" - for the semen is the life of the body, as the Rambam wrote in Deos 4:19.

| "*Labor not to be rich, cease from your own wisdom*" - "*Labor not to be rich*" - lest you become satiated and rebel against your Maker. "*cease from your own wisdom*" - do not say "I will not allow my heart to stray due to wealth".)

The third division in the use of things permitted is the deficient.

| (*Tov Halevanon*: i.e. that the torah commanded us to separate ourselves from what is permitted to us, as a fence, or in the way of asceticism.

| *Marpe Lenefesh*: See Gate 8, end of chapter 3. These things are more explained there.)

This is the case when a person denies himself what is sufficient in food and drink, clothing, sexual relations, speech, sleep, or in the occupation by which he will obtain what he needs for his maintenance in food and other requisites. Deficiency falls into two subdivisions. It may be motivated by piety or by worldly considerations.

If the motive is a pious one, proceeding from a longing for nearer and closer communion with G-d by asceticism (to break one's lusts - TL), it is laudable and will be rewarded, as the sage said, "*The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of merrymaking*" (Koheles 7:4).

| (*Tov Halevanon*: "*The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning*" - his heart is broken and he always worries on the day of his death. "*but the heart of fools is in the house of merrymaking*" -

always joyful and good spirited on account of his bodily pleasures, similar to the verse (Yeshaya 21 22:13) "eat and drink for tomorrow we will die".)

If the motive is worldly, namely, to increase his money, or be praised as one who abstains from what is permitted and takes from the world less than he needs in food, it is reprehensible, for a person who acts thus departs from the path of the middle way, and robs his body of its needs. All this comes from excessive love of this world, in reference to which a sage said, "He who separates himself from the world, out of love for the world, is like one who would extinguish a flame with straw."

(*Tov Halevanon*: On the contrary he will come to love the world even more, because he abstains himself from small worldly benefits in order to attain greater worldly benefits.)

*Lev Tov*: One who tries to extinguish a fire with straw, it appears at first as if he extinguished the fire by covering it with straw. But soon he will discover that on the contrary, he increased and strengthened the fire. So too, one who abstains from this world out of love of this world, it appears as if he separates from pleasures and lusts and comes closer to the spiritual, but in reality, he attains the opposite - he sinks deeper in the lusts and pleasures of this world.)

But to be sparing in speech and in sleep is praiseworthy; in speech, because in the end silence is better, as the wise man said, "*Be not rash with your mouth, and let not your heart be hasty to utter anything before G-d; for G-d is in heaven and you are on earth; therefore let your words be few*" (Koheles 5:1).

(*Tov Halevanon*: As he wrote earlier in chapter 2, "Secondly, the intellect is a spiritual entity, originating in the higher, spiritual world. It is a stranger in this world of gross material bodies. Sensual lust in man is the product of natural forces and of a combination of his physical elements. Its foundation is in this world, its root in this abode." Hence it is natural that the intellect becomes weak against the power of lust. This is what is written "*G-d is in heaven*", and if so, the soul within you is like a stranger among the bodily lusts since "*you are on earth, therefore let your words be few*". Because it is likely that you will allow your mouth to sin and be drawn in your words after the body.)

Similarly, in regard to sleep, it is said, "*Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep. [So shall your poverty come as a traveler, and your want as an armed man (who arrives suddenly)]*" (Mishlei 6:10).

In what has been mentioned, it has thus been demonstrated that all human activities belong either to those (1) commanded, (2) forbidden or (3) [permitted which is] sufficient. For whatever is not in the category of [permitted which is] "sufficient", and is either superfluous or deficient, must necessarily belong to the category of what is commanded, if done for the sake of G-d; or it belongs to the category of the forbidden, if it is not done for His sake.

(*Rabbi YS*: i.e. among the 3 categories of permitted activities mentioned earlier, namely, the sufficient, the excessive and the deficient, the latter two, do not really belong to the category of permitted things. They belong either to the category of positive commandments or negative commandments depending on whether they were done for the sake of G-d or not. Sometimes it is a mitzvah to go into the domain of the excessive. For example, if one is by his mother and it would please her if he ate everything on the plate.)

Enquiring more closely into what is "sufficient", for example, in obtaining a livelihood, we find this too in a commandment, set forth in the account of Creation, "*And G-d blessed them, and G-d said unto them: 'Be fruitful and multiply, fill the land and conquer it.'*" (Genesis 1:28). And it continues, "*Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth [.. to you it shall be for food]*" (ibid. 1:29). Hence, to seek a sufficiency in food belongs to the class of the commanded.

(*Lev Tov*: to do acts which are necessary to obtain one's food is a commandment. Just like "be fruitful and multiply" is a commandment, so too "conquer it" and the next "I have given you every herb bearing seed..[for food]" are also commandments.  
*Rabbi YS*: i.e. to obtain one's livelihood is also in the category of "commandments". Hence, all human activities belong either to those commanded or those forbidden. Not 3 categories (commanded, forbidden, and sufficient) as stated earlier.)

This being the case, it has been demonstrated that all human activities are either in the category of what is commanded or in the category of what is prohibited. If what is done is in the category of the commanded, it is a good deed. If one is able to do it but neglects his obligation, he falls short in his duty. So, too, if one does one of the things that are prohibited, he is a sinner (he will be punished - *ML*). If he abstains from doing it, he is a righteous man (he will receive reward - *TL*), provided that he abstains out of fear of G-d, as Scripture says, "*They also do no iniquity. They walk in His ways.*" (Tehilim 119:3). (i.e. one who refrains from iniquity is as if he walks in the way of G-d - *TL*)

And so, if one does one of the things permitted, in the right and proper way, he is righteous, as the Psalmist said, "*A good man is gracious and lends; he conducts his affairs with measure*" (Tehilim 112:5). If he, however, exceeds and goes beyond what is sufficient, he falls short in his duty, because this will mislead him to what G-d warned against. So, too, if he denies himself what is sufficient when he is in a position to obtain it, his aim being to train himself in the service of G-d and to reign over his lusts, so as to come nearer to G-d or separate himself from this world and direct his attentions to the better world hereafter, he is righteous and his conduct is good. But if he does this not for the sake of G-d, he falls short in the fulfillment of his duty, and his conduct is reprehensible.

Hence, human actions fall into the categories of good and bad. The intelligent person is one who weighs his actions before he does them, as is here set forth, examines them carefully with his mind and recognition, chooses what is good among them and abandons what is not good, as David, peace be unto him, said: "*I thought on my ways and turned my feet unto Your testimonies. I made haste and did not delay to keep Your commandments*" (Tehilim 119:59-60).

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: i.e. who is considered intelligent and righteous in all his deeds? He who makes it a habit and second nature in this - that he does nothing in this world, whether in religious or secular deeds, until he first ponders in his mind what he is about to do. If it appears something good will come out of it, he does it. If not, he will abandon it. This general principle includes the entire service of G-d.

"*I thought on my ways*" - Through my thinking and putting to heart, all of my ways, what will be their end, through this - "*I turned my feet unto Your testimonies*".)

That this division of deeds into good and evil is correct is proved in the wise man's statement: "*For G-d will bring every deed into judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil*" (Koheles 12:14). The sage thus places all actions under two categories, good and bad; this coinciding with what we call praiseworthy and reprehensible.

(*Tov Halevanon*: "*whether it be good or evil*" (Koheles 12:14) - whether he benefited himself with superfluous pleasures, or whether he refrained himself and afflicted himself not for the sake of G-d - G-d will bring him to judgment)

Hence it has been demonstrated that all human actions fall into only the two categories of the torah, namely, commandments and prohibitions.

## THE TEN CLASSES OF TORAH UNDERSTANDING

And since the Torah consists of words and matters, individuals, in respect to their understanding of its wisdom, fall into ten graded classes.

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: So that a man will know on which level he is holding, and will strive to ascend from level to the next level, as he concludes in the end.)

The beginner's class consists of those who have learnt the Torah (five books of Moses) and the rest of the Scriptures and are satisfied with their ability to read the text without any understanding of the contents. They do not know the meaning of the words nor have they any acquaintance with the grammar of the language. They are akin to a donkey laden with books.

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: "*who have learnt the torah, etc.*" from their youth, and even when they get older, they do not change from this path. They are satisfied like this, and they don't know nor understand what they are saying such as those who read shnayim mikra, without understanding anything. Likewise, their prayers are like this.)

The second class consists of those who have tried to learn to read correctly, pay heed to the vowels and specially concentrate their attention on the right position of the accent. They [may be said to] belong to the class of Punctuators and Massorites.

*(Marpe Lenefesh: People who sought to study their reading, so that their tongue does not mispronounce, that they recite Hebrew with proper vowelization and taamim (cantillation notes), but they don't understand the contents like those who read the torah merely by way of grammar. They do not understand anything.)*

The third class consists of those who have noted the insufficiency of the previous classes and have striven to know the principles of punctuation and musical accentuation (neginoth). They have in addition sought to acquire knowledge of the correct use of the language and its grammar, nouns and verbs, modifying parts of speech (prepositions, conjunctions and adverbs) absolute and construct forms (of nouns and adjectives) ; use of the future to express the past and of the infinitive to express the imperative; the various classes of verbs: complete (all three letters sounded), defective (one letter omitted), silent (one or two letters not sounded), duplicate (verbs with the second and third letters the same) ; the apparent and the hidden. (i.e. Closed and open syllables; the former ending in a consonant, the latter in a vowel sound.)

*(Marpe Lenefesh: they sought the reason why this word is voweled like this and that one like that. For example yira versus yerae (same word different vowels) - that the meaning of this is not like the meaning of that.)*

The fourth class consists of those individuals who have advanced beyond the preceding classes in their ability to explain words of doubtful meaning in the Holy Scriptures, and in their understanding of the plain sense of the text. They have also investigated the figurative and the literal meaning of words in the Hebrew language; homonyms and synonyms; derivative nouns (derived from other words), primary nouns, foreign nouns; and so with adjectives and verbs.

*(Marpe Lenefesh: They also learned the grammar of Hebrew, since without clear understanding of hebrew grammar, a person cannot lift his hand anywhere in the torah as is known and evident. Only that a person should not waste all of his time in these matters, and refrain from learning other things which his soul needs. Many authors have already warned at length against this practice.)*

The fifth class consists of those who have advanced beyond the preceding classes in their knowledge of the subject-matter of the Holy Scriptures, have sought to understand its fundamental principles and have endeavored to investigate the metaphorical sense and the true meaning of its contents with regard, for instance, to the anthropomorphic expressions in the Bible. They are those who attempt to explain the Scriptures of G-d according to the plain meaning without relying on the received Tradition (Oral Torah).

*(Marpe Lenefesh: Up until [and including] now, he is speaking about people who try to explain the Torah using only grammar. They explain the matter, but according to their understanding and desire (the plain meaning - TL). They are not interested in the explanations of our Sages of blessed memory, as received by the Tradition. These are the Sadducees and Karaites.)*

The sixth class consists of those who rely on the ancient Tradition as contained in the Mishnah, so that they have attained knowledge of some of the duties, commandments and laws of the torah without studying the Talmud.

The seventh class comprises those who have added to what we have just mentioned an intense study of the Talmud and devoted themselves to a knowledge of its text, reading its decisions without attempting to answer its questions and clearing up its difficulties.

The eighth class consists of those who were not satisfied with the knowledge of the Torah, which had been sufficient for the previous class, but exerted themselves to comprehend the words of the Talmudic sages, resolve the doubtful points and elucidate the obscurities, with the purpose of winning a name and glory. But they ignore the duties of the heart. They pay no attention to what would be detrimental to their religious and moral activities. They spend their days in the study of singular deductions from the legal principles and of what is strange and difficult in the final decisions; they cite the conflicting views of the Talmudic authorities on novel points of law while they neglect topics

which they have no permission to do - topics that affect their spiritual interests which it is their duty to investigate, such as the truth of the prophet's signs and of tradition, and the modes by which it can be demonstrated; the obligation which the Creator has imposed upon us to bring proofs with our reasoning faculties of His existence and to serve Him with a perfect heart, and many similar points that can be intellectually understood and which I will explain in this treatise.

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: i.e. since they don't learn any books on yira and mussar (ethical books), certainly all of their learning is only to show off their brilliance and breadth of knowledge to the masses, "to acquire a name"... and even though they toiled in the torah to the best that a human being is capable, nevertheless, they are still on the outside, since they are not learning l'shem shamayim (for G-d alone), rather only to "win a name, etc." for themselves. However, they are near to the exalted level if they will just open their eyes on their ways, and from lo lishma (undevoted), they can come to lishma (devoted). Let one put this to heart so as not to inherit a double Gehinom as our sages said in Yoma 72b.)

The ninth class consists of those who have exerted themselves to know the duties of the heart as well as the active duties and also what is detrimental to right conduct; who understand the plain sense of the Holy Scriptures as well as their inner meaning, and have arrived at a conviction of the truth of tradition, based on Scripture and on reason; have arranged the laws into an orderly system, divided the practical duties in accordance with circumstances of time and place, as a result of their understanding of the fundamental principles of the Pentateuch; scrupulously observe the duties and exhort others (to do likewise); cherish truth inwardly and outwardly, and follow it wherever it may lead them. They are the Talmudic teachers and the Geonim who continued their predecessors' customs.

The tenth class consists of those who received the wisdom of the Torah from the prophets, with all its interpretations and detailed results of fundamental principles. They are the men of the Great Assembly and their successors (the Tanaim) who received the traditions from them, the authorities named in the Mishnah and Beraithoth (additional teachings and views not incorporated in the Mishnah) as set forth in the Ethics of the Fathers: "Moshe received the Law from Sinai and delivered it to Yehoshua; Yehoshua to the elders; the elders to the prophets; the prophets to the men of the Great Assembly; the men of the Great Assembly to Shimon the Just; Shimon the Just to Antigonos; Antigonos to Joseph son of Joezer and Yosi son of Jochanan the Jerusalemite; they delivered it Joshua, son of Perachiah and Nittai the Arbelite; they delivered it to Judah son of Tabbai and Shimon son of Shetach; they delivered it to Shemaiah and Avtalion; from them it passed to Shammai and Hillel; from them to Rabban Yochanan ben Zakai; from him to Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabbi Gamaliel, Rabbi Elazer ben Arach, Rabbi Yosef the Priest: and Shimon, son of Nathanel; from them it passed to Rabbi Akiba, Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah, Rabbi Tarfon, Rabbi Shimon ben Gamaliel; from them to Rabbi Meir, Rabbi Judah, Rabbi Yosi, Rabbi Shimon [bar Yochai], Rabbi Judah the Prince". The last is our sainted teacher who gathered together the dicta of the Mishnah, arranged them in order, divided them into chapters and compiled them in a work. This compilation is the essential element of the whole tradition on which we rely in our Torah.

## TEN CLASSES OF FAITH IN THE TORAH

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: Now, he will explain that there are different classes of faith in the torah, and due to this, their corresponding undertaking of the service of G-d will likewise be different.)

The outlooks of those who owe allegiance to the Torah fall into ten classes of varying degrees in their faith and in their acceptance of the service of G-d.

Of the lowest degree are those who are misled by foolishness and the overwhelming force of evil passions to reject the Torah which they consider to be similar to the laws by which other peoples are guided and the simple kept in check. This attitude results from the powerful hold that sensual lust has obtained over their understanding, and from their gross nature; they do not submit to the yoke of the Torah, nor will they be bound by the restraints of reason, due to their longing for unrestrained license. Of people of this sort the sage says, "*A fool has no delight in understanding but only that his heart may discover itself (follow its impulses)*" (Mishlei 18:2).

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: Due to foolishness and worldly lusts, they found excuses to shed the yoke of torah, and they think that the torah is similar to the laws and customs which come from gentile kings - without reason, and only the fools will believe them and fulfill them. Likewise, they say that there is no reward and punishment in the torah (in the afterlife).

*Pas Lechem*: "the simple kept in check" - i.e. like the methods the gentile leaders employ to lead



*Tov Halevanon*: the Rabbis made up laws and customs so that human society can endure.)

Of the second degree are those who cannot deny the signs and wonders that were manifested by the prophets, because of their publicity, but they doubt the truthfulness of the Torah, and express views that approach those of the foregoing class, namely, that G-d only wished to point out to His creatures a way by which they would improve their condition in this world, and therefore stirred the prophet (Moses) to guide them with statutes that they needed, and granted him signs and wonders, so that they should listen to his words and accept his ordinances. The members of this second class do not believe in reward and punishment (in the afterlife - TL).

*(Pas Lechem: "do not believe in reward and punishment"* - Since according to their views G-d's intent in giving the torah was only for their welfare in this world. Hence, there is no punishment for one who rebels against it, only ruining of his worldly affairs.

*Marpe Lenefesh: "who cannot deny the signs"* - since the great signs and wonders performed by the prophets are so familiar and well known, and certainly the signs were from G-d, but the matter of prophecy itself they deny, believing it is inconceivable that G-d will speak with a human being. For speech is physical while G-d is exalted and above all physicality, as this view is mentioned in the Kuzari book. Hence, they claim that the torah is not from G-d. G-d's intent was only that people should conduct themselves justly in this world, that their matter should not be unrestrained. Therefore, G-d stirred the prophet to guide them in the right way, according to how he wants. G-d made signs and miracles so that they will listen to the prophet's words and commands. They also do not believe in reward and punishment like the first class.

*Rabbi YS*: In ancient times, the Exodus from Egypt and the miracles of the ten plagues, etc. were known more as a historical fact than as belief. This is because they were closer to it in time. Historical facts are very difficult if not impossible to establish since they need a consensus from everyone simultaneously. An example of a historical fact today, would be the Spanish Inquisition or the conquests of Napoleon, something no one doubts due to their being so well known and familiar. And even today, the Torah remains the most popular book of all time. Likewise, no other book has been translated into so many languages.)

I will give here briefly the answers to these views by refutation and also alternatively by agreement, (for argument's sake).

By refutation: The Creator is too exalted to alter the course of nature for the sake of one who resorts to falsehood in regard to Him and utters in His name things which He had not said, even if that person aims, by means of these falsehoods about G-d, to direct people in the right way. For the vision of the truth manifested to the prophet is not more wondrous or harder to apprehend than a change in the order of nature that takes place for the prophet's sake.

*(Marpe Lenefesh*: It is inconceivable that G-d would make signs and miracles for one who will say falsehood in His Name, i.e. that the person will utter in G-d's name, that G-d commanded him on everything in the torah. And according to their view, the prophet (Moses) made up on his own the entire torah. How could G-d change the natural order for him if he were a liar? If you say, G-d changed the natural order for the prophet so that he will be able to direct the people to the way of G-d. This is also inconceivable since why wouldn't G-d Himself command as to how to do His will? For certainly the vision of prophecy to the prophet, to command him on words of the torah is no more wondrous and no more difficult before G-d than performing miracles. If G-d wants to change the natural order for the prophet why would He not command him also. Is one more difficult than the other? Is G-d's power lacking? Rather, certainly G-d spoke the words of torah to the prophet. See also Kuzari maamar 1 siman 89)

By agreement (for argument's sake): If it were clearly demonstrated by an irrefutable proof that the fact was as these people say (that the Torah was not revealed to the prophet, but was the prophet's own invention), it would even then be right to follow him, for the exalted Creator would not change the order of nature and manifest a wonder through one who does not know the good and right way. And if the exalted Creator has chosen one to teach us the good and right way and guide us, after wondrous signs had been manifested by him, he is sufficiently worthy that we should rely upon him in our behavior and way of life. Seeing that we owe this to a king or governor, even if he is not

endowed with wisdom, as it is said, "O, my son, fear the L-ord and the king" (Mishlei 24:21), how much more is this our duty toward one through whom a wonder has been shown. Thus, from both points of view, we are under an obligation to accept the Torah. Concerning people of this class, the wise man says, "O, ye simple, understand wisdom: and ye fools, be of an understanding heart" (Mishlei 8:5).

(Tov Halevanon: "fear the L-ord and the king" - Just like you fear G-d, so too you are under duty to fear the king which G-d has appointed, in His place on the actions of human beings.)

Marpe Lenefesh: And likewise, one who has demonstrated miracles, that you can see tangibly that he is a messenger of G-d, how much more so that you are under duty to abide by his commands.)

Of the third degree are those who are convinced of the truthfulness of the Torah but think that it was given as a favor of G-d, to direct aright His creations and guide them exclusively in this world, but not for the sake of reward in the world hereafter. Their reason for this view is that in the prophetic books, reward and punishment in this world are frequently mentioned but there is no mention of retribution in the next world. Our teacher, Saadyah, in his commentary on the weekly portion Behukothai (Vayikra, Chapters 26 and 27) expounded on this topic and clearly demonstrated the nullity of the views expressed by these people. (see also the Gate of Trust ch.4 for sufficient answers to this view - ML)

The prophetic books contain clear indications of reward and punishment in the world to come. The following are examples: "For G-d shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil" (Kohel 12:14) (a reference to the Judgment Day when G-d will stand every human being to be judged - TL). "And you shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the sole of your feet" (Malachi 3:21). "[behold a day is coming, it burns as a furnace and all the wicked shall be as stubble...] then shall you return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serves G-d and him that serves Him not." (Malachi 3:18). "And they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against Me; for their worm shall not die. neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an eternal abhorrence unto all flesh" (Yeshaya 66:24). "How great is Your goodness, which You have laid up for them that fear You, which You have wrought for them that trust in You before the children of men" (Tehilim 31:20). "Thus says the L-ord of Hosts, if you will walk in My ways . . . I will give you places to walk among these that stand" (Zach. 3:7). "Eye has not seen, O G-d, beside You, what He had prepared for him that waits for Him" (Yeshaya 64:3). "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Daniel 12:2). "Your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the L-ord shall be your reward" (Yeshaya 58:8). And there are many passages to the same effect, too numerous to mention.

Of the fourth degree are those in whose consciousness the genuineness of the Torah and the truthfulness of reward and punishment in the world to come are firmly established. But their disposition inclines them to love of the world and its lusts; and they use the practices of the service of G-d as snares with which to obtain worldly advantages. They accept the Torah outwardly but not inwardly, with their tongues and not with their hearts. Of such people it is said, "One speaks peaceably to his neighbor with his mouth, but in his heart he waits in ambush for him" (Yirmiya 9:7). Further, "With mouth and lips, they honor Me; but their heart is far from Me" (Yeshaya 29:13).

(Marpe Lenefesh: Due to their great lust for worldly enjoyment they undertake the religious service as a snare to trap this world. They are not able to attain their lusts due to their weakness and poorness. Therefore, they pretend to be pious and ascetics and wear garments of torah scholars so that others will believe in them, give them gifts, and deposit their money by them [for safekeeping]. They are hypocrites to people and to G-d. In the Gate of Abstinence ch.4 the author concludes regarding them that they are the worse class of all human beings.)

Of the fifth degree are those who are convinced on all the points we have mentioned in regard to the Torah and of the truth of reward and punishment in the world to come. But their disposition inclines them to love of the world; they indeed accept the Torah; but in their acceptance their intent is to obtain reward from G-d as well as praise and honor from human beings. This is one of the branches of hypocrisy, namely, the concealed joint worship [of G-d and something else].

(Tov Halevanon: He serves concealed idolatry, namely, he joins the service of G-d with the service of praise and honor, only that it is concealed and other people cannot detect that he serves G-d jointly. [i.e. he is worshipping G-d and praise of human beings. He has two masters not one - RYS].

Pas Lechem: "joint worship" i.e. with idolatry since he worships himself not his Creator. He is called

Of the sixth degree are those who in their religious practice aim at a reward from the Creator solely in this world, because of their love for it, and because they prefer its delights. They do not comprehend the reward hereafter and its bliss.

*(Marpe Lenefesh: These people are worshipping only l'shem shamayim (solely to G-d). But their intent is for worldly reward because they do not understand the bliss of the afterlife.*

*Tov Halevanon: They do not yearn for the bliss of the afterlife, hence they are not able to break their lusts for the reward of the afterlife because they don't understand its bliss, even though they know that there is reward in the afterlife. The reason being, because they love this world very much.*

*Rabbi YS: i.e. since they love this world so much, they don't strive to understand the bliss of the afterlife. Perhaps because they know that to work for the bliss of the afterlife, they would need to break their lusts and distance themselves from physical enjoyments.)*

Of the seventh degree are those who are convinced of all that we have mentioned. But their motive in the service of G-d is the expectation of reward in this world and in the world to come. They have no conception whatever of service of the Almighty for His own sake, to magnify, honor and exalt Him, as alone befits the worship of Him. Of these, our wise men have said, "Be not like servants who serve the master upon the condition of receiving a reward; but be like servants who serve the master without any condition of receiving a reward; and let the fear of Heaven be upon you" (Ethics of the Fathers: 1:3).

*(Marpe Lenefesh: They are still outside [the goal] since they hope for reward in their service. If not for hope of reward, they would not be doing the service of G-d. And in truth, it is proper to serve Him for His own sake, etc.)*

Of the eighth degree are those who are convinced of all that has been mentioned, but they accept the service of G-d out of fear of His punishment in this world and the next. We have already pointed out how reprehensible these two views are (in chapter 3 where he disgraced those who serve out of reward and punishment alone - *MH*)

*(Marpe Lenefesh: They are not concerned about the reward, but they are serving G-d out of fear of punishment of this world or the next. From our words, one can see the difference between each of the degrees, which are going up in ascending order, from the lowly to the lofty, so that a man will know how to ascend from level to level, as the author ends off. See the [book] Shl"Habris and you will understand all these levels.)*

Of the ninth degree are those who believe in the Torah and in reward and punishment in both worlds. In serving G-d, their intent is to do so for His Name's sake and in the way befitting Him alone, but they are not careful to avoid whatever is detrimental to this service, and when detriments have caused injury they do not know from where the trouble came. This is suggested in the verse: "*Dead flies make the apothecary's oil to ferment and send forth a foul odor; so a little folly outweighs the rarest wisdom and honor*" (Koheles 10:1). Further, "*One sinner destroys much good*" (ibid. 9:18).

*(Tov Halevanon: each one of the dead flies will spoil and bring up bubbles in the [perfumed] oil until eventually the oil exudes a foul odor. This analogy is to arrogance and pride which bubble inside him and produce hot air until it eventually spoils his service and piety.*

*"a little folly spoils the rarest wisdom" - a little folly is heavy and outweighs all the wisdom and exalted states in him and drives them out.*

*Marpe Lenefesh: He wrote later in Gate 5 that every good thing has corresponding bad things which ruin it. These are the musings of the evil inclination which desires to topple him from this world and the next. See there. Therefore one should study all the things detrimental to avoid them and only then he will be able to do good. See there at length.)*

One of the pious once said to his disciples, "If you would be absolutely free of sins, I would be anxious about you and fear something worse than sins." They said to him: "What is worse than sins?" He replied: "Haughtiness and

pride," as Scripture says, "*An abomination unto the L-ord is everyone that is proud in heart*" (Mishlei 16:5). 28

*(Marpe Lenefesh: If you did not learn torah nor do mitzvot and good deeds, you would have nothing to be proud about. Through good deeds one comes to arrogance. Furthermore, a person is embarrassed to do sins, but one who is arrogant becomes increasing more and more without realizing it. Furthermore, when one commits a sin, he will rouse himself to repent for it. But if he does not do sins and is proud of this, he does not arouse himself to repent [for his pride], therefore pride is the worst sin (LT).*

*(Pas Lechem: Certainly arrogance is the greatest detriment of all. And in truth, he does not know from where the loss came, because a person does not become haughty unless he first imagines that he deserves to be proud. Therefore, he will not find any sins he committed.)*

The tenth degree, those people for who it has become clear to them the truth of the Torah and all the rewards and punishments which they will incur on account of it in both worlds, and who have become aroused out of their neglect [of it]. Their hearts have seen what they owe to their Creator in return for His great benevolence and loving kindness towards them. They do not fix their hearts on reward or punishment, but hasten to fulfill the service of G-d for His Name's sake, to aggrandize and exalt Him with longing and wholehearted devotion, because they know Him and recognize His matter.

*(Pas Lechem: they know His greatness and exaltedness and recognize the matter of His conduct with His creations.*

*Lev Tov: They know His greatness and exaltedness and recognize His wisdom and goodness.*

*Marpe Lenefesh: "have become aroused out of their neglect" - If they neglected to do some good thing or [neglected] not to do some [bad thing], immediately they aroused themselves and stood up against their evil inclination, so that the Yetzer (evil inclination) has no opening to strengthen himself over them.*

*Rabbi YS: Rabbi Eliya Lopian zt'l would compare the evil inclination to a fly. If you shoo it from here it returns on a different place. Only when one has no pus anywhere will the fly leave you alone. So too only when one does not give in to it in the least will the evil inclination leave a person to search for better spoils. [Artscroll Reb Elyah]*

This is the highest degree to be attained by the men of the Torah. This is the degree that was attained by the prophets and chasidim (pious ones) who devoted themselves to G-d, made a covenant with Him, were always communing with Him, accepted His ruling, gave up to Him themselves, their children, their possessions, and firmly kept their faith in all that they undertook, even to the surrender of their lives. Concerning these, Scripture says, "*Gather My saints together unto Me; those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice*" (Tehilim 50:5).

*(Pas Lechem: "gave up to Him their lives, their children, their possessions" - i.e. they resolved that their lives, children, and possessions - all belong to G-d, and they are prepared to return it to Him if need be to do His will. After this, he wrote that just like they resolved and accepted this on themselves, so too they fulfilled it when the time came and they firmly kept their faith.)*

This is the form of the inducing of the Torah in urging the service of G-d, and these are the degrees of those men of wisdom who devote themselves to the study of the holy books of the Torah and the excellencies of those who believe in it. It is possible that there may be other degrees among men of understanding in the Torah, other than those that we have set forth. But we only mentioned those degrees that are found among the large majority of the people. Still, the list of degrees that we have given will be of use to one who seeks the right way, for, when he finds in this list a degree to which he is near, he will know what is the next higher degree and will strive to rise to it, then notes the distance between the degree that he has attained and the highest of the degrees, and strives to ascend to it gradually, one degree after another-he will find the ascent easier to accomplish.

*(Pas Lechem: He will know the next higher degree, i.e. next higher rung. And since one needs to ascend to the top rung, he wrote "then notes the distance between the degree that he has attained and the highest of the degrees", so that he will strive to ascend from level to level until he reaches the highest.*

*Rabbi YS:* The tenth level is the goal. Perhaps, the other levels are ordered according to their distance from the goal not according to moral superiority. Hence, the commentary wrote in the fourth level: "they are the worse class of human beings". 29

## CHAPTER 5

*(Marpe Lenefesh:* until now, he explained the urge of the torah. Now he will explain what is the urge of the understanding.)

It is now proper for us to proceed to explain the mode in which the intellect urges us to the service of G-d in the form of questions and answers - this method being most suitable to a clear presentation of the topic we are investigating.

*(Pas Lechem:* The role-playing through questions and answers, as if two people are debating, one asking and the other answering, is a deep method of clarifying a topic, to one who contemplates it. Because the way of the questioner is to strive to ask a powerful, wise question, and the Sages say (Mivchar hapeninim 1:3) "the question of the wise man is half of the wisdom". While the way of the answerer is to strive to heal the illness of the questioner by refuting it to the best of his ability. [*Rabbi YS:* the Talmud is built on this method of question and answer])

We will assert that the urge of the intellect means that G-d reminds a human being through his intellect, of his duty to know Him, and to become cognizant of the marks of His divine wisdom. This call of G-d comes to one who has taken the Torah as the light of his path, attained intellectual maturity and capacity for clear perception, yearns to gain the Almighty's favor and rise to the spiritual heights of the saints, and turns his heart away from worldly cares and anxieties.

*(Marpe Lenefesh: "G-d reminds a human being" -* When G-d reminds a man and stirs him so he does not fall into the trap of forgetfulness and sinks into the abyss of lusts. G-d warns him through his intellect and neshama (soul) which is called the "yetzer tov" (good inclination). "*comes to one who has taken the Torah...*" - i.e. after he conducts all his affairs in line with the torah, and does not veer neither right nor left as G-d commanded Moses. Then he can ascend higher and higher to the intellectual urge. Because, without torah, he is a fool who walks in darkness. He is entrenched in bodily lusts and erroneous outlooks, as the author wrote in chapter 2.)

The things through which a person will experience the intellectual urge are as follows: that a person should come to realize what the Creator has implanted in the human mind, namely: [that it is proper - LT] to esteem truth and detest falsehood, [it is proper - LT] to choose righteousness and avoid injustice. [It is proper - LT] to repay benefactors with good deeds and express gratitude to them, and to punish the wicked and condemn them. [It is proper - LT] to keep at peace with all human beings and act beneficently towards them, estimate good deeds [in comparison] with the resulting praise, righteous deeds with their reward, wrongdoings with their punishment, the superiority of one reward over another, the severity of one punishment compared with another and forgiveness of transgressors when they truly repent.

*(Marpe Lenefesh:* When does a man experience the intellectual urge? He answered, when he comes to realize the just and true outlooks which a straight intellect obligates, namely, that it is proper to esteem truth and detest falsehood, etc.

*Rabbi YS: "what the Creator has implanted in the human mind" -* i.e. G-d has implanted the voice of conscience in the human mind so that he can recognize the truth if he truly seeks it.

*Lev Tov: "to punish the wicked and condemn them" -* even though the torah forbade us to do this, as written: "do not take revenge nor bear a grudge" (Vayikra 19:18), nevertheless, a man must know that Reason dictates that it is proper to pay back evil with evil. And if a person pays back the Creator with evil despite the great benefits G-d has bestowed on him, it is proper that G-d pays him back evil accordingly. Through this, one will refrain from transgressing G-d's will out of fear of punishment.)

After these concepts have been clearly established in a man's soul through his reasoning ability and power of perception, his intellect will have become sound and his perception strong. And when G-d will remind him of the way of His goodness, that person will arouse his mind and soul to appreciate G-d's kindnesses to him, and his recognition of them will become stronger. And when he will attempt to recount them and realize them with his understanding and will find himself unable to do so, because of their universality, multitude, continuity and permanence, he will make demands upon his soul in regard to his duty of gratitude towards benefactors, as pointed out to him by his intellect, and his duty to act righteously. He will then resolve to make a return to the exalted G-d for the multitude of benefits he has received from Him.

*(Marpe Lenefesh: "when G-d will remind him" - i.e. G-d will place in his heart good thoughts, and stirs him to choose for himself the proper path which will be good for him in both worlds. "that person will arouse his mind and soul" - then he will start to consider and think by himself on how many benefits G-d has bestowed on him. "and his recognition of them will become stronger" - he will see to it to recognize them meticulously, and not forget even one of them - that they be like Totafot (tefilin) between his eyes, the great favors which G-d did with him every day, at all times.)*

And when he perceives with his mind's eye that he does not have the ability to do so, for the Creator has no need of him, then he will feel the obligation to humble himself and become conscious of his lowliness and insignificance, and he will then insist of his understanding concerning what he has to do, that it may be possible for him to approach and draw near to G-d in order that communion with Him may serve as a substitute for the return due to G-d, and his understanding will aid him to the right path in this regard.

*(Tov Halevanon: "he does not have the ability to do so" - i.e. that it is impossible for a created being to benefit the Creator, and especially since the Creator, who is absolutely perfect in every way, does not need anything.*

*Marpe Lenefesh: Even if he had the ability to repay the benefit, he will understand and realize that the Creator does not need him or his benefits.*

*Pas Lechem: "to humble himself" - with acts which demonstrate lowliness such as fasts, sackcloth, and ashes, as written "have you seen how Achav has humbled himself before Me" (Melachim 21:24).*

*"and become conscious of his lowliness and insignificance" - in his thoughts. "lowliness" from the perspective of himself, to regard oneself as lowly which is the opposite of arrogance. "Insignificant" forbearing and humble before others..*

*Marpe Lenefesh: "to humble himself..." - to say to oneself, "what am I and what significance am I that You have brought me until here? You have bestowed on me these tremendous favors and I am not capable of repaying You in the least, as the pious king (David) said (Divrei Hayamim 17:16): "Who am I, O L-ord G-d, and what is my house, that you have brought me this far?" Examine the whole matter there and you will be inspired.)*

## THE DELIBERATION BETWEEN THE UNDERSTANDING AND THE SOUL

*(Tov Halevanon: Now he will begin to explain the urge of the understanding in the way of questions and answers; How the understanding induces the service of G-d out of love, over the service induced by fear of punishment, whose source is in the nefesh, which feels reward and punishment and is from the aspect of good and evil. The understanding argues with its own source, namely, the aspect of truth and falsehood - to establish the nefesh in the service which is induced from the Understanding.*

*Manoach Halevavos: The "understanding" refers to the neshama (higher soul). The "soul" (nefesh) refers to the life spirit (lower soul, animal soul).*

*Marpe Lenefesh: The soul (nefesh) is the life spirit, through it the body lives and is maintained. The Creator has implanted in it lusts for all bodily things. It is called the "nefesh bahamit" (animal soul), for an animal also lusts for things which furthers its body. But the superiority of a human being lies in his intellect, which is like the king over the body, to guide everything in the just way and to yearn for spiritual things. See the Shemonei Perakim of the Rambam ch.1 and what I quoted from the book*

It (the Understanding) will say to his soul (nefesh):

Is it clear to you and firmly fixed in your mind that you are pledged (i.e. under debt - *ML*) to your Creator for His goodness and belong to Him because of the multitude of His kindness and His great favors?

The Soul (nefesh): Yes. (it is true what you say - *TL*)

(*Pas Lechem*: "you are pledged... and belong to Him" - As is the nature of the world. The poor debtor will first give his property as a pledge to his rich creditor because it is hard for him to sell it, and he hopes that maybe he will earn some money afterwards and redeem it back. Afterwards, when he sees that he needs more money, and borrows more until the debt becomes greater than the value of the pledge and the pledge then belongs to the creditor. So too here, at first he is obligated only a little to his Creator. As time goes on, his debt increases until even his life belongs to the Creator. "kindness and favors" - on the benefits which He bestowed on you and the favors which he saved you from troubles.)

The Understanding: Is it your intention to repay a portion of what you owe to the Creator?

The Soul: Yes.

(*Pas Lechem*: "a portion" - i.e. even though you are not able to fully repay any of them, you can nevertheless pay some of them according to your ability.)

The Understanding: How is this possible when your longing for this is so weak. Only a person who longs for health will put up with the bitterness of a medicine; but one who does not long for health will not submit to bearing the severity of the treatment.

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: How can you say that your intention is to repay a portion, etc. while you do not long and yearn for this with a tremendous desire. Your words contradict your heart.)

The Soul: My yearning is strong and my pain is great, to repay as much as I can of what I owe to my G-d; therefore continue to exhort me (and teach me how and what to repay Him - *LT*).

(*Pas Lechem*: My yearning is strong for the future and my pain is great for the past, that I was lazy in this. Alternatively, my pain is great due to my ignorance how and what to repay for I did not have a mentor until now.)

The Understanding: If you are telling the truth in what you are saying, the treatment may possibly be successful in your case. But if it is not the truth, why should you deceive yourself? For a sick person who lies to his physician only cheats himself, wastes the physician's efforts and aggravates his sickness (for it is the way of medicines to harm those who are not suited to them as the Rambam wrote - *PL*).

The Soul: And how can it be determined whether my longing (to repay the Creator - *LT*) is strong or weak.

(*Tov Halevanon*: i.e. how can I know whether the longing in me is true or false?)

The Understanding: If your longing stems from a clear realization how great is your debt to repay G-d, how little it is in your power to fulfill it and that your neglect of it is your downfall, while your striving to fulfill it is your salvation and life - your longing is genuine and your want is urgent; if not, it is false.

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: Know and understand that all the time that you are lax and negligent to long for this, namely, that you do not know and contemplate always "when will the time come that I can do something to fulfill the will of G-d?", and that through this will be your salvation in this world and life in the next world - then you are still on the outside. But if not, know that this is a true longing.)

#### LONGING VS WANTING

*Pas Lechem*: "your longing is genuine and your want is urgent" - "your longing is genuine" i.e. it is powerful and enduring and therefore indirectly, you will swiftly reach your want. This is the meaning

of "*your want is urgent*". "longing" and "want" are two separate things. It is possible to have "longing" without "want" or vice versa. The term "longing" applies to strong yearning in the nefesh (soul), to cling to that which it deems cherishable while the mental imagery of that thing is in its thoughts. Hence, it works in a kind of natural way. Nevertheless, perhaps he will not "want" that thing due to some impediment. For example, consider a person who feels extremely hungry on a fast day. It is correct to say that his nefesh (soul) longs for food but nevertheless he does not want the food. Because the term "want" applies to will by cognitive choice. It is possible also to find "want" without "longing". For example, if a man takes a bitter potion for healing purposes. He "wants" it by necessity but his nature does not "long" for this. It is known that in all human powers, there are varying degrees, higher and lower. Likewise for "longing". There is a strong longing, and there is a stronger longing. However, there is no such thing as an utterly lax longing, since if it is lax, it is not at all a "longing" (by definition). Through this presentation, you will understand all of the author's words regarding longing and want. Understand this.)

The Soul: My want was never other than lax, and my longing was always false, from the time when my only inducements (to the service of G-d) were the records of former ages that have passed away up to the time when the truth of what you have stated has become rationally clear to me, first through the exhortation of the Torah, and later by rational demonstration, so that my longing now is genuine and my want is clear.

(*Tov Halevanon*: i.e. even though the stories in the torah and the prophets induced me to the ways of G-d, nevertheless, my longing was lax and false. Unlike now when it has become clear to me through the method of wisdom (rational enquiry).

*Pas Lechem*: "*my want was lax*" - the term lax applies correctly to "want", but not to "longing", as [I explained] before. Therefore, he used the term "false", which connotes ceasing, for it is possible for a man to long for something and afterwards his yearning cools down, hence his longing is [retroactively] proved false.

*"my want is clear*: i.e. strong. He used the term "clear" because what causes a want to become lax is the mixtures of impurities of outside interests which conflict with that want. This is like the mixture of impurities in a man's blood which conflicts with the natural health and weakens his strength. But when the "want" strengthens, this indicates that the impurities have shed and it is now clear [pure].)

The Understanding: If what you say is true, then prepare yourself to bear the pain of the treatment, and endure the bitter taste of the medicine and its unpleasantness, after you will have first given up the bad diet to which you were accustomed.

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: For the physician will not give the treatment to the patient as long as the patient is continuing to eat the bad foods which the illnesses stem from. He then says that the bad foods to the soul are the bad traits which divide into two categories.)

The Soul: What is the bad diet to which I was accustomed ?

The Understanding: It is the bad disposition (trait) which has mastered you from your beginning and the forces which have maintained it, from the earliest years of your growth.

(*Pas Lechem*: "*from your beginning*" - the beginning of your existence. From the beginning of the formation of the body, the soul was joined to it. Regarding the "forces", he wrote "*earliest years of your growth*" since these are the superfluous things which he has accustomed himself in when he has attained some understanding. Hence, he did not write "beginning" regarding these since one is not in control of his ways while in his mother's belly.

*Marpe Lenefesh*: If you wish to understand why he refers to bad traits as bad food, and why the healing of bad traits is not part of the healing regimen itself, see the words of a holy man, the man of G-d, our teacher, Rabbi Chaim Vital in his book "Shaarei Kedusha". There he explains this matter at length as he received it from his teacher, the Arizal, through the divine presence which rested on him... The summary of what he says is that good and bad traits in a human being stem from the nefesh bahamit (lower soul). The body is comprised of the four elements of the world and their spiritual counterparts, which are material and form. Therefore, all the traits fall into two main divisions which in turn subdivide into two subdivisions: "arrogance", from the element of fire (*Rabbi YS*: see Gate 1 ch.6 for an explanation of the four elements system of classification. Modern science



combined everything with  $E=mc^2$  because it ignores the spiritual side of reality). [Excessive] speech, whether good or bad springs from the element of air. Lust for physical pleasures springs from the element of water, sadness and laziness from the element of earth. From their opposites spring the good traits in a human being. The 613 commandments correspond to the 613 spiritual limbs of the soul which are encloded inside the nefesh bahamit which in turn is encloded in the 613 physical limbs of the body. Therefore, the body is not able to work and fulfill the 613 commandments if the soul is ill with the sickness of these bad traits, just like if the body were ill. Therefore, the traits were not included in the 613 commandments. It comes out that bad traits are more severe than fulfillment of the commandments themselves, since then the body and soul are not capable of fulfilling any commandment properly. Therefore, the bad traits are like bad food to a sick body - all the medications in the world (i.e. the commandments) will be of no avail as long as he continues with the bad food. See there at length the words of the wise man and you will understand it well.)

The Soul: What disposition is this, and what are the forces that maintain it?

The Understanding: The reprehensible dispositions in you are many. But the root and stock from which they spring are two. One of them is love of physical pleasures - eating, drinking, marital relations and other bodily needs. This disposition you have acquired from your bad neighbor, the body.

The second disposition is love of domination and superiority - pride, haughtiness, jealousy. This brings you to refrain from making a return to your Benefactor. This disposition you have acquired from your associates, among whom you have grown up, namely, your siblings and [other] relatives.

The Soul: What are the forces that I need to keep far from me?

The Understanding: The forces that maintain the former evil disposition are superfluity in eating, drinking, dress, sleep, rest, tranquility and other similar things. The forces that uphold the latter evil disposition are superfluity of speech, excessive socializing, approval seeking [of human beings], love of praise and honor, jealousy of others because of their material possessions, even if what they possess consists only of sheer necessities; contemptuousness, picking on the faults of others, and so forth. If what you have said of your strong desire and yearning to make a return for the benefits G-d has bestowed upon you is true, keep far from you, with all your strength, the forces and dispositions that I have mentioned to you, and I will then bring you to the first gate leading to recovery.

*(Pas Lechem: "rest" - from physically toiling with one's limbs. "tranquility" means tranquility of heart from the toil of thoughts.*

*Tov Halevanon: "tranquility" - a mind tranquil and quiet from the worries of the service of G-d.*

*Manoach Halevavos: "jealousy of others" - i.e. jealousy of them because they acquired worldly possessions, and things necessary for their livelihood. Alternatively, due to great jealousy, he comes to steal forcefully what is in their hands.*

*"contemptuousness" - due to his great pride and arrogance, he desires to denigrate other people and recall their faults.*

*Pas Lechem: "keep far from you, with all your strength, the forces and dispositions" - he first mentioned the "forces" which are the causes which maintain the dispositions. One must first remove the cause for when the cause is removed, the effect (i.e. the bad dispositions) will also be removed.*

*Translator: see Gate #9 chapter 5 for a detailed regimen by the author for conquering one's lusts for excessive things.)*

The Soul: To renounce these faults would be very hard for me, on account of the long time that I have been habituated to them; therefore be kind enough to show me in what way I can do so more easily.

The Understanding: Surely you know that a sensible man will consent to the cutting off of one piece of flesh or to the loss of one of his limbs, if it is attacked by some disease which he fears will spread and affect the remaining limbs, as soon as he considers the difference between the two states and realizes the inequality of the two evils. So, too, if you wish that the separation which is so hard should seem easy to you, concentrate your mind and employ your intelligence in weighing the good you will derive from the separation and the evil which will befall you if you continue your association with it; and then separation from your reprehensible disposition, which seems so hard, will be easy.

*(Pas Lechem: "cutting off of one piece of flesh or to the loss of one of his limbs" - i.e. when flesh is cut off and it eventually heals, there is no recognizable loss. The entire suffering was the pain of the cutting it (and its healing), therefore he used the term "cutting off". But for a limb, where the loss is*

also in lost functionality he used the phrase "*and its loss*".

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*Tov Halevanon*: "*concentrate your mind...*" - i.e. which is the worse evil, to lose one limb or to die altogether?

*Pas Lechem*: "*concentrate your mind...*" - At first one must picture in his mind the two extremes, and afterwards to employ one's faculty of contemplation to weigh the difference between them.)

The Soul: What is the good that separation from it will bring me, and what is the evil that will befall me if I continue to keep it?

The Understanding: The good will consist in your spiritual tranquility and relief from the darkness of this gloomy world, the pleasures of which are mixed with grief, while its lusts soon cease; also, that your strengthened power of perception will finally lead you to realize your destiny in the place of your rest (the life hereafter) and that therefore you should busy yourself and be concerned about it. This is one of the gates on which depend your salvation and your life.

(*Tov Halevanon*: "*the pleasures are mixed with griefs*" - there is no pleasure in this world which is complete, without worries. They inevitably become increasingly mixed with worries. A human being always longs for what is more. What he possesses is as nothing compared to his heart's desire to obtain more than this, as our Sages said (Koheles Raba 13:1) "no man ever dies having obtained [even] half of his desire". Hence, his desire and grief in what he lacks is greater than what he has obtained.

*"its lusts soon cease"* - the pleasures of this world and its enjoyments. A man desires and lusts for some matter which he is not able to obtain. And when he does obtain the thing he desired, the thing transforms to being loathsome in his eyes and his lust for it then becomes heavy on him. Understand this.

*"your strengthened power of perception"* - this is the good that you will obtain when you separate [from the lusts] - you will perceive what awaits you in your final end - a pleasure without interruption and without worry. The good that awaits you when separating from the lusts and physical enjoyments of this world is that this will bring you to understand "your strengthened power of perception", i.e. great recognition and intent on your final abode, i.e. after death. When you see just how great your power of perception has been magnified after you have renounced the worldly lusts, all the more so, after death when the body has become completely separated from you.

*Marpe Lenefesh*: your perception, namely, your thoughts will be primarily on the next world, for there is your true home, and there you will rest and be tranquil.)

The evil [resulting from not renouncing your bad tendencies] is recurrence of your anxiety, multiplication of your grief, continuance of your mourning at the non-fulfillment of your desires in this world which, if they were satisfied, would only bring you something that is vain, without permanence or continuance, and which will undoubtedly pass to someone else; so that nothing will remain to you of this world nor will you secure the world hereafter; and, what is more obvious, you will not fulfill your wishes, however long you strive for them.

The Soul: I understand what you have said. I hope that the separation which previously was so hard will now become easier for me. Continue now to lead me to the second part of the healing methods which will teach me what I desire to learn of the service of G-d.

(*Lev Tov*: Now the understanding will start to teach the soul what it needs to do to become closer to G-d and to find favor in His eyes. As an introduction, he explains that the foundation of the service of G-d is that a man relates towards G-d, who is above him and benefits him, in the same way that he expects from his slave who is inferior in status and benefits from him.)

The Understanding: The ruling principle and sum of the matter is that you assume towards Him who is above you all those obligations which you would desire should be assumed towards yourself by one beneath you-presupposing that relations in both cases are equal. What seems to you good and what displeases you as evil in the conduct of the latter, do and refrain from doing, towards the former.

The Soul: Be more explicit.

The Understanding: Think of the benefits bestowed by G-d that you share with others, and of those benefits with

which you are specially favored. Then imagine that you have bestowed similar favors on your slave whom you acquired by purchase; and the kind of behavior on his part towards you that would be pleasing to you, undertake to show to your Creator, and what seems to you evil, on his part, you too must regard as evil on your part to your Creator.

*(Marpe Lenefesh: i.e. the root of the matter and general principle how it is fitting to serve G-d - take a proof from your own self. If you own a slave and the slave receives benefits from you (room and board, etc.), you want that this slave will honor you and serve you with all types of service, as he will explain. So too, it is proper to take on yourself all kinds of slavehood and service towards Him, since He is your superior, the Master of all, and you receive countless benefits from Him.)*

*Tov Halevanon: "presupposing that relations in both cases are equal" - i.e. not that they are really equal, but rather, according to the extent and quality of the benefits bestowed on man by G-d relative to the extent and quality of the benefits bestowed on a master to his slave. So too, should be the corresponding greater service of a man to G-d relative to the service of a slave to his master.)*

The Soul: I have understood in general what you have just said. But kindly explain all this to me in detail.

The Understanding: The duties of good conduct of any servant towards his master, who bestowed upon him even a tiny portion of the bounties your Creator has bestowed upon you, consist in honoring the master in word and deed, in faithfulness to him, exerting himself in his master's affairs, openly and inwardly, and showing reverence and fear when standing in his presence. As a pious man said, "Do not rebel against your master when he observes you."

*(Pas Lechem: "faithfulness to him, exerting himself" - i.e. faithful in his matters and exerting himself in them. The author's intent in these two terms is to divide the matters of slavehood into two divisions, namely, duties of the heart and duties of the limbs. On the duties of the heart he wrote "faithfulness" while on the duties of the limbs he wrote "and exerts himself". "reverence and fear" - fear due to picturing his ability to punish those who transgress his will, even though, G-d is beyond any representation of the mind, nevertheless, He is close from the aspect of His providence. Therefore, he wrote "reverence and fear". Reverence from far and fear from close.)*

*Marpe Lenefesh: "Do not rebel against your master when he sees you." - therefore David said "I have set G-d before me always" (Tehilim 16:8), in order not to transgress before Him.)*

Among these duties are also included that he should be humble and submissive to his master, in his visible behavior and innermost secret thoughts; that he should conduct himself with humility before him, in his attire and habits.

*Marpe Lenefesh: A slave should not dress up before his master in honorable clothing like free men, unless it is for his master's honor. He should also not act important in his traits, for example, to not become angry before his master even on someone who it is proper to get angry on. Likewise, he should not machria his words (affirm his opinion as if you are equal to him), as the Sages wrote regarding honoring one's father Kidushin 31b.*

That he should honor and exalt him, in his speech and thought, that he should praise and laud him by day and by night; that he should recall his good deeds privately and publicly; recount his praises according to what befits him; run to do his service joyously and goodheartedly out of love that he will find favor in his master's eyes (i.e. because he loves and wants that he will find favor in his eyes - PL); strive to draw nearer in his behavior to his master's will; ever beseech his master to be pleased with him and forgive him; to love him; to be afraid that he may be falling short in doing what he had been commanded;

*(Pas Lechem: "be afraid" - literally "be afraid that he WILL BE falling short" - that perhaps he is falling short in his commandments. He wrote "will be" in the future tense, i.e. he is afraid perhaps it will become known to him on the day of reckoning that he had fallen short. Alternatively, as our Sages said that a righteous man is afraid on future sins. Alternatively, the author's intent is that he pictures "fear" to himself when preparing for some act of service that perhaps he will fall short in it.)*

That he should heed the master's command, keep far from that against which the master had warned him, think of the many iniquities which he has committed in the past, appreciate the benefits he has received on account of their great number and importance and diminish the value of what he has done in comparison with what he should have

(*Tov Halevanon*: In every act of his [master's] service, he should not credit himself with good, rather he should think that this service is very petty compared to the service he is obligated to his master. i.e. that [generally] his service be petty in his eyes relative to what he is obligated to his master.)

He should admit his own insignificance compared to the greatness of his master. He should bow to him frequently, in deep humility and lowliness. He should put his trust in his master for all his needs and be satisfied with whatever position his master assigns him to. If the master provides for him fully, he should thank and praise him. If the master leaves him hungry, he should accept and bear his condition patiently. He should never suspect the master of unfairness in his judgment of him, nor charge him with perverseness in his decree. He should be contented with what the master favors him with, and justify the master when he has punished him.

(*Pas Lechem*: "he should accept and bear his condition patiently" - "accept" favorably [the hard condition the master subjected him to] at the beginning and bear the condition throughout its duration, without trying to remove it from himself through human strategies [rather to beseech only his master - Rabbi YS].

"never suspect the master of unfairness in his judgment" - on the small portion the master has allotted him for his needs while his eyes see much greater good that the master has allotted to others. He should not suspect that there was favoritism...

"nor charge him with perverseness in his decree" - if the master decreed some bad for him, he will not ascribe perverseness to the master. We find these two divisions in parsha Haazinu (Devarim 32:4) "The Rock, His work is perfect, For all His ways are just", corresponding to G-d's allotting of benefits. The verse continues: "A G-d of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He", corresponding to the decrees of bad.

Afterwards, he explains his words "*He should be contented with what the master favors him with*" corresponds to the first division. "*and justify the master when he has punished him*" - corresponds to the second division.)

Other things which are proper on his part: that in every movement of his limbs and in all his traits, he should exhibit evidence of his servitude and of his master's ownership.

(*Pas Lechem*: How he is the property of his master. [*Rabbi YS*: such as wearing a kippa on the head or tzitzit, tefilin, Brit Mila])

He should ponder only on remembrance of his master.

(*Pas Lechem*: in all of his thinking, one will find that his mouth expresses remembrance of his master.)

Look nowhere else than to the master's ways.

(*Pas Lechem*: To learn for himself the ways of his master, as written (Devarim 28:9): "you shall walk in His ways")

Listen only to his master's words, eat only the food that his master provides for him, think only of his master's greatness, render no service except to please his master.

(*Pas Lechem*: All of the service he renders to his master has no other aim than to find favor with him.)

Rejoice only in serving his master.

(*Pas Lechem*: To not be joyful of any thing in the world whatsoever except in performing the service of his Creator.)

(*Pas Lechem*: "a seeker" refers to one who exerts himself on something to attain it. He wrote that the slave will not exert great exertion on anything in the world except for attaining the favor of his master.)

Hasten only on his master's errands, abstain only from whatever might be against the master's will.

(*Pas Lechem*: "abstain" - [the literal translation is "stand"]. The intent of using the word "stand" is that he "stops"... i.e. that he will not fear and halt from doing anything in the world when he senses that it is harmful like he panics, trembles and halts from some matter when he senses that he is rebelling against his Creator in that matter.)

Stay nowhere except in his master's house, remain ever faithful to him alone.

(*Pas Lechem*: For any matter in the world, he will not consider it so much to be steadfastly strong in it and so that he won't slip in it, except for his faithfulness to his master - he will strengthen himself with all of his might in it so that his heels will not slip.)

Only read his books, wear only the garment of reverence for his master.

(*Pas Lechem*: He compared the fear of G-d to a garment that a person wears to cover and hide his naked parts. So too, the fear of G-d will cover the disgrace of lowly traits in man's potential so that they don't come out to actual.)

Sleep only on the couch of love for him, keeping ever in his mind the master's likeness.

(*Pas Lechem*: One who is very much beloved to someone, due to that person's great love, his picture will cleave to his heart. And the picture which clings to his heart becomes manifested and pictured before him always as if it were placed before him. This is the pshat (plain meaning) of the verse (Tehilim 16:8) "I have set G-d before me always".)

Awaking with the sweetness in thinking of him.

(*Pas Lechem*: When something is beloved and precious to a man, it is the first of all his thoughts. Immediately when he wakes up, it precedes other thoughts in entering his mind.)

Finding no pleasure except in being with him, fleeing from naught except disobedience to him, never mourning except when his master is angry [on him - PL], feeling no fear except fear of his master, hoping for naught but his master's kindness, never angry except at that which his master obliges him to be so. He will only be pleased with one who does his master's will; take nothing but with his master's permission; only give to one to whom his master orders him to give.

And so with all his movements. He will not move a foot, nor raise an eyelid except to fulfill his master's will.

The habits that are bad in a servant are the opposite of those that are good in his master's sight. When these good habits are reversed, they are easily recognized.

(*Pas Lechem*: in all matters, one can know and recognize the unknown side from the known side which is its opposite. For example, a poor man can picture the goodness of being wealthy through his recognition of the sufferings of poverty which is its opposite. On this, they wrote "knowledge of the opposites is one". The intent here is that once we have clarified the conducts which are good in the eyes of the master, indirectly we also know that the opposite conducts of the slave are bad in his eyes. And one must renounce the bad and adopt the good.)

I have assembled for you a sufficient number of examples to indicate to you the rest of the duties and their

opposites. And as the conduct of servants, regarded by their masters as good is as we have described it, and you know how insignificant is the kindness of masters to their servants, how much more in reduplicated measure to what we have mentioned do you owe in service to the blessed G-d in return to Him for the multitude of bounties He has bestowed upon you.

## CHAPTER 6

The Soul: I have understood what you have stated and your explanation is sufficient. Now explain to me the various aspects of favors for which I am under an obligation of increased service to the blessed G-d.

(*Tov Halevanon*: increased service [in return] for the specific benefits to me which is in addition to the service which all human beings are obligated in)

The Understanding: The obligation of increased service incumbent on human beings varies according to the benefits - general and specific - bestowed on them. These benefits fall into four divisions.

The first is the universal goodness of G-d which embraces all mankind, in having brought human creatures into existence when previously they were naught; in keeping them in life and bestowing on them bounties which we have cited in the second treatise of this work. They are accordingly under a universal obligation of service to the blessed Creator. This consists of obedience to all the rational laws observed by Adam, Enoch, Noah and his sons, Job and his companions, up to the days of our teacher Moses, peace be upon him. If one adheres to all these laws for the sake of G-d's service, the Almighty will bestow on him favors beyond those enjoyed by other men, and give him a higher degree in this existence and a great reward in the World to Come, as was the case with Abraham, to whom G-d said, "Do not fear, Abraham; I am your shield (in this world - *PL*); your reward is exceedingly great (in the next world - *PL*)" (Bereishis 15:1). But one who rebels against G-d, despite His beneficence, will fall from the degree of rational beings and their excellencies, sink to the low condition of irrational creatures and share the fate of the beasts of the earth, as it is said: "*And the enemies of the L-ord shall be as the fat lambs (they shall be consumed; into smoke shall they be consumed)*" (Tehilim 37:20). And in the next world they will be sentenced to an evil of which there is none greater, as it is said: "*As to your spirit - fire shall devour you*" (Yeshaya 33:11).

(*Pas Lechem*: "*share the fate of the beasts of the earth*" - his matter will be like the animals. i.e. even though you may see him at a time of success, nevertheless, they are being well fed and fattened up to prepare them for slaughter.

*Marphe Lenefesh*: "*an evil of which there is none greater*" - for just like we understand that the good of the next world is unimaginable and incomparable. So too, we can imagine that its evil also is incomparable. For, if even in this world there are many troubles and evils, and sufferings - all the more so for one who has incurred the wrath of the great King, the King of kings, the holy One BB"H. How many great evils will befall him of which there are none worse.)

The second division consists of G-d's special goodness to one people among the peoples, one nation among the nations, as for example, the favors He showed the children of Israel, in taking them out of Egypt and bringing them to the land of Canaan. Thus He put them under an obligation of service, additional to the universal service which we have mentioned. This consists in obedience to the authoritative commandments (Divine precepts received by Moses, the reason of which is not clear), after He had exhorted them and aroused them concerning the rational moral duties (which reason can deduce such as honor your mother and father, don't steal, etc).

(*Marphe Lenefesh*: "*authoritative commandments*" - (literally "heard" commandments) these are the statutes which were made known by "hearing" (prophecy). This is what the verse says (Devarim 16:12) "And you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt: and you shall observe and do these statutes". This verse was said regarding the holiday of Shavuot to teach that only the "statutes" (Chukim-commandments without rational explanation) were new in the giving of the Torah.)

Whoever assumed the service for the glory of G-d was favored by the Almighty with special bounties, for which he was under an obligation of additional service beside the service due from his nation and the rest of his tribe, as Moses said: "*Whoever is on the L-ord's side? Let him come unto me. And all the descendants of Levi gathered themselves together unto him*" (Shemot 32:26). G-d showed them additional favor and then chose from among them Aaron and his sons to minister to His glory. He charged the Levites with special precepts in addition to those he gave to the rest of the nation, and promised them a great reward in the life hereafter. But whoever of them rebels against the exalted Creator, will fall from both these degrees of excellence and be punished in both worlds; as the wise man

(Tov Halevanon: "whoever assumed the service for the glory of G-d" - i.e. even the commandments which the intellect obligates, if he assumes them also because G-d commanded them in addition to because the intellect obligates them - his reward is greater, similar to what our Sages said (Avoda Zara 3a) "one who is commanded and does is greater than one who is not commanded and does...", and even greater is one who fulfills G-d's torah because they are G-d's commandments and dedicates his life on this as we find by the tribe of Levi.

Marpe Lenefesh: "whoever assumed the service for the glory of G-d" - i.e. both torahs, the authoritative precepts and those which the intellect obligates - if he assumed them for G-d's glory alone, not for his own needs, and therefore, he fulfills them with all his heart and soul, as the Levites did, to endanger their lives in order to exact revenge on the sinners [of the golden calf].)

The third division is the special goodness of G-d to a certain family among the families of the nations, such as the appointment of the priesthood and the Levites, as also the succession of sovereignty conferred upon the house of David. In return for this, He charged them with additional duties, of which those assigned to the priests and Levites are known and clearly set forth in the book of G-d's law, the Pentateuch. The specific law applying to the House of David is thus set forth: "O house of David, thus says the L-ord, execute judgment in the morning; and deliver him that is spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor" (Jeremiah 21:12). One who completely fulfills these duties, because he loves to please G-d, will be singled out by the Almighty for happiness here and a great reward hereafter. He will be a distinguished nobleman or a teacher of righteousness, as the Scripture says concerning Pinchas, "Then stood up Pinchas and executed judgment and the plague was stayed. And that was counted unto him for righteousness unto all generations for evermore" (Ps. 106:30-31). Further, "But the priests, the Levites, the sons of Zadok that kept the charge of My sanctuary...[They shall come near to Me to minister unto Me]" (Ezek. 44:15). But whoever among them rebels against G-d falls from those highest degrees in this world, and will suffer severe pain in the world to come, as you know from what befell Korach and his company.

(Tov Halevanon: "But whoever among them rebels against G-d" - i.e. of the family which G-d has bestowed special goodness above the rest of the nation, and it was proper for them to increase service for this. But instead, on the contrary, they rebelled against G-d, their punishment will be greater.

Pas Lechem: i.e. the special goodness itself was the source of their rebellion like Korach and his company that through his wealth and distinguished lineage, he rose up against Moses.)

The fourth division is G-d's goodness to an individual, by which he has been singled out from the rest of his family and people and other rational beings, as for instance, one chosen to be either a distinguished prophet, a leader appointed to govern a nation or a Sage whose spirit G-d has awakened and endowed with wisdom, understanding, counsel and similar qualities. For every one of these bounties, he is under the obligation of additional service of G-d. He who performs this service in full measure unto him will these gifts - general and special - be continued in this world, and G-d will increase his power over them and understanding of them, as it is said, "The L-ord has sworn unto David in truth-he will not depart from it, of the fruit of your body, I will set upon your throne. If your children will keep My covenant and My testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon your throne for evermore" (Ps. 132:11-12). The reward in the world hereafter is indicated in the following verse: "unless I had believed to see the goodness of the L-ord in the land of the living" (Ps. 27:13).

But whoever [among these who] rebels against G-d, despite the beneficence which G-d has specially bestowed upon him, will fall from all these degrees, and the Creator will hold him more strictly to account in this world, as it is said, "... this is it that the L-ord spoke, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come near Me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace" (Lev. 10:3); furthermore, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities" (Amos 3:2). His punishment in the next world will be more severe, as it is said: "For Tophet (Gehinom) is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; He has made it deep and large. He makes great with fire and wood. The breath of G-d kindles it, like a torrent of brimstone" (Isaiah 30:33).

(Pas Lechem: "for the king it is prepared" - i.e. that the Gehinom's fire was made deeper and wider for the king than the rest of the wicked individuals like him of his nation. Because since he was the king, singled out for benefits, his sin is exceedingly great. Therefore, his downfall and punishment will be greater for his wickedness.)

According to the above four divisions, human beings are under obligations to serve G-d. Whenever G-d increases His beneficence to an individual, that individual is under an obligation to render additional service for it. This is illustrated by the following examples. It is a duty to tithe produce, as it is written, "You shall tithe all the yield of your seed that comes from the field year by year" (Deut. 14:22). One to whom G-d has given one hundred kur of produce is obliged to give ten kur; one to whom G-d has only given ten kur has to give one kur. If the former were to separate nine and a half kur and the latter were to separate one kur, the former would be punished, while the latter would receive a reward.

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: "it is a duty to tithe" - it is written in the Shl" a and the book "Kenei Chachma", that this is not only for produce, but rather for all good a person receives, he is under duty to tithe it. And from all profit that G-d bestows on a man, he is obligated to give one tenth to the poor. Since, behold, the forefathers took on themselves to do this as written: "he (Abraham) gave him one tenth of everything" (Bereishis 14:20) and "of all that you give me I will give a full tenth to you" (ibid 28:22), and "put Me to the test, says the L-ord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need" (Malachi 3:10). Since this mitzvah is lax in our times, it is proper to remind and make known its importance. Here is an excerpt from the book "Yesh Nocholim" (ch.2 of 30) and the Sefer Chareidim siman 144: "woe to those who refrain from giving their maaser, for in the end nothing will remain in their hands except the one tenth. This is something tangibly visible for in the places where people were careful to take maaser properly, they became wealthy and their wealth stayed by them until they bequeathed it to their children. While in those places where people were not careful in this, they lost their wealth through some calamity and bequeath nothing to their children... see there and the book Kenei Chachma at length.)

So, too, if a man has no son, the obligation of circumcising and teaching his son Torah does not apply to him. If a person is lame, the duty of going to Jerusalem for the three festivals is not obligatory for him. When a person is sick, the precepts which he is unable to fulfill are not binding upon him. Analogously, if a person has been singled out by the Creator for special beneficence, he is under an obligation to increased service for it.

Hence, the saints in ancient times, when some good fortune happened to them, were troubled in two respects: First, that they should not fall short in the complete fulfillment of the service and gratitude they owed for this good fortune and that it should not turn into evil for them, as our ancestor Jacob said, "I have diminished from all the mercies, and truth which You have shown unto Your servant" (Gen. 32:11); secondly, that it should not be the Creator's reward for their service, and thus their reward in the world to come would be diminished, as the ancients explained the text, "And repays them that hate Him to their face to destroy them (in the afterlife)" (Deut. 7:10). This will suffice on this theme.

The Soul: I have understood all that you have mentioned. But I do not feel myself able to repay the Creator with services in return for His bounties, not even for those all men enjoy, much less for those with which He has specially favored me. And when it is my wish and desire to fulfill the service which it is my duty to render for them, before I have even completed forming the resolution, the hope of a future reward enters my thoughts.

(*Tov Halevanon*: i.e. when I wish to serve G-d for the good He has bestowed on me, immediately, I start to think that I will do this service and repay G-d so that He will bestow on me additional future benefits as reward for this repayment.

*Pas Lechem*: Immediately, it enters my mind that my aim and intent in doing this deed, is in order to receive potential reward in the future due to this act of service.)

And so it is with my gratitude to G-d; when I thank Him, I thank Him for His great goodness to me in words but my thought and intent is the wish that the reward may be continued and increased. I am not like the one who renounced all expectation of an increase of the reward or its continuance. And if I behave in this way in my service and gratitude to G-d, with so little of clear intent to fulfill my obligations for His universal goodness, how will I ever be able to fulfill the rest of the service I owe to Him for bounties with which He has specially favored me? I therefore need that you should teach me the minimum of service that it is my duty to render for these favors, so that I may be worthy of their continuance.

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: It would be proper for my intent in my service and rendering of thanks to make my heart renounce future benefits. Namely, that even though G-d will not give me anything,



nevertheless, I am under obligation to render thanks for the past. Because all the while that my intent is to increase benefits, I am like one who serves in order to receive reward, thereby doing it only for my own honor. 41

*Pas Lechem:* "I thank Him for His great goodness to me in words but my thought and intent" - in my words, one can hear only thanks on the past which He already bestowed. This is proper. However, I recognize my lacking - that my main thought and intent in the thanking is to seek the continuance of this good, i.e. that this good will continue and maybe even that it will increase more.

"I am not like the one who renounced.." - in truth, a man needs to direct his mind to make his heart abandon the desire for increased or continuance of good as before. Then his heart will be perfect in intent of thanking only for the past. Behold, he first said "*continue and increase*" and afterwards said "*increase and continue*", since in both instances he spoke in the way of "not only this but also this" (lo zu afzu). Understand this.

*Tov Halevanon:* "with so little of clear intent to fulfill my obligations" - i.e. what causes me these thoughts is because it appears to my eyes that His benefits to me do not obligate so much service and I can discharge my duty with just a little bit of service.

*Pas Lechem:* "therefore teach me the minimum of service" - teach me a minimum amount whereby I would be fulfilling my duty and this would be considered an acceptable service. Because if you load on me a great amount of service, perhaps it will be too much for me and I will not be able to bear it. But if this is a small amount, I will be assured that I will be able to endure it.)

The Understanding: Your complaint of your scanty devotion in the service of G-d and ingratitude to Him and that the words of your mouth are [hypocritically] those of one who expresses thankfulness, while your purpose is that of a requester, and the wish in your heart is for an increase in the bounty and its continuance - all this is due to three dispositions:

The first is your excessive self-love, and desire to draw for yourself enjoyable things. You do not move a step to the service of the Almighty or for any other purpose without the motive to enjoy pleasures. I have already recommended as the beginning of my course of treatment that you should strive with all your might to keep this evil disposition far from you, and then I may hold out the best of hopes for you.

(*Tov Halevanon:* you forget to thank on the past good for you are constantly preoccupied in seeking future pleasures.

*Pas Lechem:* you do not take any step in the service of G-d nor help any human being unless you hope to gain some personal benefit from it.

*Marpé Lenefesh:* you love yourself, i.e. your body, namely, you pursue pleasures, to seek enjoyments in everything. Whether you are working for the next world or for this world, your intent is to have immediate pleasure from this... and (Pirkei Avot) "lust ,etc drive a person out of the world")

The second is that you do not realize the Creator's kindness to you and imagine that you will not obtain His bounty except through your supplication for it, whereas G-d has been good to you in what you know and in what you do not know, and when you supplicate Him, you do not consider Who has done all this for you from the beginning. If you would put away from yourself this idea, your service would be wholly devotional, your thanksgiving to Him would express your inward feelings (i.e. wholehearted - TL), and your hopes to Him [of benefits] would then be worthier and more justified.

(*Marpé Lenefesh:* You [mistakenly] think that if you supplicate for something then you will obtain it but if not, then you won't. You do not consider that G-d has already bestowed many benefits on you which you do not even think about or know about. If one would reflect on this frequently, he would not associate his thoughts in his service or in his prayers on receiving reward... alternatively,

*Tov Halevanon:* "except through your supplication for it" - of that which your heart desires and seeks from G-d, that which appears good to your eyes and your outlook.

"and in what you do not know" - i.e. even though it appears to your eyes that the Creator has not benefited you because you do not understand the good He has done to you in refraining from

fulfilling your heart's requests. This is for your ultimate benefit, which you will obtain in your final end. The Creator knows that this request [of yours] will have a bad ending.  
*"who has done all this for you from the beginning"* - all these benefits without your requesting them, and likewise He refrained from granting your requests in order to benefit you in the future.  
*"your service would be wholly devotional"* - to unload all your needs on G-d, and thinking that all that He has done to you - it is all for your benefit according to the decree of His divine wisdom. This is like the saying of one of our Sages (Taanis 21a) "this is also for the best" and (Berachos 60b) "all that the Merciful One does, is for the best".)

The third reason is that you neither know yourself nor how to conduct yourself. You deem yourself deserving of the greatest benefits and you never cease beseeching G-d for them. And when you obtain any of them, your mind yearns for something higher. You do not, however, realize that the exalted Creator deserves the greatest service on your part. When you render any service, you regard it as a favor granted by you to Him, though you realize that for all your needs you are dependent on Him and that He has no need of you.

(*Tov Halevanon*: "you neither know yourself nor how to conduct yourself" - i.e. you do not realize how little is your understanding and how petty are your merits, and what [little] benefits you actually deserve for your wisdom (torah study) and deeds.)

*Marpé Lenefesh*: you do not put to heart from whence you came and who you are. You are a petty creature, worm and maggot in your life and in your death. You constantly need the kindness of the Creator while He does not need you or your service.)

If you were to uncover (remove) this blinding folly, study the matter with open eyes and realize that the Creator who created you thinks of you and knows what is good for you and what is not good, better than you do, you would be contented with whatever benefits He bestows upon you, and would render great thanks to Him for them with a perfect heart. Then you would not rest your hope on what disturbs you, and keeps you from recognizing the bounties that you have gotten and from discharging the obligations that you owe to G-d for them.

(*Marpé Lenefesh*: "remove this blinding folly" - that you come to know and understand this, that you do not deserve any good while the Creator deserves the greatest service on your part due to His great favors to you.  
*"thinks of you and knows what is good for you..."* - and also you consider that the Creator thinks on you. It appears to me that this point is against the second disposition.  
*"you would be contented with whatever benefits He bestows upon you"* - whether good or bad, little or much - you would greatly thank Him for them and not put your mind to your benefit and gain in all that you do. This point is against the first disposition.)

And it is impossible that you should not attain what you are fit for, when it will become due to you by reason of your service, and not merely because you hope for it and fix your mind on it.

(*Marpé Lenefesh*: if you would remove and divest yourself of these three dispositions certainly you will attain all good things fitting for you due to your service and you would not need to fix your mind and hope on this.)

*Pas Lechem*: "fit for..due to you" - "fit" from your side, that you are more fitting and prepared to receive the good when you understand His kindness. "due to you" - from His side, from the side of His trait of goodness which necessitates bestowing to those worthy of the good.)

## CHAPTER 7

In regard to your question as to what is the minimum service of G-d, below which, a person would not be discharging his duty, and which is requisite for the continuance of the Divine bounty, there are ten matters, as follows:

(*Marpé Lenefesh*: "In regard to your question" - of how can I conduct myself in the service of G-d in the minimum way, and even though one is not able to do more, nevertheless this small amount should be with kavana (proper intent). The Understanding answered that there are ten matters which one must conduct himself in. This is the minimum of all levels of service [of G-d] and every human

being is capable of fulfilling it.

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*Tov Halevanon*: "which is requisite for the continuance of the Divine bounty" - i.e. through this service, G-d will not remove His kindness and truth from him.)

(1) One should not use the Divine bounty (G-d's favor) as a means to rebel against G-d.

*(Tov Halevanon*: to not make the good which the Creator has bestowed on him into a destructive tool to sin with, such as a wise man with his wisdom or a rich man with his wealth. Likewise, not to rebel against his Maker due to the great favors similar to (Devarim 32:15) "But Jeshurun grew fat, and kicked [...then he forsook G-d who made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation]")

(2) One should verbally declare G-d's bounty always and also abundantly thank and praise Him in his heart for it, in harmony with his utterances.

*(Marpe Lenefesh*: to always verbally recall the favors which G-d has bestowed on him.)

(3) The bounty should not seem to him insignificant and small.

*(Pas Lechem*: "insignificant" in quality. "small" in quantity.  
*Marpe Lenefesh*: the bounty of G-d should not be insignificant and small in his eyes. Rather, it should be big, important, and cherished.)

(4) He should not ascribe it to anyone beside G-d; and, if it comes through an intermediary (such as another human being or the like - TL), he should not thank the intermediary and fail to thank the Creator for it.

*(Marpe Lenefesh*: to not ascribe the good to other people who benefit him and thank only the person because the person is just an intermediary between him and G-d, which G-d has made into an agent. It is proper to thank the human being for his good heartedness and because G-d has brought good through him [since G-d brings good through the meritorious]. But the main thing is to thank G-d because He is the primary Benefactor, and the good comes from Him alone as will be explained in the Gate of Trust.)

(5) He should not pride himself of it, nor think that he obtained it by his own strength and wisdom or by what is fitting for it.

*(Pas Lechem*: that he prides himself that he possesses what is fitting for obtaining that thing therefore he obtained it. i.e. if it is something which needs to be obtained through strength, he will pride himself in his strength and say that his might and strength obtained for him this thing. If it is something obtained through plan and strategy, he will pride himself in his wisdom and say that it is due to his wisdom. Similarly for other things.

alternatively,

*Marpe Lenefesh*: To not pride oneself in them and think "my power and the might of my hand have achieved all these things for me" (Devarim 8:17), or that he says that he is worthy of this due to his good deeds. In truth, all the bounties are a kindness of G-d for a man is not worthy of this as will be explained.)

(6) It should not enter his mind that he can secure its continuance by his striving, and will lose it if he neglects the effort.

*(Marpe Lenefesh*: He should not think that this good will continue only if he exerts himself with all his strength to amass it and guard it but if he neglects it, he will lose it.

*Tov Halevanon*: if he engages in that good and in its continuance, it will continue by him, but if he abandons exerting himself in it and seeking after it, it will leave him. Rather, he should believe that its continuance depends on the will of G-d and His decree.)

(7) He should not despise one who lacks the bounty and regard himself as better before G-d than that person, since it may be that G-d is trying him in order to expose the evil hidden in his nature, so that his good fortune is actually leading him astray, while everyone who lacks this good fortune is better before G-d than he is.

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: that he should not despise the poor man and think that he is better before G-d than the poor man since he has received many bounties. This is not a proof because perhaps your heart was evil before G-d and other people did not know about it. Therefore, G-d gave you much good and this good will entice you to do bad things in public view. But if G-d had not done this, there would have eventually been a chilul Ha-shem (desecration of G-d's Name). (see next commentary).

*Pas Lechem*: through this good, his evil thoughts and interior will be exposed. For example, a person whose heart desires illicit relations and he prolongs desiring them and has no fear of G-d before himself. The only thing holding him back from actualizing his desires is that he is poor and lowly, and lacks the means to pay the prostitute. His evil heart is hidden from other people. But when he attains wealth, his evil interior will be exposed, and the Sages said (Yoma 86): "It is proper to publicize the identity of Chanafim (hypocrites) to prevent Chilul Hash-m" [which would result from people learning from the actions of these evildoers posing as Tzadikim and also from people questioning the punishment which comes to them]

(8) His heart should be wholly with G-d in devotion and humility, and if he is not more active in his service than he had formerly been, and does not increase his gratitude and thankfulness, he should at least continue to maintain his standard. In his service he should endeavor to direct his heart to G-d, and prosperity should not cause him to diminish his former [pious] practices, nor disturb him in the effort to increase his devotion to G-d.

(*Pas Lechem*: "he should endeavor to direct his heart to G-d" - that at least for the little service which he is upholding until now, his heart should be with proper intent in it.)

(9) His attention should always be directed to one beneath him in material well-being, not to the one who is above him in this respect. So, too, his gaze should always be fixed on one more zealous in the service of G-d than he is, so that he will strive to rise to the latter's degree; and not on one who is less zealous, so that he may not become proud of his piety and negligent in his duties.

(*Tov Halevanon*: He should estimate himself compared to other people whose bounties are less than his, thereby seeing the kindness of G-d towards him, instead of being jealous of those who have more bounties than him.

*Pas Lechem*: "proud of his piety and negligent in his duties" - two bad things will befall him by this. One, by seeing his fellow who is more negligent in the service than him, he will become proud in his heart and will say to himself that he is better than them. Two, through this, sometimes when he feels laziness, he will also become lax in his duties saying to himself "it's enough for me to be like him".)

(10) The protracted period during which the Creator overlooks his sins and restrains His anger should not entice him into thinking that he is safe from the Divine wrath, and so may rebel against the Almighty.

(*Pas Lechem*: i.e. this is part of the test and the system of free will granted to man so that it will seem to a man as if he is safe from Divine retribution, therefore his heart entices him to rebel against G-d. But if G-d did not delay the retribution, then a man would greatly fear at all times that the evil inclination is enticing him to sin due to the punishment immediately incurred from a sin and its swift execution. Hence, he would have been forced to guard from sin and would have been without free will.)

For individuals, concerning whom reports have reached us from ancient times, as well as some also among our contemporaries, who were favored by G-d with various bounties and departed from the service of G-d and rebelled against Him, stumbled only because of the erroneous views which I have mentioned to you. This is also clearly set forth in the books of the prophets in every generation. All these faults are detrimental to the service of G-d which we endeavor to expound in this third treatise.

Yet, whoever cannot increase his service of G-d, but is able to undertake what I have set forth for the sake of G-d, will be worthy of a continuance of the good [portion] which has been specially allotted to him. And if this is withdrawn from him, it will be for one of two reasons: either to erase some previous sin or bestow on him in the life hereafter with a reward greater, more precious than, and much exceeding that of which he has been deprived here.

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: For "G-d does not come with complaints [unreasonable demands] on His creations" (Avodah Zara 3) but nevertheless a man can take on himself these ten matters mentioned.

"will be worthy of a continuance of the good" - as if to say "I guarantee on this that no damages shall strike his material possessions and he will succeed in all of his ways."

"And if this is withdrawn from him" - i.e. even if sometimes one who fulfills all these ten things, and nevertheless G-d withdraws the bounties from him and his situation reverses, and he is struck with poverty or some other troubles, he should not feel bad because "all that G-d does is for the good". Either through this, G-d will erase his sins in this world, so that they are not prepared for him in the next world, because there the justice is extremely harsh. Or it is to increase his reward, as the Sages said regarding "chastisements of love" (Berachot 5a), for certainly one hour of the bliss of the afterlife is better than all the life and pleasures of this world. Hence, either way it is good for him...)

## CHAPTER 8

The Soul: You have occupied yourself with my treatment and helped my recovery. You have clarified for me, acted generously, and with your luminous mind supervised my treatment and dispelled the darkness of folly that enveloped me. But of the factors that are detrimental to the service of G-d, one still clings to me. If you will relieve me of the pain it causes me and remove the worry it occasions me, I will be delivered from my worst suffering, and will be near a cure of all my afflictions.

(*Pas Lechem*: "treatment ... recovery" - "treatment" refers to the early stage of healing, before the [physician's] work is finished, while "recovery" refers to after the work has been finished.

Alternatively, the author's intent is that "treatment" refers to internal illnesses while "recovery" refers to external wounds. Because a man has internal illnesses in his soul, namely, in matters of emunot v'deot (faiths and outlooks), and external wounds attributed to the soul, namely, [bad] physical deeds.

"relieve me of the pain...remove the worry" - this is the extra [pain] of the wise man over the fool. The fool is compared to an animal, without understanding, which was struck with some pain or illness. It has only the suffering of the sensation of feeling the pain or the illness. This is unlike the wise man, which besides the pain also has the worry of what will be the outcome of this pain or illness, and how much will it pain him before it leaves. This is the meaning of "more understanding more pain" (Eccles. 1:18). Therefore, he specified these two distinctions.

"I will be delivered from my worst suffering" - I will consider it that I have been saved from the worst of all illnesses.

"and will be near a cure of all my afflictions" - for this illness is the root and cause of all illnesses. And when one removes the cause, the effect is automatically removed.)

The Understanding: What is it that troubles you, as you say?

The Soul: I have found in [the sacred] books in reference to the topic of necessity and fate, divine authority and will, that all things created mineral, vegetable, animal and rational being - are in the power of G-d, as it is said:

"Whatsoever the L-ord pleases, that He does, in heaven and on earth" (Ps. 135:6). Further, "The L-ord kills, and makes alive: He brings down to the grave and brings up again; the L-ord makes poor and makes rich; He brings low and lifts up" (I Sam. 2:6-7). "Who is he that says and it comes to pass, when the L-ord commands it not? Out of the mouth of the most High, proceeds not good and evil?" (Lament. 3:37). "I form the light and create the darkness: I make peace and create evil" (Isaiah 45:7). "Except the L-ord build the house, they labor in vain that build it; except the L-ord keep the city, the watchman wakes but in vain" (Ps. 127:1). "Vain it is for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows; for so He gives His beloved sleep" (Ps. 127:2).

(*Tov Halevanon*: "Whatsoever the L-ord pleases, that He does, in heaven and on earth" - all the changes in the elements and their synthesis occur by the will of G-d.

"The L-ord kills, and makes alive" - hence, life and death of living things also depend on the will of G-d.

"the L-ord makes poor and makes rich, etc." - hence, even the "incidents" on human beings and their benefits depend on Him.

"Who is he that says and it comes to pass, when the L-ord commands it not?" - this includes 46  
generally all the events and matters which occur to human beings - it is all from the command of G-d.

"Out of the mouth of the most High, proceeds not good and evil?" - i.e. who is the rational person which can claim that something can happen in the world which G-d did not ordain? i.e. that G-d did not decree that it shall be so.

"Vain it is for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows" - i.e. the workers will rise up early in vain to their work, and even so, at night they will eat their bread in sorrow.

"for so He gives His beloved sleep" - to those who deprive themselves of sleep to toil in torah, the Holy One will give them their livelihood in abundance. From here, we see that G-d rewards human beings according to their good deeds.)

There are many passages to the same effect, all of which indicate that the Creator formed man and other living creatures to fill the world. When they move, they are moved by His permission, His power and His ability. When they rest, it is because He ordains that they shall rest, as it is said, "When He gives quietness, who then can make trouble?" (Job 34:29). "You hide Your face; they are troubled. You take away their breath; they die and return to their dust" (Ps. 104:29). And all the sayings of the ancients in every book indisputably agree in this.

(*Tov Halevanon*: "the Creator formed man and other living creatures to fill the world" - to guide the world according to His wish, they are all forced according to His decree.

"they are moved by His permission, His power and His ability" - on those which move by will, namely, animals and humans, the author wrote "permission", i.e. that they take permission from Him to do according to their will. The intent of this is that G-d's will is the underlying force which moves and stirs their will. On the growing things (plants, bacteria, etc. which grow without will), he wrote "His power". On the inanimate things where movement is contrary to its nature, since the nature of inanimate objects is to rest and be still, and G-d moves mountains with His might and shakes the ground from its place, it is proper to use the term "ability", as it demonstrates His ability and might.)

We find, however, in the book of the Torah a contrary view, namely, that a human being's visible acts are in his own power. He can choose then as he pleases. They are effected by his choice and free will and he is accordingly liable to reward or punishment for service and transgression respectively, as it is said, "See, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil" (Deut. 30:15). ". . . therefore choose life" (Deut. 30:19). "Through your hands this has come" (Malachi 1:9). "For according to a man's act, He requites him" (Job 34:11). "A man's folly perverts his way" (Prov. 19:3). Everything in our religious literature, whether it be instruction, precept or moral exhortation, demonstrates this view. And whatever is there set forth concerning reward for service, and punishment for transgression, indicates that a human being's acts are left to himself and that the Divine glory does not interfere in his prosperity or in his ill-fortune, in his righteous deeds or in his perversities.

(*Pas Lechem*: "a contrary view" - since one cannot instruct, command, or rebuke, one who is forced in his deeds.)

This is hard for me to grasp, and to reconcile the contradiction of these two views is exceedingly difficult. If there is a remedy for this difficulty which troubles me sorely, may G-d relieve me through your aid.

The Understanding: The difficulty you state of reconciling these two contending conceptions, found in the books, is no greater than that of solving the contradiction found in observing life's actual experiences. For we see that a human being's activities are sometimes in accordance with his thoughts and desires and sometimes they are against his wish and intent.

These differences show you that the exalted Creator has control over a human being and that the latter is bound by the Almighty who permits him to do only what He wishes and prevents him from doing what He does not wish. This is also apparent in the function of speech, hearing and sight. And, on the other hand, I see that reward and punishment come to a human being; that he is rewarded and punished according to his deeds and movements either in serving G-d or rebelling against Him.

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: You wonder at the contradictions in scripture on this matter, but you do not wonder that you can see this tangibly by mere observation that these two things contradict each other. Sometimes, a man is able to accomplish all that his heart wishes and no one can hold him back. While for some matters and some times, he cannot perform things the way he wishes, and many

times things happen against his wishes. From this you can see and observe that man is under the chains of G-d, and G-d has total control over him like the pottery in the hands of the potter. If G-d wants, He will grant him the ability of free will and sometimes, G-d holds back and blocks his free will if He does not want this thing [*Rabbi YS*: G-d will put thoughts/decisions in his mind].

*Pas Lechem*: "a human being's activities are sometimes in accordance with his thoughts and desires and sometimes they are against his wish and intent" - sometimes things turn out like his thoughts and desires while other times, they turn out against his wish and intent. Behold the author changed the terms. He first said "*thoughts and desires*", that it turned out perfectly according to what he wished from the beginning, and so he may pride himself and consider himself a wise man, who sees the long term consequences and predicts the future, and it all turned out perfectly according to his best wish. Then the author wrote the extreme opposite "*against his wish and intent*" - that it did not at all turn out as he intended, and the result is completely against his wish. Understand this. Translator: perhaps the author refers to periods of time, i.e. some periods of time a person has one success after another, while other periods it is the opposite.)

Controversies have long raged among the learned as to the modes of reconciling the issue between necessity and righteousness (divine decree vs free will).

(*Pas Lechem*: he called free will "righteousness" because it is through free will that a man can be called righteous. Unlike if his actions were through "necessity" [i.e. divine decree])

Some say that all human activities proceed according to man's will, capacity and strength; that G-d has left the conduct of these affairs in a man's own hands, and given him control over them. And since the Divine glory does not interfere in these, therefore a human being is liable to reward and punishment for them.

(*Tov Halevanon*: the Moray Nevuchim mentions this view in part 3 ch.17 in the name of the group of Metzla which are non-Jews who maintain that the acts of G-d follow His trait of wisdom while the bad we see follow His trait of kindness only that we do not understand His ways of beneficence. Likewise, the good we see by the wicked is really bad according to the divine decree. They maintained that the primary reward and punishment is in the next world....)

Others ascribe all human actions, like everything else, to the Creator, blessed be He, and say that every movement in the universe from that of a rational being to that of an inorganic body, is in the control of the Creator, takes place by His decree and compulsion, and which cannot be varied by as much as a hair's-breadth, neither more nor less.

When, against this view, the justice of reward and punishment was questioned, they replied, "We have no knowledge on the subject of reward and punishment; we do not know its form nor the way it is enforced. G-d, however, is righteous and will not do any iniquity. He is faithful in awarding recompense and retribution as He appointed them, and will not depart from His rules. Our minds are too feeble to grasp His infinite wisdom. His righteousness is too apparent, His loving kindness too evident, that we should cast suspicion on His decisions, and there is no G-d beside Him.

(*Tov Halevanon*: the Moray Nevuchim also mentions this view in part 3 ch.17 in the name of the group of Ashria which are arabs... they hold that even though man is forced in all his deeds, nevertheless, G-d gave man the torah to command them despite that man does not have the ability to fulfill it and it is possible that G-d commanded us on the impossible... and according to this view, it is possible, that one who fulfills the commandments will be punished, while one who transgresses them will be rewarded. This is indeed a disgraceful view.)

Some find it possible to accept both principles - necessity and righteousness. They say that one who goes deeply into these subjects will not escape sin and will stumble, in whichever way he apprehends them. They therefore assert that the proper course to follow is to act on the principle of one who believes that actions are left to a human being's free will, who will therefore be rewarded or punished for them, and that we should strive for all that will avail us with the Creator in both worlds. At the same time, we ought to trust in G-d with the trust of one, fully convinced that all things and movements, together with their advantageous and injurious results happen by the decree of the Eternal, under His authority and according to His sentence, and that G-d has a victorious claim upon us while we have no claim upon Him.

Of all the views that we have mentioned this is the nearest approach to the way of salvation. For honestly and in truth, we must confess our ignorance on this topic which refers to the wisdom of the Creator, because our knowledge is too weak, and our comprehension too limited. This ignorance is one of the various forms of divine beneficence; it is for our good that knowledge is hidden from us. If there had been any advantage to us in understanding this mystery, the Creator would have revealed it to us.

(*Tov Halevanon*: i.e. that the reward comes from good deeds, and punishment from committing bad deeds and rebelling against G-d. This is contrary to the view of the Ashria who maintains the reward and punishment is only from the will of G-d [*Rabbi YS*: since according to them a human being is always forced by the will of G-d].

"*in both worlds*" - i.e. even though we see a wicked person prosper in his wickedness while a righteous man is destroyed in his righteousness, it should not be difficult to us, since we believe that the primary reward and punishment is in the next world.

[Overview of the book of Job:]

"*at the same time...all things.. happen by the decree of the Eternal*" - like the second view. And that nothing is hidden from G-d as Elihu said: "For His eyes are upon the ways of man, and He sees all man's steps; There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves" (Job 34:21-22). And this is what took Job out of the trap of his error, that due to the question of necessity versus righteousness, and pre-knowledge versus free will, he almost turned the plate upside down, to claim that G-d left the universe and does not supervise over this world. The view of Eliphaz HaTemani is the view of our torah, only that he did not know how to answer these questions. Therefore, he steadfastly maintained that it is impossible for man to be punished unless he sinned. The view of Bildad HaShuchi is the view of the Metzla we mentioned. The view of Tzofat HaNaami is the view of the Ashrias. Job debated with them until Elihu enlightened the eyes of all of them and answered them like the author mentioned, as I will explain. (see also Moray Nevuchim Part 3 ch.23).

"*G-d has a victorious claim upon us while we have no claim upon Him*" - i.e. the human mind has no ability whatsoever to forward a claim against G-d. Because His scope of vision is not like ours, His guidance of His creatures is not like the guidance we utilize for ourselves, His wisdom is not like ours, and there is no comparison whatsoever between them... and as scripture says "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts" Isaiah 55:9)

A close analogy we can observe in the case of a person with weak eyes, who cannot enjoy the light of the sun without putting on a thin veil to protect his eyes. The more the eyes are impaired, the thicker the veil which he needs to aid his sight. When the impairment lessens, a thinner veil is suitable for him.

(*Tov Halevanon*: so too due to our weak power of apprehension, G-d placed a veil, i.e. the secret, between our understanding and the wisdom behind His providence so it may be easier for us to approach His service. And the more our intellect strengthens, the more we will understand this secret.)

Furthermore, we note in regard to a large number of physical occupations, that if we did not behold them with our own eyes, and only knew of them by report, we would right away declare the reporter a liar. Take for instance, the astrolabe (a measuring instrument formerly used by astronomers). If we had never seen this instrument with our eyes but someone had told us of its form and appearance and what can be apprehended by its use concerning the movements of the spheres, the positions of the stars, the precise determination of each of the seasons, the distances between stars and many other facts that would otherwise be unknown to us, we would have no clear conception of it, nor could we form a picture of it in our minds.

The same is the case with a thing we are more familiar with, which belongs to tools which many men use - the fulcrum scale.

[*Rabbi YS*: a scale like: -|^-----| where one side is longer than the other.]

For were it not that we apprehended it with our sense of sight, we could not possibly deem it conceivable that one could truly weigh with a balance scale one of whose parts is longer than the other. And what is still more surprising is that on this balance and by means of a single stone, many objects, varying in weight, can be weighed, some of these weighing more, others weighing less than the single stone.



A thing that people use still more is the upper millstone which the water causes to revolve regularly by a slight contrivance. When we cast a small stone into a swift current of flowing water, it does not stay on the surface for a single moment, but sinks to the bottom, while the millstone is many times heavier than the stone and the force of the water by which the mill is set in motion is much less than that of the current. If any one had told us this and we had not seen it with our own eyes, we would have quickly denied and rejected his statement.

All this is because we know so little of the secrets of nature and because our faculties are too limited to recognize the fundamentals of created things and their results, their natural constitution and special forces. Since a person is so ignorant, as we have shown, in regard to a familiar thing which he constantly handles, it is not surprising that he does not comprehend the divine decree and the righteousness of the exalted Creator's judgments, these being hidden and infinitely exalted beyond all that we have stated.

On a similar topic, David, peace be upon him, said, "*L-ord, my heart is not haughty, nor did I lift up my eyes . . .*" (Ps. 131:1). And he adds in the next verse, in regard to submission to G-d, "*Surely I have stilled and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with his mother; my soul is with me like a weaned child*" (Ps. 131:2).

(*Pas Lechem*: Behold even though the author seemingly brought this verse incidentally, come and see, and be amazed, how each verse of this Psalm corresponds one-to-one to each of the points raised by the author:

"*L-ord, my heart is not haughty*" - to attribute the free will to myself, and to think that my choice is released and depends only on my free will. G-d forbid, I do not hold this arrogant view.

"*nor did I lift up my eyes*" - i.e. likewise, G-d forbid, for me to lift up my eyes to heaven, and to attribute all of my actions and movements to You, and claim that I am forced in them. Hence, I do not hold of either extreme view.

"*Nor do I involve myself in great matters, Or in things too high for me*" - Likewise, I know that I am incapable of distinguishing between "necessity and righteousness". These are the words of the author for "one who goes deeply into these subjects will not escape sin and will stumble". He wrote "*great matters*" corresponding to their magnitude. And "*too high for me*" corresponding to the concealment of their essence.

"*Surely I have stilled and quieted my soul*" - i.e. you know and can testify that I indeed conducted myself like this.

"*stilled and quieted*" - "*stilled*" means strengthened myself such as "I stilled myself until the morning" (Isaiah 38:13). i.e. I took on myself to hold on to both views - in some of them I strengthened myself and told myself "See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no G-d with me" (Deut. 32:39), for G-d left the free will in my hands. Namely, in matters of [doing good] deeds. As the author wrote earlier "the proper course to follow is to act on the principle of one who believes [that actions are left to a human being's free will, who will therefore be rewarded or punished for them]". While in other matters I "*quieted my soul*" anticipating G-d's will, namely in matters of Bitachon (trust in G-d). As the author wrote "At the same time, we ought to trust in G-d with the trust of one, fully convinced [that all things and movements, together with their advantageous and injurious results happen by the decree of the Eternal]". This is the meaning of the term "*quieted*", and this term is used in scripture regarding Bitachon (trust) such as "wait quietly for the salvation of the L-ord" (Eicha 3:26) and "Wait for the L-ord and hope for Him" (Ps. 37:7).

Afterwards, he clarified his words in saying "*like a weaned child with his mother*", that in being on his mother's breast, he is entirely dependant on her will. But after he has been weaned, his matters are dependant on both his will and her will. Namely, to fulfill his needs, he must engage himself to walk with his feet to the place of food and to take it with his hand and place it in his mouth, and likewise to put on clothing. But he is still lacking the ability to obtain his needs independently . Therefore, he must place his trust in his mother, that she will provide for him. This is the meaning [of the double expression]: "*like a weaned child with his mother; my soul is with me like a weaned child*". Namely, that for matters of bitachon "*like a weaned child with his mother*", while for others, namely doing good deeds, "*my soul is with me like a weaned child*", that it depends on me. The Psalm ends with bitachon (Trust) which is the foundation of Judaism, and its perfection, saying "Let Israel hope in the L-ord from this time forth and forever".)

## CHAPTER 9

The Soul: You have comforted me in having made me give up the hope of ever fathoming the mystery of this subject because of its subtlety and depth. But reveal to me the mystery of my existence in this world, its aim and purpose.

(*Tov Halevanon*: even though you said it is impossible to fully understand this mystery, nevertheless,

help me to understand a bit so that I may grasp some understanding of it. And just like your analogy of the sun, where if one's eyes are not so weak, it is enough for him a thin veil to protect his eyes. So too, perhaps I do not need to be completely ignorant of this knowledge.)

And give me, as well as you can and briefly, some approximate conception of necessity and righteousness, so that the same should not happen to me as happened to a king who, as I learned, did not appreciate the various aspects of his good fortune. The story is that in one of the Indian islands, there was a state, the citizens of which decided to appoint over them every year a stranger as a ruler; and when the year had elapsed, they would banish him and he would have to return to the status he had had before he had been appointed over them. Among those elected, one was a fool who knew nothing of their secret plans in regard to him. He accumulated much money, built palaces which he fortified, and sent nothing out of their country. On the contrary, whatever he had outside the state - his money, his wife and children, he brought into it. And when the year was ended, the citizens sent him out, stripped of all his possessions, and deprived of all that he had built or acquired before he entered office up to the time he relinquished it. And so when he left, he had nothing of what had belonged to him in the city and outside it. He grieved and regretted the trouble he had taken and the efforts he had expended on the edifices he had erected and the treasures he had accumulated and which now would go to another person.

Afterwards, the citizens decided to appoint as their ruler a stranger who was wise and understanding. After he had been appointed, he selected a person to whom he showed kindness and inquired of him the customs of the people and their laws which they had observed with reference to the one who had preceded him in office. The favorite revealed to the new ruler their secret plan and what they intended to do to him. When he learned this, his activities took a different turn to those of his predecessor. He strove and labored to take everything valuable in the country to the land where he had placed all his other treasures. He did not trust his subjects' exaltation of him nor the honor they showed him. During the whole time he stayed in their country, his mood was in between grief and joy. He was grieved that he would soon have to leave the people, and that the treasures he could bring out were in his estimation, so few. If he could have remained longer, he would have been able to bring out more. But he was glad that he would soon leave and be able to settle in the place where he had put his treasures and would be in a position to use and enjoy them in various ways, with a quiet mind, confident spirit and uninterruptedly.

And after his year was up, he was not troubled at leaving, but prepared for the event speedily, calmly and joyously, with approval of his work and diligence. He was going to great good fortune, honor and enduring joy. So he had happiness in both positions and attained his wishes in both places.

I fear, however, that what happened to the fool who wearied himself in both matters and lost out in both places, may happen to me. Since G-d has favored me in sending you to be my advisor, please instruct me and show me my position and tell me all you know in regard to the mystery of my being and the ways in which it should be improved.

*(Marpe Lenefesh: This is a powerful parable on a human being, who is here now and tomorrow in the grave. Not only does he accumulate money and builds here as if he will live forever, but even what he has there, namely, the torah and mitzvot which he should have received reward for in the next world, he does them in order to receive reward in this world, namely, for honor and [worldly] benefits. Therefore, he received his reward for them in this world like he wished. And when he is lowered in the grave, he will be destitute here and with nothing in his hand for there. Then too the regret he will feel will be of no avail. But the wise king, when he realized the truth, did the opposite, etc. So too, a wise man, everything he does in this world, even for things of his body and benefit, which people deem valuable - he leaves them there, namely, he does everything l'shem shamayim (with wholehearted devotion to G-d). Hence, he will find his reward in the next world, and there he will delight in them. Therefore, he is always joyful, whether in this world or in the next.*

*Tov Halevanon: "who wearied himself in both matters and lost out in both places" - First that he wearied himself in hoarding money and to build buildings in that country which he left to another person. Two, his leaving the country naked and destitute, and his remaining days were impoverished and barren.*

*Pas Lechem: The fool who did not know their secret, did not eat well even in the time of his reign. Even at night, he did not rest because he was busy and troubled in the matters of the country, to build palaces and towers, and other fortifications. This is the way of kings, to engage heavily at first in fortifying the country so that he can sit afterwards in peace and quiet. Hence, the fool lost out in both places while the wise man reached his desire in both.)*

The Understanding: In the parable you related, you have already given a picture of your state in this world and shown that your situation therein is like that of the kings you mentioned. You clearly realize that you are a stranger here and will soon depart from it. You should therefore act as the wise and understanding ruler did, so that the outcome in your case may be like his. Should you deviate from this course, my words will be of no use to you, my fine language will bring you no advantage.

The Soul: If I had no desire in the matter, I would not have troubled to investigate what is hidden from me in regard to my condition.

The Understanding: The mystery of your being is that the Creator created you out of naught, in common with all spiritual beings that He created; and His purpose is to exalt you and elevate you to the high degree of His treasured ones-the chosen and elect who are nearest to the light of His glory-for your good and as a kindness towards you. But you will only be worthy of this favor when three conditions have been fulfilled:

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: the soul is from the spiritual worlds. Its state was like that of angels (spiritual beings not destined to enter a physical body - Rabbi YS), before it came into this world. Only that they are forced in their deeds, and they stand always at the same level. They have neither reward nor punishment.

"*His purpose is to exalt you*" - i.e. G-d wanted to exalt the soul and elevate it to a greater level than even the angels. Hence, the author continued "nearest to the light of His glory". For the souls of tzadikim are mamash the [holy] chariot (see Ezekiel 1), and close to the Shechina (divine presence) as the Sages said (Bereishis Raba 47:6) "the forefathers are the chariot". And every human being can reach their level with his deeds. All this is accepted by all the kabalists - that the level of tzadikim is higher than the level of angels. Likewise, it is the view of the author, and the view of Rav Saadia Gaon... See also the end of Shaarei Kedusha and in the Shl"A.)

The first is the removal of the curtain of folly from yourself so that He may enlighten you with the gift of His knowledge.

(*Tov Halevanon*: to remove from the nefesh bahamit (animal soul) in you the curtain of folly, namely, its animalistic lusts. So that G-d may enlighten you with His wisdom.

*Marpe Lenefesh*: To not be foolish, as in: "Be you not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding" (Ps. 32:9)

*Pas Lechem*: "*enlighten you with the gift of His knowledge*" - He granted you of His knowledge, as our sages said: "[On seeing the Sages of Israel one should say: Blessed be He] who has imparted of His wisdom to them that fear Him" (Berachot 58a). Wisdom is called "light", for "the fool walks in darkness" (Eccl. 2:14), and "wisdom excels folly, as light excels darkness" (Eccl. 2:13). And since He granted of His wisdom to His people, He called them His "treasured people".)

The second is that you be tried and tested as to whether you will choose to serve Him or rebel against Him.

(*Tov Halevanon*: through this you will be worthy of reward, in that you stood up against your evil inclination and chose good.

*Pas Lechem*: "*tried and tested*" - it is known that the term "*trial*" is from the verse "lift up a banner over the peoples" (Isaiah 62:10). Because through trials the level of the tzadik is elevated. This is G-d's intended purpose in doing this. The term of the actual act of testing is called "*test*". The author first said "*tried*" because the thought preceded the act.

*Rabbi YS*: i.e. G-d already knows what each person will do. The purpose of the trial is to elevate the person who passes it.)

The third is that He disciplines you in this world by your bearing the yoke of His service, in order to raise you to the degree of the higher beings who serve Him, of whom it is said, "*Bless the L-ord, ye His angels, ye mighty in strength, that fulfill His word*" (Ps. 103:20). All this could not have been possible if you remained in your former state.

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: G-d sends sufferings and other trials on a man to demonstrate whether he will scorn them or receive them with love and serve G-d with whatever G-d sends his way. Like the

forefathers, whose days were full of displacements and sufferings. And likewise, for the pure and 52 straight of every generation, they are in a state of suffering due to this reason - in order to elevate them to a higher level than the angels which are called "*mighty in strength, etc.*" For if man had only good in this world, with what would he be worthy of all this greatness?  
"*All this could not have been possible if you remained in your former state*" - when you were there, in the world of souls, [it was not possible] to do these three things to you.

Alternative explanation,

*Tov Halevanon*: "*He disciplines you in this world*" - by bearing hard labor, prepared for every human being, as written: "man was born to toil" (Job 5:7).

"*by your bearing the yoke of His service*" - to subdue your lusts so that you will be suited to take on the yoke of His service.

"*ye mighty in strength*" - who strongly and mightily serve Him.

"*All this could not have been possible if you remained in your former state.*" - i.e. of utter nothingness.

*Pas Lechem*: "*by your bearing the yoke of His service*" - G-d's service in this world, is hard as stone and grueling work against the physical nature of man which tends towards physicality [*Rabbi YS*: since torah study has no physical benefit so the body resists it]. But the righteous man bears it. Through this, the righteous weaken the power of their physical side and purify their hearts. G-d refers to them as "pure of heart" (*bar levav*) just like the grain of wheat, after it has been purified from the waste of chaffs and husks through threshing is likewise called "*bar*".)

Therefore the exalted Creator, by His wisdom, created for you this world with all that is therein - minerals, plants and living creatures, everything suitably arranged and properly administered - and all for your benefit (everything that was created in this world, it is all for man - *ML*). Out of the finest elements, He chose for you a palace similar to the world in its origin (the human body is a microcosm of the universe - *ML*), foundations, products and form. In this palace he set five gates opening to the external world, and appointed five trustworthy keepers of the gates. Those gates are the organs of the senses - eyes, ears, nose, tongue, hands. The gatekeepers are the five senses which employ these organs, namely, the sense of sight, the sense of hearing, the sense of smell, the sense of taste and the sense of touch, by means of which you are enabled to attain to the knowledge of all that can be useful to you in this world. He also prepared for you in this palace four degrees for the four rulers. These are the brain, the heart, the liver, and the testicles.

Furthermore, He placed four stores for four officers, namely, the faculty of ingestion, the faculty of retention, the faculty of digestion, the faculty of excretion. Their stores and offices are the two galls-black and green, the white lymphatic fluid and the blood.

Within and without this palace, He distributed servants to attend to it and take care of it. Those within are the intestines, veins, sinews, nerves and arteries; those outside are the hands, feet, tongue, teeth, nails and other similar parts.

He furthermore made for you connecting intermediaries between the spiritual and physical, namely, the blood, the natural heat and the life spirit (*nefesh bahamit*, the animal soul - *TL*). By His wisdom and power He joined you to this palace in a proper and well-ordered union, so that you might fulfill the three requisites which I mentioned to you.

(*Pas Lechem*: "*well-ordered union*" - i.e. these three intermediaries are intertwined so that through them the soul may be attached to the body. [*Rabbi YS*: for the soul cannot be attached to the body without an intermediary since the physical and the spiritual are total opposites, and cannot be joined, like fire and water and even more so.]

"*three requisites*" - he mentioned earlier. establishing the understanding, the test of free will, and the bearing of the yoke of the service.)

He provided you with two counselors. He appointed for them two scribes. He gave you servants and attendants for your needs in this world.

Of the two counselors the first is the Understanding which points out to you what the will of G-d is. The second counselor is your lust which entices and seduces you to do that which will arouse the anger of the L-ord, your G-d.

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: "*two counselors*" - the understanding and the lust. I term these the good

inclination and the evil inclination. They are for your need, namely, so that you may have free will to follow whichever one you wish.

*Pas Lechem "entices and seduces... the L-ord your G-d"* - Behold the power of the yetzer (evil inclination) which brings a man's heart to sin is of two kinds. One, when a man is hesitant and not keen on doing a bad thing, whether due to fear of G-d or fear of something else. The yetzer comes cunningly and removes the fear from his heart, either by some rationalisation. Therefore he is called in this aspect "mesi" (enticing, literally "lift up") the heart of a man, which connotes lifting up, for he lifts up the man's hesitations.... The second aspect is that he intensifies his lust and warms his heart with imaginative pictures of the pleasures of that act. Then he is called "seducer" (mesit)... (see there for more).... Now reader, the author ended with the words *"the anger of the L-ord, your G-d"*. Certainly, he did not write two Names of G-d for nothing. They correspond to these two aspects. For the first aspect, where one removes the fear of G-d from his heart, he also arouses the wrath of the trait of mercy [the name "L-ord" corresponds to the trait of mercy]. But that which his heart turns towards superfluous lusts, there is room to have mercy on him and say that he is only entangled in the physical and he arouses only the wrath of the trait of justice [your G-d (Elokim) which corresponds to the trait of justice].)

Of the two scribes, one writes down your good deeds, whether done in private or in public, secretly or in the sight of all, through any of those already mentioned whom he placed at your disposition, the gate-keepers, officers, administrators, servants, counselors, attendants and sextons. The second scribe writes down the bad deeds in the same way as we have stated in regard to the good deeds.

*(Marpe Lenefesh: Every thing that a man does creates something above (in the mystical worlds), whether good or bad, and it is very much as if he wrote it. It is known that a man creates with each deed either a katorgor (prosecutor) or kanegor (defender). They [the prosecutors] stand and do not nullify until the man repents. Likewise, the sages said (Pirkei Avot 3:16): "the shop stands open and the shopkeeper gives credit and the account book lies open and the hand writes...". And in the talmud (Taanit 11a) on the verse (Devarim 32:4) "righteous and just is He", the sages said (Taanit 11a): "When a man departs to his eternal home all his deeds are enumerated before him and he is told, 'Such and such a thing have you done, in such and such a place on that particular day'. And he replies, 'Yes'. Then they say to him. 'Sign' - And he signs, as it is written, "He seals up the hand of every man" (Job 37:7). And what is even more, he acknowledges the justice of the verdict and he says. 'You have judged me correctly'...")*

The servitors and sextons are the soul's moods and qualities - cheerfulness, anxiety, gladness, joy and grief, memory and forgetfulness, wisdom and folly, courage and timidity, generosity and miserliness, righteousness and wickedness, bashfulness and arrogance, hope and apprehension, love and hate, pleasure and pain, pride and modesty, domination and submissiveness, and many similar dispositions which you use with your inner being.

The blessed Creator appointed these watchmen, leaders and administrators, servants, counselors, servitors and sextons, to listen to you and be ready to do your bidding, up to a definite period, except in certain matters which He explained to them when they were brought into association with you. Those are the matters wherein necessity and the divine decree prevail.

*(Tov Halevanon: "except in certain matters" - i.e. sometimes all your powers are in G-d's hands. He will allow you to do certain things which He wishes and prevent you from doing things which He does not wish. Likewise, for your speech, sight, and other senses. Hence, sometimes G-d completely rules over a person and guides him against his will.*

*Pas Lechem: "necessity and the divine decree" - these servants are the matter of necessity stated regarding man, as you said "whatever G-d wants He does" (Tehilim 135:6), and other verses brought earlier. We asked how this can be reconciled with free will. However, in truth, man does act in accordance with his will and choice, and nevertheless it is correct to say that man's deeds are ascribed to G-d because G-d commanded man's servants to listen to his choice and do his bidding. This is the answer to the big question of the philosophers regarding free will - how is it possible for man's will to be left to his wish and to do things contrary to G-d's will? The answer to them is that this itself is G-d's will - that man be endowed with free will. Hence, it is incorrect to say this is against G-d's will.)*

In other words, He gave you liberty to make use of all these aids for the improvement of your physical well-being and to do everything over which the Almighty gave you control and power, but only in certain ways and under certain conditions. These are comprised in the duties indicated by our natural Reason, or that are to be accepted on divine authority (torah), or that are permitted.

#### G-D'S MESSAGE TO ALL HUMAN BEINGS

And He said to you (i.e. G-d. He warned you before you came into this world, and likewise in this world through the Torah - ML): "Whatever I have put into your hands in this world and placed under your control, must not entice you, since none of them can contribute anything to your essential being nor take anything from it; nor will you obtain from any of them either pleasure or pain, for they are only things that incidentally affect your body, externally or inwardly. None of them is necessary for you. Their relation to you is that of the embryonic sack to the new-born baby or the egg-shell to the hatched chick.

*(Pas Lechem: "not entice you" - to follow after them [the lusts].*

*Marpe Lenefesh: "not entice you" - know that all the pleasures you can possibly enjoy in this world - they are only to the body. Your soul has no pleasure or benefit whatsoever from them nor any pain in their absence.*

*Tov Halevanon: "none of them can contribute anything to your essential being" - i.e. to the rectification of your soul and to your eternal reward.*

*"for they are only things that incidentally affect your body" - i.e. what occurs when you eat and drink, namely, the production of blood, flesh, fat.*

*"None of them is necessary for you" - i.e. for what will be beneficial to you in your final end.*

*"Their relation to you.." i.e. even though you are forced to engage in matters to further your body's welfare, nevertheless, you have no benefit whatsoever from the body and its powers in respect to your essential being. The body is like the embryonic sack, or the egg-shell which is needed incidentally while the embryo is not yet complete. So too your body is needed only for the duration of your stay in this world so that you may complete the matter of your soul.)*

[G-d continues] "If you will understand and comprehend My intention towards you (in sending you to this world - TL) and the benefit which I have bestowed upon you, and you choose My service, and keep far from rebelling against Me in the management of everything over which I have given you control, I will raise you to the highest of the degrees attained by My elect and favored ones. I will draw you closer to My mercy and love, and enfold you with the radiance of My glory. But if you choose to rebel against Me, I will punish you with a severe punishment and afflict you with prolonged affliction."

*(Pas Lechem: "severe punishment...prolonged affliction" - regarding bad deeds, he wrote "severe punishment". The intent is on the acts of punishment which a man is actively punished by, just like he sinned with actions, as written regarding sinners "for their worm shall never die, and their fire shall not extinguish" (Isaiah 66:22). While on refraining from doing good, he wrote "prolonged affliction". The word "affliction" connotes withholding something good and desirable such as the "afflictions of Yom Kippur", which are all withholding of desirable things (such as washing, eating, etc.) Likewise, in truth, on the wicked it is written there: "behold My servants will eat and you will go hungry.." (Isaiah 65:13), and "he will not see the good" (Jer. 29:32). Therefore he wrote regarding active punishments "severe" and regarding afflictions "prolonged". For since, the affliction is withholding of good, it is not proper to say "severe affliction". For it is not correct to say this withholding is greater than that one. It is only proper to use the term "prolonged", namely, that the affliction will be for a long time. Furthermore, regarding the active punishment, which is incurred for bad deeds, it is only for a limited time just like his bad deeds were limited in time. On this it is written: "He does not maintain a dispute continuously or remain angry for all time" (Ps. 103:9). But for the affliction, which is withholding [good], it could be, G-d forbid, forever. For just like he refrained from doing these good deeds, so too he will be completely withheld from the good, and will never ever merit it. Hence, the intent in the word "prolonged" is on eternity, as they expounded the verse (Kidushin 39b): "you shall prolong your days" (Deut.22:7) - to the world which is eternally prolonged. Hence, it is correct to use specifically the term "severe" for this, and "prolonged" for that. Understand this.)*

[G-d continues] "If you are ignorant of the modes in which you should use any of the things which pertain to your

service of Me which I have appointed unto you as your duty and obligation, because you are too much occupied with your body and its concerns, with which I test you, I have appointed for you a counselor, wise and faithful. When you ask his advice, he will instruct you. If you ignore him he will arouse you. This counselor is the Understanding. Take counsel with him in all your affairs, for he will recommend you how to employ all your servitors who stand before you, in the right way of serving Me. The reprehensible qualities will be transformed into praiseworthy ones, even as does the wise physician, making use of injurious and even poisonous drugs for the benefit of the body."

*(Pas Lechem: "a counselor, wise and faithful" - these are the two necessary conditions for a counselor whereby one can trust his counsel. One, that he is wise and knows what is good for the asker. Two, that he is faithful to him, and will not betray him by giving him bad advice.*

*Tov Halevanon: "Take counsel with him in all your affairs" - do not do anything before weighing the matter with your understanding, as the wise man said (Prov. 4:26): "Give careful thought to the paths for your feet".)*

[G-d continues] "If you will continue to be of this mind, and strengthen your Understanding, and listen to his advice, the scribe who writes down good deeds will count all your permitted (neutral) movements among your good deeds to which they will be added, and all your servitors will help you in My service."

*(Marpe Lenefesh: "If you will continue to be of this mind" - that all your deeds are l'shem shamayim (devoted to G-d). The scribe will count all your movements which are not a mitzvah such as eating, drinking, business dealings, and likewise all other bodily needs - they will be counted as good deeds and you will receive reward for them just like mitzvot since you did them l'shem shamayim (for serving G-d).*

*Tov Halevanon: since he is coming to purify himself, and sees his entire existence in this world in order to serve his Creator, behold, all the permitted pleasures he partakes of this world will also be counted for him as a mitzvah. For he is rectifying and strengthening his body for the service of the Creator. And likewise, the opposite, if he rebels against G-d with his faculties and chases after his heart's evil lusts, behold all his permitted pleasures will be added to his sins, in that he used his body to rebel the advice of G-d.)*

[G-d continues] "But if you dismiss his advice and incline to the view of the second counselor who is in all respects his opponent, and use all the means placed at your disposal as he advises you, then your praiseworthy qualities will become reprehensible, even as the incompetent physician in his ignorance kills patients by his inexpert use of useful medicines. And the scribe, appointed to write down evil deeds will write, down all your permitted (neutral) movements and enter them in the record of your evil deeds, to which they will be added."

*(Marpe Lenefesh: "but if you dismiss his advice" - you discard the advise of the Understanding and listen only to the advise of the lusts, which is the Satan, which is the yetzer hara (evil inclination), who is diametrically opposed to the Understanding.)*

[G-d continues] "You will find that your aids, attendants and servitors and everyone with whom you come in contact, are agreeable and carry out your desire and thus you will have increased joy and gladness."

*(Tov Halevanon: i.e. since you are coming to defile yourself, behold, all the powers and servants of your body will become habituated to lust for the lusts. And all your deeds will entice you to continue in the joy and gladness [in the lusts] they are used to. Day by day, they will lure you into sin, until your nature and body will tend towards and become ingrained to be disgusted by the service of G-d, and as the verse wrote: "Yeshurun became fat and kicked" (Deut. 32:15). And the sages said (Pirkei Avot 4:2): "sin brings more sin." Behold, he hinted here, that even though the free will is in a man's hands, nevertheless, there is an aspect of necessity and fate. For after, he chose for himself the path of righteousness, behold, all his actions and good deeds will pull his nature and force him towards the service of G-d, as the sages said "mitzvah brings more mitzvah". And the opposite, if in the beginning of his choice, he chose evil, behold, his sins will tend the powers and faculties in him toward animalistic pleasures, until they become habit and ingrained in him as second nature, and draw him by force towards more sin, as if he is forced into them.)*

(That which I told you that the Creator will count all your permitted (neutral) acts either as good deeds or as bad deed, - LT) All this is in accordance with the justice of your Creator. Because, in your innermost thoughts and secret aims and purposes, you chose either to rebel against Him rather than serve Him, or serve Him rather than rebel against Him.

(Lev Tov: Hence you channel your permitted (neutral) acts towards the aim which you chose for yourself.)

For what is open and revealed in you and what is concealed in you, are equally known to Him. He will requite you for all that His omniscience observes in you, though it remain hidden from human beings. For do you not see that a human judge decides according to what has been established before him as fact, whether on the evidence of witnesses or by his own senses. If what was in the mind could be established for him, he would also take that into account in his decision. Since the blessed Creator knows everything equally well, it follows that He judges according to His knowledge, as it is said: *"The secret things belong to the L-ord, our G-d"* (Deut. 29:28).

And when the Creator wishes to arouse you and admonish you, He charges one of the servitors to leave your service; and one or two of your limbs or all of them sicken and become painful for a definite time. If you awake and return to Him, He charges that servitor to return to your service. He heals your body, and it resumes its former function, as it is said: *"Fools, because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted. Their soul abhors all manner of food until they reach the gates of death; Then they cry unto the L-ord in their troubles... He sends His word and heals them"* (Ps. 107:17-20).

And when the days of your trial in this world are ended, the exalted Creator commands all those we have mentioned - gates, gate-keepers, servants and servitors - to depart from you and the bonds and connections between you and your body are severed, and you return to your first state. Your body has no movement and no feeling. It also returns to its first state, as the sage said: *"Dust will return to the earth as it was: and the spirit will return to G-d who gave it"* (Eccles. 12:7) : And then you will be shown the account-books, the record of your deeds and thoughts and what you had chosen and troubled yourself with in your earthly existence; and in accordance with this, will be your requital.

On all this, the Almighty, through His messengers and prophets and His faithful law, has exhorted and warned you, as the sage said: *"Incline your ear, and hear the words of the wise; put to heart my knowledge; . . . for it is pleasant if you keep them within you . . . Have I not written for you excellent things in counsels and knowledge, that I might make you know the certainty of the words of truth, that you might answer words of truth to them that send unto you"* (Prov. 22:17-21).

(Lev Tov: *"Incline your ears"* - hearken well.

*"and hear the words of the wise"* - who teach you My torah, and take on yourself lovingly the yoke of torah and mitzvot.

*"put to heart my knowledge"* - put to heart that My intent in this is for your benefit, to test you, purify you, and prepare you, so that you will be able to ascend to the highest degree possible.

*"for it is pleasant"* - it will be blissful for you in the next world.

*"if you keep them within you"* - when you conduct yourself according to the torah in all your matters of this world.

*"Have I not written for you excellent things (literally: triple things)"* - see, I have exhorted you through the torah, prophets, and holy writings "in counsels and knowledge".

*"that I might make you know the certainty of the words of truth"* - the absolute truth of why you came to this world, and what you are supposed to do here. So that you don't come to the world of truth empty handed and shame faced trying to justify yourself with hollow claims. Rather, when you must come give a reckoning before the King of kings,

*"that you might answer words of truth to them that send unto you"* - you will be able to answer that you fulfilled the mission for which you were sent to this world.

*Tov Halevanon:* what also comes out of this entire discussion of the Understanding is that even though the existence of man is primarily out of necessity and divine decree, according to what G-d implanted in him of powers and dispositions and to whether they will tend towards the good traits or the bad traits due to each person's particular nature, nevertheless, each person has been granted the ability to choose through his understanding and he can transform his traits from bad to good or vice versa. He will continue this theme in the next chapter. Know it well. For it is all precious words, and it includes all that the great and faithful thinkers deeply inquired into of the matter of necessity and righteousness, and foreknowledge versus free will, and everything that follows from this.)



## CHAPTER 10

The Soul: I have comprehended your statement and paid attention to all that you have mentioned. And now I beseech your Honor to expound to me the occasions on which I should make use of my good and bad dispositions - each in such a way that there [in the next world - PL] I shall win praise and commendation for their proper employment.

*(Marpe Lenefesh: i.e. which occasions may I employ even bad traits, and even so I shall win praise for them in the next world.)*

The Understanding: You possess many dispositions of which I shall briefly mention those that occur to me.

Among these there are two: joy and grief. They are opposites to one another. The proper occasion when joy is in place when you can trust that the pleasure will be everlasting without any mixture of grief, and uninterrupted by mishap. Then you may permit yourself the emotion of joy. The proper occasion for grief arises when something occurs to you that will cause you everlasting and unceasing pain, which you cannot remove nor separate from. Then you may permit yourself the emotion of grief and make use of it.

*(Tov Halevanon: "when you can trust that the pleasure" - i.e. the joy of doing a mitzvah, that we should know that through it, we will attain the delights of Olam Haba, a pleasure which is everlasting, without any mixture of grief. This is to exclude the pleasures of matters of this world which swiftly end and are mixed with grief.*

*"for grief ... everlasting and unceasing pain" - If you see that your evil inclination overpowers you and you are not able to repel it, that is certainly a lasting pain. It is proper to feel grief. And all the more so, if you actually stumbled in deed - and to find solace in this through repentance.*

*Pas Lechem: the intent is that a person should feel joy by remembering that through his service to the Creator, he is prepared and designated to "gaze at the delight of G-d" (Ps.27:4) and that "light is sown for the righteous" (Ps. 97:11), which is a constant and eternal pleasure which has no mixture of pain, unlike the worldly pleasures.*

*"Then you may permit (literally 'release') yourself the emotion of joy" - He used the term "release" metaphorically, that this trait be restrained until you release it when you need it.*

*"cannot (1) remove nor (2) separate from" - a man can get rid of a trouble in two ways. Either he removes this pain from himself or he separates himself from that painful thing. For example, regarding a fire. He may have the ability to extinguish the fire or to run away from the flames. Hence he wrote here two expressions.*

*Marpe Lenefesh: If you do a mitzvah, which you trust that through it you may attain an enduring pleasure, namely, the reward of Olam Haba. Release this trait, i.e. to do the mitzvah with great joy as we wrote earlier in chapter 3. For otherwise [the wise man wrote:], "and of joy, what use is it?" (Eccl. 2:2). And the opposite, the proper place to use grief, i.e. sadness, is if an occasion happens that you are forced to commit a sin, that through this you will get enduring pain in Gehinom, it is permitted to use the trait of sadness. Likewise, for the death of righteous people or your relatives, it is permitted to mourn in sadness. But otherwise, sadness is a very bad trait as written in Shaarei Kedusha.*

*Lev Tov: i.e. a man should not be joyous except in the service of G-d and in fulfilling the torah and the mitzvot because then he is assured that the pleasure he will attain through this in the next world is eternal and will not be mixed with any sadness. But for every other pleasure, a man should not rejoice because it is liable to be mixed with pain and will inevitably cease. Likewise for the trait of sadness, a man should only be sad when he transgresses the will of G-d, because the pain that he will get for this will be everlasting and he will have no refuge from it.)*

Among your traits there are other two - fear and hope. Fear is proper when you are in a situation which will lead to a painful situation that will not have a good end and which you have no strength or power to avert.

*(Marpe Lenefesh: i.e. now you are engaged in some matter, and this matter is a path which leads to another matter which will have a bad ending that you cannot avert. Then, release the trait of fear.*

Hence, if this is not the case, do not fear and trust in G-d that He will do what is good for you. 58

*Lev Tov*: i.e. a man should not fear from what will happen to him in the future, except when he transgresses the will of G-d because then the outcome will be that he will suffer everlasting pain in the next world and his final end will not be good. But for everything else, he should not be afraid. Rather let him trust in G-d that He does only what is good for him.

alternatively,

*Tov Halevanon*: i.e. to fear something which leads him to something eventually painful and which will not have a good end, and that he does not have the ability to avert that painful thing, even though right now it seems proper, as the wise man said: "there is a way that seems right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Mishlei 16:25). Therefore, one must fear always [to be careful] that his deeds will not result in sin. This is to exclude matters of this world, whereby it is not permitted to fear events. Rather, trust in G-d. On this our sages said (Berachos 60a): "whoever fears is a sinner".

*"which you have no strength or power to avert"* - i.e. the pain of Olam Haba which is incurred due to sin, and which it is impossible to avert it in any way. [*Rabbi YS*: in Gate 4 he explains that if one did not repent before death, then it is impossible to avert the punishment for sins in the afterlife because the punishment is like a debt which one must pay.]

The occasion for hope arises when you busy yourself with the preliminaries that will bring you good and secure for you bliss with no hindrance to keep you from it, nothing that will separate you from it. And that is when you fulfill the duties which G-d commanded you and the result of which is good.

(*Tov Halevanon*: i.e. hope which is strength and trust - to busy himself in things whose end is the reward of Olam Haba, even though it appears to his eyes that these things will harm his secular affairs, let him hope to G-d that He will shield him.

*Marpe Lenefesh*: For example, to do your business dealings faithfully, i.e. according to the torah even though this may [seemingly] cause you losses, and trust in G-d that the end of this matter will be good in this world and in the next.)

There are two other emotions: courage and timidity. The right occasion for showing courage is when you meet the enemies of the L-ord, to wage war against them. [Courage is also in place,] to endure all distress and all trials in fulfilling the will of the exalted Creator and of His saints, as it is said: "*Yea, for Your sake are we killed, all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter*" (Ps. 44:23). Further, "*Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness; and let him reprove me*" (Ps. 141:5).

(*Pas Lechem*: "*courage*" - the intent is on courage of heart. While timidity refers to softness of heart. "*when you meet the enemies of the L-ord*" - as David said [regarding Goliath]: "For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should mock the armies of the living G-d?" And David put his life at risk, and strengthened his heart to wage war against him.

*"bear all distress"* - for the trait of forbearance requires courage of heart.

*"all distress and all trials.."* - bad things happen to a person sometimes to sadden him and make him suffer for his sins, as written (Eicha 1:16) "Look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow..which the L-ord inflicted". And even if he is a tzadik (righteous person), he bears for his generation (to atone for them) like the prophet Yechezkel. Sometimes the intent is to test him.

*Marpe Lenefesh*: to be strong as a lion, to not transgress the will of G-d, even if this entails enduring many trials, distresses, and humiliations. Likewise, to fulfill the commandments of G-d and the commandments of His saints (the Rabbinical decrees), even though there are many obstructions against you - do not be swayed and endure their difficulties.)

The occasion for timidity arises when you meet those who love G-d, so that you fight neither them, nor those devoted to His service; and that you refrain from standing up against one who rebukes you for your good, as it is said: "*Because your heart was tender and you humbled yourself before the L-ord*" (II Kings 22:19).

(*Tov Halevanon*: i.e. even though you are in a stronger position than he who rebukes and humiliates you, nevertheless humble yourself before him since his intent is to benefit you.

*Pas Lechem*: "you refrain (literally: delay) from standing up" - he used the term "delay" since one 59 needs only to delay and be patient. For due to surprise, and lack of deliberation and calmness, a man gets upset at one who rebukes him and stands up against him. But if he delays this, certainly, after time, he will understand that this is foolish and a great sin to pay them back evil for their good intent, and he will change his mind completely regarding standing up against him.)

Among your dispositions there are other two: shame and boldness. Shame is proper regarding rebelling against your Benefactor to His face while you are in His hands, using the good He bestows on you, and while He rebukes you by means of good or evil happenings; or by means of His prophets, as it is said, "O, son of man, show the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities" (Ezek. 43:10); and further, "O my G-d, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to You" (Ezra 9:6).

(*Pas Lechem*: That you be ashamed to rebel against your Benefactor with the very same good that He is bestowing you - the wise man with his wisdom, the rich man with his wealth, the strong man with his strength. "to His face" - i.e. before Him, as in "a people who without ceasing provoke Me to anger to My face" (Isaiah 65:3). The author specified 3 aspects 1. to His face, 2. in His hands, 3. while He rebukes you. The first aspect is that he rebels against G-d with the good itself. On that he wrote "to His face". Secondly, that he knows that he is in G-d's hands, like pottery in the hands of the potter, who can do whatever he wants with it. How could he not be ashamed to rebel against G-d? Thirdly, that G-d already warned him. Therefore, he wrote "while He rebukes you".

Alternative rendering:

*Marpe Lenefesh*: That you feel ashamed and humiliated when G-d removes the good which He bestowed on you until now. "to His face, in His hands" - i.e. even though your Benefactor is eternal and so are His benefits, therefore He has the ability to continue to bestow good to you, and even so, He retracts them from you and no longer wishes to bestow this good to you, then it is proper for you to feel ashamed before Him and to ask yourself why did G-d do this? It must be due to my sins. Then feel remorse and repent completely. And likewise be ashamed when He rebukes you either through good means, i.e. preachers who use good and nice words, or through bad means, namely, sufferings G-d sends on you which are usually measure for measure...)

Boldness is in place when one meets wicked people and transgressors and those who oppose the truth; and to exhort men to do kindness; and to warn people to avoid what is reprehensible. Boldness is proper to shame sinners and rebuke the small and the great, as it is said: "I have set my face like a flint" (Isaiah 50:7).

(*Pas Lechem*: "wicked" - these are the mufkarim ("free men" i.e. of religious duty) who are deliberate [in their wickedness].

"transgressors" - this refers to those who sin due to their lusts [ex. eats non-kosher meat to save money or out of lust for the food in that restaurant but if everything is equal, he will eat only kosher meat].

"those who oppose the truth" - even though one may not see them committing acts of sin, just that when one hears their words it becomes apparent that they oppose the main principles of the true faith - we must stand up against them.

"to exhort men to do kindness and to warn people to avoid what is reprehensible" - one must also use the trait of boldness and to strive to be a man - to exhort people to do kindness and warn them to refrain from reprehensible deeds. These last two are warnings for how to behave in the future.

Afterwards he wrote: "to shame sinners..", that it is proper after he has already warned them privately and they did not heed and they returned to their wickedness, one must rebuke them publicly, to curse them and shame them until they desist from their sins. Thus our sages learned from Nechemia (Moed Katan 16a).

*Marpe Lenefesh*: even though he wrote in Gate #5 that it is a ploy of the evil inclination to go and shame other people and that this is to induce arrogance, see there at length (ch.5). We must answer that here he is referring to thoroughly wicked people whose wickedness is well known. And likewise, if he is fitting for rebuking them and that his words are heeded. But there it refers to when he does this arrogantly, and also he does not know clearly their wickedness. It appears to me to make this distinction due to the different expressions used here and there.)

So, too, there are two traits - anger and satisfaction. Anger is in place when you see a departure from the way of truth and the rule of righteousness, when falsehood prevails over truth and those who follow it.

(*Pas Lechem*: when you see people turning away from the way of truth, namely, the way of the Torah of truth. He wrote "way of truth" corresponding to the commandments between man and G-d and the "rule of righteousness" corresponding to those between man and his fellow. Behold, earlier regarding the trait of courage, he wrote "when you meet the enemies of the L-ord". There the intent was on the wicked who come to strike out at G-d's torah or His people, as written "For behold, Your enemies stir, and those who hate You raise their heads; Against Your people they plot cunningly, and they take counsel against Your protected ones; They said, 'Come, let us destroy them from [being] a nation, and the name of Israel will no longer be remembered.'" (Ps.83:35). There showing anger to them is not enough. Rather one must stand up against them and foil their plans, as written there. For this one needs courage, which is strength of heart, to be *moser nefesh* (self-sacrificing) in G-d's war, like David in the war against the Philistines, especially in the battle against Goliath, or like the Chashmonaim in the war against the Greeks. Here he is talking about individuals who are being wicked by themselves, and it is enough to show anger to them, to show them that you disapprove of their deeds, and that their deeds are evil in the eyes of G-d. Through this they will feel ashamed and perhaps they will repent.

*Marpe Lenefesh*: when people sway from the way of truth and when the falsehood strengthens over the truth. Likewise it is permitted to be angry at people of falsehood [who adopt the ways of falsehood].)

Satisfaction is proper when all things fall in their right direction, when everything is in its right place, always keeping, in regard to them, in the ways of truth.

(*Pas Lechem*: when he sees people acting properly, everything falling in its right direction and in its right place. These three expressions are opposite to the three he used earlier. Corresponding to "rule of righteousness", he wrote "all things fall in their right direction". Corresponding to "when falsehood prevails over truth", he wrote: "in its right place". Corresponding to "when you see a departure from the way of truth", he wrote: "always keeping the ways of truth".

*Marpe Lenefesh*: When all things are done in the good and just way, and each and every person's direction and place will come in peace - this should be your desire and wish.)

So, too, there are two qualities - mercifulness and ruthlessness. The quality of mercy is to be shown to the needy, to the poor and the sick; to those who are leaving the world (ex. awaiting execution -PL); to one who does not realize what is good for him; to one who does not know how to guide himself; to the prisoner who is in the power of his enemy; to one who has lost a great benefit (such as a rich man losing his wealth); to one who regrets his iniquities; to one who weeps for his past sins, out of fear of Divine punishment.

(*Pas Lechem* : "*needy (dal), poor (ani)*" - the sages counted 7 expressions for the poor man (Vayikra Raba BeHar). Each one applies to a specific aspect. The term "dal" (needy) refers to one whose flesh is scant, with little fat, such as "Why are you becoming so thin, O' son of the king" (Samuel II 13:4). The term "ani" applies to his being submitted, such as "How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me?" (Ex. 10:3).

"*who does not know how to guide himself*" - his understanding is not sufficient to guide him in the proper course whether in matters of this world or of the next.

"*one who regrets his iniquities, one who weeps for his past sins out of fear..*" - This expression is of the type: "not only this but also this". i.e. One who regrets his iniquities without being prompted by the [fear of] punishment - his regret is due to his sins only. After he repents, he regrets his bad deed of rebelling against G-d. Certainly it is proper to have pity on him. Not only that, but even one who weeps out of fear of punishment - it is also proper to have pity on him and to teach him the way of his rectification....)

Ruthlessness is in place in paying back the wicked and exacting vengeance on the corrupt, as Scripture says, "*neither shall you pity him, have mercy upon him, nor shield him*" (Deut. 13:9).

(*Pas Lechem*: "*paying back the wicked*" refers to those who are bad towards G-d. "*Exact vengeance on the corrupt*" refers to those who are bad to human beings, and who oppress them. Regarding the latter he used the term "*vengeance*" for them but not for those bad to G-d since the term "*vengeance*" is incorrect because if they acted wickedly, what [damage] did they do to G-d? And

So with the two traits, pride and humility. Pride and haughtiness are in place when you meet those who deny G-d and turn away from Him. Do not humble yourself before such people nor show them deference, so as not to seem to justify them or even incline to their corrupt views; but release the trait of arrogance and pride, to indicate your opposition to their views and how little you agree with them, as you learn from the relation of Mordechai to Haman.

Humility is in place when you meet a man who is pious and pure, G-d-fearing, learned in the Torah and occupied in the service of G-d. So, too, if any one has shown you kindness and favor, you are under an obligation to make a return for it (in a humble demeanor - TL). And how much more so, if His benefactions are so great and weighty that you cannot make Him a return for them. Likewise, you should accept on yourself the justice administered to you by G-d [in acceptance of His judgment], as it is said, *"if their uncircumcised heart be humble and they accept their punishment then will I remember My covenant..."* (Lev. 26:41-42).

(*Pas Lechem*: "pious" - in doing good. "pure" - pure and of clean hands from not doing bad. "G-d fearing" - that he places the fear of G-d opposite his face constantly. He preceded the fear of G-d to the torah wisdom as the mishna says "he whose fear of G-d precedes his wisdom [his wisdom endures]..." (Pirkei Avot 3:12). "occupied in the service of G-d" - generally, all his occupation is in the service of G-d. Even when he is doing his physical needs his intent is to serve G-d. However, it is not correct to call this "serving" hence he used the term "occupied".  
"accept on yourself the justice" - i.e. that you accept the justice of the evil that befell you and receive it with love as an atonement for your sin.)

So with the two qualities, love and hate. Love is in place towards one who is in agreement with you in the service of G-d, and through whom you will secure abiding joy at the end of your earthly existence.

Hatred is proper against one who transgresses the will of G-d, stood up against men of truth and misled you to what angers your Creator, as it is said: *"They that forsake the law praise the wicked; but such as keep the law contend with them"* (Prov. 28:4).

(*Pas Lechem*: Correspondingly, there are two reasons to hate the wicked. Either because they transgress the will of G-d, and hate Him. Or because joining their company is a substantial snare which can bring you to slip and stumble.  
"stood up against the men of truth" - i.e. if we see a man standing against the men of truth, such as Korach and his company, even though we don't know his deeds, it is proper to hate him since he hates those G-d loves.)

So with the two traits, generosity and miserliness. The part of generosity is to assign to everything its proper place, and give to every good-charactered person of your money and of your wisdom, in a measure suitable to the recipient (and the donor - TL), as it is said: *"Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of your hand to do it"* (Prov. 3:27); further, *"Let your fountains be dispersed abroad"* (Prov. 5:16).

(*Pas Lechem*: "to assign to everything its proper place" - to volunteer to put your attention to the conduct of your fellows, that their matters be in proper order.  
"every good-character person" - since on the surface, we cannot know about someone whether he is truly G-d fearing. But if he is of good character, than we can assume he is also G-d fearing. And it is proper to grace him with money, if he needs, or to teach him wisdom. For it is not proper to teach wisdom (torah) to a student who is not worthy. As the sages said in several places such as Chulin 133a and Makot 10a)

Miserliness is in place towards the cruel and foolish and those who do not recognize themselves, nor the value of the beneficence bestowed on them, as it is said, *"He that reproves a scorner gets to himself shame: and he that rebukes a wicked man, it is a blemish to himself"* (Prov. 9:7). Our wise men say, *"He who does a favor to an ingrate is like a man who casts a stone to Markolis"* (A form of idol worship in ancient times).

(*Pas Lechem*: "the cruel and foolish (enticed)" - corresponding to generosity with your money, he wrote "the cruel". Since they are cruel on others, why should one be generous towards them? Corresponding to wisdom he wrote the "foolish", which are enticed by their evil inclination to distance

themselves from wisdom.

*"who do not recognize themselves"* - their low worth. Therefore the beneficence of G-d is not big in their eyes. Alternatively, because they do not recognize the greatness of the good. All the more so for one who does not recognize either one, as he wrote in the introduction to the Gate of Examination.

*"He that reproves a scorner gets to himself shame"* - regarding stinginess with one's money, no proof is needed because since they are evil why should you give to them? Furthermore, you will be reducing what you have. This is unlike wisdom, which is similar to lighting a candle with a candle and the first candle does not lose anything, and maybe this wisdom will improve them. Therefore, he brought a proof from the verse that he is damaging himself. And regarding one who does not appreciate the good, he brought the teaching of the sages *"He who does a favor to an ingrate..."*.

*Marpe Lenefesh*: so too one who teaches torah to a student who is not worthy, not only are you not doing a mitzvah, but you will also be punished for this. Because he will take the torah teachings and do all kinds of bad things with it, and like those apikorsim (heretics), and as the talmud says (Pesachim 49b) "those who learned torah and left it [hate the torah sages] more than all of them".)

And so with the two qualities - laziness and diligence. Laziness is proper in the gratification of physical desires, the pleasures of which pass away while nothing remains to him who indulges in them but shame in this world and punishment in the world to come.

(*Tov Halevanon*: i.e. when his soul is hungry for the forbidden food or forbidden relation, due to his lust, he will not yet understand the disgrace of this. But after he has done the deed, and his lust is gone, he will lie down in shame on his sin and his punishment is in the next world.)

Diligence is in place, in the spiritual pleasures and in doing deeds, with the intent to attain the favor of the blessed G-d, as David, peace be unto him, said: *"I made haste, and delayed not to keep Your commandments"* (Ps. 119:60).

(*Pas Lechem*: *"the spiritual pleasures"* - this is the pleasure of the wise in [the study of] wisdom, and their delighting in it. On actual good deeds, he wrote *"and in doing deeds"*.)

What I have expounded in this treatise should suffice for one who chooses the just way, seeks the truth for himself and desires wisdom for its own sake.

(*Tov Halevanon*: *"seeks the truth for himself"* - who does not fool himself with false claims.

*Manoach Halevavos*: *"desires wisdom for its own sake"* - like [the expression: "one who studies torah for its own sake", i.e. not to receive praise and honor of human beings.

*Marpe Lenefesh*: *"seeks the truth for himself"* - as in (Pirkei Avot 1:14) "if I am not for myself who is for me?" Why should a man oppress himself, for all that a man does, whether good or bad, is ultimately for himself.)

May G-d in His mercy lead us out (to the light of truth, i.e. - *ML*) to the paths of His service. AMEN.