

# **Derech Hashem**

The Way of God

by

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(Ramchal, 1707-1746)

English Translation

*In Memory of Avraham Chaim ben David*

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# Chapter 1

## Author's Introduction

### Author's Introduction

#### הקדמת המחבר

[1] The advantage of knowing things according to the structure of their parts, as distinguished by their divisions and the order of their relations, over knowing them without such discernment, is like the advantage of seeing a magnificent garden in its flowerbeds, adorned by its pathways and rows of its plantings, compared to seeing a tangled thicket of reeds and forest growing in disarray. For indeed, the conception of many parts whose connection and true rank within the whole composed of them are unknown to the intellect yearning for knowledge, is nothing but a heavy burden without desire, with which one toils and strives until weary and exhausted, finding no solace. For behold, each of these parts, once its conception is grasped, will not cease to awaken within the intellect the desire to reach its ultimate end. This, however, will not be achieved, since the completion of its essence is absent. For a large part of a thing is its relations to that which it relates to, and its rank in completeness, and this is hidden from it. Thus, its desire torments it without satisfaction, and its longing pains it, affording no rest. Not so for one who knows a thing in its proper manner. As its subject is clearly revealed to his eyes as it truly is, the intellect will proceed wherever it turns, delighting and rejoicing in the beauty of its workings. Now, the totality of what a person needs to examine in a subject is its true rank, which we have mentioned. This is because, when we distinguish the totality of existing things, both

perceptible and intelligible—which is the totality of all that can be conceived by our intellect—we find that they are not all of one kind or one rank, but rather different kinds and varying ranks. And according to the variation of their kinds, so will their judgments and laws vary. This compels us to discern between them with our intellect, so that we may apprehend them in their truth, each according to its law. However, the principal ranks and kinds are one, and these are what one ought to examine in a subject to know from which of them it is. These are the whole and the part, the general and the specific, the cause and the effect, the subject and the predicate. And this is what we first require in a subject: to know if it is a whole or a part, if it is general or specific, if it is a cause or an effect, if it is a subject or a predicate.

[2] And behold, according to his level, so will he examine distinctions that, by his nature, are necessary for the completion of his understanding and the conceptualization of his subject. If he is a part, he will seek to know the whole of which he is a part. If he is a particular, he will investigate its universal. If he is a cause, he will investigate its effect. If he is an effect, he will investigate its cause. If he is a composite, he will seek its subject and investigate what kind of composite it is – whether prior or subsequent, incidental or essential, potential or actual. All these are distinctions without which the conceptualization of a subject is not complete. And above all, he will contemplate the nature of the subject to know if it is absolute or limited. And if it is limited, he will investigate its boundaries, for indeed, every true subject becomes false if attributed to an inappropriate subject or if

taken beyond its limits.

**[3]** You must indeed contemplate that the number of particulars is exceedingly vast, beyond the capacity of any person to encompass; it is impossible for him to know them all. However, what he ought to strive for is the knowledge of general principles, for each principle, by its nature, includes many particulars. When one attains a principle, he is thereby attaining a large number of particulars, even if he has not yet distinguished them or recognized them as particulars of that principle. For when one of them comes before him, he will not fail to recognize it, since the general concept, without which they cannot exist, is already known to him. Thus, it is also said, "Let the words of the Torah always be in your hands as general principles, not as particulars."

**[4]** However, what will be necessary for the knowledge of the principles is to know them in all their boundaries and aspects, as stated above. And even matters that initially appear to lack a consequence, you must guard them and pay attention to them, and do not disdain them, for there is nothing small or great in any principle that does not have a place for a consequence in the particulars. And that which does not add or subtract from some particulars will indeed produce a great consequence in others. And since the principle is a principle for all of them, it must contain what suffices for all of them. Therefore, you must be very meticulous in this, and contemplate their matters and their relations and connections with great precision, and discern beautifully their continuation and their chain of development, how one matter follows from another from the beginning to the end. Then you will succeed, and then you will gain wisdom.

**[5]** In accordance with these matters, I have

composed this small work for you, my pleasant reader. My intention therein is to present to you the principles of faith and service in their fundamental aspects, so that you may grasp them firmly and they may be depicted in your intellect with sufficient clarity, free from confusion and perplexity. You will then see their roots and branches in their respective degrees, with the utmost possible clarity that will settle in your heart, and you will acquire them in your intellect with the finest understanding. From there onward, it will be easier for you to find the knowledge of God in all parts of the Torah and its interpretations, and to comprehend all its secrets, as a blessing from the Lord your God, which He will give you. I have endeavored to arrange the matters in what appears to me to be the most fitting order, and with words that I have deemed most appropriate to give you a complete picture of these things, which I have resolved to impart to you. Therefore, you too must now be meticulous with all of this and guard all of it with excellent vigilance until you find a place where it will benefit you, and do not neglect any detail, lest a necessary matter be hidden from you. But in what you do, be meticulous with all the words and strive to grasp the essence of the matters and to hold all their truths within your intellect, and you will find for yourself a rest that will be good for you. I have named this book "Derech Hashem" (The Way of God), for indeed it encompasses His ways, which He has revealed to us through His prophets and made known to us in His Torah. By them, we are guided, and by them, all His creatures are guided. I have divided it into four parts. In the first, I will speak of the general principles of existence and their details. In the second, of His providence. In the third, of prophecy. And in the fourth, of service. And you, my brother, who seeks the Lord in this way, go forth, and may the Lord be with you, and may He grant you eyes to see and ears to hear wonders from His Torah. Amen.

## Chapter 2

# Part I: On the Creator

5 Chapters

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### Part 1, Chapter 1

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**[1]** The Existence of God: Every person in Israel must believe and know that there exists a First, Ancient, and Eternal Being, and He is the One who brought into existence and continues to bring into existence all that exists in reality, and He is God, blessed be He.

**[2]** His Perfection: Furthermore, one must know that the existence of this Blessed and Exalted Being is not apprehended by any other at all. Only this is known of Him: that He is a perfect existence in all kinds of perfection, and no deficiency is found in Him whatsoever. (However, these matters we know by tradition from the Patriarchs and from the Prophets, and all Israel apprehended them at the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai, and they stood upon their truth with clarity, and taught them to their children from generation to generation, as is the case today, as Moses commanded us from the mouth of the Almighty, "lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, etc., and you shall tell them to your children and to your children's children." Indeed, even from the side of inquiry through learned proofs, all these matters will be confirmed, and their being so will be necessitated by the power of the existents and their apprehenders, which we see with our own eyes,

according to the wisdom of nature, engineering, astronomy, and other sciences from which true premises will be drawn, from which the clarification of these true matters will be born. However, we shall not elaborate on this now, but rather we shall propose the premises for their truth and arrange the matters clearly according to the tradition in our possession and what is famous among our entire nation.)

**[3]** The Necessity of His Existence: Furthermore, one must know that the existence of this Blessed and Exalted Being is a necessary existence, whose absence is utterly impossible.

**[4]** His being is not dependent on another: Furthermore, one must know that the existence of the Blessed One is not dependent on anything else at all, but rather He is necessarily existent from Himself.

**[5]** His Simplicity: One must also know that His existence, blessed be He, is a simple existence, without any composition or multiplicity whatsoever. All perfections are found in Him in a simple manner. This means that in the soul, many different faculties are found, each of which is defined in its own right. For example, memory is one faculty, will is another faculty, and imagination is yet another faculty. None of these enters into the definition of another at all, for the definition of memory is one definition, and the definition of will is another definition, and will does not enter into the definition of memory,

nor memory into the definition of will, and so on for all of them. But the Master, blessed be He, is not possessed of different faculties, even though in reality there are aspects in Him that, from our perspective, are different. For indeed, He wills, and He is wise, and He is able, and He is perfect in all perfections. However, the true reality of His existence is one matter that truly encompasses in its essence and definition (meaning, the true essence of His being, for a definition is only applicable to Him, blessed be He, in a figurative sense) all perfections. And thus, all perfections are found in Him, not as something additional to His essence and true being, but rather from the very reality of His being itself, which inherently encompasses all perfections, such that it is impossible for that matter to exist without all perfections by its own nature. Indeed, this path is exceedingly distant from our comprehension and imagination, and we scarcely have a way to explain it or words to expound upon it, for our imagination and conception grasp only matters limited by the boundaries of the created nature, which emanates from Him, blessed be He. This is what our senses perceive and bring its image to the intellect. And in created beings, matters are numerous and distinct. However, we have already established that the true reality of His existence, blessed be He, is not comprehensible, and one cannot draw an analogy from what is seen in created beings to the Creator, blessed be He, for their nature and existence are not at all the same, such that we could judge one from the other. But this too is among the things known in Kabbalah, as it is written, and confirmed by investigation according to nature itself in its laws and judgments, that it is absolutely impossible that there not exist one Being who is devoid of all nature, its laws and boundaries, of all absence and deficiency, of all multiplicity and composition, of all relation and proportion, and of all the accidents of created beings, who would be the true cause of all existing things and of all that is generated within them. For without this, the existence of the beings we see and their persistence would be impossible.

**[6]** His Uniqueness: And from what one must also know is that this Existent, blessed be He, is necessarily One and no more. Meaning, it is impossible for many existents to be found whose existence is necessary in itself; rather, only One must be found in this necessary and complete existence. And even if other existents are found, they will not be found except by His will, and thus all are dependent on Him and not existent in

themselves.

**[7]** Thus, the sum of these fundamental truths is six, and they are: the truth of His existence, may He be blessed; His perfection; the necessity of His existence; His being independent of anything else; His simplicity; and His oneness.

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## Part 1, Chapter 2

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**[1]** The Purpose of Creation: Behold, the purpose in creation was for the Blessed One to bestow His goodness upon others. You will observe that He alone, blessed be His name, is true perfection, devoid of all deficiencies, and there is no other perfection like Him whatsoever. Consequently, any perfection conceived outside of His perfection is not true perfection; rather, it is called perfection only in relation to something lacking it. Absolute perfection, however, is solely His perfection. Therefore, since His will is to bestow goodness upon others, it is not sufficient for Him to bestow a little goodness; rather, He must bestow the ultimate good that creatures can receive. And since He alone, blessed be His name, is true goodness, His good will is not satisfied except by His causing others to partake in that very goodness that resides within Him, by virtue of His essence, which is the complete and true good.

Furthermore, from another perspective, this goodness cannot be found except within Him. Therefore, His wisdom decreed that the existence of this true bestowal of goodness would be achieved by creating a space for creatures to cleave to Him, blessed be His name, to the extent possible for them. It is then found that by themselves, they cannot be described with perfection like His perfection. However, by virtue of their cleaving to Him, they will attain, to the extent possible, that perfection by virtue of their cleaving to Him. They will then be found to partake in that true goodness to the extent they are capable of partaking. Thus, it is found that His intention, blessed be His name, in creating was to create those who would partake in His goodness in the manner possible for them to partake.

**[2]** The Matter of Perfection and Imperfections, and the Acquisition of Perfection: However, His

wisdom decreed that for goodness to be complete, it is fitting that the beneficiary of that goodness be the possessor of that goodness itself. That is, one who acquires goodness in himself, not one to whom goodness accrues by chance. You will observe that this is called a certain resemblance, to the extent possible, to His perfection, blessed be He. For He, blessed be He, is perfect in Himself, not by chance, but rather by virtue of the truth of His essence, perfection is necessitated for Him, and imperfections are necessarily absent from Him. However, this cannot be found in any other than Him, whose essence necessitates perfection for Him and removes imperfections from Him. But to resemble Him in this regard, even partially, requires that at the very least, he be the acquirer of perfection, whose essence does not necessitate it for him, and that he himself remove from himself the imperfections that were possible for him. Therefore, He decreed and ordained that matters of perfection and matters of imperfection be created, and that a creature be created in which there is an equal possibility for both matters. And means will be given to this creature by which it can acquire perfection for itself and remove imperfections from itself. Then it will be called resembling its Creator in what was possible for it, and it will be fit to cleave to Him and to enjoy His goodness.

**[3]** Furthermore, beyond the fact that this creature, having acquired perfection, is fit to cleave to its Creator, blessed be He, by virtue of its resemblance to Him, it is also that by acquiring perfection for itself, it becomes attached and cleaves to Him, until the end of its acquisition of perfection and existence, it will be one with Him. This is because His existence, blessed be He, is true perfection, as stated. Thus, all that is perfection is attributed only to Him, like a branch to its root. For although it does not reach the root perfection, it is a continuation and product of Him. You will observe that true perfection is His existence, blessed be He, and all deficiency is merely the concealment of His goodness, blessed be He, and the veiling of His countenance. Consequently, the illumination of His countenance, blessed be He, and His closeness will be the root and cause of all perfection that may exist, and the veiling of His countenance will be the root and cause of all deficiency. In proportion to the degree of veiling will be the degree of deficiency that ensues from it. Therefore, this creature, standing in balance between perfections and deficiencies, which are the products of illumination and veiling, by strengthening itself in perfections

and acquiring them within itself, it grasps hold of Him, blessed be He, who is the root and source of them. And in proportion as it increases in perfections, so it increases its grasp and cleaving to Him, until, upon reaching the ultimate acquisition of perfection, it reaches the ultimate grasp and cleaving to Him, blessed be He. Thus, it cleaves to Him, blessed be He, and enjoys His goodness and becomes perfected in Him, and it itself is the possessor of His goodness and perfection.

**[4]** The essential and the secondary in creatures: And behold, for these various matters of perfection and deficiency that we have mentioned to exist, and for the creature we have mentioned to be found in the state it ought to be – meaning, it is possible for it to attain perfection and be devoid of deficiencies, and for the means to achieve this to be available to it – it is certainly necessary that many and varied details exist in creation, and many relationships between these details, so that the intended purpose may be achieved. However, the creature that was destined for this great matter, namely, cleaving to Him, blessed be He, as it is stated, is called the essential one among all creation. And all else that exists in reality will be nothing but an aid in some aspect or in some regard to the purpose, so that it may be achieved and found. Therefore, they are called secondary to the essential creature we have mentioned.

**[5]** But the principal creation, in truth, is the human species, and all other created beings, whether superior or inferior to it, exist only for its sake, for the completion of its purpose in all the many and varied aspects that are fitting for them to possess, as will be further stated below, with God's help. Now, understanding and all good character traits are matters of perfection through which man is perfected. And matters of matter and evil character traits are matters of deficiency, which we have mentioned, and man is placed among them to acquire perfection for himself.

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## Part 1, Chapter 3

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**[1]** Man's Free Will: We have already recalled that man is the creature created to cleave to the Blessed One, and he is the one poised between

perfection and deficiency, with the ability in his hand to acquire perfection. However, it is necessary that this be by his choice and will, for if he were compelled in his actions to choose perfection in any case, he would not truly be called a possessor of his perfection, because he would not be its owner, since he was compelled by another to acquire it. The One who grants it is the owner of its perfection, and the ultimate intention would not be fulfilled. Therefore, it was necessary that the matter be left to his choice, so that his inclination would be balanced between the two sides, and not compelled towards either of them. And he would have the power of choice to choose, with understanding and desire, whichever of them he wishes. The ability is also in his hand to acquire whichever of them he wishes. Therefore, man was created with a good inclination and an evil inclination, and the choice is in his hand to incline himself towards the side he desires.

**[2]** The Composition of the Body and the Soul: However, for this matter to be complete as it ought to be, Divine Wisdom decreed that man be composed of two opposites, namely, a rational and pure soul, and an earthly body. And because each of them naturally inclines to its own side—that is, the body to materiality and the soul to intellectuality—a struggle is found between them. In such a way that if the soul prevails, it will be elevated, and it will elevate the body with it, and that person will achieve the perfection intended for him. But if man allows the material to conquer him, then the body will descend, and his soul will descend with it, and that person will be unfit for perfection and rejected from it, God forbid. And this person has the ability to humble his material before his intellect and soul, and to acquire his perfection, as it is written.

**[3]** The Creator, blessed be He, decreed that there be a limit to the effort required for man to attain perfection. When he completes his effort, he will attain his perfection and rest in his enjoyment forever and ever. Therefore, He ordained for him two periods: one, the period of labor, and the other, the period of receiving reward. However, the measure of goodness is abundant, for labor has a prescribed time, as His wisdom decreed it to be fitting for this purpose. But the reception of reward has no end, but rather for eternity he delights and progresses in the perfection he has acquired for himself.

**[4]** The Change of Man's State According to the Change of His Time: However, just as his time changes, so too ought his state and other circumstances to change. For during the time of exertion, it is necessary that he be in a certain disposition that will enable all the matters required for this exertion to be found within him. This means that the struggle we mentioned between the intellect and the material must necessarily exist for him, and there should be nothing to prevent the material from ruling and acting according to its proper measure. Nor should there be anything to prevent the intellect from ruling as it ought and acting according to its proper measure. Likewise, nothing should cause the material to become stronger than is proper, nor should it cause the intellect to become stronger than is proper. For although from one perspective this might seem better, according to the true intention and the desired purpose in man, which is the acquisition of perfection through his exertion, it is not good. And during the time of receiving reward, it is fitting that he be in a state opposite to this. For whatever the material ruled at that time, it only served to darken and impede the soul from cleaving to its Creator. Therefore, it is fitting that only the soul should rule then, and the material should be entirely drawn after it, in such a way that it does not impede it at all. Indeed, for this reason, the two worlds, this world and the World to Come, were created. This world, its place and its natural laws, are what is fitting for man during the time of exertion. The World to Come, its place and its laws, are what is fitting for him during the time of receiving reward.

**[5]** The human species has undergone a transformation. It is necessary to understand that the human species, in its essence, is not as we perceive and discern it now. For a great change occurred within it, namely, the sin of Adam the First Man, through which man and the world were altered from their original state. The details of this change and its consequences are numerous, and we shall speak of them further, with God's help. Thus, discourse concerning the human species and the discernment of its subjects is twofold: it will be discussed in its state prior to the sin, and it will be discussed in its state after the sin, as we shall further explain, with God's willing assistance.

**[6]** Behold, Adam the First, at the time of his creation, was indeed in the very state we have described thus far. That is, he was composed of the two opposing parts we mentioned, namely the



soul and the body. And in reality, there were the two matters of good and evil, and he stood in deliberation between them, to cleave to whichever he willed of them. And it was fitting for him that he should choose the good and strengthen his soul over his body, and his intellect over his matter. Then he would have been perfected immediately and rested in his perfection forever.

**[7]** The Soul's Actions in the Body: You must know that although we do not perceive the soul acting in the body in any way other than imparting vitality and intellect, in truth, it is its nature to purify the very essence of the body and its matter, elevating it level by level until it becomes fit to cleave to it in complete enjoyment. Indeed, Adam the First would have achieved this if he had not sinned; his soul would have purified his body purification after purification until it was sufficiently purified and established in eternal delight.

**[8]** The Genesis of Adam's Sin: And when he sinned, matters changed greatly. For initially, the deficiencies in creation were of a measure that was necessary for Adam to be in the state of equilibrium we mentioned, and to have a place to attain perfection through the labor of his hands. However, through his sin, deficiencies were added and multiplied in man himself and in all of creation. Furthermore, the rectification became more difficult than it was before. This is because, initially, it was easy for him to emerge from the inherent deficiency and acquire perfection, as the Supreme Wisdom arranged matters according to the attribute of goodness and righteousness. Since man was not the cause of the deficiency within him, but rather it was imprinted upon him in his creation, by removing himself from evil and turning towards good, he would immediately emerge from deficiency and acquire perfection. However, through his sin, since perfection became more concealed due to him than it was, and deficiencies multiplied, and he himself was the cause of evil for himself, it will no longer be as easy for him to return, to emerge from deficiency, and acquire perfection as it was when he was not the cause of his deficiency, but rather it was so from his very origin. And all the more so, the effort now required for him to attain perfection is doubled, for he will first need man and the world to return to the state they were in initially, before the sin, and thereafter to ascend from that state to the state of perfection that man was meant to attain.

**[9]** Death and Resurrection: However, apart from all this, Divine Justice decreed that neither man nor the world, in their current corrupted form—that is, the form in which wickedness has proliferated—could attain perfection. Rather, they would necessarily require a transition from this state of loss. For man, this loss is death; for all other created beings that have been corrupted along with him, it is their ruin. The soul cannot purify the body unless it first departs from it, and the body dies and perishes. Then, it will return and be rebuilt anew, and the soul will enter it and purify it. Similarly, the entire world will be destroyed from its present form and will be rebuilt in another form, suitable for perfection. Therefore, it was decreed that man should die and then return to life, which is the matter of the resurrection of the dead. And for the world, it will be destroyed and then renewed, which is the matter of what our Sages of blessed memory stated: "The world exists for six thousand years, and one thousand [years] it is desolate. And at the end of a thousand years, the Holy One, blessed be He, returns and renews His world."

**[10]** And behold, according to this root, the true time of reward, meaning the time of receiving the recompense we mentioned above, its place is after the resurrection in the world that will be renewed. And man will enjoy therein with his body and his soul, his body being purified by his soul and prepared by it to enjoy that good. However, people will be tested there, and their degrees and stations will differ according to the measure of their toil in the world of labor, and according to what they strove to attain of perfection. For according to this measure, the soul itself will shine and illuminate the body, and purify it, and both will acquire preciousness and elevation, and will be worthy to draw near to the Master, blessed be He, and to shine in the light of His countenance and to enjoy His true goodness.

**[11]** The World of Souls: And indeed, since death was decreed upon man, and as it is written, it is found that this composite being must separate for a time, and then return to be reunited. Thus, even during this period of separation, it is fitting that there be a place for the two separating parts, suitable for the purpose of that separation. And behold, the body must return to its elements, its composition undone, and its form corrupted. Since it was from dust, to dust it shall return, as the Almighty says to man, "For dust you are, and to dust you shall return." But the soul (which is

meritorious through its deeds) has naught to do but await until what needs to be done to the body is accomplished, namely, its dissolution and corruption in the first instance, and its remaining in dust for as long as necessary, and its subsequent re-formation when it returns to enter it. And indeed, it requires a place during this interim. For this purpose, the World of Souls was prepared, into which the meritorious souls shall enter after their departure from the body, and they shall dwell there in a place of rest for the duration that the appropriate matters are being enacted upon the body. And behold, for all that time, those souls shall reside in elevation and delight, a semblance of what will be given to them later in the time of true reward that we mentioned above. For their elevation in the World of Souls is certainly measured according to the deeds they performed, according to which the reward will also be measured in its time. However, the true perfection destined for those who merit it will not be attained by either the body or the soul, but only upon their re-union after the resurrection.

**[12]** The benefit for man in the World of Souls: Beyond the fact that the World of Souls is a place for souls to reside while awaiting their bodies, as stated, there is also a great benefit found therein for the souls themselves, and consequently for the body, for what it will require subsequently at the time of the Resurrection. This is because, after the decree was made upon man that he would not attain his perfection except after death, even though it might appear to him from his deeds while still alive (for otherwise he would never have attained it, as the time for acquiring perfection is only in this world before death, as stated), it also followed from this decree that the soul, for as long as it is in the body in this world, is bound by the evil that cleaves to it, from which it is impossible to separate completely. Consequently, the soul itself remains darkened and obscured. And even though through the good deeds that man performs, it acquires for itself a precious perfection, this cannot be revealed, nor can it shine with the radiance it was meant to possess according to the preciousness it truly attains. Rather, all remains concealed within its essence until the time it is permitted to be revealed. However, the impediment is not at all from its side, but solely from the body's side, as stated. And the body itself suffers a loss in this, for it does not receive all that time the purification it should have received, as stated. Yet, the soul also suffers a loss, for it is itself concealed

and cannot unfurl its radiance. Furthermore, it does not perform the action it is meant to perform, which is the purification of the body. If it were to perform that action, it would attain great perfection from the very nature of the action itself, for the action of perfection is to benefit and perfect another. Moreover, this is the action appropriate for it according to its nature and law, for which it was created. Every created being attains perfection when it performs what its Creator, blessed be He, has ordained for it to perform, and it is deficient in perfection as long as it does not perform it. Indeed, upon the soul's departure from the body and its journey to the World of Souls, there it expands and shines with its radiance according to its deeds and what it attains. While there, it strengthens itself from what it was weakened in the body and becomes more prepared for what it is meant to do at the time of the Resurrection, so that when it returns to the body at the appointed time, it will be able to perform within it the appropriate action, namely, the purification we have mentioned.

**[13]** The difference between the soul's entry into the fetus and its entry at the resurrection: However, you must know that even now, when the soul enters the body of the fetus, although it has not yet attained perfection in its deeds, by virtue of its inherent preciousness and radiance, it would be fitting for it to impart great purification to the matter, such that it would transcend the human species. But His decree overcomes it, concealing its power and diminishing its radiance, so that this outcome does not ensue. Instead, it remains there, veiled within itself, to the extent required by the Divine intention, and acts upon the body in the order and measure desired by His wisdom. Now, according to the good deeds it performs, it would have spread and become radiant, as it is said, and then the purification would have come from it to the body. However, according to the decree we explained above, this is not possible except when it is in the world of souls. But upon its return to the body after the resurrection, it will not be diminished or concealed; rather, it will enter with all its radiance and all its power. Then, it will immediately purify that body with great purification, and it will not require the gradual growth that is now necessary for children. Rather, immediately at that moment, it will illuminate it and immediately purify it with great purification. However, this does not preclude the body and soul together undergoing successive elevations. But the matter is that immediately upon the soul's entry into the body,

that person will be precious and elevated, and his body will immediately receive an initial purification, whereby he will be elevated above all that he was throughout his initial life. And that purification will be in accordance with all the good deeds he has already performed, and it will place him in the rank he is fit to occupy among those who are purified to enjoy perfection. Afterward, both will undergo successive elevations according to what is fitting for one who is in that rank.

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## Part 1, Chapter 4

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**[1]** In man's state in this world, two matters will be examined: man's own nature in its parts and their composition, and the place in which he is situated, with all that accompanies him.

**[2]** The nature of man in this world: Regarding man himself, we have already recalled how he is composed of two opposing elements, namely the soul and the body. However, we see with our own eyes that materiality is primary within him, and its consequences are very strong. For immediately after his birth, he is almost entirely material, and intellect operates within him only to a small degree. As he grows, intellect will grow stronger in each individual according to his capacity. Nevertheless, materiality will not cease to rule over him and incline him towards its concerns. This is only if he grows in wisdom, studies it, and strengthens himself in its ways. Then he will strive to conquer his nature, not loosen the reins of his desires from his hand, and become mighty in walking the paths of intellect.

However, the inner reality of these matters that we observe is that in the existence of matter and its essence, turbidity and darkness are found by nature. This is a reality very distant and opposite to what is truly meant by drawing near to God, may He be exalted, and cleaving to His holiness. And the soul itself, although in its essence it is pure and exalted, upon entering the material body and becoming entangled within it, finds itself expelled and rejected from its natural state to an opposite state, and subjugated within it by a compelling force. It cannot escape from this unless it strives with a force stronger than the compelling force.

And since the Master, blessed be He, decreed that

this composition of man's body and soul shall never be separated (meaning that the separation of death is only temporary until the resurrection of the dead, but afterward it must return to the body, and both will endure together for all eternity), it is therefore necessary that the soul endeavor and strengthen itself, and continually weaken the dark force of materiality, until the body becomes devoid of darkness. Then it will be able to ascend with the soul and be illuminated by the supernal light, instead of initially being darkened and debased with it.

However, man in this world is in a state where materiality is strong within him, as we have said. And since matter is turbid and dark, man is found in great darkness, very distant from what is fitting for him, which is to cleave to Him, may He be exalted. Indeed, in this matter, he must direct his efforts to strengthen his soul against the force of his materiality, and to improve his condition by elevating himself to the degree that is fitting for him.

**[3]** What causes a person's world and occupation: The place in which he is also material and dark, and all the beings within it are material. And it is impossible for a person's occupation within it and in its entirety to be anything other than a material and corporeal occupation. Since they are all material and corporeal, and the very constitution of man and the composition of his parts necessitate this occupation for him, for it is impossible for him without eating and drinking and all other natural matters. And it is impossible for him without wealth and acquisition and the ability to obtain these necessities. Thus, whether from the side of man's body, or from the side of his world, or from the side of his occupation, he is imprinted with matter and sunk in its darkness. Great toil and strong effort will be necessary for him to ascend to a state purified from this, and he is naturally compelled by these material matters.

**[4]** Material actions are rendered complete actions. However, from the depth of His wisdom, may He be blessed, it was His will to arrange matters such that even while man is necessarily immersed in materiality, as we have written, he can, from the material itself and from bodily engagement, attain perfection and elevation to purity and to a higher station. Indeed, his degradation will be his elevation, and from there he will acquire unparalleled preciousness and honor, as he

transforms darkness into light and gloom into radiant brightness. This is because the Blessed Name, may He be exalted, has set boundaries and orders for man in his use of the world and its creatures, and with the intention he should intend in them. When man uses them within those boundaries, those orders, and that intention commanded by the Divine Presence, that very physical and material action will itself be a complete action, and in it, man will strengthen a state of perfection and a great elevation, whereby he will be raised from his lowly state and be lifted from it. However, the Supreme Wisdom has surveyed all the general deficiencies inherent in man's condition, and all the matters of true perfection and preciousness that he requires to be worthy of cleaving to Him, may He be blessed, and enjoying His goodness. In opposition to all this, He has arranged for him orders and set boundaries for him, such that by observing them, all that is necessary of the true perfection we have mentioned will be strengthened within him, and all that distances him from the Divine cleaving will be nullified from his condition. If the decree had not been decreed that he would die, as is stated, through these actions, the soul would have been strengthened, and the darkness of the body would have weakened, to such an extent that it would have been thoroughly purified by it, and both would have ascended to cleaving to Him, may He be blessed. And because the decree is decreed, the matter does not occur all at once. However, in any event, the soul itself is strengthened, and the body is purified by force, even if it does not occur in actuality. And man acquires a state of perfection in potential, which will later be actualized at its appointed time.

[5] However, these arrangements and boundaries constitute the totality of the positive and negative commandments, each of which is directed toward the ultimate acquisition within man and the strengthening within him of one of the levels of true elevation that we have mentioned, and the removal of one of the matters of darkness and deficiencies through the action of that positive commandment or the abstention from the negative commandment. But the details of all the commandments, as well as the particulars of each and every commandment, are founded upon the true reality of man's existence and essence in all his aspects, and the true reality of the perfections required by each thing within its conditions and boundaries for its completion. Indeed, the Supreme Wisdom, which knows all this truly and knows all the affairs of all creatures and

their functions as they were truly created, has surveyed all and encompassed all that is necessary in the commandments that He commanded us in His Torah, as it is written, "And He commanded us to do all these statutes, etc., for our good, etc."

[6] The Root of Service: Behold, the root of the entire matter of service is that man should constantly turn towards his Creator, understanding and realizing that he was not created except to cleave to his Creator, nor was he placed in this world except to conquer his inclination and subjugate himself to his Creator by the power of intellect, opposing the desires of the material and its inclination, and that he should direct all his actions towards achieving this ultimate purpose and not deviate from it.

[7] The parts of service: This providence is divided into two parts. The first is that which one does because one is commanded to do it, and the second is that which one does because one is necessitated and requires it. The first part refers to the totality of performing the commandments, and the second refers to what a person uses from the world for his needs. Regarding the performance of the commandments, its purpose for a person is clear: that he perform it to fulfill the will of his Creator and to do His pleasure. Indeed, he fulfills His will in two ways, one following from the other. This is because he fulfills His will by doing what He commanded him to do, and he does it. And secondly, through that action, he perfects himself in one of the levels of perfection that is a consequence of that commandment. As it is stated, and thus His will is fulfilled, which is His will that man be perfected and come to enjoy His goodness.

However, concerning what a person uses from the world for his needs, it is first necessary that it be limited by the boundary of His will, meaning that it not contain anything that God has forbidden and prohibited, and that it be only what is fitting for the body and the sustenance of its life in the best possible way, and not according to the inclination of matter and its desire for superfluities. The intention should be for the body to be prepared and ready for the soul to use it for the service of its Creator, so that the soul does not find an impediment in its lack of preparation and weakness. When a person uses from the world in this manner, he will find that this use itself effects perfection, as it is stated, and he acquires thereby a true elevation, just as he acquires through the

performance of all the commandments. For this too is commanded upon us: to guard our bodies with proper preparation so that we may serve our Creator with them, and to use the world for this intention and for this purpose, according to our needs. Thus, we are elevated through this action, and the world itself is elevated by it, in that it assists man in serving his Creator.

**[8]** And behold, what a person must strengthen within himself is love and awe for his Creator, blessed be He. This means that he should contemplate the greatness of His exaltedness, blessed be He, and the extreme lowliness of man, and humble himself before Him, blessed be He, and be ashamed of His loftiness. He should be desirous and yearn to be among those who serve Him, to praise His praise and boast of His greatness. For these are strong means that draw man close to his Creator, that purify the darkness of matter, illuminate the soul's light, and elevate man from one ascent to another until he achieves His closeness, blessed be He.

**[9]** The Study of Torah: Indeed, the first means that God, blessed be He, has given us, whose level is above all other means that draw man close to Him, is the study of Torah, and it is in two aspects. The first is in the aspect of logic and study, and the second is in the aspect of understanding. For behold, in His abundant kindness, God willed and connected for us a compilation of matters, as His wisdom decreed, and delivered them to us. This is the entirety of the Book of the Torah, and after it, the books of the Prophets. By the inherent quality of these matters, whoever contemplates them with holiness and purity, with the correct intention, which is to do God's will, will be strengthened by them to a supreme level and a very great perfection. Likewise, whoever strives to understand them and to know what has been transmitted to us of their interpretations will acquire, according to his effort, perfection upon perfection, especially if he reaches the understanding of their hidden depths and secrets. For every matter that he understands will be fixed and strengthened within his soul, a level from the highest levels of attainment and true perfection. And in all these matters, it is not enough that man acquires for himself a level and perfection, but rather the existence of the entire creation, in its entirety and in its particulars, is elevated and perfected, especially through the Torah.

**[10]** The Genesis of Commandments and

Transgressions: However, the cause of all man's states, his darkness and his brightness, is none other than the shining of the Divine Countenance upon him, or its turning away from him, as stated above. For indeed, to whatever extent the Blessed Holy One shines His countenance, so too does purity and perfection increase for him who has received His illumination, and in proportion to the illumination is the measure of perfection and purity drawn from it. The opposite of this is concealment. And truly, the Blessed Holy One always shines upon him who draws near to Him, and there is no impediment of good from His side whatsoever. Rather, he who does not draw near to Him will lack His illumination, and the impediment is on the part of the recipient, not on the part of the Bestower. And behold, the Supreme Wisdom decreed that one who performs those matters that He commanded, meaning the totality of all commandments, as stated above, in each and every act of theirs that he performs, he will thereby draw nearer by some degree to the degrees of proximity to Him, may He be exalted. And through this, he will attain some degree of the degrees of the shining of His countenance, according to the proximity to which he has drawn near to Him. And a degree of perfection will be strengthened within him, which is the genesis of that degree of illumination. And the opposite of this are transgressions: each act that man performs, God forbid, will thereby cause him to draw farther by some degree from Him, may He be exalted, and a degree of deficiency will be added to him, which is the genesis of that degree of concealment.

**[11]** It is found, according to all that we have previously established, that the true intention in all the commandments is to draw near to Him, blessed be He, and to be illuminated by the light of His countenance. And the prohibition from transgressions is to escape from being distanced from Him. And this is the true ultimate purpose within them. However, the matters in detail possess great depth, according to the particulars of man's affairs and creation, as has been mentioned above. And we shall speak further concerning some of them in this section, with the help of God, blessed be He.

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## Part 1, Chapter 5

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**[1]** The divisions of creation are twofold: corporeal and spiritual. The corporeal are those perceived by our senses and are divided into the higher and lower. The higher are all the celestial bodies, namely the spheres and their stars. The lower are all that is within the sphere of the lowest, namely the earth, the waters, the air, and all perceptible bodies within them. The spiritual are created beings devoid of body, imperceptible to our senses, and are divided into two kinds. The first are souls, and the second are separate intelligences. Souls are a kind of spiritual created being intended to enter a body, to be contained within it, to be bound to it with a strong bond, and to perform various actions within it at different times. The separate intelligences are a kind of spiritual created being not intended for bodies at all, and they are divided into two parts. The first is called powers, and the second, angels. These too are of many and varied degrees, and they have natural laws in their existence according to their degrees and levels, such that we can truly call them many kinds of the first category, which is the angelic category. However, we find one kind of created being that is like an intermediary between the spiritual and the corporeal. This is because it is truly not perceptible to our senses, nor is it contained within all the boundaries of the perceptible body and its laws. For this reason, we call it, not with strict accuracy, spiritual, but it is separate in its essence from the angelic category, even though it may resemble it in some aspects. It has its own particular laws and specific boundaries according to its true existence, and this kind is called the demonic kind, which is the kind of demons. However, this too will be divided into other particulars, such that the general kind becomes a category for them, and they are kinds related to it. Now, we observe and distinguish the human kind alone as being composed of two entirely distinct kinds of creation: namely, the higher soul and the lower body, which is not found in any other created being. And here you must be careful not to err and think that the essence of other living creatures is the same as that of man, for the soul of a living creature is merely a subtle corporeal thing, among the subtlest of corporeal things, and its essence is also found in man in his capacity as a living creature. However, apart from all this, man possesses a higher soul, which is a distinct kind of creation in itself, entirely separate from the body and very distant from it, which comes and attaches itself to it by Divine decree for the purpose we

mentioned in the preceding chapters.

**[2]** The heads of created beings are powers from which all things are descended. The corporeal created beings are known to us, and their natural laws and judgments are generally well-known. However, it is impossible for us to properly conceive of the spiritual ones, as they are beyond our imagination. We speak of them and their affairs only according to the tradition we possess.

Now, one of the great principles we hold regarding this matter is that corresponding to everything found among the lower created beings, there exist distinct powers above, from which they descend and emerge in a specific order of emanation, as His wisdom decreed. These lower beings and their accidents are the results, and those powers are the roots of these lower created beings. The lower created beings are branches and offshoots of those powers, and they are bound to each other like links in a chain.

We also have a tradition that over every essence and every accident among these lower created beings, there are appointed agents of the angelic kind that we mentioned above. Their task is to sustain that essence or that accident in the lower created realm as it is, and to renew what is fitting to be renewed in the lower realms according to the Divine decree.

**[3]** Indeed, the essential reality of the world and its true state reside in those higher powers, and what is in the lower corporeal realms is a consequence of what is within them. This applies both to what was at the inception of creation and to what is renewed with the changing of times. The reason for this is that according to how they were created from those powers, and according to the order in which they were arranged and the limits by which they were bounded, so too was that which subsequently devolved according to the law of devolution that the Creator, blessed be He, willed. And according to what is renewed and continually renewed within them, so too is that which is renewed and continually renewed in the lower realms. However, the reality, the state, and the order, along with all other distinctions in the higher powers, are as they pertain to them according to the truth of their essence. The reality, the state, and the order, along with all other occurrences in the lower realms, devolve and are transferred from what pertains to them according to the truth of their essence.

**[4]** Three General Movements in Creation: And behold, according to this root, the beginning of all existences is above in the higher powers, and their end is below in the lower realms, and likewise the beginning of all emergent matters is above and their end is below. However, there is one particular aspect that deviates from this rule, which pertains to human choice. For since the Master, blessed be He, willed that man should have the ability to choose whatever he desires of good and evil, He made him independent of others in this regard. On the contrary, He granted him the power to be a mover of the world itself and its creatures, according to his chosen will. Thus, we find two opposing general movements in the world: one is natural and necessary, and the other is volitional. The first is from above to below, and the second is from below to above. The necessary movement is that by which the lower realms are moved by the higher powers, and this is from above to below. The volitional movement is that which man initiates by his choice. And what he initiates cannot be anything other than a physical thing, for man is physical and his actions are physical. However, due to the connection and conjunction that exists between the higher powers and the physical realm, when the physical is moved, the resulting influence reaches the higher power upon which it depends. Thus, this movement is from below to above, the opposite of the natural, necessary movement we have mentioned. However, you must know that even man himself does not have all his actions as volitional. Rather, some of them will be from his choice, and others will be caused by a higher decree for his reward or punishment (as mentioned in its place, with God's help). However, in that which he is drawn after the decree upon him, his judgment will be like all other matters of the world, whose movement is from above to below, according to how the higher powers move them. And in that which is from his choice, his movement will be from below to above, as we have explained.

**[5]** And behold, the Master, blessed be He, ordained that all matters in which man's choice falls shall be moved by the faculty of choice to the extent and degree that He has decreed for them. This is because not only his actions will move them, but even his speech, and even his thought. However, the extent and degree of the movement shall be only within the boundary that the Supreme Wisdom has decreed and limited.

**[6]** And indeed, after the movement of free will, a

necessary movement will inevitably follow. For since the higher powers were moved by the agency of man, they will in turn move the lower things that descend from them by a natural movement.

However, there are many specific laws governing all these matters, according to what the Supreme Wisdom decreed in the depth of its counsel, deeming it fitting for its creation, in many measures. This applies both to the transmission of movement from man to the powers, and to the transmission of movement from the powers to the lower things. And according to these profound mysteries, all the cycles of His [God's] providence revolve, in all that has been and all that will be.

**[7]** The origin of good and evil lies in the root forces. Since His wisdom decreed that good and evil should exist in the world, as stated, the beginning of this matter must reside in these root forces, and from them it will extend to the lower realms. His wisdom has therefore arranged the separated forces, the roots of created beings that we have mentioned, in an order and manner such that correction and corruption will befall them according to what is fitting for them. This means that a state of good and not-good will be found within them. The true good of their state will be their preparedness to be illuminated by the light of His countenance, and He will shine upon them. The opposite is their lack of this preparedness, and He will conceal Himself from them. The consequence of their correction in the lower realms is the good within them, and the opposite in the inverse.

**[8]** Created forces are the agents of evil: You must know that although in reality the cause of all good matters, wherever they are—that is, both in the forces themselves and in their consequences—is the radiance of His blessed countenance, as it is written, and the cause of evil, wherever it is, is the concealment of His radiance. However, for good, the Master, blessed be He, is described as the true cause of all His general and specific matters. But for evil, He is not described as a true cause, for indeed, the Holy One, blessed be He, does not identify His name with evil. Rather, the concealment of His light and the hiding of His face are considered its root, for this is truly its cause, and this is the reason for the good that has passed. But for the specific matters in their existence, the Master, blessed be He, who is omnipotent, whose will is unimpeded and whose power is boundless, created a specific root and source directed towards this end of bringing forth the specific matters of evil,

according to what the Supreme Wisdom foresaw as necessary for the desired state of man and the world. And this is what is meant by, "He forms light and creates darkness, He makes peace and creates evil." The matter of this root is a totality of various forces from which all matters of deficiency and evils will emanate in all their aspects, whether concerning the soul or the body, in all their details and divisions. We will speak more of this in the second part, with God's help. And indeed, this totality of forces operates to act or not to act, either in its entirety or in its parts, after the concealment of His blessed light and the hiding of His face. For according to the measure of the concealment, to that extent will dominion and authority be given to this totality of forces, or to parts of it, to act. And when these forces gain strength and prevail, the force of good is obscured, and the state of the fundamental created forces that we mentioned is corrupted, and they and their branches weaken. When these forces are subdued and the dominion and action are removed from them, good will prevail. The fundamental created things will be rectified and established in a good state, and they and their branches will be strengthened. However, all that we have mentioned concerning matters of good and evil, the struggle of intellect and matter, and all matters of rectification and corruption—the root of all these matters is the ascendancy of these forces and the arrival of matters and their

consequences in created beings, whether in roots or branches, or their subjugation and the nullification of their action, and the removal of their matters and consequences from created beings, roots and branches.

**[9]** And behold, there are many divisions of degrees concerning the forces of evil that we have mentioned and what is influenced by them. Generally, what is influenced by them is called impurity, darkness, filth, or weakness, and the like. And what is influenced by the radiance of His Countenance, blessed be He, is called holiness, purity, light, blessing, and the like. However, by discerning the details of these matters, we will distinguish the kinds of these categories and their particulars, upon which the entire providence of the Master, blessed be He, revolves in governing His world.

**[10]** Angelic beings bring all things to fruition. Indeed, for each of these matters, there are appointed officials of the angelic type that we explained above, tasked with bringing these matters to fruition, even down to the physical realm, whether for good or for ill. And behold, they are His exalted servants, doers of His will, for so He desired and ordained that His decrees should be enacted through His angels, according to what He appointed them and entrusted into their hands.



## Chapter 3

# Part II: Divine Providence

8 Chapters

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### Part 2, Chapter 1

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**[1]** It is known and explained that all created beings, both the higher and the lower, were created because the Supreme Wisdom perceived in them a need and benefit for the ultimate general purpose of creation. And all their natural laws and statutes were inscribed and imprinted according to what the Supreme Wisdom decreed to be fitting for the intention it had in that created being. However, for that very same reason they were created, it is also fitting that they should endure as long as they are of benefit to the totality of creation. As it is stated, "And therefore the Master, blessed be He, who created all these created beings, will not refrain from overseeing them to sustain them in the state in which He desires them to be."

**[2]** His Blessedness's Providence Over All Levels of Creation: We have already prefaced in Chapter 1, Section 5, that the beginning of all created beings are the separate intelligences, and from them, the corporeal substances and things within them descend in all their particulars. These are according to what has been transferred to them from those intelligences in the particulars of their aspects. There is nothing small or great in the corporeal realm that does not have a cause and root in the separate intelligences, according to their

aspects. And the Blessed Lord, may He be exalted, oversees all these matters according to how He created them, meaning, He first oversees the separate intelligences and all their descent according to what is true. Likewise, He also oversees the agents whom He appointed over the existents, as mentioned there, to sustain them and their charge, and to continually grant them the power to perform their actions.

**[3]** His Providence over the Human Race: Indeed, since the human race is distinguished from all other species by being granted free will and the capacity to acquire perfection or deficiency, and is thus found in this regard to be an agent and mover rather than a passive recipient, Providence over it must necessarily differ from Providence over other species. Thus, it is required to oversee and observe the particulars of its actions, to bring about for it according to its ways and the fruits of its deeds. Consequently, all its actions and their consequences will be overseen, and it will, in turn, be overseen according to what is fitting for the consequences of those deeds in particular, measure for measure, as has been stated previously. This is not applicable to other species, whose individuals are passive recipients and not agents, and are only as they ought to be for the completion of that species, according to its root as it was established. For there, Providence is to sustain that root and its branches according to what the nature and law of the root dictate they shall be. But the human race, whose individuals are

agents and movers, as stated, must be overseen in particular according to what their actions cause, no more and no less. We shall further elaborate on this matter at a later point, with God's help.

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## **Part 2, Chapter 2**

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**[1]** The matters of this world are an invitation to the World to Come. We have already established that the purpose of the creation of humankind is for them to merit and attain true good, which is cleaving to Him, blessed be He, in the World to Come. Thus, the end of all their transmigrations is rest in the World to Come. However, Divine Wisdom decreed that it is fitting and proper that a precursor to this be their state in this world, bound and limited by the laws of nature of this world. This shall be the true and proper preparation for reaching the desired purpose. And according to this root, He ordered all the affairs of this world to be a preparation and an invitation for what will be thereafter in the ultimate world, which is the World to Come.

**[2]** The Ultimate End of the Human Species: This preparation, however, revolves around two poles: the individual and the collective. The individual pole concerns the acquisition of human perfection through his actions, and the collective pole concerns the preparation of the human species as a whole for the World to Come. The explanation of this matter is that since the human species was created with good inclination and evil inclination, and with free will, it is not precluded that its parts will include some who are good and some who are evil. The ultimate end of the process must be that the evil ones are rejected and the good ones are gathered, and from them a single entity will be made, to which entity the World to Come will be destined with the true good attained therein.

**[3]** The distribution of reward and punishment occurs in two times and two places. However, the principle of free will, which necessitates the possibility, which we have mentioned, for individuals within the human species to be either good or evil, and for some to be good and some evil, itself necessitates this possibility. Thus, it is also true for the deeds of each individual person: it

is possible for all of them to be good or all evil, and it is possible for some to be good and some evil. This is what prevents the gathering of the perfected beings that we have mentioned, for one may find within a single person both good and evil matters. To attend to some of these and not to the others, even if those attended to are the majority, is not in accordance with justice, for the law dictates that all deeds should be rewarded, whether great or small, whether many or few. Therefore, Divine Wisdom decreed to divide the reward, both for recompense and for punishment, into two times and two places. This means that the totality of deeds will be divided into the majority and the minority. The majority will be judged in its appropriate place and time, and the minority will be judged in its appropriate place and time. However, the true and principal reward will be in the World to Come, as it is written, "And the reward of the righteous man shall be eternal, to cleave to Him, blessed be He, eternally," and punishment is to be distanced from the true good and to be lost. Nevertheless, the judgment in this matter will be based only on the majority of deeds. But for good deeds that belong to the wicked, and for evil deeds that belong to the righteous, based on the minority, the present world will provide its successes and its troubles, wherein the wicked will receive the reward for the minority of their merits in their successes, and the righteous will receive punishment for their sins in their suffering, in such a way that justice will be perfected in all. And the matter will remain for the World to Come as is fitting for that perfected state, meaning that the righteous will remain alone, without the mixture of the wicked among them, and they themselves will be without hindrances to the enjoyment prepared for them, and the wicked will be rejected and lost, without any claim remaining for them whatsoever.

**[4]** Gehenna and other spiritual punishments: Furthermore, His blessed will decreed to increase salvation for humankind, so that another form of rectification might be found for those for whom it is possible. This refers to those in whom evil has gained great dominance, but not so much that their judgment is to be utterly destroyed. This encompasses all punishments, the most prominent of which is the judgment in Gehenna. The intention therein is to punish sin according to its transgressions, in such a manner that after being punished, there will no longer be any debt upon them for the evil deed they committed. Consequently, they will be able to receive true reward according to their other good deeds. Thus,

it is found that those who are truly lost will be few, not many. For indeed, only those in whom evil has gained such great dominance that it is impossible for them to find any place whatsoever to remain in true reward and eternal pleasure will be among them.

Now, it is found that the judgment is divided into three parts, for its essence is for the world after the resurrection, as stated. However, deeds worthy of reward are recompensed beforehand. There are those who will be rewarded in this world, and there are those who will be rewarded in the world of souls. Indeed, the details of this judgment are known only to the True Judge alone, for He knows the truth of the existence of deeds and their consequences in all their aspects and particulars. He knows which of them is worthy of reward at one time and in one manner, and which at another time and in another manner. What we know is only the general principles of this system of providence, upon what it is founded and to what it pertains. This is what we have explained: the ultimate purpose of the entire matter is to gather complete beings who will be worthy of being established forever in His blessed attachment. And in order for this matter to be perfected as it should, all these preceding matters were necessary to prepare and arrange this ultimate purpose, as stated.

**[5]** The Efficacy of Suffering: And indeed, when you delve deeper into this matter, you will see that beyond this matter being drawn according to judgment and law, as stated, it is also founded upon the reality of the created being. This is because we have already explained that good deeds enhance in a person, in his body and soul, a complete and elevated reality. Conversely, evil deeds enhance in him a reality of impurity and deficiency, all in precise measure according to the deeds themselves, no more and no less. Now, the righteous person who has greatly enhanced himself with radiance and elevation, yet on the other hand, due to the few evil deeds he has performed, a mixture of some darkness and impurity is found within him. As long as this mixture exists, he is not prepared or fit for cleaving to Him, blessed be He. Therefore, Divine grace decreed that a refinement should be found for him, and this is the totality of suffering, in which, blessed be He, lies its efficacy to remove that impurity from that person, leaving him pure and luminous, prepared for good at the proper time. Indeed, according to the measure of impurity that the person has acquired through his

deeds, so will be the suffering that will be necessary for his refinement. It is possible that physical suffering will not have the power to remove the impurity from him, and he will require spiritual suffering. The totality of this is detailed into many particulars that human intellect cannot encompass.

**[6]** The merit of the wicked is entirely consumed in this world. Indeed, the utterly wicked are those in whom the impurity of their deeds and the vastness of their darkness have become so entrenched that they are truly corrupted in body and soul, and have become utterly unfit to cleave to Him, blessed be He. It is possible that some good deeds may be found in their possession, but these are deeds whose weight, in the scales of His justice, blessed be He, do not at all tip their possessors toward true good, neither by their quantity nor by their quality. For if they did tip them toward good, they would no longer be considered utterly wicked, but rather among those who are joining and progressing until they reach a state prepared for good. However, so that divine justice not be impaired by these deeds remaining without reward, it has been decreed that their recompense be given them in this world, as it is said, and thus that merit is entirely consumed and does not bring them any true elevation.

**[7]** In the gathering of the inhabitants of the World to Come, there are degrees. Indeed, there is another exceedingly important detail in this matter, which is that the gathering of the perfected ones, which we mentioned will occur in the future, does not mean that they will all be at one level, at one rank, and attain one apprehension. Rather, the matter is that the Supreme Wisdom has determined the furthest extent to which the lowest limit can reach, meaning the minimal measure of cleaving to Him, blessed be He, and delighting in His perfection. Correspondingly, it has arranged that whoever's deeds reach at least that minimal measure will already be counted in this gathering we mentioned, and will be among those who remain for eternity to delight in Him. But whoever does not even reach this will be utterly rejected and lost. Indeed, whoever merits more will be in the gathering itself at a greater and more elevated level. And it is from the depth of His counsel, blessed be He, that man himself will be entirely the master of his own good, both in general and in particular. That is, it is not enough that he merits good, but rather, after he has attained it through his labor, even the specific portion that will be given to him

will be only according to his deeds with precision. And it is found that man will not be at a level other than what he himself chose and placed himself in. And indeed, in that gathering, there will be found great and small, elevated and lowly, but the height of man's rank and his lowness will not have any other cause than his own being, in such a way that he will have no complaint against anyone at all.

**[8]** The Law Regarding the Level of Man in the Assembly of the World to Come: And behold, according to this root, you will find another great distinction in the judgment of deeds, to determine which of them are fitting to bring about an elevation for man in the assembly of the perfected, which we have mentioned, and the measure of the elevation they will bring. For there are deeds that, according to the precise and just supreme judgment, will not bring about an elevation for man for that time, but rather will be rewarded in this world. Then that person will remain among the lowest of the eternal in that small assembly. And behold, this is somewhat similar to those we mentioned above who receive their reward in this world and are lost to the World to Come. However, they are greatly distinguished from them. The distinction is that those we mentioned, who are the utterly wicked, all the power of their good deeds is consumed in the reward of this world, and they do not reach eternity at all. But these, their deeds already reach them to eternity, and even if they require a very great spiritual combination, nevertheless, they have a portion in eternal survival. However, due to the corruption of their deeds, their commandments do not reach to give them that small portion we mentioned, and many of their merits they receive in this world. For if the law had decreed that they be rewarded in the World to Come and not in this world, then those individuals would have been found in one of the higher levels in the assembly of the perfected.

**[9]** However, concerning all that we have mentioned until now, the matter of the suffering of the righteous in this world and the tranquility of the wicked has been clarified, as well as the spiritual punishments insofar as they are preparation for the true reward in the World to Come. But the good fortune of the righteous in this world is drawn forth in another manner and remains for later, by God's help. And all that we have explained is according to the second, general pole that we mentioned for preparation. But its matters, according to the individual pole, proceed in a different way from all

this, and we shall clarify it now in a separate chapter, by God's help.

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## Part 2, Chapter 3

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**[1]** The commandments given to humankind in this world: We have already established that the service entrusted to man depends on the fact that good and evil exist in the world, and man is placed between them to choose the good. However, the particulars of good are many, as are the particulars of evil, for every good trait is part of the good, and its opposite is every evil trait. For example, arrogance is one of the matters of evil, and humility is among the matters of good. Compassion is among the matters of good, and its opposite is cruelty. Contentment and joy in one's lot are among the matters of good, and their opposite is among the matters of evil. And so it is with all other particulars of character traits. The Supreme Wisdom has foreseen all the particulars of these matters that are fitting to exist and to befall humanity according to the primary purpose we mentioned in its place. It brought them into being in all their aspects, their causes and their effects, and all that accompanies them, and inscribed their possibility within man, as it is written. Indeed, for all these matters to exist, various situations were necessary among human beings, all of which would serve as a test for them, by providing a place for all the particulars of these evil aspects and a place for man to strengthen himself against them and to grasp the good. For example, if there were no rich and poor, there would be no place for man to be compassionate or cruel. But now, the rich man is tested by his wealth: whether he will be cruel to the poor who need him, or whether he will have compassion for him. Similarly, the poor man is tested: whether he will be content with the little he has and thank his God, or the opposite. Furthermore, wealth will be a test for the rich man to see if his heart will be lifted up by it, or if he will be drawn after the vanities of the world and abandon the service of his Creator. And whether, despite all his wealth, he will remain humble and submissive, despising the vanities of the world and choosing Torah and service. And so it is with all similar matters. Indeed, the Supreme Wisdom has divided these types of tests among the individuals

of the human race, as it decreed in the depth of its counsel that it is fitting and proper. Thus, each and every person among humankind has a special portion in the test and in the struggle of the inclination, and this is his commandment and his burden in this world. He must stand in it according to what it is, and his deeds will be known to the attribute of Divine Justice according to the burden truly given to him in all its aspects, with utmost precision. This is like the king's servants, all of whom stand at his command, and among them all, the service of his kingdom must be perfected. Indeed, he divides among each of them a portion, so that among them all, all the necessary parts will be completed. Indeed, each one of them is tasked with completing that portion which was entrusted to him, and according to his action in his commandment, so will the king reward him. However, the attribute of this division and its ways are exceedingly beyond our comprehension, and we cannot grasp them. Only the Supreme Wisdom, which is beyond all intellect, has foreseen them and arranged them in the most complete manner.

**[2]** And behold, since all matters of the world are drawn and transferred in a chain of succession from one matter to another, from their existence in the separated intelligences to their existence in the corporeal realm, as we have stated above in the first part, chapter five. Behold, all these matters are particulars of man's trial, as it is written that the root of their aspects begins in the separated intelligences according to the reality pertaining to them of perfection and corruption, as we have stated above. And according to their nature there, they are judged and decreed to exist and to spread to the corporeal realm in the individuals fitting for them, until all the particulars of reality enter into their stations within this general law of division. And the Supreme Wisdom has surveyed all of them, and according to the truth of their existence, it decrees what is most fitting and proper. And this is clear according to the principles we have previously established.

**[3]** The successes and troubles of this world are all trials. It is thus found, according to this root principle, that the successes and troubles of this world will serve as trials for man in those aspects of trial that the Supreme Wisdom has deemed fitting for that individual.

**[4]** The circumstances of this world serve either as assistance or hindrance to the attainment of

perfection. Indeed, another reason for these circumstances exists according to the principles of justice and retribution. This is because the Supreme Judge has decreed that as a consequence of man's own actions, his assistance from Him, may He be exalted, will be facilitated to ease his attainment of perfection and save him from obstacles, as it is stated, "He guards the feet of His faithful." However, there are certainly degrees within this as well. For one may be found whose measure of justice, according to his past deeds, dictates that the Divine Presence will assist him only slightly. Another, whose judgment will be that he will be assisted more greatly, and the attainment of perfection will be greatly eased for him. And yet another will be worthy of even greater assistance. Conversely, one may be found who, according to justice, should not be assisted from Heaven, yet the attainment of perfection will not be difficult for him. And another, whose judgment will result in many hindrances, requiring great strength and much effort until he attains it. And finally, the utterly wicked, before whom all paths of rectification will be blocked, and who will be pushed away by his wickedness. And within all these matters, there are exceedingly many minute details.

Thus, it is possible for a person to merit, and for success to be decreed upon him in this world to aid him in his service, so that it will be easy for him to attain the desired perfection, and no hindrances will be found for him. It is also possible that, according to his deeds, losses and troubles will be decreed upon him, standing as a wall before him and separating him from perfection, until he requires more effort and more toil to break through that wall and strive, despite all his troubles, to attain his perfection nonetheless. The opposite is also true for the wicked: it is possible that successes will be decreed upon him to open before him the gate of destruction in which he will be cast away. It is also possible that troubles will be decreed upon him to prevent him from the wickedness he intended to commit. This occurs when the Supreme Providence knows that it is not fitting for that wicked person to act in a certain way, as David prayed, "O Lord, do not grant the wicked his desire; do not let his wicked scheme succeed."

Indeed, He, may He be exalted, orchestrates all these matters with His wondrous wisdom, all according to what is fitting for the benefit of His entire creation, as it is stated, "And He judges all creatures in all their states according to their true reality." This means that one who is in a state of

ease and neglects his service is not like one who is in a state of distress, harassed by pressure, and does not complete his task. Their judgment will not be the same; rather, each will be judged according to his true reality, whether he errs or acts intentionally, whether he is compelled or acts willingly. And He, may He be exalted, knows the truth of all matters, deeds, and thoughts, and judges them according to their truth.

**[5]** Suffering - Note: However, from this root, another branch emerges concerning suffering. It is possible for a person to be righteous yet have sins, or to be intermediate and balanced in his deeds, and for a decree to be issued upon him to rouse him to repentance. In that case, he will be chastised from Heaven so that he will take heed and examine his deeds. Indeed, these sufferings are not of the kind of expiatory sufferings we mentioned above, whose purpose is to cleanse the transgressions in this world. Rather, these sufferings are sufferings of awakening, to rouse the heart to repentance. For punishments were not created except in the absence of repentance, but what is desired before Him, blessed be He, is that man not sin. And if he sins, let him repent. And if he does not repent, so that he not be lost, he will be joined with punishments. Therefore, these sufferings come for awakening. And if man is not awakened by them, then he will be afflicted with sufferings of purification. And concerning this matter, Elihu said, "Then He opens their ear to instruction, and commands that they return from iniquity."

**[6]** The Filling of the Measure: You must know that a limit is set for the wicked, until when they will allow him to continue in his evil choice. And when he reaches that limit, they will not wait for him at all, and he will be destroyed from the face of the earth. This is what the Sages called "the filling of the measure" (milui hasa'ah), and what the verse states, "When his iniquity is full, he shall be cut off" (Genesis 15:16). Indeed, until that time, it is possible for him to succeed and continue, for the reason we mentioned above, which is to open a path for him to destruction. This is what the Sages wrote: "If one comes to defile himself, the gates are opened for him" (Yoma 38b). But when he reaches that limit, he has already reached destruction and will perish. And then the anger of the Lord will be kindled against him, and a catastrophe will befall him, by which he will be destroyed.

**[7]** Occurrences for man arise from his connections. It is further necessary to know that the Divine Providence, in every detail, watches over all that is connected to it, from what precedes and what follows. Ultimately, it watches with the providence of each detail over the entirety of the whole, by virtue of how all the parts relate to each other and how each part relates to the building blocks of the whole. And from what is reflected in the judgment of any individual, it is from his station and condition concerning what preceded him, namely the forefathers, and what will follow him, namely the descendants, and what is with him, namely the people of the generation, or the people of the city, or the people of the society. And after all these considerations, his portion in service and trial, which we mentioned above, will be decreed for him, and he will be given the burden to serve before Him, blessed be He. (However, you see that this is only concerning the judgment of this world, and this is what I said would be decreed for him, his portion in service, meaning in what state he will find himself in this world, for according to that state will be the burden upon him. But for the World to Come, a person is judged only according to his deeds, according to the state in which he was, and this is what the prophet said: "A son shall not die for the iniquity of his father.") This is because, indeed, if a person merits that greatness and wealth are decreed for him, then his children will be born wealthy, and if nothing new happens to them, they will be wealthy and possessors of greatness. And so it is in reverse. Thus, it is found that that wealth did not reach those children except by virtue of their being children of those fathers. However, the truth of the matter is this: that a person merits for his children in five ways that our Sages, may their memory be blessed, have enumerated. And it is possible that a person is created in goodness by virtue of his father already being established in it. It is also possible that by virtue of his father's merit, a good thing will reach him at some time, or vice versa. And from another aspect, it is possible that salvation or a good thing will be decreed for him for offspring that will emerge from him. Likewise, by virtue of his place or his society, it is possible that a good thing or a bad thing from the good and bad things of this world will be decreed for him.

**[8]** Suffering for the righteous, for the benefit of their generation or for the benefit of the entire world. Indeed, beyond all this, there is another matter that derives from the two aspects of Providence we mentioned, the individual and the general. This is

because the Supreme Wisdom has foreseen all that was fitting to exist for the perfection of the species from which the assembly of the perfected, which we mentioned above, would be formed. And it saw that it was very fitting for them that some of them should have the power to benefit others and to do good for them. That is, it is not decreed that only one who reaches perfection through his own efforts will be counted in the assembly of the inhabitants of the World to Come. Rather, even one who has already attained it through his actions, by cleaving to another who is more righteous than he, can enjoy perfection and will enter into that assembly, albeit in a lower rank, the rank of one who cleaves to another. Thus, not only one who is unworthy to enjoy it either by himself or by cleaving to another will be excluded from perfection. And by this means, salvation is greatly increased, and the number of those who benefit will multiply. However, those who benefit and cause others to benefit will certainly be the greatest in that assembly, and they will be the leaders, and those who need to cleave to them will be subservient to them and dependent upon them. And in order that there may be room for this great perfection, He bound individuals to one another from the beginning, which is the matter of "All Israel are guarantors for one another," as our Sages, may their memory be blessed, mentioned. For through this, they are found to be bound to one another and not separated, each one for himself. And indeed, a good attribute is always multiplied. If they are caught by one another in sin, how much more so will they benefit one another through merit. Indeed, according to this root, it is ordained that troubles and sufferings will come upon a righteous person, and this will be for the atonement of his generation. And it is incumbent upon the righteous to accept with love the sufferings that befall them for the benefit of their generation, just as they would accept with love the sufferings that were fitting for them in themselves. And by this act, he benefits his generation by atoning for it, and he himself is greatly elevated, becoming one of the leaders in the assembly of the inhabitants of the World to Come, as mentioned. However, from this very category, another type will be found, higher in its rank than the one we mentioned. This is because what we mentioned is that the righteous person will be punished for the people of his generation who were worthy of great punishment and close to destruction or ruin, and he, through his suffering, atones for them and saves them in this world and benefits them also in the World to Come. However, there are also sufferings that are given to

the greatest pious individuals, who are already perfected in themselves, and these are to assist in whatever is necessary for all the cycles of Providence to reach their end, which is perfection. The meaning of the matter is that according to the primary order that was established for the governance of the world and its cycles, it was already necessary for a person to suffer some pain so that he and the entire world with him would reach perfection. This is what was born and derived from the concealment of His light, may He be blessed, and the hiding of His face, which was placed as one of the foundational matters of man's condition, as mentioned above. And all the more so, since the corruptions in the world have multiplied due to sins upon great and awesome sins that have been committed in it, the concealment has increased, and the good has been hidden, and the world and its creatures are found in a low and evil state. And it is absolutely necessary that through the cycles that His wondrous wisdom will cycle in the world, matters will reach perfection. And the essence of these cycles is that human beings will receive punishments commensurate with their wickedness until Divine Justice is appeased. However, the Master, blessed be He, ordained that the perfected and important individuals can atone for others, as mentioned, and Divine Justice will strike them instead of striking the entire world. Indeed, since they themselves are perfected and worthy of good, and they are afflicted only for the sake of others, certainly Divine Justice will be apprehended in a small measure in them, unlike in the sinners themselves. Moreover, through this, their merit increases, and their strength is reinforced, and all the more so they can rectify what others have corrupted. This is because it is not enough that they rectify what is in the people of their generation, but also for all that has been corrupted in the world from the time sins began until now. And certainly, these will be the foremost leaders in the assembly of the perfected, and the closest to Him, may He be blessed.

**[9]** And behold, all that we have mentioned until now concerning the aspect of justice is further clarified concerning the aspect of reality, according to the truth of its order, as stated above. For behold, through sins, impurity increases and intensifies in humankind and in the world, and causes the Divine light to be hidden and concealed, concealment upon concealment. And according to the purification of this impurity and the cleansing of creatures from it, so too does the Divine light return

and is revealed, revelation upon revelation. Indeed, suffering is that which purifies the impurity, both individually and collectively. And through these significant sufferings, it is gradually purified from all of creation, and the world approaches perfection, degree by degree.

**[10]** Circumstances for a person arising from the transmigration of his soul: Another root is found for the governance of worldly affairs, and it is that the Supreme Wisdom has ordained to increase salvation, as it is stated that one soul shall come to this world at different times in different bodies. Through this, it will be possible to rectify in one instance what it corrupted in another, or to complete what it did not complete. However, at the end of all transmigrations, for the judgment of the World to Come, the judgment will be upon it according to all that has passed over it from the transmigrations it underwent and from the states it was in. It is possible that circumstances will befall a person whose soul is transmigrated, according to what is caused to it by what it did in a previous transmigration. And that person will be given a state in the world corresponding to this, and according to the state given to him will be the burden placed upon him, as mentioned above. Indeed, His blessed Name's judgment is precise for every person according to what he is in all his aspects. Meaning, in all the details of his state, in such a way that it will never be a burden upon a person in the World to Come, which is the true good, a burden that he truly does not possess. Rather, he will receive from the burden and the charge in this world according to what the Supreme Wisdom has allotted to him. And according to this, his deeds will be judged. Indeed, many detailed aspects will be found in this matter of transmigration, how a person will be judged according to what he is in his transmigration and according to what preceded it in another transmigration, so that all will be according to true and just judgment. And concerning all this, it is said: "The Rock, His work is perfect, for all His ways are justice..." (Deuteronomy 32:4). And there is no knowledge among created beings that can encompass His blessed thoughts and the depth of His counsel. Only this general principle do we know, like all other general principles: that one of the sources of the circumstances of human beings in this world is transmigration, according to those just laws and judgments that were enacted before Him, blessed be He, for the completion of this entire matter.

**[11]** Events do not stem from a single cause. As we have explained, there are various and changing causes for the events that befall human beings in this world, whether for good or for ill. It is not the case that every event that occurs stems from all these causes; rather, from all these causes, events befall human beings in the world, and some events stem from one cause, while others stem from another. Indeed, the Supreme Wisdom, which always knows and reflects upon all that is fitting for the perfection of the totality of creation, weighs all things together in the depth of its counsel, and according to this, governs the world in all its details. For it is impossible for all these causes to always yield their results equally, as often one cause can negate its counterpart. For example, it is possible that according to the merit of the Patriarchs, one person will receive wealth, and according to his deeds, poverty, and according to the general decree, wealth or poverty. Even according to the deeds themselves, a person may perform one act for which the judgment is that a good thing will come to him, and another act for which the judgment is that this good thing will be withheld from him. However, the Supreme Wisdom weighs and decides everything in the most beneficial way, and arranges for each individual matters of one kind and matters of another kind. That is, matters that follow one of the causes, and matters that follow another cause. Yet, no event will befall a person that is not in accordance with one of the causes we have mentioned, and it is impossible for a person to know all the details. We have already learned much when we know the general principles of matters in their various kinds, as it is written.

**[12]** Intermediate and Purposive Causes: However, you must know that the occurrences that befall human beings are of two kinds. The first are purposive causes, and the second are intermediate causes. The meaning of purposive causes is occurrences that are decreed upon a person because they are fitting for him by virtue of one of the reasons we mentioned above. And intermediate causes are occurrences that befall him so that through them another occurrence befalls him that is fitting for him. This is like the verse, "I will give thanks to You, O Lord, for though You were angry with me, Your anger has turned away and You have comforted me," which means that his cow's leg broke and it fell, and he found a treasure underneath it. Or it could be that he is saved from an occurrence that it would not be fitting for him to experience, such as being delayed and not



boarding a ship he wished to travel on, and the ship sank at sea. And these intermediate causes, too, can be for the person's own benefit, or they can be for the benefit of another, so that through them good or bad befalls another. Indeed, Divine Wisdom, just as it estimates the occurrences that are fitting to befall a person, also estimates the intermediate causes through which they will befall him, so that everything is decreed with the utmost precision for what is truly best.

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## Part 2, Chapter 4

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**[1]** Among the profound matters in His [God's] providence is the matter of Israel and the nations of the world. From the perspective of human nature, they appear to be truly equal, yet from the perspective of the matters of the Torah, they are greatly different and distinct, like entirely different species. Now, we shall explain this matter sufficiently and expound upon what in it makes them resemble one another and what in it makes them differ from one another.

**[2]** The state befitting man and his offspring, and what is destined for them: Adam the First, prior to his sin, was in a very elevated state compared to what man is now. We have already explained this matter (in Part I, Chapter 3). And the degree of humanity according to that state was a very noble degree, befitting a high, eternal elevation, as stated. And had he not sinned, he would have been perfected and elevated further, elevation upon elevation. And in that good state, it was incumbent upon him to beget offspring, a number foreseen by His wisdom, blessed be He, according to the truth of what is fitting for the perfection of those who benefit from His goodness, blessed be He, and they would all have enjoyed that goodness with him. However, these offspring that he was meant to beget were decreed and foreseen by Him, blessed be He, foreseen in specific gradations, meaning that among them there would be principals and subordinates, roots and branches, following one another in a specific order, like trees with their branches, and the number of trees and the number of branches, all precisely foreseen. And behold, through his sin, he descended greatly from his station and was encompassed by darkness and

obscurity to a great extent, as mentioned above. And the entire human species descended from its station and stood in a very lowly degree, unfitting for the high, eternal elevation that was originally intended for it. And nothing remained prepared and ready except for a degree far inferior to it, a great inferiority. And in this aspect, he begot offspring in the world, all in this lowly degree that we have mentioned. However, even so, the human species, from its true root, did not cease to exist in a higher degree than the degree in which the species was at the time of its corruption. And Adam the First was not entirely rejected, such that he could not return to the higher degree, but he was found practically in the lowly degree, and in potential, capable of reaching the higher degree. And behold, the Master, blessed be He, placed before those offspring who existed at that time the choice to strengthen themselves and strive to ascend from the lowly degree and place themselves in the higher degree, and He granted them time for this matter, as foreseen by the Highest Wisdom as appropriate for this endeavor. And in the manner that He now grants us to attain perfection and the degree through the gathering of the children of the World to Come, as mentioned above. For behold, all that is an endeavor must have a limit.

**[3]** The effort granted to humankind from the sin until the Flood, and the matter of the Flood: The Supreme Wisdom perceived it fitting that this effort be divided into roots and branches. That is, there would first be a time for the effort concerning the roots in the generations, and subsequently for the branches within them. This is because the entire human species still needed its essence to be properly established and rectified from the corruptions that had befallen it. According to the order of progression, it was fitting that the roots and heads of human generations be established first, to stand in a corrected state, and that they and their branches would stand therein, for branches always follow their root.

The time for this foundational effort was delimited: whoever merited (from all those existing in those times when this gate was open and it was within their power to attain this matter) and properly prepared himself, would establish a good and precious root, prepared for the elevated station befitting a human in a good state, not a human in a corrupted state. Likewise, he would attain that his proper generations would be brought forth in his capacity, meaning in that degree and state that he

himself had attained in his root. This period was from Adam the First until the time of the Flood.

Throughout that entire time, righteous individuals did not cease to seek truth for the multitude, such as Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, and Eber, warning them to rectify themselves. When the measure of the creatures was filled, meaning at the time of the Flood, His blessed judgment decreed it fitting that the time of the foundational effort conclude, and that the matters be finalized, establishing what was proper to be established in the capacity of the roots, according to what had already transpired and occurred until that appointed time.

Then, His blessed Name looked upon all humankind and saw all the degrees in which those individuals were meant to be established according to their deeds, and He established them therein in their foundational capacity, as stated. And according to how they were placed, so was it decreed for them that they would bring forth generations, according to what had already been foreseen as fitting for that root. Consequently, all were found to be fixed species in the world, each according to its law and nature, like all other species of creatures, and they were permitted to bring forth their generations according to their law and capacity, like all other species.

However, all were found, according to the Supreme Judgment, to be worthy of remaining in the lowly human degree to which Adam the First and his generations had descended due to the sin, and not higher than that at all. Abraham alone was chosen by his deeds, elevated, and established to be a superior and precious tree, according to the reality of humanity in its highest degree, and he was permitted to bring forth his branches according to his law. Then the world was divided into seventy nations, each in a known degree, but all in the capacity of humanity in its lowliness. And Israel was in the capacity of humanity in its elevation.

After this event, the foundational gate was sealed, and the unfolding and governance of the branches began, each according to its matter. It is found that although our present matters and those of the ancients may appear similar, in truth, it is not so. Rather, until the Flood was the time of the roots of humanity, and matters unfolded in this capacity. When the end of this time arrived, the matter was established according to the judgment, and another time began, which is the time of the branches, in which we still are now.

**[4]** God made Abraham the father of converts. And out of His abundant goodness and kindness, God decreed and provided a place even for branches of other nations who, by their choices and deeds, would uproot themselves from their own source and join the branches of our father Abraham, if they so desired. This is what God, blessed be He, did for Abraham, making him the father of converts, and said to him, "And in you shall all the families of the earth be blessed." However, if they do not strive for this, they will remain under their original trees according to their natural disposition.

**[5]** The purpose of the judgment of the nations until the giving of the Torah: You must know that just as the totality of human generations is divided into root trees and their branches, so too each individual tree is examined by its principal branches, from which all other particulars are drawn and detailed. Indeed, the encompassing branches of Abraham's tree are the seventy souls who came out of Egypt, from whom the Israelite nation was formed, and to them the Land of Israel was divided. All who came after them are considered particulars of these encompassing generations. To these, the Torah was given, and then it is said that this tree stood at its appointed time. However, God showed great kindness to all the nations by deferring their judgment until the time of the giving of the Torah, and He offered the Torah to all of them to accept. If they had accepted it, it would still have been possible for them to ascend from their lowly station. Since they did not want to, their judgment was then completely finalized, and the gate was sealed before them, a sealing without opening. However, this remains for each individual from the branches, in their particulars, to convert himself and enter by his own choice under Abraham's tree.

**[6]** The Portion Allotted to the Nations of the World: However, the decree was not to annihilate these nations, but rather that they should remain in the degraded state we mentioned. This is a form of humanity that would not have existed had Adam the First Man not sinned. It was through his sin that he caused it to exist. Nevertheless, since there is in them a dimension of humanity, even though it is degraded, the Holy One, Blessed be He, desired that they should have something akin to what is proper for true humanity. This is that they should have a soul, a semblance of the souls of the Children of Israel, even though its level is not the level of the souls of Israel, but rather much lower than them. And they shall have commandments

through which they will acquire both material and spiritual success, according to their capacity. These are the commandments of the Children of Noah. And indeed, from the beginning of creation, all things were ordained to be thus, should man sin, just as all other damages and punishments were created conditionally, as our Sages, may their memory be blessed, stated.

**[7]** The preparation for the World to Come for the nations of the world: However, in the World to Come, you will not find nations other than Israel. And the souls of the righteous gentiles will be granted existence in an additional, appended aspect, attached to Israel themselves, like a garment attached to a person. And in this aspect, they will attain what they are to attain of the good, and it is not within their capacity to attain more than this at all.

**[8]** Regarding the Ministers of the Nations of the World: Behold, at the time when the world was divided thus, the Holy One, Blessed be He, appointed ministers of the angelic order who would be in charge of these nations, overseeing them and supervising their affairs. And He, may He be exalted, would not supervise them except with general providence. The minister, however, would supervise them with specific providence, by virtue of the authority the Master, blessed be He, vested in him for this purpose. And concerning this matter, it is said, "Only you have I known of all the families of the earth." However, it is not for this reason that His knowledge of them in detail is absent, God forbid, for all is foreseen and revealed before Him, may He be exalted, from eternity. Rather, the matter is that He does not supervise and bestow influence upon their particulars. And this matter you will understand when we further explain it, with God's help.

**[9]** The consequence of the actions of the nations of the world: However, in the actions of Israel, the Master, blessed be He, has suspended the rectification and elevation of all creation. As it is written, He has, as it were, subjugated His governance to their deeds, to illuminate and bestow influence, or to conceal and withdraw, Heaven forbid, according to their actions. But the actions of the nations will neither add nor detract from the reality of creation, nor from His divine manifestation or concealment. Rather, they will draw for themselves benefit or loss, whether in body or in soul, and will strengthen or weaken their

fleshly power.

**[10]** Divine Providence over them: And indeed, although the Holy One, Blessed be He, does not exercise providence over the nations in their particulars, it is nevertheless possible that He exercises providence over them for the sake of an individual or many from Israel. However, this is in the category of intermediate occurrences that we explained in the previous chapter.

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## Part 2, Chapter 5

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**[1]** Here, we have explained the principles of Divine Providence. Now we shall speak of the manner of Providence and its essence, which is divided into two main aspects: the first concerning His [God's] perspective, and the second concerning His influence.

**[2]** The matter of His Blessedness's Providence: We have already learned concerning His Blessedness's perception that He, may He be blessed, knows all, and there is no deficiency of knowledge with Him whatsoever, neither in the future, nor in the present, nor in the past. For all that was and will be is already foreseen before Him from eternity, and nothing is hidden from Him. And all that is present is revealed before Him and known to Him, may He be blessed, in all its aspects, and nothing is concealed from Him at all. However, it is called that He perceives things in that He judges them and decrees upon them decrees limited by the boundary of time that He wills to renew them therein. And we shall speak more of this later, with God's help.

**[3]** Regarding His Influence: His influence is that which brings His will into effect in the order and gradation that He desires. Now, since He arranged His creations in an order of gradation and emanation because He desired this order, just as He willed this emanation in terms of the existence of the created beings, so too He wills it in terms of their permanence and their actions in all their affairs. And in this order, He sustains them in all their aspects and influences them with what He willed concerning them and their relationships. Indeed, He, may He be exalted, influences an

angel, and that angel influences the angel beneath it in rank, and so on, rank after rank, until the last angel acts in the physical realm to fulfill a matter or to renew it, according to the decree of His will, may He be exalted. However, the sustenance of all that exists at any given rank is solely from Him, may He be exalted, for He, may He be exalted, sustains the created beings and their emanation with His power, each according to its nature. But the bringing forth of actions into the physical realm, according to the order of existing things and their relationships that we mentioned above, is accomplished through the gradation we have described.

**[4]** The operation of the agents of nature in their appointed stations: And behold, the Name of the Master, blessed be He, is in the nature of every agent to stand at his post and to fulfill with strength what has been entrusted to him, and he will not be removed from his station except in the order that the Master, blessed be He, has ordained. For example, the minister of trees will strive and endeavor to sustain his trees. However, when the decree comes from Him, may He be exalted, the minister of the wind will control the wind according to what is decreed upon him, and the minister of trees will be removed accordingly, and his trees will be uprooted by the force of the wind accordingly. There is great gradation and much detail in these matters, for there are angels who are agents of physical nature, sustaining all parts of matter according to their natural laws. And above them are the ministers of the decrees of reward, who move the angels of nature to bring about events according to the decrees. And there are many details within details, according to the wonders of the hidden aspects of His governance, may He be exalted.

**[5]** However, He, blessed be He, surveys all things, the higher and the lower, their roots and their branches, and constantly directs His attention toward the general perfection. For this purpose, He causes all creation to come into being, and the matter is divided in its particulars according to what is found: some are prepared to be pushed away, and some to be drawn near; some to be refined, and some to rest. Each one according to what is fitting for it to receive, in order to establish the entirety of creation upon perfection.

**[6]** The Matter of Miracles: And behold, He, blessed be He, by His will, alters the order of Creation whenever He desires, and performs

miracles and wonders according to His will in various matters, as He decrees, which is fitting for the benefit of Creation according to the circumstance and the time. And what is this that our Sages, of blessed memory, said: "The Holy One, blessed be He, made conditions with all of Creation"? It is not that the Holy One, blessed be He, will not change anything from now on, for certainly He changes things completely whenever He desires. But the matter is that at the time of Creation, He showed and informed all the roots of the created beings of their essence, the truth of their existence, the purpose for which they were created, what they were destined to undergo in their cycles, and what their ultimate end would be. And they comprehended and knew that everything was proceeding towards the ultimate true good, and they consented to this matter and rejoiced in it. This is what our Sages, of blessed memory, said in one place: "All of Creation was created according to their will." And indeed, when the Holy One, blessed be He, informed them of the truth of their essence and their law, and the truth of all their cycles, He also showed them that what was necessary for their perfection was that those miracles would be performed upon them for Israel or for the righteous among them at those times. And indeed, this matter was stated in the upper roots, and afterward, according to all this, things devolved in succession and were established in physicality as was fitting for them, and the agents who uphold them in their natural law were appointed over them. And at the time the Holy One, blessed be He, desires, He decrees upon these agents, and they will cease from their function and change from their natural course according to the decree upon them. And it is possible that the arrival of the decree upon them will be in various ways, meaning that it may arrive, for example, by the command of a king upon them, or like the rebuke of a ruler who is enraged, as in the verse, "And He rebuked the Red Sea, and it dried up," etc., and similar ways, all according to the circumstance in its time.

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## **Part 2, Chapter 6**

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**[1]** The matter of the heavenly courts: The Master, blessed be He, ordained that the governance of His

entire world, both concerning the judgment of the actions of the chosen people and concerning what is fitting to be renewed in the world and its creatures, should be conducted in an orderly fashion, akin to the governance of earthly kingdoms. Thus, it is also stated in our Sages, of blessed memory: "The kingdom of heaven is like the kingdom of earth." And this is the essence of the heavenly courts and Sanhedrins, with all their ways and statutes. This is because He ordained various courts composed of spiritual beings, in known ranks and established orders, before whom all matters worthy of judgment shall be presented, and by their decree all things shall be established, as Daniel stated (Daniel 4:14): "By the decree of the watchers is the matter..."

**[2]** The judgment in the heavenly court: And behold, He, blessed be He, manifests Himself in all these Sanhedrins, and influences them, and establishes them upon the true essence of the matter, so that the judgment is truly rendered. And there are Sanhedrins where the Holy One, blessed be He, is placed at their head, as it is stated, "I saw the Lord sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by Him on His right hand and on His left." And the Sages, of blessed memory, explained: These are on the right for acquittal, and these are on the left for condemnation. And Daniel said, "Until the thrones were cast, and the Ancient of Days sat down... the judgment was set, and the books were opened."

**[3]** The matter of witnesses in the celestial court: The essence of the matter is as follows: We have already explained above how much detail is found in the judgment of each individual. For within every person, numerous claims can be found for various reasons why that person should be judged in many ways of judgment. This is especially true for each and every deed, for within it, there can be found an aspect of merit and an aspect of culpability from many perspectives. Truly, all matters of the world are complexly composed and proceed in diverse ways. However, all these true aspects are revealed in their reality in these supreme courts. To each of the host present in that court, one of the aspects is revealed according to its nature, so that among them all, all aspects are revealed, and nothing is hidden. Then the matter is weighed according to all those true aspects, and the decree is issued as is fitting. The final decision is made by the one who is the head of that court. If it is one of the courts where the Master, blessed be He, desires and

presides as head, then even though all is foreseen by Him, He allows all the ministering hosts before Him to present their arguments according to what is revealed to them about the matter in truth, and He concludes the matter as is proper, as stated. Thus, according to this root, the Holy One, blessed be He, does not judge the world according to His knowledge, but rather according to the order He willed and established for the matter. And what He further established in this regard is that no matter shall come to judgment in any of these courts until it is brought before them by appointed agents whom He has appointed for this purpose. This means that He, in His will, appointed agents from the angelic orders to oversee all matters occurring in the world. These agents will come to the celestial court and testify about the matters they have grasped and which have been revealed to them, and then the matters will come to judgment. I have already mentioned several times that these matters do not proceed according to His knowledge, for none of these matters were necessary for Him, as all was foreseen by Him from eternity; rather, it is so that He decreed and ordered in His wondrous wisdom. The world truly operates according to these arrangements. And it is concerning these ways and matters that the scriptures allude in their metaphors, as it is said, "And the Lord descended to see," etc., and "the sons of God came to present themselves," etc., "The eyes of the Lord are roaming throughout the whole earth," "These are they whom the Lord sent to walk the earth," and others like these. All are spoken concerning these modes of governance, according to the arrangements He established. And those angels appointed to oversee the world's affairs and testify about them are called "the eyes of the Lord." And when He, may He be exalted, reveals Himself to one of the courts to judge a matter, such as the matter of the builders of the tower in their time, it is said, "And the Lord descended to see," etc., and similarly all that is akin to this. However, you must understand that the analogy in these matters with what is done in earthly kingdoms is only in the arrangements, but in the manner of execution, the analogy is not true. For in corporeal matters, they are done according to what is fitting for them in their perception and all their concerns, and in spiritual matters, according to what is fitting for them in their perception and their concerns.

**[4]** The Matter of the Accuser: And behold, the Master, blessed be He, appointed the accuser, who is Satan, as it is stated concerning him (Job

1:6), "And Satan also came among them." His charge is to demand judgment in the courts of law, and when he demands, the judges are aroused and will judge. And from His attribute of goodness, may He be blessed, He does not seize in judgment until the accuser accuses, even though the sins of the sinner are revealed before Him. However, for this too, He has legislated laws and arranged orders, meaning concerning the accusation of the accuser, how it shall be and when it shall be. This is like what our Sages, of blessed memory, wrote (Bereishit Rabbah 91:9), "Satan accuses at the time of danger." Likewise, what our Sages, of blessed memory, wrote (Berakhot 55a), "Three mention a person's transgressions," and many details of this sort.

**[5]** The statutes of divine judgment above: However, for all these matters of judgment, both in general and in their particulars, there are ordered statutes and ways, as His wisdom decreed for the times of judgment and its examinations. For example, what our Sages of blessed memory said regarding the four periods in which the world is judged, and what they said, "A king enters first before the divine wrath spreads." And similarly, what they said, "Produce is judged by two judgments," and the distinctions between before the decree and after the decree, and many other particulars similar to these.

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## Part 2, Chapter 7

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**[1]** The function of the stars for the sake of lowly objects: We have already explained in the first part that the root of all material matters is in the separate powers. Indeed, matters are rooted there in all the ways they need to be rooted, and afterward, they need to be transferred and drawn down to materiality in the form they require to exist. For this purpose, the spheres and their stars were prepared, through which and by whose revolutions, all those matters that were rooted and ordained above in spirituality are drawn and transferred to materiality here below, and stand here in the appropriate form. Indeed, the number of the stars, their degrees, and all their divisions were according to what the Supreme Wisdom saw as necessary and fitting for this transfer we have mentioned. And

from the stars, the power of existence is effused to the material objects beneath them, by means of which their matter is transferred from its status above in the roots to its status below.

**[2]** The Influence of the Stars on Incidents: However, the *Bet* (second letter of the Hebrew alphabet, representing the second sphere of creation) has also ordained another matter concerning these stars, which is that all the affairs of material occurrences and their attainments, after they have been prepared above, will be drawn down below by them in the very manner in which they are destined to occur. For example, life, wealth, wisdom, offspring, and the like – all these matters are prepared above in their roots and are transferred below to their branches in the appropriate form by means of the stars. This occurs through known divisions and specific constellations that have been ordained for them, and through known revolutions. And all the incidents that befall material beings of every kind have been distributed among them, and all material beings are bound under their dominion according to their order, to be renewed within them according to what is influenced from the celestial arrangement, according to the connection that each individual will form.

**[3]** The subjugation of the lower beings to the influence of the stars, and its annulment for Israel: Behold, all human beings are also subjugated to this order, to be renewed within them according to what is drawn for them from the celestial sphere. However, it is already possible for the influence of the stars to be annulled by a force superior to them. And on this foundation they said (Shabbat 156a), "Israel has no *mazal* (destiny/star-influence), for the power of His decree, blessed be He, and His influence overcomes the power inherent in the influence of the celestial sphere, and the outcome will be according to the higher influence and not according to the influence of the celestial sphere."

**[4]** Knowledge of the Future Through the Stars: Indeed, the judgments of this influence of the stars are also limited, according to what the Supreme Wisdom decreed to be fitting. Some of its ways are known according to the arrangements of the celestial observations, and this is what the stargazers attain. However, the full truth of its arrangements is not revealed in this, and therefore the astrologers do not attain more than some of the future matters, and not completely. All the more so,

there is already nullification of their consequences, as it is stated. And concerning this, the Sages of blessed memory said (Bereishit Rabbah 5:3): "Ma'asher v'lo kol asher" (meaning, "and some, but not all").

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## Part 2, Chapter 8

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**[1]** That which is most profoundly examined in His blessed providence is that the foundation of all the ways and paths of providence is the uprightness of justice and the straightness of judgment, as it is stated, "A scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Your kingdom." And it is written, "A king establishes the land through justice." Indeed, we truly know that the Holy One, blessed be He, desires only to bestow good, and behold, He loves His creations as a father loves his son. However, for the sake of love itself, it is fitting that a father chastise his son to improve him in his future, as it is stated, "For as a man disciplines his son, so the Lord your God disciplines you." Thus, we find that justice and judgment themselves stem from the source of love, and the chastisement of the Holy One, blessed be He, is not from the aspect of an enemy and avenger, but rather the chastisement of a father who desires his son's welfare, as we have mentioned. From this root, two matters arise: The first is that the chastisement itself will be sweetened and not harsh or cruel, for love mingles judgment with mercy. The second is that sometimes, when the hour requires it, the Master, blessed be He, will completely set aside the rule of judgment and act with mercy, as it is stated, "And I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."

Now, since the Holy One, blessed be He, desired that man be rewarded for his deeds according to the justice of His judgment, giving recompense to each according to his deeds, He, so to speak, subordinates His governance to man's actions, not benefiting him or harming him except according to his deeds. But in truth, the Master, blessed be He, is not subservient to any law, nor does He require anything from others, nor is He affected by anything. Therefore, when He wishes to exercise His loftiness, He acts and governs according to His will without any necessity or delay whatsoever. However, for the governance of judgment, He

governs according to the subordination we have mentioned. But when His wisdom decrees that it is fitting to set aside the rule of judgment, then He will exercise His loftiness and unique dominion, and overlook transgression and rectify all ruin with the might of His power.

Thus, we find here two kinds of providence: the providence of judgment and the providence of dominion and uniqueness. In both these ways, His blessedness, may He be exalted, always watches over His creations, for He watches with the providence of judgment to always judge all deeds, and He watches with the providence of dominion to sustain creation with His power and ability, so that it not be destroyed by the evil deeds of humankind.

**[2]** The good and bad states of this world. You should also know that its influence is divided into two kinds: the first is for that which pertains to the body, and the second is for that which pertains to the soul. We have already explained the matter of the body, that is, that which pertains to man's success and tranquility in this world. That which pertains to the soul is in its understanding and knowledge, and in man's closeness to Him, blessed be He, and his spiritual elevation. For truly, the good state of this world is that men cleave to wisdom and are occupied with the service of their Creator, and truth is revealed and clear, and wickedness is pursued and subdued, and deception is cast out, and no service is found in the world except unto Him, blessed be He. And all good traits will be found and will prevail, and evil traits will be distanced and despised. In opposition to this, tranquility and peace will abound, and suffering, pain, and damage will not be found, and the Master, blessed be He, will manifest His glory openly in His world, and will rejoice in His works, and His works will be joyful and exultant before Him. And the opposite of all this is when men are steeped in desire and despise wisdom and are distant from it, and turn to service only a little or not at all, and truth is trampled underfoot, and wickedness prevails and succeeds, and deception and error are abundant, and foreign services are in the world, and good traits are absent, and evil traits are found in abundance. In opposition to this, tranquility is lacking, and there is no peace, and suffering and damage are many, and the Master, blessed be He, conceals His glory from His world, and the world proceeds as if abandoned to chance and surrendered to nature, and the Holy One, blessed be He, does not rejoice in His works, and

men do not rejoice before Him, nor do they recognize and know what the joy of creatures is before their Creator. And in such a time, the wicked prevail and the righteous are humbled. And it is found that He, blessed be He, will bestow upon it that which pertains to all matters of the body in the parts of the state we have mentioned, and that which pertains to all matters of the soul.

**[3]** The influence of the shining of His countenance, and the influence of the hiding of His countenance: It has already been clarified in Part I, Chapter 4, that man's state in this world is one in which materiality and darkness are inherent, and illumination is acquired and participates within it, from which arise knowledge and intellect. Indeed, at the beginning of man's existence, his ignorance is great and his knowledge is little, and as the youth grows, so does his knowledge increase. The cause of all these existences is His blessed influence, for according to what is influenced upon man, so will he be found to possess existence and essence, in general and in particular. The root of all this is the matter of the shining of His countenance and its concealment, which we explained above in Part I, Chapter 4, and which is the root of the existence of good and evil wherever they are.

Now, influence is drawn according to the shining of the countenance or its concealment, as supreme wisdom decrees. From the influence of illumination is born abundance of merit and preciousness, and from the influence of concealment is born deficiency, sin, and degradation. Since the existence of beings and their proper governance are greatly compounded from these matters—for within a single being itself, and in what is fitting to be filled within it, there will be matters of deficiency in one aspect, and matters of abundance in another aspect; matters of sin and matters of merit; matters of degradation and matters of preciousness—therefore, the influence that will be influenced upon them, according to what is fitting for them to possess, must itself be compounded of illumination and concealment, according to what is fitting to be born in those influenced, and according to what will be rooted within them, and according to the order that will be arranged and the gradation by which matters will be rooted in the influence, so will the outcome emerge in all its aspects and boundaries. This is a great principle for all existences and occurrences, wherever they may be.

**[4]** The fourth degree in the states of the world: When we observe all the states of the world from its creation, according to the events that occurred within it and what the prophets foretold concerning them, we find a fourth degree. We shall consider the entire human species as one person, from his birth until he reaches his proper maturity. We find one state in which ignorance and darkness predominated to a great extent, wherein true knowledge of the Blessed One and His perfection was greatly absent. This is what the Sages called the two thousand years of void. The second state is better than the one we mentioned, and it is like the state of our present time. For we have, thanks be to God, knowledge of His existence, His perfection, and the Law of God is with us, and before Him we serve. However, there are no signs, no prophets, and true enlightenment, which is the Holy Spirit, is lacking. For what a person comprehends with his intellect through human endeavor is, in comparison to what is comprehended by the spirit of intellect that flows from above, merely like the body in relation to the soul. The third state, better than this, is like the state of the Temple period, when there were already signs, wonders, and prophecy among humankind. But this abundance was not found to be spread throughout all of them, but only among individuals, and even for them with difficulty, for there was already an impediment and a hindrance to it. The fourth state is better than all of them, and it is what the prophets foretold for the future, that ignorance will not be found at all, and the Holy Spirit will be poured out upon all humankind without any difficulty. Then it will be called that the building of the human species is complete, for from then onward, it will have ascents, and for all eternity, it will delight.

**[5]** The Limits of Psychic Influence: And concerning the psychic influence we have mentioned, there are found further limits in terms of time and place and other conditions. For the Master, blessed be He, has decreed and ordained that [existence and revelation] should be found and revealed at certain times in certain ways, distinct from what is revealed at other times, and similarly in certain places, distinct from what is revealed in other places. And all of this is in many aspects and details meticulously calculated, as is fitting for the perfection of creatures. And herein lies the sanctity of holy days and holy places, in which human beings will be influenced with a greater abundance and will receive more illumination, merit, and elevation, according to the calculated gradation.



## Chapter 4

# Part III: The Soul

### 5 Chapters

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#### Part 3, Chapter 1

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**[1]** The Matter of the Speaking Soul: It has already been clarified in Chapter 1, Section 3, the matter of man, in whom there exists that which is not found in any other creature. This is the composition wherein two distant and distinct existences are composed within him, the body and the soul. This is because, indeed, there exists in man a soul-existence, just as all creatures possess, serving sensation and intellect engraved in their nature. The matter of this soul in all creatures is a very fine existence, drawn and coming within the seed after its conception. It itself expands and proceeds to build the body according to what is fitting for that species. Likewise, it expands with it as it grows, and in it depends sensation, as well as the intellect fitting for that species. For indeed, in the creatures themselves, there is a great difference in their intellect, and the intellect of human beings is greatly distinguished from the intellect of all of them. However, all of this is accomplished in this soul according to its natural law and according to the preparation of the vessels serving it in each species, according to what it is. And indeed, in the human soul, faculties and powers are examined, such as imagination, memory, intellect, and will, all of them powers within the soul limited by known boundaries and operating in specific ways.

**[2]** The Matter of the Separate Soul: Beyond all this, there exists in man a distinct and exceedingly elevated spiritual reality, a soul. Its purpose in being in man is solely to connect him to the higher roots to which he can be attached, so that his actions may generate their consequences in the higher powers with great force. Through this reality, the divine flow that is bestowed upon man is drawn from the supernal sources, and from there into the soul we have mentioned, and from it into the body. The higher soul governs the lower soul and effects within it the necessary actions at every stage of man's life, according to the relationship he maintains and the connection he forms with the higher realms. Now, this higher soul connects with the lower soul, and the lower soul connects with the most refined part of the blood. Thus, the body and the two souls are interconnected with one another.

**[3]** The action of the separated soul in the body and its being affected by it: And behold, because of this connection by which this soul is bound to the body through the lower soul, it is found to be limited by specific boundaries, and participation and engagement with spiritual and separated beings are prevented from it as long as it is connected to the body, that is, throughout the days of a person's life. It is affected by the actions of the body, to connect through them to the light of the Divine Presence, or to deviate from it and cleave to the forces of impurity. In this lies the preparation for the perfection that is destined, or its distancing from it. And it acts in the person, governs the lower

soul, guides it, and engraves within it the forms of intellect according to its preparation, and implants within it thoughts and desires according to the side to which it inclines.

**[4]** Parts Examined within the Totality of the Soul and Its States: Although we have referred to it as a single, unified soul, it is, in truth, possessed of many parts and diverse levels. Indeed, we can say that many souls are interconnected, like links in a chain. Just as a chain is constructed from all these links as is fitting, so too is the supreme soul we have mentioned constructed from all these psychic levels. All of them are bound to one another, the latter to the former, and the former to the blood, as has been stated. It is also possible for some of these parts to depart at certain times and then return, or for further levels to be added to them, and they will then proceed without any trace of this being perceived in the body at all. For the activity of these souls is no longer something perceptible in the body, nor do they add or subtract from vitality or sensation. Rather, their activity pertains to what is truly the essence of man and his relationship with the higher roots, according to what is fitting for him to be connected to them. And from all this arises the matter of the additional soul that comes on the Sabbath and departs on the eve of the Sabbath, and neither its arrival nor its departure are perceived by the body. Indeed, the totality of the soul's parts is divided into five, and they are called Nefesh, Ruach, Neshamah, Chayah, and Yechidah.

**[5]** The matter of its fortune is seen: And indeed, this higher soul has special circumstances befitting its nature, even though it is bound by its connections to the body, as stated. It retains some connection with the spiritual beings, which its connection to the body does not prevent. However, nothing perceptible and discernible to human intellect and thought is drawn and born from this, except at times, to a minimal extent. This is as our Sages, of blessed memory, stated: "Even though he himself does not see, his fortune sees." This is because the matter has already reached this higher soul, but has not yet conveyed a complete image to the thought and intellect, only some stirring and no more.

**[6]** The matter of dreams: However, the Supreme Wisdom saw fit to divide time into two parts. One for the activity of creatures, and one for their rest. This is the day and the night, for the day is the time of action, and the night is the time of rest. It is in

the nature of living beings to sleep, so that they and their souls may have rest from their toil. During that time, their physical and spiritual faculties are renewed in all their parts, and they return refreshed in the morning to their service as before.

Now, when a person sleeps, their faculties are at rest, their senses are quiet, and their intellect is also at rest and quiet. Only the imagination alone is active, going and imagining and picturing matters according to what occurs to it, from the residue of what was impressed upon it at the time of waking, and from what reaches it from the humors and vapors rising to the brain, whether from natural bodily fluids or from food. This is the nature of dreams for all human beings.

However, the Divine Will also decreed that the higher soul, which we mentioned, should detach somewhat during that time from its bodily connections. Certain parts of it, namely up to the spirit, will ascend and detach from the body. Only one part, which is the soul, will remain with the lower soul. These detached parts will wander in their allotted domains and will have dealings and matters with spiritual beings, whether with the agents of nature, or with angels of reception, or with demons, according to what befalls them for some reason. Sometimes, the matter it perceives will be drawn down to the lower soul, and this will awaken the imagination, which will then form images according to its ways.

It is possible that the matter it perceives will be true or false, according to the means by which it was perceived. This matter itself will be drawn down to the imagination and will be pictured in its ways, sometimes with great confusion and much admixture of the corrupt images arising from the humors, and sometimes with greater clarity. At times, a person has received information and revelation through this means of what is destined to befall them, and this occurs by Divine decree, for the matter is known to the soul through one of the ministering angels, whichever it may be. The matter will be drawn down to the soul and will be pictured in the imagination, either obscurely or clearly, according to the decree of the Supreme Wisdom.

Regarding this, it is said, "In a dream, a vision of the night..." (Job 33:15), "Then He opens the ears of men." Thus, the totality of dreams consists of images of the imagination, either on its own account, or on account of what the soul awakens within it according to what it perceives. However, the agent in all these is none other than one of the

spiritual forces that informs the soul, and the soul draws it down to the imagination, as we have written. If that force is from the holy ministering angels, the matter will be true; if it is from the forces of opposition, the matter will be false. This is what is meant by, "Here, through an angel; here, through a demon" (Berachot 55b). In all of them, there is an admixture of the corrupt images of the imagination itself, which is why it is said, "It is impossible to dream without vain matters."

However, other dreams also exist, and these are the dreams of prophecy, the matter of which we will explain separately, with God's help.

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## Part 3, Chapter 2

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**[1]** There are two levels of powers: We have already explained in the preceding parts that the beginning of all created beings is a totality of distinct powers arranged in a certain order within known divisions, and from them, the physical beings of their kinds gradually descend. We have also explained the matter of the powers of evil, from which all evils descend into the physical realm. We have further explained that the essence of the reality of the created being is what is in the distinct roots, and what is in the physical is merely a continuation of what was rooted and established there. However, there it was arranged and spread out what was fitting to spread out according to the truth of the reality of existing things, and their matter is what is fitting to be in the roots and what is fitting to be in the branches. The Supreme Wisdom drew forth the matters in the descent that it drew forth, and transmitted their essence from form to form until they were bound and limited in this physical form. And upon all physical things stands their chain of roots, higher and higher, up to the First Powers, and each one stands in its station and is sustained in its degree and boundaries as the *Bet* [referring to the second letter of the Hebrew alphabet, often associated with divine creation and blessing] impressed upon it, and does not depart from them. And all the roots influence their branches according to the descent, without ever removing them from their natural boundaries.

**[2]** And indeed, the Supreme Wisdom decreed that there would also be an operation for the active

forces within the material realm that is not in the order of emanation. That is to say, they themselves would effect actions in the material world that pertain to their own nature and not to the nature of materiality, and these are actions by which material things will change from their perpetual state. Now, God has given man the ability to utilize the existing things in this manner, just as He has given him the ability to utilize them in the natural manner. And in that very same way that he was given the ability to utilize them naturally, meaning, just as the natural utilization is not absolutely at his will, but rather he can only utilize it in known ways and within specific boundaries – for he cannot cut except with a knife and the like, nor can he ascend except by means of a ladder, nor can he push except soft things, and all similar examples – so too, the spiritual utilization has been granted to him only within known boundaries and in specific ways, according to what the Supreme Wisdom deemed fitting.

**[3]** That man can develop somewhat from physicality: And from this entire matter, it is also the case that we have already explained that man is a composite of two opposites, body and soul. Now, the soul is limited within him and bound by laws, as His wisdom, blessed be He, decreed upon it. Consequently, man is limited in his physical state by the laws of the body and the principles of matter, and his soul is bound by these chains, not departing from them. However, the Master, blessed be He, willed that there be a way for man whereby he could develop somewhat from these physical bonds and their chains, and that matters would accrue to him not according to the principles of physicality, but according to the principles of spirituality. Through this, he will attain understanding and apprehension of spiritual matters and their concerns, which would have been absent from him according to his physical state and limitations. Thus, he will also be more capable of establishing all existences in their proper and fitting state, both above and below, in roots and in branches.

**[4]** And behold, the Supreme Wisdom has prepared that there shall be a nullification of some of the boundaries of the nature of matter and this world, which distinguish and distance man from spiritual beings and their affairs. Rather, man shall be elevated from his physical state to a superior condition, such that he will be granted connection and involvement with the spiritual, while still in this world and in his material body. However, not all

boundaries of nature were decreed to be nullified, but rather some of them, those which the Supreme Wisdom deemed fitting for the general purpose of Providence. As it is written in the first part [of this work], and even these [nullifications] are under precisely measured conditions and paths known with utmost precision.

**[5]** The means by which man will develop from corporeality: However, His wisdom ordained means for man by which he can attain this purpose if he wills and strives in them, namely, the nullification of the boundaries of nature from him, and placing himself in the state we mentioned. All their essence depends on what I will now explain: The matter of His Names and the action with them: Know that it has been explained that the existence of all existences, in their entirety and in their particulars, is none other than the Master, blessed be He. Thus, all existents and their order, whether in the higher powers, in spiritual creatures, or in corporeal ones, are sustained only by Him, blessed be He, in whom they have a basis for existence. And behold, He exists and is revealed to all His existents, and He bestows upon them according to what is fitting for the existence of their essence. Thus, the bestowals are many and varied according to the multiplicity and variations of the recipients. And upon these bestowals depends the existence of all existents in their divisions and all their affairs. And when these bestowals are drawn, all the consequences that are born from them will be born in all the chain of existents according to what He ordained. And the angels will receive from His light, blessed be He, what is revealed to them, and the higher ones will convey to the lower ones from them, and the lower ones to the lower ones, until the end of the entire chain. Indeed, He, blessed be He, willed to be called by a Name so that His creatures could be aroused to Him and call upon Him to remember Him and draw near to Him. And He designated for His honor the Special Name and said concerning it, "This is My Name forever," etc. And this is the Name by which He is called in honor of His essence, according to how He willed to be called by a Name. However, according to all the particulars of His bestowals, He willed and is called by various Names. And He decreed and inscribed that when His creatures mention His Name, illumination and bestowal will be drawn to them from Him, as it is said, "In every place where I cause My Name to be mentioned, I will come to you and bless you." However, according to the Name by which they mention and call Him, so will

be the bestowal drawn by that mention. That is, the bestowal that will be drawn will be of the same kind as that bestowal upon which the Name is attributed to Him, blessed be He. And indeed, by the drawing of the bestowal, the consequence that is inscribed for it will necessarily be born, and the matter will spread throughout the entire chain from beginning to end. As it is said, "And behold, the Higher Wisdom has limited the matter within known boundaries and under special conditions, such that when the mention is completed within them, that bestowal will be drawn and the consequence will be born, and not otherwise." And indeed, among the bestowals that He decreed to be drawn from Him, blessed be He, He ordained that there be drawn bestowals which, upon reaching those who receive them, will nullify by their power the boundaries of nature. As it is said, "And that man shall cleave to the spiritual existents, and knowledge and understanding shall come to him above human understanding, and other matters, branches of this root." And this is the matter of the degrees of the holy man and prophecy, as was said previously, with God's help. And indeed, He decreed that the drawing of these bestowals will also be by the means we mentioned, namely, His Names attributed to Him in honor of these bestowals, with intention in them in the thought of the heart, or by mentioning them with the mouth, or by combining them with words with the necessary conditions that must be joined to this, as was said further, with God's help.

**[6]** And behold, it is known that although this matter is one, namely, exiting the bounds of nature, its particulars are many, according to the orders of existing realities and their degrees. For according to how the nature of existing things and their order dictates, so will be the particulars of the influences required for the completion of the matter in all its aspects. And according to this, the particulars of the mention and their conditions will increase. And in this very exit that we mentioned, from degree upon degree, they will be found, just as all other general matters are detailed in their particulars. And there will be one who exits some of the bonds and limits, and one who exits somewhat more. And we will speak further of this ahead, with God's help.

**[7]** Upon this foundation rests the possibility for man to utilize existing realities in a spiritual manner, as previously discussed, and to effect great and potent actions beyond the capacity of physical utilization. This is because the Master, blessed be

He, has arranged the orders of existence and their mechanisms in such a way that all are interconnected and all are dependent on His Divine influences, which we have mentioned. Thus, when one draws down one of these influences by invoking one of His Divine Names, as stated, this will generate a consequence, leading to the end of the chain of emanation. For He, blessed be He, will be found by those who call upon Him in that Name, according to His arrangement and will, and will illuminate that light and bestow that influence upon which the reality of the desired matter depends, all the way to its physical manifestation.

Furthermore, another matter has been inscribed by the Divine Will in this manner: the angels, in all their ranks, have been granted the power to perform the actions entrusted to them. They do not act perpetually, but rather according to the order established for the continuous natural governance of the world. However, they possess the capacity to act with greater force and intensity in their specific functions than they do perpetually, and not according to the continuous order. In this way, they often act in performing miracles and wonders that are renewed in the world according to His Divine will, when He desires.

The Master, blessed be He, willed and honored His Name such that when it is invoked in relation to the angels, according to the order He established – that is, for an angel of a specific function, the Name attributed to Him, blessed be He, corresponding to the influence upon which that entire matter depends – the angel is compelled to act with that additional power vested in it for that action, to the extent that the one invoking the Name compels it. Thus, in this matter, there are two roots. The first is the invocation of His Divine Name, as one who calls upon Him to answer and thereby draw down from Him an influence, by which certain matters will be brought into being. The second is compelling the angels, through His Divine Name, to act with what is within their power to perform beyond the continuous order.

However, neither of these matters is absolute for the entirety of man's will, but rather they are limited by boundaries and conditions, and measured as to how far the ability to utilize them extends and in what manner they will succeed. It is even possible for the consequence to be prevented and the actor to be hindered, even within that very measure that was granted for utilization, just as the consequence of natural utilization can also be prevented by His

Divine decree, if He decrees it.

But for the first root, which is the invocation of His Divine Name to draw down influence from Him, closeness to Him and cleaving to Him are certainly necessary. And the more this matter is increased, the more successful the endeavor will be in the hands of the one performing it, and the more it is diminished, the more difficult it will be to achieve the goal. For the second root, this condition is not required, although it does not cease to be helpful if it is found. For since these Names have been endowed with the property of compelling the angels by their invocation, they are also like all natural instruments, which the user operates according to his will, if he uses them in their proper manner.

However, it is clear that it is not fitting or proper for an ordinary person to use the scepter of a king, and concerning this, the Sages said, "He who uses the crown forfeits it." There is no permission for this except for the holy ones who are close to Him and cleave to Him, that they may use it for that which will result in the sanctification of His Divine Name and the doing of His will in any manner whatsoever. Otherwise, even if the action is not prevented for the user, if he observes the proper ways of utilization, he will be punished for his presumption.

And I have already said that in any case, the matter is not absolute but is limited by boundaries that the Supreme Wisdom deemed appropriate, and even within that very boundary, His Divine decree can prevent the consequence whenever He wills, when His wisdom decrees that the mover is fitting and appropriate.

**[8]** The matter of "God has made this opposite that": Behold, after His wisdom decreed that there be good and evil in the world, the arrangement was that evil would truly be found in all possible degrees. And man's service would be to prevent its dominion and operation in all his ways and degrees, until its essence is completely removed from all creation. However, you will see that the Master, blessed be He, His true essence negates any deficiency, as stated in the first chapter of the first part, and deficiencies and evils can only be found in created beings. Behold, the arrangement was that He would create degrees of good for created beings, and He would create for them its opposite, which is evil, which is the reality that can be evil, and man would come through his service and remove all evil from its essence and from all creation, and establish good within him and within

creation for all eternity. And therefore, the arrangement was that for every matter of good, there would be found its opposite, evil. And this is what the verse states: "God has made this opposite that." And only in one matter does good surpass evil: that the root of good is His eternal and ancient perfection, may He be exalted, while evil is nothing but a created thing to be nullified, and it has no purpose except for the duration of man's effort, which we mentioned above.

**[9]** The matter of sorcery: And behold, according to this path, just as a way was provided for man to attain illumination, understanding, and divine inspiration not through the natural physical way, so too was it necessary for this great good to have its opposite: that man could draw down darkness, turbidity, and a spirit of impurity not through the natural way. This is the matter of the impurities of sorcery and the consultation of the dead, from which the Torah has distanced us. Their essence is to draw down, through incantations under known conditions, the influences of impurity and filth, which is the greatest distance from Him, blessed be He, the very opposite of cleaving to Him. This matter is drawn from those evil forces we mentioned in Chapter 5 of Part I, to whom His decree, blessed be He, assigned names to be invoked, thereby drawing down impurity from them in known degrees, not through the natural way. Likewise, through them, actions are performed that are not natural actions, such as the deeds of the sorcerers and others, according to what was transmitted to those forces to act with, and within the boundaries set for them. Similarly, through demons, such actions are performed according to what was also transmitted to them to do, and within their specific boundaries. And behold, to the extent that they were given the ability to act, the Master, blessed be He, decreed that the agents of nature, who maintain the affairs of the world in their natural state, and all the angels who bring influences according to the established order, would be repelled before them. And concerning this, the Sages, may their memory be blessed, said (Chullin 7b): "Sorcery that negates the heavenly court." However, this will only be to that extent and no more. And even within that extent, it is possible that they themselves will be repelled by a stronger force, and their action will be prevented by His decree, blessed be He. And concerning this, they said: "There is none else besides Him," even concerning sorcery. They explained that this refers to one whose merit is abundant, that the heavenly

dew will save him and repel those who wish him harm. And this is what is meant by: "For I am Rabbi Chalafta, whose merit is abundant."

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### Part 3, Chapter 3

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**[1]** The matter of the Holy Spirit: Behold, the Divine Being has decreed within man's nature that he should be a learner, an understander, and an intelligent being by observing existing things and their aspects. From what is revealed before him, he should contemplate and seek that which is not revealed until he apprehends it and grasps it. This is the path of natural intellect. However, He further decreed that man would find an intellect greatly superior to this, and this is the intellect that is bestowed. This means that a flow will be bestowed upon him from the Divine Being through certain means that He has prepared for this purpose. When this flow reaches his intellect, knowledge of a certain matter will be firmly established within him, with absolute clarity and without error. He will know the thing in its completeness, its causes and its consequences, each thing in its proper degree. This matter is called the Holy Spirit.

**[2]** The Concepts of the Holy Spirit: And behold, in this way one will attain matters that are within the scope of natural intellect, but with greater clarity. As it is said, and he will also attain matters that are not within the scope of natural intellect to attain them. And from these are the future events and the hidden things.

**[3]** The glimmer of the Holy Spirit in concealment: However, there are found degrees upon degrees in this matter, both concerning the power of the emanation that is emanated, and in the time of its emanation, and in the manner of its arrival to man, and in the essence of the things that are revealed and known to him thereby. Indeed, in all of them, the emanation will be in a way that the recipient will clearly feel it. But it can also happen that an emanation will be bestowed upon the heart of man that will establish him upon the content of a certain matter, yet the recipient will not feel it except as one upon whom a thought falls into his heart, and this is sometimes called, in a broader sense, the Holy Spirit in the words of our Sages, or a hidden

emanation. But the Holy Spirit truly is that which will be clearly recognized and felt by its owner, as it is written:

**[4]** The Matter of Prophecy: And indeed, above all this, there is another level, which is prophecy. Its essence is that a person reaches and becomes connected to the Creator, blessed be He, and cleaves to Him in true cleaving, in such a way that he feels this cleaving and apprehends that to which he cleaves, namely, His glory, blessed be He, in the manner we will explain further on. And the matter will be clear to him and perceptible from Him without any doubt, in a way that he will not doubt it more than he would doubt something physical that he perceives with his senses. The principal aspect of prophecy is achieving this cleaving and connection while still alive, for this is a great and certain perfection. However, knowledge and insights will accompany this, for indeed, through it, he will apprehend very true and weighty matters from the secrets of His mysteries, blessed be He, and he will apprehend them clearly, in the manner of the imparted intellect we mentioned, and with even greater power than the possessor of the Holy Spirit, as will be further stated in this book, God willing.

**[5]** The Way of Prophetic Attainment: However, the path of this attainment is through means whereby man does not cleave to, nor apprehend, the Divine Presence as one who sees his fellow man before him. Rather, it is through intermediaries that serve the apprehension, like the use of a lens for the eye, by which the Presence is apprehended. Yet, what is truly apprehended will be the Presence itself, and nothing else. However, the apprehension will change according to the change in the intermediaries, like seeing through lenses, and by this one can examine the degrees of remoteness and closeness, and the clarity or haziness of the lens.

**[6]** The Mode of Prophecy: And behold, when the Blessed One is revealed, and His abundance flows upon the prophet, a great overpowering will seize him, and immediately his material substance and all his bodily limbs will tremble and seem to invert, for this is the nature of matter not to bear the revelation of spirituality, all the more so the revelation of His glory, blessed be He. And behold, his sensations will cease, and also his mental faculties will not operate at all on their own, but all will remain dependent on Him, blessed be He, and on His

flowing abundance. And behold, from the aspect of cleaving, whereby his soul cleaves to Him, there will be added to him a reality of intellect, entirely beyond the bounds of all human intellect, for it will be an intellect not from the aspect of what it is in itself, but from the aspect of the Supernal Root being connected to it. And then, what he will apprehend will be in a manner more sublime than what is apprehended from it in its own aspect. And in this, the prophet's strength is enhanced by the Master of the Holy Spirit, even in the apprehension of knowledge, for he apprehends with a supernal intellect beyond any intellect possible for man, and it is an intellect in the aspect of his being connected to his Creator. And behold, the revelation of His glory, blessed be He, will be the agent of all that will be drawn to the prophet in his prophecy. And behold, from Him will be drawn, by the power of imagination in the prophet's soul, matters that will be impressed upon him by force of the supernal revelation, and not from his own aspect at all. And from those imaginings will be drawn thought and intellect, whose engraving will be by force of the revealed glory, and the matter will remain fixed in his intellect, so that even when he returns to his human state, the knowledge will be found within him with clarity. This is the general principle of prophecy for all prophets, but the details of the degrees are many, as stated above, with God's help. And above all is the degree of our Master Moses, concerning whom the Torah testified, "And there arose not another prophet in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face" (Deuteronomy 34:10).

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### Part 3, Chapter 4

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**[1]** The prophet will attain all matters of prophecy without doubt. Behold, when the prophet reaches the level of prophecy in its completeness, he will attain all that is due to him with clear apprehension and complete knowledge. For, although according to the progression we mentioned in the previous chapter, imaginations will precede, and afterward he will reach thought, according to the ways we mentioned, when he reaches the clarification of his prophecy, he will attain his being a true prophet. That is, his being connected to the Blessed One, and the Blessed One revealing Himself to him and

acting within him all those actions. He will attain that the imaginations that are formed within him are prophetic imaginations, wrought from the overflow of the Blessed One's abundance flowing upon him, and the knowledge of the matter that will be established by this abundance will be fixed within him. And no doubt will remain for him, neither concerning his prophecy nor its aspects, neither the preceding nor the subsequent ones.

**[2] The Matter of Those Who Learn Prophecy:** And from what you must know is that the prophet does not reach the highest level at once, but rather ascends step by step until he reaches complete prophecy. And there is in this matter a process of learning, like in all other wisdoms and crafts where a person ascends through their levels until he stands on solid ground. And this is the matter of the sons of the prophets, who would stand before a prophet to learn the ways of prophecy, whatever was necessary for this.

**[3] Unrecognized Prophecy:** It is possible for a revelation to come from Him, blessed be He, to a person, and for him not to recognize it as a prophet would, but rather to consider it as one of the sensory perceptions, until the prophetic abundance overcomes him, and then he will recognize the matter as it truly is. And of this kind was God's call to Samuel; at first, he did not prophesy nor did the abundance flow upon him, but rather a voice was revealed to him like a sensory voice, and he did not grasp more than this. But afterward, the abundance flowed upon him, and he recognized and grasped the prophecy in its ways. Similarly, the vision of the bush to Moses, at first, it was not revealed to him except as sensory perceptions, and he saw the bush burning with fire, and the Holy One, blessed be He, called him with His voice, but afterward, the abundance flowed upon him, and he grasped the prophecy in its truth.

**[4] The Study for Disciples:** However, disciples shall study prophecy in specific matters that will draw upon them the Divine Influence and nullify the hindrances of the body's matter, drawing forth the revelation of His blessed essence, and attachment to Him. In general, these include intentions and remembrances of the Holy Names, and praises in the hymns of creation, which are joined by the Names through methods of combinations, as stated above. And according to how they merit through their deeds and purify themselves through these matters, so shall they draw closer to Him,

blessed be He, and the Influence shall begin to flow upon them, and they shall attain insights after insights until they reach prophecy. And the distinguished prophet, who already knows the ways of prophecy correctly, shall teach each one according to their preparation what they should do to attain the desired end. Likewise, when the revelations begin to manifest upon them, the prophet shall teach them according to the nature of the revelation that is being revealed, and what they still lack from the end they seek. Indeed, they will require a teacher and guide until they stand upon the complete foundation of prophecy, for even though revelations may begin to manifest and Influences may flow upon them, it is not for this reason that they will immediately reach the end of the matter. Rather, they will require much guidance to correctly reach the end, each according to their level and preparation.

**[5] The Distinction Among Prophets:** And indeed, even after attaining the level of prophecy, prophets will be distinguished from one another in rank and degree, both in quantity and in quality. This means that some will prophesy many times, while others will prophesy only a little. Similarly, in the quality of prophecy itself, some will achieve great cleaving to the Blessed One, and will attain very great insights, while others' cleaving will not be as profound, nor their insights. However, in this regard, all prophets will be equal in that they will have a discernible cleaving to the Blessed One, and a revelation from the Blessed One to them that is clear to them, such that they will not doubt it. Rather, it is in the cleaving itself, and in the revelation and insight, that the many degrees will be distinguished.

**[6] The Mission of the Prophets:** And from what accrues to the prophets is their being sent on a mission from Him, Blessed be He. This is because the essence of prophecy is not this, and it is not at all necessary for a prophet to be sent to others. Rather, the essence of prophecy, as we have already explained, is cleaving to Him, Blessed be He, and His revelation to him. To this are attached the knowledge and insights that accompany it. And among the occurrences that frequently befall prophets is their being sent to others. It is possible for this to come to a distinguished prophet, exceedingly skilled in the ways of prophecy and knowing them thoroughly. And it is possible for it to come to one who is not so skilled and learned in this. And from this, it is possible for errors to occur to prophets, not in what they prophesy, but in what



they themselves do from their own understanding, and they do not complete what is fitting in their mission, and they will be punished. As with the case of Jeroboam's prophet, who transgressed his own words, and it resulted from his not being meticulous in the ways of prophecy, as our Sages, of blessed memory, stated concerning this in the Talmud (Sanhedrin 89a).

**[7]** It is possible for a prophet to be unaware of something included in his prophecy, but it is impossible for something not included to appear to him. Furthermore, it is possible for one prophet among prophets to grasp a true matter within his prophecy, but not to grasp all the true matters included therein. For example, the prophecy of Jonah son of Amittai, concerning which it was said, "Nineveh shall be overthrown," included two true understandings in this utterance: first, the punishment that was destined for them according to their sin; and second, what was foreseen by the Blessed One to occur with them, namely, that they would turn from evil to good. However, if only the matter of punishment were truly included in the utterance, then when the Holy One, Blessed be He, would regret the evil, He would reveal this to the prophets, and particularly to Jonah, as a new decree would arise for them other than the first. But since the Holy One, Blessed be He, included both understandings in the single utterance, a new decree was not necessary for them; rather, the utterance was fulfilled in the second understanding and not the first. Indeed, Jonah initially grasped only the first understanding, not the second, and this is what our Sages, of blessed memory, meant (Sanhedrin 97b): "Jonah is the one who did not discern."

**[8]** The matters of prophecy, its words, and its actions: You must know that in the prophecy of the prophets, two distinctions are examined: first, the matter itself, and second, the words and expressions. This is because there are instances where the prophet grasps a certain matter and it is not limited to him in words, but rather the prophet conveys it in words as he wills. And there are instances where a matter is grasped that is also limited to words, such as the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the other written prophets for generations, whose words were limited in prophecy to encompass many matters as one. And even in this, the expression will change according to the prophet's own understanding and ways, and it will also change according to the nature of his

language and manner of speech. And often, prophets were given to perform actions with their prophecy, such as Jeremiah's girdle (Jeremiah 13) and his yoke (ibid. 27), and Ezekiel's brick (Ezekiel 4), and many like these. Their purpose was that through those actions, certain higher powers would be stirred, which was necessary according to the truth of the matter upon which the prophecy was based in all its aspects. And from then on, they would be summoned and present to bring the matter to fruition at its appointed time.

**[9]** The Title of Prophet: You must also know that the true and precise title of prophet is fitting only for one who has already attained prophecy in its entirety and for whom it has become clear that he prophesies from the Blessed One, as stated above. And one who has reached this state will have no doubt whatsoever concerning his prophecy, nor will he fall into error in his prophecy. However, in a broader sense, one who has begun to attain prophetic insights and has received a revelation beyond the human realm may also be described by this title. But one who has only attained such insights is not yet certain in his matter and it is possible for him to err, as in the case of Ahab's prophets, which we will explain later, with God's help. Indeed, those who know the ways of prophecy in their entirety know all this accurately; they know these pitfalls that can be found and recognize their signs and the way to be saved from them until they reach the truth of prophecy. And these were the ones who taught the disciples, as stated above, and saved them from errors and established them upon the truth.

**[10]** The matter of false prophets: However, the essence of this matter is as stated in the Book of the Covenant, Chapter 5, concerning those forces of impurity that exist in the world and operate according to their nature and what has been decreed upon them. Indeed, it is within their power to mislead man by influencing him with impressions in ways akin to true prophecy, revealing to him both true and false matters, and generating for him certain wondrous phenomena. As the verse explicitly states concerning the false prophet: "And he gave you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder came to pass."

Now, this phenomenon can occur to a person unintentionally, and it can also occur intentionally. This means it can happen to him without his striving for it, or he may have striven for its

opposite, and it befell him because his actions and efforts were not perfected. Alternatively, it can befall someone who desired it wickedly and strove to attain it. This is to say, he would follow these forces and strive to cleave to them willingly, in order to achieve what he desired, namely, that matters be revealed to him by which he could present himself to people as a prophet and mislead them as he wished, or gain honor in their eyes. Of this kind were the prophets of Baal and Asherah, who indeed strove in this manner until they cleaved to these forces and attained knowledge of certain things by which they would deceive those who believed in them, and also generate wonders by this power as a sign of their prophecy, as stated.

However, they themselves knew that this came to them only from the side of impurity, which they had chosen for themselves, and they did not consider themselves prophets, but rather acted thus out of wickedness of heart. But even for one who did not strive for this, it was possible for it to occur. Therefore, those who strove for prophecy required a clear teacher to instruct them, as stated, and through him they were saved. And all this is until they reach the true level of prophecy, for once they have reached it, they have already seen the great difference and recognized it, and it is impossible for them to be satisfied with this at all, as stated.

**[11]** The matter of Zedekiah son of Kenaanah and his companions: And behold, from this path was the incident that befell Ahab's prophets through the spirit of their mouths. This is because, due to his deeds, it was decreed that he would go and fall in Ramoth Gilead, and it was fitting that he should have a strong temptation by which he would be drawn and go to that war, and not turn back from it, even if what was fitting to prevent him were to occur. And indeed, as happened, Jehoshaphat said to him, "Inquire, I pray, today the word of the LORD," and the prophecy of those prophets was not sufficient for him, all of which was foreseen by the Blessed One. And behold, when the judgment was prepared before the Heavenly Court, there were accusers and defenders, and circumstances were brought forth to tempt him, and it was found that the most fitting circumstance was the spirit, which is that all those false prophets prophesied before Ahab's eyes and in his presence. This means they were performing those actions and striving for those matters by which the revelation of prophecy was drawn. And behold, they were not striving for anything more than to draw the

revelation of impurity, which we mentioned above, and nothing more. Rather, they were deceiving the king and showing him that they were drawing the revelation of His light, blessed be He. However, in any case, they were striving for its drawing before him, and the revelation they sought was truly drawn upon them, and this was done before the king's eyes to strengthen his belief in them. And this is what the verse states (1 Kings 22:10): "And all the prophets prophesied before them." And behold, what was drawn for them in that impure prophecy were these words (1 Kings 22:12): "Go and prosper, and the LORD will give it into the king's hand." These were the words that that spirit spoke through their mouths, and they themselves did not err, for they knew what their striving was. Rather, Ahab erred in them and was tempted, to the point that he did not believe the words of Micaiah, due to his great faith in what he saw in his false prophets. And indeed, Zedekiah son of Kenaanah added to the other prophets, for they only spoke according to what was drawn for them from that spirit. But Zedekiah added to act in a manner similar to what the true prophets did, for he had already believed in that revelation and thought it to be true and drawn from the Blessed One, to the point that he dared to say (1 Kings 22:11): "Thus says the LORD, 'With these [rams]...'" And behold, he did not learn the ways of true prophecy properly, nor did he distinguish between falsehood and truth. Therefore, the Sages said about him that he spoke what he did not hear, and they also said (Sanhedrin 89a): "The spirit of Naboth misled him." And they also said, "He should have examined according to what Jehoshaphat warned, that two prophets do not prophesy in the same manner." And behold, in truth, those prophets experienced a revelation at that time beyond what they were accustomed to achieve, and in a different manner than they were accustomed to, so that Zedekiah erred and it seemed to him that his prophecy that time was true, even though their striving was only towards impurity, as mentioned. But this was a turn of events from the LORD, as mentioned, and understand this well.

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## Part 3, Chapter 5

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**[1]** The Distinction Between All the Prophets and

Our Master Moses, May He Rest in Peace: Behold, the levels of prophecy, in general, are divided into two. One is the level of all the prophets, excluding our Master Moses, and the second is the level of our Master Moses. And the Holy One, Blessed be He, Himself divided them with this division and clarified their difference in Scripture: "If there be a prophet among you, the LORD will make himself known to him in a vision, I will speak with him in a dream. Not so with my servant Moses, etc."

**[2]** The prophecy of the prophets through vision or dream: All prophets, except for Moses, received their prophecy through vision or dream, as it is stated, "By vision I make Myself known to him; in a dream I speak with him." This means that the Holy One, Blessed be He, uses the dream, which is already engraved in the nature of human beings, as a means to convey prophecy to the prophet. It is not that prophecy and dream are of the same kind, but rather that the dream is fitting before His wisdom, may He be exalted, to serve as a means for conveying prophecy through it. And when our Sages, of blessed memory, said (Berakhot 57b), "One dream is like sixty prophecies," they did not mean this literally, but rather due to the fact that a dream contains a revelation and a communication that is above the level of ordinary communication for human beings, according to the laws of their intellect, as stated above.

**[3]** And behold, when the abundance of prophecy overcomes the prophet, he departs from his feelings and senses and becomes immersed as if in sleep, and his thought remains like the thought of one sleeping and dreaming. Then prophecy will be drawn to him. Indeed, it is possible for this to occur to the prophet while he is awake, in the manner we have mentioned, and it is possible that while he lies on his bed in the night, prophecy will be drawn to him in a dream. However, in any event, prophecy will not reach him except after he is outside of his senses and immersed in that slumber. It is possible, however, that this occurs for a short time, and he immediately returns to his original state, except that at the moment of prophecy, he departs from sensation and becomes immersed in slumber for an hour until he receives the prophecy.

**[4]** Indeed, the vision of the prophets is akin to one who sees through a polished mirror, wherein subjects are depicted but not as one sees a fellow human being directly before them, nor as one sees through a single polished mirror. Rather, it is as one

who sees through numerous mirrors, wherein the image is transferred from one to another, yet the perceived object is undeniably one, and its movements are visible through these mirrors, even if not directly observed in plain light. Furthermore, their vision is only as one who sees through an unpolished mirror, whereby the subject cannot be seen with absolute clarity. Thus, they cannot see the Divine Presence with perfect clarity, even after all these transfers of imagery, although what they truly see is His blessed glory, and there is no doubt in their minds regarding this. And even within all this, there are many degrees and differences between one prophet and another, for some have a more polished mirror than their peers and attain greater clarity. However, the prophet who attains all this grasps the matter in its truth, meaning that it becomes clear to him that what is revealed and made known to him is the Divine Presence, and he grasps the reality and secret of the mirror, and he attains and comprehends the insights that truly and clearly flow to him, as stated above in Chapter 3. And indeed, just as the Divine Presence is made known to him through all these transfers of imagery, so too the knowledge that reaches him is through riddles and parables and in the manner of a dream, which is the medium through which prophecy arrives, as mentioned above.

**[5]** The prophecy of Moses: However, the prophecy of Moses is of a higher order than all of these. Firstly, he did not need to depart from his senses and feelings, nor to dream at all. Rather, the prophecy would come to him while he was in his usual state. This is what is stated concerning him: "Mouth to mouth I speak with him." The matter would be revealed to him as one who sees through a single, polished mirror. And similarly, the knowledge would come to him in its clarity, not through riddles, as it is said: "And a vision, and not in riddles." However, even for him, the glory would be revealed to the extent that he could receive it, as one whose image is imprinted within the mirror. For otherwise, it is impossible for a person to apprehend his Creator. But it was in a manner such that at least that image apprehended him entirely and in its clarity, as one who sees in a polished and luminous mirror, with no impediment to his vision. And concerning this it is said: "And the image of God he beholds," for that imprinted image, which was the image, he beheld it very clearly. This is unlike other prophets, for even that image was not possible for them to grasp well. Now, from the image he apprehended, he would attain great and

very clear understanding, superior to all other prophets, as it is written:

**[6]** Furthermore, there was another distinction between Moses and the other prophets. The other prophets did not have the ability to prophesy at any hour; rather, at the hour the Divine Presence willed it, He would bestow His abundance upon them, and they would prophesy. But with Moses, the matter was dependent on his will, and it was within his power to connect himself to the Blessed One and draw down revelation as needed. Moreover, the other prophets would only grasp specific matters that the Master, blessed be He, wished to reveal to them. But Moses merited that all the arrangements of creation were revealed to him, and he was granted permission to investigate everything and search into everything. And all the insights that have ever been granted to humankind were entrusted to him, for it is said, "He is faithful in all My house." And it is also stated, "I will cause all My goodness to pass before you."

**[7]** The prophecy of Israel at the Giving of the Torah: Behold, all the prophets, just as they apprehended the image that was depicted for them from the Glory, as we have mentioned, so too they apprehended the secret of the image and its

meaning, meaning the secret of the existence of this phenomenon, that the Glory is depicted, and how this is drawn forth, and what is the intention in all this. Likewise, they apprehended true understanding of the secrets of His blessedness through that image. Thus, they apprehended the truth of the matter, that in Him, blessed be He, there is truly no image at all, and that this image is but a thing created before the eyes of the prophet by His blessed will, for the reason known to Him. And concerning this it was said to Israel, "And you see no image save a voice," and also, "for you saw no image." For behold, they truly apprehended two things: First, they apprehended that the truth of His blessed existence contains no image whatsoever, and that He is completely devoid of all these imaginings. And after this knowledge, an image of the prophetic images was also revealed to them, concerning which it is said, "And they saw the God of Israel." And for this reason, the Sages (Sifrei Bamidbar 12:8) called it "a vision of speech," which is not truly a vision of the Glory, but rather a vision that is formed by the power of speech, akin to the image formed in a mirror, as we have explained above. Through it, they apprehend the details of matters concerning His blessed Divinity, His creation, and His providence, just as we have elucidated.

## Chapter 5

# Part IV: Divine Service

9 Chapters

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### Part 4, Chapter 1

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**[1]** The Parts of Service: The entirety of service is divided into two parts: the first, study, and the second, action.

**[2]** The Parts of the Action: The action is divided into four parts: 1. Perpetual, 2. Daily, 3. Occasional, 4. Accidental.

**[3]** The perpetual is that which is incumbent upon man always, such as love of God and His fear. The daily is that which is incumbent upon him each day, namely the sacrifices in the time of the Temple, and now the prayers and Shema. The seasonal is that which is incumbent upon him at known times, such as Sabbaths and Festivals. The contingent is that which is incumbent upon him according to the circumstances that befall him, such as challah and tithes, the redemption of the firstborn, and the like. And in each of these categories, one will find commandments and prohibitions, meaning positive and negative commandments, and these are "depart from evil and do good."

**[4]** The essence of the service in general: Indeed, the essence of all these matters in general has been clarified in Part One, Chapter Four, which is turning to Him, blessed be He, and seeking His closeness

according to the ways He has ordained for us to draw near to Him and cleave to Him. And behold, we must endeavor to remove all impediments of evil that cling to the darkness of materiality and this world, and strive in drawing near to Him until we cleave to Him and are perfected in His perfection, for this is His blessed will and the ultimate purpose of His creation of the universe, as it is written:

**[5]** However, the details of these matters are as the laws of humanity and the world have been decreed in all their aspects, and the paths that have been given to man to perfect himself in perfection and to perfect with him all of creation according to its order, in all its divisions, in its roots and in its branches. And we shall now explain some of them that are most relevant and applicable everywhere and at all times.

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### Part 4, Chapter 2

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**[1]** Behold, the study of Torah is a necessary matter, for without it, it is impossible to arrive at action. For if one does not know what he is commanded to do, how can he do it? However, beyond all this, there is in study a great purpose for the perfection of man. We have already mentioned this matter briefly in Chapter 4 of Part I, but now we shall elaborate on it further.

**[2]** The matter of Torah study, in accordance with the nature of divine influences: Among the general divine influences bestowed for the benefit of His creatures, there is one supreme influence, superior to all others. Its essence is the most precious and exalted of all that can possibly exist. This is because it represents the ultimate attainment possible for created beings, reflecting the Divine Presence itself, and it is precious and exalted in accordance with the truth of the Divine Majesty. This is what the Master, blessed be He, shares of His glory and preciousness with His creations. Indeed, the Holy One, blessed be He, has bound this influence to a creation of His, intended for this purpose, which is the Torah. This matter is perfected in two aspects: through discourse and through comprehension. This is what we have explained elsewhere. For the Master, blessed be He, has composed a compendium of words and pronouncements, which constitute the entirety of the five books of the Torah, followed in rank by the Prophets and the Writings. He has bound this influence to them in such a way that when these words are spoken, this influence will be drawn to the one speaking them, provided that this discourse adheres to the boundaries set for it, as stated previously, with God's help. Similarly, through the comprehension of what is included in these words, according to their true paths, this influence will be drawn to the one comprehending them. However, there are degrees within this influence, just as there are in all other influences and matters in existence. These degrees are divided according to the portions of discourse and comprehension, as the Supreme Wisdom has deemed it fitting. In one part of discourse, one degree of the influence will be drawn, and in another part, another degree, and so on with comprehension. Yet, there is no aspect of Torah study from which one degree of this lofty influence will not be drawn, provided that the necessary conditions are observed.

**[3]** It is evident that the greater the level of understanding attained, the greater the degree of influence that will be drawn through it. One who understands merely the literal meaning of the verses will not be equal to one who understands their intent, nor will one who understands the superficial intent be equal to one who delves deeper, nor will one who has delved a little be equal to one who has delved extensively. However, it was from God's kindness that for every part of understanding, a degree of influence is drawn. Thus, whoever attains understanding will benefit

from this great influence to the extent of their understanding. And one who has not attained any understanding beyond mere contemplation will already have a means by which to receive a portion of this influence. Consequently, the majority of Israel merit this, some a little and some more.

**[4]** The Matter of the Parts of the Torah: Indeed, apart from this gradation found in the reward for human effort in it, according to its true measure, there is also found a gradation and division according to what is necessary to rectify the entirety of creation through it, such that there is no part of it that will not be rectified by its means and a part of the entirety of creation will be perfected. And it is found that one who wishes to serve his Creator with complete service must engage in all its parts according to his ability, so that rectification may reach all parts of creation through him. And in this manner, our Sages, of blessed memory, said (Kiddushin 30a): "A person should always divide his days: one-third in Scripture, one-third in Mishnah, one-third in Gemara." And included in this are all the parts of the Torah in which he divides his time, so that he may grasp all of them and not let go of any one of them. However, the measure of engagement in each of them should be assessed according to the person himself and according to all the circumstances that befall him, and we have already spoken of this in a separate essay, see there.

**[5]** The conditions for diligent study: The conditions that must accompany diligent study are reverence for the study itself and the constant rectification of deeds. This is because the entire power of the Torah lies in the fact that the Blessed One has bound and attached His precious influence to it, such that through speaking of it and understanding it, that great influence is drawn down. Apart from this, speaking of it would be no different than speaking of other matters or books of wisdom and knowledge concerning all other natural, rational concepts, which possess only the knowledge of that subject and from which no precious empowerment or elevation accrues to the soul of the reader, speaker, or understander, nor is there any rectification for the entirety of creation. Indeed, this influence is divine in its essence, as it is stated, "and not only so, but it is the highest and most sublime of matters that flow and reach from Him, may He be blessed, to the created beings." And since this is so, it is certain that a person must stand in awe and tremble when engaged in such a

matter, for he finds himself approaching his God and engaging in drawing down the great light from Him to himself. He must therefore be shaken by his human lowliness and tremble at His supreme loftiness, may He be blessed. And he will greatly rejoice in his good fortune that he has merited this, but with trembling, as it is stated. And included in this is that he should not sit carelessly nor conduct himself with any form of contempt, neither towards its words nor its books, and he should know before whom he stands and with whom he is engaged. If he acts thus, then his study will be what it truly ought to be, and the aforementioned influence will be drawn through him, and the divine preciousness will be empowered within him, and rectification and illumination will be drawn for all of creation. But if this condition is lacking, the illumination will not be drawn through him, and his words will be like all other human utterances, his reasoning like that of one reading a letter, and his thoughts like one contemplating worldly matters. On the contrary, it will be counted as a sin against him that he approached the holy without awe and treated his Creator with contempt, while still speaking before Him and engaging with His holiness, may He be blessed. However, according to the degree of awe and the measure of honor and caution, so will be the measure of the preciousness of the study and the degree of the influence drawn through him, as stated above.

**[6]** The matter of Torah study in accordance with the nature of divine influences: And the second condition is the rectification of deeds, for indeed, one who desires to draw down a fitting influence must be himself worthy and prepared to draw it down. However, if he defiles himself with transgressions and sins, and distances himself from his Creator, and strays after him after the forces of impurity and evil, it is certain that it will be said of him (Psalms 50:16), "But to the wicked, God says, 'What right have you to recite my statutes...'" Likewise, our Sages, of blessed memory, have said (Chullin 133b), "Whoever teaches a student who is unworthy is as though he throws a stone at Marqulis." And indeed, such a person, his Torah will certainly not draw down any degree of the influence we have mentioned. Nevertheless, the Sages, of blessed memory, have revealed to us a great secret: if the wicked did not abandon Torah study, they would ultimately return to righteousness. For even though they lack the power to draw down any influence from Him, blessed be He, as we have already stated, the words of the Torah themselves

are holy and stand on their own, such that by persistently engaging with them, some stirring will eventually come from them, time and again, like a small spark of illumination to the one who engages with them, which will ultimately overcome him and return him to righteousness. And this is what our Sages, of blessed memory, wrote (Midrash Eichah Rabbah, P'tich'ta 2:2): "Would that they had abandoned Me, but kept My Torah, for the light within it returns them to righteousness." However, it is plain that this is not said of one who engages with it in jest or mockery, or to reveal aspects of it improperly, but rather that he should engage with it at least as one engages with other sciences.

**[7]** A difference in learners according to their preparation: However, one who purifies and sanctifies himself in his deeds will draw down influence in his study in proportion to the preparation he has made for himself. And as he increases in preparation, so will he increase in the preciousness and power of his study. This is what we find among the ancient Sages, whose Torah was a great power that granted them elevation and honor, which is not found in later generations, due to the superiority of their preparation over that of the latter ones. It has already been said concerning Jonathan ben Uziel that when he was engaged in Torah, any bird that flew over him would be consumed by fire (Sukkah 28a), due to the intensity of the Divine Presence that would rest upon him through his study.

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## Part 4, Chapter 3

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**[1]** Fear: We have already explained in Part I, Chapter 4, the matter of love and fear, which are the forces that draw man near to his Creator and cleave him to Him. This is stated concerning true love and fear, which are love of His Name, blessed be He, not love of reward, and fear of His sublimity, not fear of punishment. This fear purifies man from the darkness of his materiality and corporeality and causes the Divine Presence to rest upon him. In proportion to the measure of fear will be the measure of purification and Divine Presence. And whoever attains this fear will always have the Divine Presence resting upon him. This matter was found in perfection in Moses, our teacher, concerning

whom it is said that fear was a trivial matter to him. Thus, he merited the perpetual indwelling of the Divine Presence. However, this matter is difficult for the rest of mankind to attain as it should be. Nevertheless, to the extent that one attains it, so will be the power of his purification and holiness, as it is written. Particularly when engaged in a commandment or in study, it is an essential condition for the perfection of that study or that commandment, as it is written.

**[2]** In love: And love is that which cleaves and connects man to his Creator, beautifies his strength, and crowns him with great crowns. The essence lies in the joy of the heart and the fervor of the soul before its Creator, and the surrender of man with all his might to sanctify His Name, may He be exalted, and to bring pleasure before Him. These matters have already been elucidated in their proper place, and there is no need to elaborate on them. And indeed, connected to this aspect are faith in Him and His Oneness, trust, and the like; all are matters that cleave man to the Divine Presence and uphold holiness and illumination within him.

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## Part 4, Chapter 4

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**[1]** Two duties have been imposed upon us to serve before Him, blessed be He, day by day: these are the Shema and the Prayer, and in the time of the Temple, the daily offerings and the additional offerings. Now we shall explain their essence.

The essence of His blessed existence and the uniqueness of His dominion: The first is the recitation of the Shema, and its essence is His blessed uniqueness and the acceptance of the yoke of His kingdom. The principle is that the Creator, blessed be He, willed into existence various beings, both celestial and terrestrial, spiritual and physical, arranging them in diverse orders. He ordained for each one of them to perform actions and to enact deeds, to undergo many cycles and revolutions in various ways, according to what His wisdom, blessed be He, apportioned to each and every one. However, He, blessed be He, is the sole Root and Cause of them all. This principle is understood in two aspects: the aspect of existence and the aspect of action.

In the aspect of existence, as we have already explained in Part One, all existents are dependent upon Him, blessed be He, and are drawn by His will. His existence, however, is a necessary existence in itself, not dependent on anything else. But all other existences have no existence except by virtue of His will that they exist, and He sustains them by His will.

In the aspect of action, although it is ordained by the nature of created beings to have dominion over matters within their capacity, and to perform great deeds, each according to its nature of action, in truth, they possess no power or dominion except what the Holy One, blessed be He, has granted them. He is the true Master, the Ruler, and the All-Powerful. All that they do is only what He, blessed be He, has given and continues to give them the power to do, and He is their Master to add or diminish as He wills at any time and any hour.

And from the depth of this principle is that, according to the orders His wisdom, blessed be He, has arranged for the perfection of the created beings, as stated in Part One, there are many matters of evil that circulate and revolve in the world, whether due to the free choice of sinful humans or due to what has been decreed upon them for punishment. It may appear, at first glance, that this is contrary to His blessed will, for He, blessed be He, desires only good, and His entire desire is to do good. Yet, His blessed Name is profaned by the dominion of the wicked and the prevalence of evils and corruptions. However, one who knows His blessed ways and delves into these matters will know that, in any case, all this is but a cycle of causes, all of which, in their profound depths, are directed towards the point of the perfection of creation, and in it they conclude, as stated in Part One. Thus, the Holy One, blessed be He, truly governs all, and His counsel alone shall stand, which is His bringing His goodness and perfection to His creatures, as stated there. However, according to the truth of the matter, these things must unfold through these cycles according to the foundations of wondrous wisdom and true goodness. And He knows that at the end of all the cycles, He, blessed be He, is One, Unique, and Singular, and He has caused all these circumstances to occur in their ways to arrive at the true end, which is the true goodness we have mentioned.

And what is further included in the depth of this principle is the revelation of the truth of His blessed



uniqueness. For we have already explained that the totality of the circumstances revolving in the world is that the Holy One, blessed be He, created evil so that humans would overcome it and establish goodness within themselves and in creation. Many laws and great roots have been implanted in this matter for its perfection in all its parts and aspects. For indeed, many details will be found in the matter of the existence of evil in creation, its actions, and its dominion, and likewise many details in the matter of man's relationship to it, in that he is placed within it and within him, and in the matter of overcoming it, developing from its bonds, and conquering it. And the matter of the existence of goodness, its expansion and strengthening, according to the subjugation and conquest of evil. However, the root of all the existence of evil, its actions, and its dominion is that the Holy One, blessed be He, conceals His uniqueness, which is not truly revealed in the world to all. And according to the measure of the concealment, so is the measure of the power of the existence of evil, as stated in Part One. And the root of all the nullification of evil, its removal, and the establishment of all creation in goodness is the revelation of the truth of His blessed uniqueness. And this is what is meant by (Deuteronomy 32:39): "See now that I, I am He..." And it is written (Isaiah 43:10): "That you may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He. Before Me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after Me..." Thus, the ultimate perfection of all creation depends on the revelation of His blessed uniqueness. And He was, is, and will always be One, Unique, and Singular, but now He is not revealed to all as He should be, and in the future, He will be completely revealed to all creatures, as it is said (Zechariah 14:9): "And the LORD shall be King over all the earth; in that day shall the LORD be One, and His name One." However, Israel, who merited His true Torah, knows this truth and testifies to it even now, and this is what is meant by (Isaiah 43:12): "And you are My witnesses, says the LORD..." And this is a great merit for us.

And the entire governance of this world is divided into the governance of the day and the governance of the night, as stated in Part Three, Chapter One. And every morning and every evening, the orders and the companies of angels are renewed for their tasks, according to the order of governance. However, we, the children of Israel, are obligated to testify to the truth of His blessed uniqueness in all aspects: that is, whether in the aspect of existence,

that He alone is the necessary existent, and all existents are from Him and dependent on Him; whether in the aspect of dominion, that He alone, blessed be He, is the unique ruler, and no agent acts except by the power and permission granted to him by Him; whether in the aspect of governance, meaning that although the causes are many, great, and profound, the Cause is but One, and the end is but One, namely, He, blessed be He, who causes all to reach the true perfection. And although this is not truly revealed now, the truth of the matter is so, and thus it will be revealed and known in the end of all.

**[2]** The concept of His Kingship: It is further necessary to discern that the Creator, blessed be He, is King over all His creations. The meaning of this concept is that the true existence of the Blessed One is a matter that is not dependent on anything else whatsoever, nor is it attributed to anything else. For He exists necessarily and is complete in and of Himself, and He has no relation whatsoever with any other, neither above Him nor below Him. This means He has no cause upon which to depend, neither as a consequence dependent on its cause nor as a component joined with its constituent. In this aspect, we call Him by the name Elok, blessed be He, meaning the necessarily existing One in and of Himself. And as it is written, "And indeed, because He willed and created creatures, and all are dependent on Him in their existence and in all their aspects," as it is written, we call Him in this aspect, Lord of All, for all is from Him and all is His, and He rules over all according to His will. However, in His goodness and kindness, He also willed, as it were, to humble the loftiness of His glory and to be related to His creatures, even though in truth they have no relation to Him at all. He willed to be to them in the status of a king to a people, to be considered by them as a head and a leader, and to be honored, as it were, by them, as a king is honored by his people, as it is stated (Proverbs 14:28), "In a multitude of people is a king's glory." In this aspect, He is called the King of the Universe. In this aspect, He is considered our Head and is honored by us, and we are also obligated to serve His service and to obey Him in all that He commands, like a king among his people. However, in this aspect also, we are obligated to know Him every day and to uphold His kingship over us and to subjugate ourselves to Him and to His decrees, like servants to their king. This is called accepting the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven, and its concept is included in this portion

of "Shema Yisrael," meaning the confession of this matter, that He is the King of Kings, ruling over all His creations, both upper and lower, and to accept the yoke of His kingship and to subjugate ourselves to Him, as it is written.

**[3]** The consequence of the testimony concerning His Unity and the acceptance of His Kingship: Indeed, from all these matters arise great consequences for the perfection of the entire creation. This is because the order and arrangements of creation are so structured that when His blessed Kingship is known and all His creatures acknowledge it, then all goodness and tranquility are found among the creatures, and blessing multiplies within them, and their peace increases. But when the servants rebel and do not submit and acknowledge His blessed Kingship, all goodness is diminished, darkness intensifies, and evil reigns. These matters are drawn out in the ways of God throughout all parts of creation, the upper and the lower, the active and the passive, as stated in the first chapter. However, whether His blessed Kingship is known or not known is certainly dependent on the actions of those below, and these foundations have already been explained in their place. But what is necessary now for our purpose is that if there is a reason for the Divine Presence to shine forth in His Kingship and He reigns over His world, then great goodness and immense tranquility will result for the created beings, and holy illumination and purity will increase, and every good thing, and the forces of evil will be subdued and enslaved and will not corrupt the goodness of the world. If not, then the Blessed Holy One conceals His countenance and does not reveal the power of His dominion, and the forces of evil break forth and reign, and all the consequences of this matter are woe wherever they belong, and this is the sum of all evils found in the world. Now, when Israel strengthens itself daily in this matter and accepts His blessed Kingship and acknowledges Him with their heart and their mouth, the Holy One, blessed be He, shines forth in His world, and the forces of evil are subdued beneath the good, and blessing is drawn down to the world. And by testifying to His blessed Unity, as mentioned above, in response to this, He is answered and is exalted in His Unity, and continuously sustains and adds perfection upon perfection to the world, in the aspect of the true perfection we mentioned, to which all circumstances of providence are directed, and He fulfills His counsel, which is to establish creation

upon complete goodness, as stated. And what you need to understand in this matter is that all these things are said only so that the perfection of creation will be from the side of human beings and not by itself, for the providence is already ordered and stands in this way: all its cycles proceed towards completion. And this is what the Master, the Blessed Holy One, brings about through His goodness and His power. However, it was decreed by His wisdom that this should be accomplished by human beings, so that human beings who accomplish this thing will themselves be perfected, and the perfection itself will be ultimate, when the created beings themselves possess their perfection, as stated. And thus, this is the entire essence of these matters: that what the Master, the Blessed Holy One, has ordered and prepared to perfect His creation will be perfected and brought to fruition by human beings, so that they may be perfected with the perfection befitting them.

**[4]** And behold, we have already explained in Part One that the true perfection of creation is a continuation of His perfection, blessed be He, for He alone is perfection. However, this too is among the consequences of this commandment, wherein we testify to His Oneness and wherein we attach everything to Him. Thus, He, blessed be He, is also required for us, and it is found that for all of creation to be perfected in His true, root perfection, which is His existence, blessed be He, and all existents are rectified in the true, root existence, which is His existence, blessed be He, as is stated there.

**[5]** The matter of martyrdom for the sanctification of God's Name: It is a condition of this commandment that a person resolve to surrender their soul for the Unity of the Blessed One, and to accept upon themselves all suffering and all manner of death for the sanctification of His Name. This is counted for them as if they had actually performed the act and were killed for the sanctification of His Name. From this matter also arise great consequences for the benefit of creation and for the general rectification.

This is because the order of the Supreme Wisdom in created beings and their existence is that all beings will be found in a known degree, which the Supreme Wisdom ordained as fitting for the world's desire and its state. The totality of this degree is a degree that allows for darkness to exist and for impurity to spread and act. However, all of this is in a known measure, meaning that darkness will not

be found, nor will impurity reign to such an extent that it would completely defile the world and corrupt the creatures. For if the matter were to reach this point, all would have to be lost and annihilated, as occurred in the time of the Flood. But it is in a measure that does not corrupt the world, but rather leaves within it matters that are profane and not holy, dark and not luminous.

Indeed, the arrangement was that this would be their primary and principal degree. However, through an augmentation, a superior illumination will be found within them, and a precious influence will elevate them from this base degree, and a measure of holiness and luminosity will reach the creatures, as is fitting for them in this world. The matters are measured with wondrous wisdom, each thing in its proper boundary, neither less nor more. This is because it was measured what is fitting for them as a principal matter, and this too is divided into various specific parts and degrees. And what is fitting for them as an augmentation, and this too is divided into various specific parts and degrees. Thus, the times were also measured for when this augmentation should occur in its degrees, as will be further discussed, with God's help.

Indeed, each day, an influence and illumination must be renewed in the created beings, which will elevate them from their root base degree and bestow holiness and luminosity upon them. However, the Supreme Wisdom arranged for the existence of this illumination, which strengthens and overcomes the darkness of the world, and increases within it and its precious creatures the elevation and holiness we have mentioned. It has tied this influx to the actions of those below, as with all influences and rectifications.

The action upon which this is tied is when a person surrenders their soul for the sanctification of His Name. And in this too, there are degrees. For the surrender where a person physically gives themselves for the sanctification of God's Name will draw a very great and strong illumination, and will effect an immense rectification in creation, greatly increasing holiness and luminosity. The surrender in thought, meaning the resolve in one's heart to surrender, as mentioned, will also draw an influence of this kind, but it will not be as potent.

However, for what needs to be renewed and drawn each day according to the principles of governance, the surrender in thought is what is done in this portion [Shema]. The resulting consequence is the drawing of the influence of holiness and luminosity

upon all of creation, to give it some elevation from the profane and dark state in which it is, according to its root degree.

**[6]** Thus, the essence of the first chapter of Shema is the testimony and confession of His unique oneness in all its distinctions, the acceptance of the yoke of His sovereignty, and the enthronement of Him over all creatures. And it is firmly resolved in our minds to be devoted to the sanctification of His Name. The consequence of all this is that the Master, blessed be He, maintains the dominion of His oneness over all creation, subjugates and enslaves the forces of evil, strengthens and overcomes the good, and that He, blessed be He, has created the creation to cleave to Him and be perfected in His perfection, and to draw the divine influence that grants elevation to creatures in the measure required, and that clarity and sanctity will be bestowed upon them as is fitting.

**[7]** The matter of "Blessed be His Name, His glorious kingdom forever and ever": Indeed, for this great rectification, another rectification is connected, which is included in the praise we say thereafter, namely, "Baruch Shem." This is because we have already explained that all His bestowals and emanations are matters that flow through various circumstances, and all are rooted and suspended in His true Unity and Perfection. The created beings conduct themselves in various cycles according to these influences and their circumstances, and the end of all is that they will reach perfection in true completeness, for the Supreme Wisdom decreed that perfection would not flow to or be attained by the created beings except through all these circumstances and after all their cycles. Since action and dominion are suspended in Unity, all is attached to Him, and all influences are known to be but branches of Unity, and the way for created beings to reach Him. Since the intention in the first section is to attach all to Unity, as stated, all influences are attached to this, and all returns to the matter of true perfection that we mentioned. What is born from this in the created beings is that His Name will rest upon them, and His holiness will cleave to them with great attachment, and He will rule over them and draw them after Him always, and they will all be found attached to Him and perfected in His perfection. This is the state they will truly reach at the end of all cycles. When they are in this state, His will is done, and His glory is magnified, and this is the essence of the crown with which He is

adorned by His creations, and as it were, is magnified in them. However, at present, this matter is not perfected except in the spiritual beings, for they are pure and holy, and His Name rests upon them, and a great connection is made with them, and they are truly drawn after Him at all times and every hour, and His glory is magnified in them. But in the lower beings, the matter is not perfected because they are not yet complete, and evil is mixed within them, and they have not been purified from it, and as it were, His glory is not magnified in them as it should be. The ministering angels, by virtue of the rectification they are in, praise this praise with "Baruch Shem," but the lower beings cannot praise it because they are not worthy of it, nor does His Name rest upon them properly, nor is glory magnified in them. Rather, our father Jacob, peace be upon him, already merited this at the time of his passing from the world, when he was with all his holy sons around him, among whom there was no blemish, and they were adorned with His true Unity, saying, "Hear, O Israel," etc., and then the elder answered, "Baruch Shem." Thus, from our side, we are not worthy of this matter, but only a little of it is given to us from the side of our father Jacob, and therefore we say it, but in secret, except on the Day of Atonement, when Israel ascends to the level of the ministering angels, as is explained in its place, with God's help.

**[8]** First Section of the Shema: Indeed, the remaining sections are the completion of this matter, and the matter is encompassed by three fundamental principles: acceptance of the yoke of His kingship and His love, acceptance of the yoke of His commandments, and remembrance of the Exodus from Egypt. In the first section, a person should intend to strengthen himself in his love for God, in all its conditions, meaning "with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might," and to draw down the illumination of His holiness and the yoke of His kingship to his children and all his descendants. This is the meaning of "and you shall teach them diligently to your children." And to rectify in all aspects the person's state, meaning "when you sit in your house, and when you walk on the way," etc., and thereby rectify his household. This is the meaning of "and you shall write them," etc.

**[9]** The matter of remembering the Exodus from Egypt: Subsequently, one accepts upon himself the yoke of the commandments, as in "And it shall come to pass, if you hearken" (Deuteronomy 11:13),

and thereafter one remembers the Exodus from Egypt in the section of Tzitzit. This is because the Exodus from Egypt was a great rectification in which Israel was perfected, and this matter remains for eternity. This is because after the sin of Adam the First, all of humanity remained corrupted, as stated in the first chapter, and evil was gaining strength to such an extent that there was no place for good to strengthen at all. Although our father Abraham, peace be upon him, was chosen to be set apart with his descendants for God, they still did not have a place where they could strengthen themselves and prepare themselves as a complete nation, and merit the crowns due to them, due to the evil that darkened over them and the primordial impurity that had not yet departed from them. Therefore, it was necessary for them to go down to Egypt and be enslaved there, and in that great servitude, they were refined like gold in a furnace and purified. And when the proper time arrived, the Master, blessed be He, strengthened His influence and His light upon Israel, compelled the evil before them, separated them from it, and elevated them from the degradation they were in, drawing them to Him. Thus, they were redeemed from evil with an eternal redemption, and from that point onward, they were established as a complete nation cleaving to Him, may He be exalted, and adorned with Him. This is a rectification that was established for all time, as it is stated, and all the good that has come and continues to come to us is dependent upon it. Therefore, we are commanded to always remember it and to mention it with our mouths, for through this, that rectification is strengthened upon us, the light endeavors within us, and the benefit derived from that rectification is perpetuated within us.

**[10]** Ramach Letters: However, one more correction is included in the reading of these portions, which is to perfect man in all the details of his aspects through the light of His Unity, blessed be He, and likewise to perfect within him all the details of creation. This is because the totality of man's aspects are Ramach, and they are his Ramach limbs. However, the parts of creation, according to their arrangements, are also Ramach, in parallel to the Ramach limbs of man. Both of these require perfection through the light of His Unity, blessed be He. And this is perfected by the Ramach letters in the Shema.

**[11]** The Blessings of the Morning Shema: And behold, our Sages of Blessed Memory composed

the blessings for the Shema concerning this matter. This is because, behold, every day the entire reality is renewed before Him, blessed be He, and this is in two aspects. The first is in the aspect of sustenance and perseverance, wherein the flow of abundance is renewed for all to exist and persevere in their reality. The second is that, behold, all the days of the six thousand years are decreed and stand before Him, blessed be He, in the aspect of illuminations and existential influences and states that are necessary for the world to complete the desired cycle and reach perfection. Thus, every day is truly a new aspect, and in that aspect, the entire reality is renewed. And concerning this it is said, "Who renews, in His goodness, each day the work of creation." And behold, on this root, these blessings and praises were instituted for all the creatures, who are those renewed day by day. And behold, these creatures are divided into two. The first is all the creatures of the world, the lower and the upper. And the second is the entire human species, and this refers to Israel, who are truly the human species. And behold, in this order, they arranged the first blessing in praise of all the creatures and their appointed ones, who are the creatures below and the angels above, each in their order. And they included in this the matter of day and night and the luminaries that govern them. And the second [blessing] is in praise of the matter of Israel, and the love with which He loved them, and the closeness with which He drew them near to His service. And all these matters are included in these blessings in their true ways. After this is the Shema, and after this, they arranged another blessing for all the great miracles that the Master, blessed be He, performed for us. And the principal matter is the Exodus from Egypt, in its particulars, arranged according to His true secrets and all His distinctions.

**[12]** The blessings of the Shema prayer for the evening: And behold, the essence of this matter is in the morning, when there is a renewal of existence, as it is written. However, at night, a new aspect is added to all creatures according to the nature of the night, and this is nothing but like the completion and perfection of the day's affair. And in this aspect also, they arranged the blessings of the Shema for the evening according to the blessings of the Shema for the morning, but more briefly, because it is only a concise repetition of matters according to what is renewed in the order of Providence, following what was renewed during the day. Furthermore, they added a blessing

concerning the rest of the night and sleep in all its aspects, and this is the blessing of "Hashkivenu."

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## Part 4, Chapter 5

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**[1]** The matter of prayer: The essence of prayer is that, according to the order established by the Supreme Wisdom, for created beings to receive abundance from Him, blessed be He, they must awaken towards Him, draw near to Him, and seek His countenance. And in accordance with their awakening towards Him, so will abundance be drawn to them. If they do not awaken, no abundance will be drawn to them. Indeed, the Master, blessed be He, desires and wills that the good of His creations increase in all their times, and He has prepared for them this service, day by day, through which the abundance of success and blessing will be drawn to them, according to what they require for their current state in this world.

**[2]** Indeed, there is a deeper dimension to this matter. It is that the Master, blessed be He, has granted man intellect to govern himself in His world with wisdom and understanding, and has placed upon him the burden of overseeing all his needs. This matter is founded upon two roots: the first, concerning man's value and importance, that he was given this intellect and understanding to properly manage himself; and the second, that he should have engagement in the world and be connected to its affairs. This is what sustains him in his human state, which we mentioned above as being the way of the mundane and not the sacred, and it is what he requires at this time according to the order of providence.

Now, in truth, from one perspective, this is a descent for him and his purpose. However, it is a necessary descent for him, and it causes him elevation afterward, as explained in the first chapter. But just as this descent is necessary for him according to his purpose in this world, from another perspective, it is necessary that it not increase beyond what is fitting. For to the extent that he becomes more entangled in the affairs of the world, so does he distance himself from the Upper Light and become more darkened.

The Divine Presence has prepared a remedy for

this, which is that man should precede [his worldly pursuits] by drawing near and standing before Him, may He be exalted, and from Him he should ask for all his needs, and upon Him he should cast his hope. This shall be the primary and fundamental beginning of all his endeavors, so that when he subsequently proceeds in the other ways of endeavor, which are the ways of human effort, he will not be called to become entangled and submerged in physicality and materiality, since he has already preceded by attaching everything to Him, may He be exalted. And his descent will not be a great descent, but rather it will be supported by this preceding remedy.

**[3]** The matter of drawing near in prayer and the three steps at the end: And behold, it was from His blessed grace that God gave man a place to draw near to Him, even though, according to his natural state, he is found distant from the light and immersed in darkness. And this is that He gave him permission to stand before Him and call upon His name, and then he will be elevated from his current lowly state and be found close to Him, casting his hope upon Him, as it is written. And behold, this is the essence of prayer, which is forbidden to interrupt at all, because in it man is in great closeness to Him, blessed be He. And likewise, the departure at its end was arranged, and he went backward three steps, and this is man's return to his permanent state, as is necessary for him at all other times.

**[4]** And indeed, our Sages of blessed memory have informed us of the specific conditions that must accompany prayer to perfect its essence, both concerning the closeness we mentioned and concerning the drawing down of divine influence. In accordance with all this, they arranged the prayer for us with its blessings, and they established for us all its laws and statutes.

**[5]** And behold, all that we have explained until now concerning the Shema and prayer pertains to the essence of these commandments as they are. However, they also arranged for us the proper order of prayers to complete that which is now missing from the service of the sacrifices. This is what is required according to the renewal of each and every day, in accordance with the laws of the time in all its parts, and this will be explained in the following chapter, with God's help.

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## Part 4, Chapter 6

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**[1]** The matter of the dominion of the forces of impurity at night: The Supreme Wisdom ordained that at night, the forces of impurity would have dominion to spread throughout all their chariots, and their branches would roam the world. And since at that time human beings gather in their homes and lie in their beds, sleeping and resting until morning, at which time the spread and dominion of those forces and all their branches are removed, and human beings return and go out to their work until evening. This is what David, peace be upon him, explained: "Darkness fell, and it was night..." "The sun rose..." "Man went out to his work..." However, all these matters, in all their boundaries and measures, are rooted in the fundamental principles of Providence, according to the distinctions of the influences bestowed upon creatures in all their degrees, as stated in Chapter Aleph, there. And you must know that although it is said in general that night is the time of the dominion of these forces, in truth, this is only during the first half of the night. But at midnight, an influence of illumination and will is bestowed from Him, blessed be He, upon all the worlds, and the dominion of the forces of evil and their branches is removed from the inhabited places, and the illumination of the day begins to awaken, until the day shines and the appropriate influence is drawn, and all existence is renewed by it. Indeed, the matter of this dominion, by which these forces rule at night, and their expulsion which occurs by day, is something legislated into the nature and order of the world, apart from the dominion and subjugation that they achieve through human action. This is what the Supreme Wisdom ordained, that for the existence of true good and evil, which stems from the actions of free will, the world must be naturally susceptible to the dominion of evil within it, in such a way that the possibility of this evil spreading in some parts of it exists, just as its non-spread in others. However, that this should be a decree of the Supreme Wisdom is because it is fitting that at its appointed time, there will be a part that is given dominion and spread by itself. And this is a preparation for what may be given to it through human actions, and there will be another part from which the dominion will be taken, and this is a provision for what its actions may cause. And He designated two strong

existences, which are light and darkness, drawn from the aspect of illumination and concealment that we explained in Chapter Aleph, and He allotted them a portion of time, which is day and night. And following them are the dominion of the forces of impurity that we mentioned and their expulsion, and all of this is a provision for the consequences of actions, as stated.

**[2]** The matter of ritual impurity of the hands at night: Indeed, when this dominion is granted to these evil forces and they are dispersed in the world, the darkness of the world increases and strengthens. And man, too, when he lies on his bed, a measure of the impurity that roams is also spread over him, to the extent permitted by its connection to the human body by virtue of its materiality and the evil inclination within him. Furthermore, it has already been prepared in the order of providence that when a person sleeps, the higher parts of his soul are withdrawn from him, as stated in the second chapter, and he tastes a measure of death. This is what our Sages, of blessed memory, wrote (Berakhot 57b): "Sleep is one-sixtieth of death." Consequently, darkness prevails more in his body in the absence of the soul's light, which purifies it. Therefore, there is a greater entry point for impurity to reside upon him, and this is the matter of the evil spirit that our Sages, of blessed memory, explained resides upon the hands (Shabbat 109b). However, its residing upon the hands and not elsewhere is because this is the measure and the boundary that the Supreme Wisdom has set for its residing upon man, which is fitting according to his state in the world, no more and no less.

**[3]** And behold, the Supreme Wisdom has prepared for man that which he should strive for in the morning, and by which he will elevate himself from what has been debased in the state of night, to purify himself from what has been defiled. And thus, he will return and elevate the entire world from its debasement, and illuminate it from the darkness with which it has been darkened. And this entire matter is encompassed within the ordinances that are established for the time of rising from actions and from speech, as it is written by the grace of God:

**[4]** Ritual Hand Washing: The first action is the purification of the hands, for it is they that have become defiled and upon which the evil spirit has rested. This requires expelling it from them and purifying them. The Divine Name, represented by

the letter Bet (ב), was instituted to expel it from them through the proper washing, as our Sages, of blessed memory, taught us. Consequently, the entire body of man becomes purified by this, just as his intellect was defiled by the resting of the evil spirit upon them. There is also in this matter a rectification for all of creation, to be purified from the impurity of the night and to emerge from its darkness. And in conjunction with this, man also purifies his body by turning away [from impurity], and thus his entire being is purified and becomes fit to draw near to his Creator.

**[5]** However, after this will come two commandments which are themselves included within the 613 commandments and are connected with the rectifications of prayer for the completion of the daily service, and these are the *tzitzit* and the *tefillin*. We will first explain their individual matters and afterwards we will explain their degree in the rectifications of the daily service that we mentioned.

**[6]** The matter of the *tzitzit* is that the Master, blessed be He, desired that Israel be perfected in all their aspects concerning holiness. Therefore, He gave them commandments for all their times and according to all their circumstances, so that they might be perfected in all of them. Now, among the things belonging to man are the garments he wears, and so that these too might be perfected in holiness, He commanded that *tzitzit* be placed upon them, and thus they are found to be perfected in holiness. A deeper matter is also included in this commandment, which is that man be marked for his God, like a servant for his master. This is part of accepting His yoke and submitting to His dominion. Now, man was given the capacity to perfect all of creation, as explained in the first part. Consequently, he serves the service of the Holy One, blessed be He, and engages in His work, which is to establish the creation He wrought in the state desired by Him, blessed be He. However, this is achieved through man's actions and deeds, that he act according to the Torah and the commandment incumbent upon him. Indeed, the entirety of this service stands on one foundation: that man be the servant of the Holy One, blessed be He, to whom this matter of perfecting creation was entrusted and committed into his hand. For this reason, this matter succeeds in his hand, and his actions come to bear such fruits. Now, the entirety of the reality of this burden upon man is called His yoke, which is upon him like the yoke of a master

upon his servant. This matter is strengthened by certain particulars that the Master, blessed be He, has attached to them, and among them is the mark and sign in this sign of the *tzitzit*. Indeed, besides this being a perpetual commandment, the Sages, of blessed memory, made it a correction for the prayers, which is to wrap oneself in a *tallit* to pray therein. The correction is the acceptance of the yoke we mentioned, to be empowered by this strength to grasp and hold onto His work, that is, the perfection of the world, as it is written.

**[7]** The phylacteries: However, the matter of phylacteries is much greater than that of the *tzitzit*. This is because the Divine Presence granted Israel the ability to draw down a direct emanation from the Blessed Holy One's holiness upon themselves, and to adorn themselves with it in such a manner that all their spiritual and physical faculties would be encompassed by this great light, and thereby achieve great rectification. This is alluded to in the verse, "And all the peoples of the earth shall see that the name of the Lord is called upon you, and they shall fear you." The Divine Presence linked this matter to this commandment in all its laws and particulars. Indeed, two principal organs are found in man, in which the soul gains great ascendancy: the brain and the heart. The Divine Presence commanded that this light be drawn down upon the brain first, through the head phylactery, thereby rectifying the brain and the soul within it. Subsequently, it would spread to the heart, through the hand phylactery opposite it, thereby rectifying that as well. Through this, the entire person, in all their faculties, is encompassed by this emanation of holiness, adorned with it, and sanctified with great holiness. Indeed, various specific matters are found in the conditions of the commandment in all its parts; all of them are necessary for the completion of the desired rectification in all its aspects, according to the divisions of man's faculties.

**[8]** Days without Tefillin: Behold, we are commanded to adorn ourselves with this adornment all days, except for the holy days, which are themselves a sign for Israel, and from them Israel adorn themselves with their adornments without any effort. This is unlike the other days, where it is impossible to attain the adornments except through this effort. And even after the effort itself, the level of the adornment attained is not equal to the level of the adornment that flows by itself on the holy days, but rather much less than it. However, all these matters, in all their boundaries,

are measured by the Supreme Wisdom, according to what is most fitting.

**[9]** And behold, after man is distinguished by the *tzitzit* and adorned with *tefillin*, the order of prayer was instituted for him to rectify as needed. The general intention of this is to establish all of creation, all the worlds, in a state fit for the reception of the Divine flow, and to draw the flow from Him, blessed be He, to them as needed.

**[10]** The parts of prayer: Prayer as a whole is divided into four parts: the first, the sacrifices; the second, the verses of praise; the third, the Shema and its blessings; and the fourth, the Amidah prayer. The intention of the sacrifices, in general, was to purify the entire world and remove from it all that hinders and obstructs the influx of divine abundance. The intention of the verses of praise, in general, is to reveal the light of His countenance, blessed be He, through the praises we offer Him and recount His glory. This is the meaning of "He chose songs of praise" (Deuteronomy 32:11), which relates to the act of praising Him. We have already explained the general meaning of the Shema and its blessings. Beyond what we have generally explained concerning them, there is another aspect: the order of the arrangements of creation and its emanation. We have already explained in the first part that all created beings emanate and descend from one level to another, from the root forces to the physical. However, the Supreme Wisdom decreed that for all created beings to receive abundance from Him, blessed be He, they must first be connected to one another from below upwards: the lower to the higher among them, and the higher to the even higher, and so on, up to the root forces. These, in turn, are connected to Him, blessed be He, and His abundance flows to them. Subsequently, the abundance spreads from above downwards through all the levels of creation as it should, and all return and are established in their respective stations to perform their functions as ordained for them. These blessings of the Shema were arranged according to these mysteries. Through this praise and glorification, the levels of creation ascend from below upwards until everything is connected at the highest level. Then, everything is connected and suspended in His light, blessed be He, and abundance is drawn to all creatures. This is what is accomplished in the Eighteen Benedictions prayer.

**[11]** The Matter of the Eighteen Blessings: You



must know that the types of Divine influence, under which all kinds of influences and their details are encompassed, are three. These are hinted at by the three letters of the Name, blessed be He, and their unification for the completion of all creation is hinted at by the final Heh. Corresponding to them are the three appellations: the Great, the Mighty, and the Awesome. He who draws them down appropriately is the merit of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And He who draws down the completion that issues from their unification is the merit of King David, who unites with the Patriarchs and completes the rectification of Israel. Corresponding to these three types, the first three blessings of the prayer were instituted, and through them, Divine influence is drawn down in its entirety. Afterward, in the middle blessings, it is drawn down to particulars as needed. And in the last three blessings, it is strengthened and settled in the recipients through the thanksgiving they offer for it. This is the general principle of the rectification of the entire prayer.

**[12]** 7. Blessings of Shabbat: However, on weekdays, the matter proceeds according to this order. But on holy days, the Sages did not burden man excessively beyond seven blessings, for behold, the day itself is holy and blessed, and it aids in the continuation of abundance. It suffices for man to endeavor for the general principle. And these are the seven blessings: the first three concerning the three categories, and likewise the last three, as explained above. And the middle one is concerning the entirety of the day's holiness, that it may be strengthened, illuminated, and rule, and it is this blessing that aids and perfects all the particulars. We shall speak more of this further on, with God's help.

**[13]** Four Worlds: You must also know that all the worlds are divided into four. These are this world, in its two parts, upper and lower, which are the celestial part and is called the world of spheres, and the elemental, which is called the lower world. Both together are called one world. And above this world is the world of angels, and above that is the world of the supernal powers, the roots of beings which we mentioned in Part 1, and it is called the world of the Throne. And above this, in rank, are examined all His [God's] influences, the revelations of His light, from which all existents are drawn and in which they are suspended, as it is written in Part 3, Chapter 2. And according to the question, all these influences are called one world, and we shall call it the world of Divinity. However, you will see

that this name is applicable only in a figurative sense, as we shall explain the reason for this, unlike the three preceding worlds, in which this name is truly applicable. This is because a world is called a collection of many entities and diverse beings in a place, divided into many divisions and related to each other in various relationships. And in all entities, whether tangible or spiritual, this concept can truly exist. Thus, this world is called a world by virtue of being a collection of lowly or celestial bodies in one place. And the world of angels is called a world by virtue of it also being a collection of many angels in one place, according to what is fitting for them. And the world of the Throne is a world by virtue of it being a collection of many powers in the place fitting for them. However, His [God's] influences are not entities at all, nor diverse beings, but rather distinctions, and kinds of revelation of light from Him, blessed be He, whose essence is only what He, blessed be He, is for His creations, and He acts upon them according to their needs. But since we examine in these influences a division of order and rank according to what is fitting for the recipients, in them are rooted the divisions, orders, and ranks of existents, as it is written in Part 3, Chapter 2. Therefore, all of this is called a world, and we consider it above all three. For according to the rank, so it is, since the entire emanation ascends in rank: the tangible in the angels, the angels in what is above them, namely the Throne and its ranks, and the Throne in His [God's] influences and in the revelation of His light, which is the true root of all.

**[14]** The Correspondence of the Parts of Prayer to the Worlds: And behold, according to this order, the divisions of prayer have been established, namely three parts. Initially, for the rectification of the three worlds: this world, the world of angels, and the world of the Throne. This is in the sacrifices, songs, and blessings of the Shema. Afterward, the standing prayer, which corresponds to the world of Divinity, to draw down the influences according to their respective considerations. And afterward, three other parts to draw down the flow of influence to the worlds, one after another, until the end. These are Kedushah d'Sidra, Shir ha-Levi'im, and Ein K'Elokeinu. And after all this, U'va L'Tzion, which is to return and crown His blessed Kingship over all the worlds, after they have been blessed by Him.

**[15]** The matter of falling on one's face and the Thirteen Attributes: And behold, a few specific

matters have been joined to this to arouse mercy and increase blessing. Among these is the matter of confession, the remembrance of the Thirteen Attributes, and falling on one's face. This is because confession silences the accusers, preventing them from causing one's prayer to be rejected, God forbid. The remembrance of the Thirteen Attributes is a strength by which the Master, blessed be He, will grasp His attribute of mercy, and by the dominion of His loftiness, He will pass over transgression and show favor even in the absence of merit. And falling on one's face is also a great submission before Him, may He be exalted, whose strength is great to appease the attribute of strict judgment, and great mercies will be stirred, and abundance will flow in plenty and with breadth. However, this is the general order upon which prayer is founded, and there are many particulars to this general principle, upon which the particulars of the order depend, in the psalms and other verses that were ordained, each thing in its place.

**[16]** The matter of the Mincha, Ma'ariv, and Tikkun Chatzot prayers: You must know that the order of providence today is divided into two parts: the morning and after midday, which is the evening. And the night is also divided into two, as stated above. In all of these, a divine illumination and influence must be drawn to the worlds according to the nature of that portion of time, and for this purpose the prayers were ordained in their number. This is because for the two parts of the day, the Shacharit and Mincha prayers were ordained. In the morning, which is the time of the renewal of abundance according to the nature of the day, the order was ordained at length, according to all that is necessary. But for the second part of the day, which follows the first, only a little effort is needed to complete the matter according to the portion of that time. And at night, there is a greater novelty due to the change in nature, meaning the nature of the night, which is more changeable than the day, and more so than the evening compared to the morning. Therefore, a more lengthy order was ordained than that of Mincha, namely in the blessings of the Shema, but shorter than that of the morning, because in any case, the abundance has already been drawn and has arrived from the morning. However, for the second part of the night, no fixed order was established for everyone, so as not to burden the congregation, but it was left to the pious to arise and sing, each according to their knowledge. And even the Ma'ariv prayer itself was originally optional, but it was then ordained as

obligatory, as was Tikkun Chatzot. You will see that the three prayers of the Patriarchs ordained them, and from this it is incumbent upon all Israel to arrange them. However, David hastened to perform Tikkun Chatzot, as it is written, "At midnight I will rise to give thanks to You." And this completes, along with the Patriarchs, the perfection of Israel, as stated above. But the matter was not ordained to be incumbent upon all Israel, but rather upon their pious ones, who are at a level somewhat below that of the Patriarchs.

**[17]** The Musaf prayer: And behold, on the holy days, a prayer was added corresponding to the Musaf sacrifice, and it is in the category of the additional abundance on that day, according to the category of its holiness and its essence.

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## **Part 4, Chapter 7**

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**[1]** The temporal service is that which we are obligated to perform at known times, and its details include the observance of Shabbat and its sanctity, the observance of the Day of Atonement and its affliction, the observance of the nineteenth [of Kislev] and the sanctity of Rosh Chodesh, chametz and matzah in their time, the shofar in its time, the Sukkah and the lulav in their time, and Rosh Chodesh, Chanukah, and Purim. And now we shall explain their essence.

**[2]** The essence of the Holy Sabbath: The essence of the Sabbath in its entirety is that, as we have explained above, the nature of this world necessitates that things within it be profane and not holy. However, it was also necessary that, from another perspective, a measure of holiness be granted to created beings, so that darkness would not overcome them excessively. The Supreme Wisdom has precisely calculated all of this, determining the degree to which the profane should exist and the degree of this added holiness. It has delimited all of this with appropriate boundaries concerning quantity, quality, place, and time, and all the distinctions that must be examined in existents.

Now, concerning the aspect of time, it has ordained the arrangement of weekdays and holy days, and within the holy days themselves, degrees one

above the other, as is fitting. It has ordained that most days be profane, and that holiness be only the necessary measure. However, it decreed that all days revolve in a single cycle, which encompasses all of time in a rotation, and this is the number seven. This is because the entire creation was brought into being within these seven days, and its entire existence is encompassed by this number. Thus, this number is what is fittingly called a complete measure, since its entirety was necessary for the existence of all reality, and nothing more was needed at all, for all existence was completed within it.

However, this number will continue to revolve and return in its cycles until the end of all six thousand years. Moreover, even when the entire world perishes, it too will observe this measure in its grand quantity, namely, six thousand years and one thousand years of rest. Thereafter, existence will be renewed in a different order, according to the decree of the Supreme Wisdom.

Now, since the end of the cycle will always be in holiness, this represents a great elevation for all the days. For even though most of them are profane, and only one part of seven is holy, which is what is necessary for this world, as we have mentioned, yet from another perspective, by virtue of this part being the end and seal of the cycle, the cycle is perfected and elevated by it. Thus, all the days of man become sanctified. This is a great gift that the Holy One, blessed be He, has given to Israel, for He desired that they be a holy nation, and He did not give this elevation to the other nations at all, as this level is not fitting nor designated for them.

**[3] The Prohibition of Labor on the Holy Sabbath:** Indeed, in accordance with the level that Israel attains on this day, so ought their conduct therein to be. However, we have already explained above that engagement in worldly affairs is that which binds man to materiality, debases his essence, and lowers him from the esteemed and precious level to which he is suited. From this, he must detach himself on the Sabbath, since his essence is elevated beyond its weekday state, and he should hold himself at the value befitting this higher level. Yet, to detach completely from physicality and its engagements is impossible, for he is, after all, in this world, and the bonds of physicality are upon him. However, Divine Wisdom has ordained the level to which he ought to detach from physicality, and the level at which he must remain. And the level to which he ought to detach, He commanded

him to detach, and warned him not to cease from detaching. And this is the totality of all the labors that are forbidden on the Sabbath.

**[4] The Delight and Honor of Shabbat:** Beyond what is forbidden, lest we mar the sanctity that flows on this day, as it is further commanded that we honor this flowing sanctity. This encompasses the entirety of Shabbat's delight and honor, both upon its arrival and departure, in Kiddush and Havdalah, and all its other details. All these matters are founded upon this principle: to preserve ourselves in a manner befitting the sanctity that flows to us, to cherish this elevated state, and to honor its essence, which is great closeness to God, may He be blessed, and profound attachment to Him, and to honor the Giver, may He be blessed, who bestowed such a great gift upon us. The specific details of these matters are directed towards the specific aspects of this sanctity, its dimensions, its paths, and its consequences, according to their true nature.

**[5] The Remainder of the Holy Days:** Indeed, the Supreme Wisdom decreed that Israel should have an additional sanctification upon sanctification, and granted them holy days besides the Sabbath, on which Israel would receive degrees of sanctification. However, all of them are below the degree of the Sabbath in their influence and sanctification. Now, according to the degree of their influence, these days require us to detach from worldly occupations, and accordingly is the prohibition of labor on them. And thus, Yom Kippur is above all of them, followed by the Festivals, and after them the intermediate days of the festival (Chol HaMoed), and after them Rosh Chodesh, on which there is no prohibition of labor except for women. And after all of this are Chanukah and Purim, on which there is no prohibition of labor, but rather thanksgiving on Chanukah and also rejoicing on Purim. And all of this is according to the value of the influence that flows and the light that shines.

**[6] The Celebration of the Temporal Festivals:** However, besides this sanctification, which is measured according to the degree of holiness of the days, there are also specific matters particular to each of these times, according to their nature. The root of all these is an order established by the Supreme Wisdom: that every rectification that was rectified, and every great light that shone at a certain time, when that time's cycle returns, a light similar to the first light will shine, and the product of

that rectification will be renewed in those who received it. And behold, according to this, we are commanded concerning the festival in all the matters we are commanded, in remembrance of the Exodus from Egypt. For since that rectification was a very great rectification, through which we were rectified, as stated above, it was established that when that time's cycle returns, a light similar to the light that shone then will shine upon us, and the product of that rectification will be renewed within us. And therefore, we are obligated in all those matters. And similarly, the festival of Shavuot for the giving of the Torah, and the festival of Sukkot concerning the Clouds of Glory, even though it is not that specific time, but rather the Torah established this festival in remembrance of this matter, as it is written, "In booths I dwelt," etc. And so too Chanukah, and so too Purim. And similarly were all the days of Megillat Ta'anit, except that they were annulled because Israel could not endure them, and they were absolved from commemorating them and from the arousal of the shining light. And now we shall explain these commandments individually.

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## Part 4, Chapter 8

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**[1]** The Matter of Chametz and Matzah: The matter of chametz and matzah is that until the Exodus from Egypt, Israel was intermingled with the other nations, a people within a people. Upon their departure, they were redeemed and separated. Until that time, the entire state of human bodies was enveloped in darkness and impurity that prevailed over them. Upon departure, Israel was separated, and their bodies were prepared to be purified and made fit for Torah, for Divine service, and for this purpose. They were commanded concerning the removal of chametz and the eating of matzah. This is because the bread prepared for human sustenance truly corresponds to the desired state within man. The process of leavening, which is a natural aspect of bread, making it easily digestible and palatable, is also drawn according to the proper order within man, wherein there must also be the inclination to evil (yetzer hara) and material inclination. However, for a specific and appointed time, Israel needed to abstain from chametz and subsist on matzah, thereby

diminishing within themselves the power of the inclination to evil and the material inclination, and strengthening within themselves the closeness to spirituality. Yet, to subsist in this manner always is impossible, for this is not what is desired in this world. But the appointed days for this purpose ought to be observed, whereby they will stand in their proper station. This is the principal matter of the festival of Matzot, and all other commandments of the first night are particulars corresponding to the particulars of that redemption.

**[2]** The matter of the Sukkah and the Lulav is that the Clouds of Glory that encompassed Israel, beyond their physical benefit of providing shelter and protection, also produced a great outcome in the spiritual realm. Just as through those clouds Israel was found to be set apart and elevated from the earth, so too was a radiance drawn to them that set them apart from all nations, elevated and lifted above the mundane world itself, truly supreme over all the peoples of the earth. This matter was actualized in its time for Israel, enabling them to reach their proper, lofty station. This outcome is drawn to each individual Israelite from generation to generation, for the light of holiness is drawn from the Blessed One, encompassing every righteous person in Israel, setting them apart from all other human beings, elevating them above them, and making them supreme over all. This matter is renewed for Israel on the festival of Sukkot through the Sukkah. And the light of God, blessed be He, shines upon the heads of Israel and crowns them in such a way that their awe falls upon all their enemies through the taking of the Lulav and its species. This is what is stated: "And all the peoples of the earth shall see that the name of the LORD is called upon you, and they shall fear you." (Deuteronomy 28:10). Indeed, they would have attained this matter openly immediately, were it not for sins preventing it. However, in any event, the matter is destined to be brought to fruition in its time. And through the particulars of the commandment of the Lulav, with its wavings and circuits, this matter is perfected to strengthen the dominion of God, blessed be He, over the heads of Israel, to cause their enemies to fall before them, and to subjugate them beneath them, until they themselves choose to be servants to them. This is the matter that is stated: "Kings shall be your foster fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers; with their faces to the ground, they shall bow down to you and lick the dust of your feet." (Isaiah 49:23) and "The sons of those who afflicted you shall

come bending to you, and all who despised you shall bow down at your feet.” (Isaiah 60:14). For all will be enslaved to them and bow down to them to receive from them the light of the light of God, blessed be He, that rests upon them. And then all their pride shall be humbled, and they shall submit beneath Israel, and through them, they shall return to His blessed service. To this end, all the particulars of the Lulav are directed, as it is stated.

**[3]** Chanukah and Purim: The essence of Chanukah and Purim is to illuminate the light that shone in those days, according to the rectifications that were established therein. Chanukah pertains to the strengthening of the priests against the wicked Greeks, who intended to remove Israel from the service of God. The priests were strengthened, and through them, Israel returned to the Torah and to service. Particularly, the matter of the Menorah, according to its rectifications, faced accusations against its essence, and the priests restored it in its purity. Purim pertains to the salvation of Israel in the Babylonian exile and the return to the acceptance of the Torah, which they re-accepted upon themselves for all time, as our Sages, of blessed memory, stated (Shabbat 88a): “The generation accepted it in the days of Achashverosh.” The details of their matters are according to the details of the rectification.

**[4]** The Shofar: The matter of the Shofar on Rosh Hashanah is that on this day, the Holy One, Blessed be He, judges all the world and renews all existence in the aspect of the new cycle, that is, the new year. The Sanhedrin are convened, and judgment is rendered upon all creatures according to the order of divine judgment. As stated in Part II, the prosecutor appears to prosecute according to the transgressions of humankind. The Holy One, Blessed be He, commanded us to blow the Shofar, and the intention therein is to draw down providence with mercy and not with the severity of judgment, and to confuse the prosecutor so that he may not prosecute. We have already explained in Part II that just as divine providence does not grant good to humankind unless they merit it, so too the very nature of judgment itself is in the deeds that humankind performs, whereby they receive their due reward according to their circumstances. Thus, they will be treated with mercy in their general judgment and not be scrutinized with absolute precision. This is akin to what our Sages, of blessed memory, stated (Rosh Hashanah 17a): “Whoever overlooks transgressions, they overlook

all his transgressions for him.” For this is a measure for a measure: just as he forgives, so too will they forgive him, and it will be found that they treat him with mercy. This itself is the attribute of judgment. However, it is not this act alone that is rewarded in this manner, but any act that the Supreme Wisdom decrees as deserving of reward will be rewarded accordingly. Included in this is the commandment of blowing the Shofar, which Israel was commanded to observe, to draw down providence upon themselves with mercy. When they observe it properly, this will be the fruit they gather from it. The detail of this matter, the relationship between blowing the Shofar and drawing down mercy, is dependent on the roots and foundations of providence, according to their true nature. The true intention in this is to awaken the patriarchs of the world to strengthen themselves with their merit, to awaken mercy, to appease the attribute of judgment, to increase good over evil, to subdue the forces of evil, to remove power from the prosecutors, and to intend that the Master, may He be exalted, use His supreme elevation to govern with the dominion of His unity, and to overlook transgression. All of this is through this commandment, when it is joined with the repentance of Israel in the proper manner. The details of this entire matter are according to the details of rectification in His ways.

**[5]** Yom Kippur: Indeed, the essence of Yom Kippur is that the Master, blessed be He, prepared for Israel one day wherein repentance will be easily accepted and transgressions will be close to being erased. This means to rectify all the corruptions that have been wrought by them, to remove all the darkness that has intensified because of them, and to return the penitents to the level of holiness and closeness to Him, may He be exalted, from which they have distanced themselves through their sins. And indeed, on this day, a light shines, by whose power this entire matter is perfected. And truly, it is a light that to receive it, Israel must observe what they have been commanded for this day, and particularly the matter of affliction, through which they detach themselves greatly from physicality and ascend somewhat to the level of angels, and all other details of the matter according to the details of the rectification.

**[6]** The Reading of the Torah: And behold, you must know that among the great rectifications that the Prophets ordained for Israel was the matter of the reading of the Torah, and this is included in two

aspects. The first is the reading of the scroll of the Torah in order until its completion, and then it is repeated in this manner. And the second is the reading of specific portions at specific times. This is because, behold, the scroll of the Torah is the totality of what was transmitted to us from Him, blessed be He, so that we may contemplate it, for through this, His illumination will be drawn to us, as it is stated in Chapter 1 and in this section, Chapter 2. And behold, in order to receive this illumination continuously, they ordained that we should contemplate it in our congregations continuously in order. And this is in addition to the private contemplation that is fitting for each individual in his particularity. And behold, through this continuous reading, this light of holiness is perpetuated within us. And also at the special times, according to their subject matter, it is fitting that we read the portions pertaining to those matters, in order to sustain the illumination of the days through the power of the Torah, which is the strongest power that we possess.

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## Part 4, Chapter 9

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**[1]** However, the incidental commandments are in accordance with the circumstances that befall human beings throughout their lives, according to their condition in this world, in their foods, their garments, all their human needs, and their political affairs. The totality of all these is founded upon what we have explained in the preceding parts, namely, that there is no matter in all the affairs of the world, whether a law or an accident, concerning any existing entity, that has not been established and decreed according to what is necessary for the existing entities to be, in accordance with the true purpose of creation that we mentioned above, which is to achieve it in perfection. For this, all these particulars were required, each one within those boundaries that truly limit it. However, the necessity of all the particulars and their forms is drawn from the parts of reality and its degrees, and the influences upon them of their various kinds and degrees, as stated above. Now, concerning all these matters, commandments were given according to their nature, to keep things on the side of good and not on the side of evil. For when these actions are observed within their boundaries, their

nature will be according to good, and good and rectification will be drawn and born from them. But if they are not observed, the actions will remain on the side of evil, and impurity, filth, and great darkness will spread through them. The Divine illumination will be diminished, and concealment will increase, followed by all the evil consequences we have mentioned, all according to the reality of that matter which was not completed within its boundaries and its relation to man, and its part in the general cycle and revolution of existing things that are rolling and moving towards being fixed in perfection, as stated above.

**[2]** The matter of blessings upon enjoyment: And behold, according to this path, the matter of the blessings ordained by the Sages of blessed memory was established upon all matters of the world and its pleasures. The root of them all is the blessing of Grace after Meals, which we were commanded in the Torah. And the essence of this matter is that, as we have already explained, all existing matters, inscribed in nature, are all particulars directed towards the ultimate general End, which is the attainment of the entirety of existence to perfection. Their share in this matter is according to the degree they truly possess in their actual existence. However, man, who is drawn after the laws of his nature and acts according to what is inscribed for him, must always intend for the service of his Creator and for what emerges from those actions as benefit and aid in achieving this End, in whatever way it may be, according to how matters are truly arranged. That is, some matters will immediately serve this purpose, and others will serve those who serve it, until after a great cycle of many matters following one another, they will lead to it. However, whatever the degree of these matters may be, they are worthy of being taken only for this intention, for what accrues from them, even after ten degrees of aid towards achieving the End, and not for any other intention, namely, the intention of desires and material inclination towards superfluities. And they shall all be guarded within the boundaries set for them by the Divine Torah. Then they will all truly be aids to this matter, and they will all be considered conditions of service. And behold, the Torah has taught us that after we have enjoyed our food and drink, we shall give thanks before Him, blessed be He, and bless His Name, and return the matter to its true End, which is aid towards the general End we mentioned, so that through them all His glory, blessed be He, is magnified, in that His will is done

and His counsel is fulfilled. And this is the general matter of Grace after Meals, and so too all other blessings upon enjoyment, which are after the enjoyment. However, the Sages of blessed memory further added to ordain blessings before the enjoyment, to magnify this matter. And this is that even before a person derives benefit from the world, he shall mention His Name, blessed be He, upon it and bless Him, and intend that this good comes to him from Him, blessed be He. And he shall intend the true nature of this good, which is not merely a physical matter and material pleasure, but rather that it is truly a matter prepared by Him, blessed be He, for what emerges from it as benefit for the true good, as stated. And by pre-empting this matter before the act, that entire act will remain on the side of good and not on the side of evil, and man will be perfected and elevated through it, and

will not be corrupted and debased, as stated.

**[3]** The matter of the blessings upon the commandments: However, concerning the performance of the commandments as well, our Sages instituted these blessings for the love of the commandment, to thank Him, blessed be He, that He desired us and gave us such great rectifications. Consequently, the act is elevated thereby, and the person is aided by Him, blessed be He. For such is the measure: according to the arousal that people arouse towards Him, blessed be He, so will be the measure of aid they receive from Him, whether little or much, in any deed whatsoever. Whoever acts thus and trusts in God, happy is he.

**[4]** The First Principle of the Second Part:





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