

# **Nefesh HaChaim**

The Soul of Life

by

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(1749-1821)

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English Translation

*In Memory of Avraham Chaim ben David*

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction by the Author's Son

### Introduction by the Author's Son

#### הקדמת בן המחבר

**[1]** Before this. Every author of a work, precedes it with an introduction at the beginning of his book. Some are accustomed to announce what they saw that led them to write the scroll of a book. Some announce the ultimate purpose and benefit of the work. Some, following in the footsteps of humility and the fear of God which precedes their wisdom, humble themselves for other reasons, so as not to boast in their authorship. And if he intended it for his son to establish it in print, behold, a son honors a father by speaking of the father-author's might, and by proclaiming the praise of the work, each according to his praise.

**[2]** And how shall I precede? I am a youth, I know nothing, my words are inscribed in a book. And even if it is not within my power to direct my heart to where I shall begin, if I say thus to proclaim the praises of matters spoken in reverence of God for life, and their ultimate purpose, it is but words of the lips, and insufficient for that which eyes see eye to eye. And they will be spoken among those who fear God, who desire closeness to God. And all who read his book, who read it in truth, will say in response, "Blessed is He who has shared His wisdom with those who fear Him."

**[3]** A correction: And perhaps the verse "but talk leads only to poverty" (Proverbs 14:23) can be interpreted as referring to something that, upon

examination, appears to have some deficiency. In such a case, speech is needed to sweeten it. But if there is no deficiency, why should most things be [mere] talk?

**[4]** And if I were to speak in praise befitting the honor of my master, the renowned, righteous, and famous Gaon, may his memory be a blessing. I am naked of the understanding to appreciate the ways of his Torah and his righteousness. It is not within my capacity to recognize them, nor to make them known to others. The elders of the Sages and the great Gaonim, the rabbis of our land, may they live long. To them it is fitting to recount his name and his memory, for he is great. And about his book, they will all write. Indeed, the earth is full of the righteousness of his ways, and his deeds have proclaimed him.

**[5]** And what flesh is there that has not heard the sound of the shofar? The praise that he performed on earth, and strength and might were given to him in the Torah of truth, and good deeds and truth that he performed. He was greatly strengthened by his Master to reveal, as it were, the might of the God of heaven.

**[6]** He is the man who established a burnt-offering of Torah in his time in the land, through the law of kindness. And his mouth opened with wisdom to hundreds of students. And he merited to magnify Torah, to complete it, and to explain it. He listened, investigated, and corrected. And he built for himself a great house of study standing on three pillars: Torah, service, and acts of loving-kindness.

**[7]** And it is not surprising that he merited and caused many to merit. For from his youth he bore the yoke of Torah with wondrous diligence. And when he was above thirteen years old, he established his study with his elder brother, the Gaon Rabbi Simcha, may his soul be sanctified. And they would study day and night. And our elders told us that when the light of a candle was not available, the light of the moon was sufficient for them for night study. And they then received the path of Torah from the greatest of sages, the Gaon of Gaonim, the lion of the high court, the great lion Leib, may his memory be for a blessing, the author of Sha'agat Aryeh.

**[8]** Correction: The Gaon, author of Sha'arei Yitzchak, may his soul rest in peace, served for several years as Av Bet Din in this holy community. He was acquainted with the family of Aba Mari, may his soul rest in peace. While he was here, he composed his esteemed work, the Responsa Sha'arei Yitzchak. When he departed from here to print it, Mr. Aba, may he be preserved, was still young in years. And after he passed through here, after printing his aforementioned book, he lodged at the home of Aba Zev, may his soul rest in peace, for several weeks. He graced the faces of the city and established halachic rulings here. Aba Mari, may his soul rest in peace, was then already elderly. And out of the love he loved them, and his elder brother, may he be preserved, he ordained for them that their sleep should be ordered.

**[9]** And when he was already twenty-five years old, he had completed the entire Talmud, and the early and later authorities. And he would study Torah with his brother, the Gaon and righteous one, who is like an angel of God, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman, may his soul rest in peace. And how good and pleasant it was for brothers to be together in Torah and divine service. And both of them, as one, studied Torah from the Rabbi who was like an angel of the Lord of Hosts, holy and pure from Heaven, our great Rabbi, the Gaon, our master and teacher, Elijah the Pious, may his soul rest in peace, from the holy community of Vilna. And he, may his soul rest in peace, imparted of his spirit upon them, a spirit of wisdom, etc. Happy is the eye that saw all this. Those who saw rejoiced, and those who heard, their soul yearned at the sound.

**[10]** Annotation: And he is known in Judah, and great is his name in Israel. And the paths of his holy way are written in the book *Toldot HaAdam*, Parts I

and II, which was authored by the preeminent rabbi, the great preacher, Rabbi Yechezkel Feivel, may his memory be blessed, the chief rabbi of the great city of Vilna. And a third part is still with him in manuscript. And my father, of blessed memory, was older than his brother, the Gaon Rabbi Shimon Zalman, may his soul be sanctified, by seven years and nine days. He was born in the year 5509 [1749], on the second day of the festival of Shavuot, the day the Torah was given to Israel. And he was taken from us at the age of seventy-two, on his day of grace, the 14th of Sivan, in the year 5581 [1821], corresponding to the weekly portion *Vayehi Binaso HaAron*. The year [is encoded in the phrase] "All that is written for life."

**[11]** And greater than his learning was his service, for he served his master, the pious one, may his memory be for a blessing. And in the many days he stood before him, he illuminated for him the paths of Torah in the revealed and the ways of wonders in the hidden. He is the one who saw his master from before, and the Master revealed to him the tractate and the illumination of wisdom. And those who learned before him stood in awe and dread, with trembling and quaking, from the river of fire that flowed and issued forth from before him. Thus, when he taught and informed his sons and disciples of the days he stood before him, the awe of his master was upon them with wondrous fear, as if standing before him on high. And when he began a discussion, and remembered the name of his master, he would tremble as if his body were not present, and his countenance would shine upon him like a consuming fire in his heart, as he contemplated the ways of his righteousness, his piety, and the purity of his holiness. And the light of his Torah was acquired for him, because his strength was excellent in the qualities by which the Torah is acquired. And from the mantle of Elijah he clothed himself with humility and awe.

**[12]** Annotation: And perhaps the matter stated in Eruvin (13b), "And behold, you would have seen Me from before..." and "And your eyes shall see your teacher," is akin to that which is written (Exodus 33:23), "And I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back, but My face shall not be seen." This is according to the Midrash of Exodus, Chapter 3, "Which I am called by the name of My deeds" (and the end of the details of the deeds are included in the primordial thought). And for this reason, thought is called "face" because it precedes, and the deed is subsequent. And within

thought itself, there is a primordial and encompassing thought, and this is the internal one, and a subsequent thought that spreads from the internal one to speech or to action (and this is the understanding that spreads within the internal attributes). And this is what is recognized from the deed or the subsequent word by the twisting of his lips, for that is the deed. But the internal primordial thought, it is impossible to bring it into speech, as in the matter of "honey and milk are under your tongue" (cf. Chagigah 13a). And this is the higher understanding, as in the matter of "A person cannot grasp the understanding of his teacher" (Avodah Zarah 6b), and it is not grasped by the student except by the radiant countenance of his teacher to a wise and understanding student, who grasps it from his own knowledge. And all of this pertains to the thoughts in a person's heart. But concerning Him, blessed be He, "For My thoughts are not your thoughts" (Isaiah 55), the totality of His thought is such that no thought can grasp it in any way, not even the highest ones. Rather, only His thought that spreads for the existence of His deeds is recognized from His deeds by every prophet according to his level. And this is "And you shall see My back," where "back" is inclusive of the thought that spreads for the existence of the deed and is recognized by the power of His deeds, and is called by the name of the deed. "But My face shall not be seen," not even by the power of His subsequent deeds in relation to the primordial. (And this is the meaning of the word "yir'u" with a chirik vowel).

**[13]** And great was the humble reverence of my teacher, the Gaon, may his merit protect us, and I clothed myself in all his ways and paths. And I will recount the edges of his paths, for they were from the way of humility: to be with the broken-hearted, or to uplift the broken-hearted with him (Sotah 5a). These two things, the eye of all preciousness beheld in him. From his youth until his old age, he gave his soul to revive the spirit of the downtrodden with his strength and the righteousness of his scattering. And to be with the crushed. And also his adornments, for when the destitute of mankind came, they rejoiced and were glad, for his right hand drew them near. And he broadened their hearts with words of appeasement, and with words of grace that flowed from his lips.

**[14]** Further from the path of true humility is that all matters of the body should truly be contemptible and loathsome in his eyes, to the point that they are

considered as nothing and void, without feeling either pleasure or pain. And only in the ways of Hashem will he be exalted. May his heart be open to Torah, Divine service, and holiness. And only in Hashem will he rejoice, for he will set his heart on a dwelling that is pleasing to Him, blessed be He. As it is written (Isaiah 29): "And the humble shall increase their joy in Hashem." And as is the saying always on our lips when we stand in prayer, saying: "And for those who curse my soul, let my soul be silent, and let my soul be like dust to all." And thereafter: "Open my heart to Your Torah, and after Your commandments my soul shall pursue." Indeed, all who knew my master, the great Gaon, may his merit protect us, they will testify and tell of his great humility, that if he was insulted, he did not insult back. And he was humble of spirit before all people. And concerning the pleasures of the body, even the slightest of the slightest, he was apprehensive, and he set his ways to not feel pleasure. And even though the days of his old age arrived, when he was tested with sufferings of love, his soul accepted them with joy and a cheerful countenance, without uttering a sigh (as the Sages said (Berachot 62a): "Acceptance of sufferings in silence"). And his mind was joyful over all the days that he accepted sufferings upon himself. And only for this was that righteous one distressed, that he was forced to sustain his body according to its needs. And in secret, his eyes would shed tears. (And my eyes saw, and not a stranger). And although his heart was pained by this, he rejoiced in his sufferings that diminished his feeling of pleasure, to the point that he paid no attention to either pleasure or pain.

**[15]** And all who beheld the sun in its glory. They saw and were astonished. For with all the subjugation of his body and the humility of his spirit to worldly matters, so his heart turned to heavenly matters. To don strength and splendor. And even to the lowest of the low. His heart was set on making a beautiful dwelling for Torah, Divine service, and acts of loving-kindness. And how exceedingly did his heart soar in the ways of God, to wage the war of Torah. And every commandment he began with a spirit of wisdom and strength, he completed with a spirit of understanding and awe of God, and not one word of his did he retract. And he brought his good thoughts to light before tens of thousands of people. And all this with repentance and wise words that were heard with gentleness.

**[16]** The essence of humility is to not perceive

one's good deeds that have been performed, nor the value of the virtues one has attained. And however great one's actions and virtues may become, and however much one's intellect increases in recognizing His blessedness, so too will the Divine Spirit increase the feeling of one's deficiency. And the feeling of the substance of one's virtues will diminish. And when one sees that they are esteemed in the eyes of people, and honored, they will shrink, and the deed will be bad for them. And they will reckon their deficiencies to diminish themselves, so that their heart will not become haughty. (As we find in the Gemara (Yoma 87a): "When Rabbi [Yehuda HaNasi] was ill, his sons would say...")

**[17]** Annotation: And the method of homiletic interpretation, perhaps it is the second intention, in what Rabbi Eliezer said to his disciples (Berachot 28b), "Be careful with the honor of your colleagues," which requires caution lest one's heart become arrogant from the honor that his colleagues bestow upon him.

**[18]** And whoever has not witnessed the ways of honor of my father, the Gaon, may his memory be blessed, in this matter, it is unbelievable to relate. All his stratagems and machinations which he devised in this regard were habitual on his tongue. For any novelties he would innovate, whether in Gemara and Piskei Halacha, or in responsa, and he would perceive his intellect to be sharp from his debates, he would be concerned about benefiting from Torah. And it was close in his eyes that the novelty might not be of the truth of the Torah, from the statement of our Sages, of blessed memory (in Parshat "Elu Devarim"): "Whoever acts arrogantly, his wisdom departs from him." (And in a jocular manner he would say that this is considered by him as a bribe, for he bribes himself with the sharpness of his intellect). And he would toil to refute his own words and to change his statements, and to weigh with the scales of his intellect how to establish the truth with sound reasoning and correct judgment. And whoever sees will see and understand from his wisdom that it was fulfilled for him, how he would diminish his intellect in his own eyes, and his opinion was humble upon him, as our Sages, of blessed memory, said (Ta'anit 7a): "Torah is not sustained except by one whose opinion is humble upon him."

**[19]** He was fond of admonition and moral instruction. And all his words were like fire. And

from his mouth, flames of the Holy One, Blessed be He, would issue forth with love, and sparks of fire with awe. And every ear that heard, its heart would melt like melting wax, and it would be drawn after his words of kindness in the aggadic tales he would expound in his chapters. And out of his humility, his heart was not filled with the desire to admonish the common folk. Rather, he admonished himself in all his words with straightforwardness. And it was as if he came to teach and found himself learning. And the majority of his admonitions were to humble the arrogance of the heart.

**[20]** Correction: And perhaps this is the intention of the verse (Isaiah 50:4) "The Lord God has given me a tongue of the learned, etc." He awakens my ear to hear as the learned do. This means that the Holy One, Blessed be He, has given me a tongue of the learned in chastisement and instruction for others. And He, Blessed be He, has awakened his ear so that he too may learn instruction for himself, like the instructions he teaches to others.

**[21]** And although most of his words in his discourses stood at the loftiest heights of the world, founded upon the Zohar and the writings of the Ari, of blessed memory (as those who understood comprehended in the words), he, of blessed memory, out of the righteousness of his humility, clothed them and stripped them and concealed them, lest he magnify his words as one who expounds on hidden matters. He sweetened them like honey and milk under his tongue, and he concealed them beneath his garment, rather than expounding them explicitly to the masses. And many who had not filled their bellies with Talmud, [he sought] to purify them from their deeds with a right spirit in the fear of God, lest they stumble in the vanities of the snares of futility.

**[22]** And according to the needs of the hour, which seemed to him to reveal certain matters without concealment, he would say, "The Midrash is not the principal thing, but the deed." (And consequently, his intention is understood to be regarding the latter part of this Mishnah, "And whoever multiplies words, etc." (the language of the King, Rabbi [Yehudah HaNasi]), who utters words to the higher realm to magnify them in the eyes of the listeners (and see Midrash Shmuel there)).

**[23]** In all his ways. He would diminish his own honor to increase the honor of Heaven. Indeed, in matters of speech. Especially in matters of the

community. It is known that he cast himself aside and occupied himself far beyond his strength. And although he was old, his hands were trustworthy. Until the sun set. And even when his strength failed, may it not be so, even on his sickbed. His thoughts ascended. And his eyes were raised to the heavens, to unite the Name of Heaven with the suffering of the community and the individual. With his groans and sighs, with his broken loins. And his many sighs in this matter would break the body of anyone who heard. (And he was accustomed to rebuke me because he saw that I did not participate in the suffering of others. And thus was his word to me always: that this is the purpose of man, not for himself was he created, but to benefit others as much as he could. And he judged and taught. A lover of peace. And a pursuer of peace. A lover of creatures and devoted to the Torah.)

**[24]** A correction: And in this manner, we are accustomed to present the prayer of the Patriarch Abraham (Genesis 18:27), "Indeed, God has seated Himself on the earth." This is to say, just as it is plausible to believe that a man of kindness, though he be wealthy and greatly honored among the mighty, possessing wisdom, strength, and riches, would choose a place to sit in humility and be with the broken of heart, in a barren land, not a place for seed, with no water to drink, so that he might bestow all manner of good kindnesses according to his heart's desire, but rather to do good in all worthy matters, as in this vision. So Abraham said, "May the Lord indeed be gracious to you, may your words be confirmed." For indeed (in the language of faithful belief), "God has seated Himself on the earth," so that your hand may be found to bestow all good kindnesses. If a man sins against his fellow, you shall do kindness with strength to save the oppressed from the hand of his oppressor. If a man encroaches upon his fellow's boundary, you shall return him to his land. For they thirst for water, and you shall give them rain; if there is famine, you shall give bread to the reapers. You shall bring healing to all who are afflicted in heart, and bind up their sorrow. And the earth shall be filled with the ways of Your goodness, to do good in all manner of good deeds.

**[25]** This was his way of studying in holiness from his youth. Both in Torah, and in the straight paths of God which he taught. He set aside his own honor, and chose to teach in a way that would be best for those who came after him, so that both the small and the great would listen. In all his many

teachings, with which he merited and caused many to merit, he did not cease to tell his townsfolk, after the morning prayer, a portion from the weekly Sidra, day by day. And all who entered the Beit Midrash left full of words, each according to his capacity. Lovers of the plain meaning absorbed the depth of its simplicity in the verse. And those who sought deeper meanings derived their interpretations from what their ears had grasped, from what was cast from his mouth as he spoke concisely. And all who heard rejoiced in the sweetness of his lips, whose words were as clear as one reading the portion before the Sages. And so beloved was this mitzvah to him, that he set aside all his own matters in holiness and would hasten from the Beit Midrash while the entire congregation was still praying. Both young and old were present, and he rejoiced with complete joy. He would say, "Not everyone is learned in the intricacies of the Talmud. And this Torah, its characteristics are all equal in its simplicity, and it benefits everyone." And his heart rejoiced in this. May the humble learn his way.

**[26]** And it is known that his heart perceived much wisdom. He magnified Torah and increased service. And from his many deeds, his wisdom was also established for him in all knowledge, to innovate Torah novellae in the sweet "Gimatriot, Pesukim, and Te'amim" (which are found in writings as fragmented pieces, as his disciples wrote them, for it was not pleasing to him to write in a book himself anything that was not a practical halakha). And from his youth until his old age, he greatly responded to all the great rabbis of our land and the geonim of our generation, and all of them were established as practical halakha. (And although, alas, a multitude of responsa he had hidden were burned, alas, by a fire sent from on high on Thursday, the 14th of Iyar in the year 5575 [1815 CE], and indeed about half the city was burned, and he too was among those whose houses were consumed by fire. But concerning his study hall, the mercies of God blazed within the fire that consumed all around him and its edges, and he remained like a brand plucked from the fire. And the books were also saved. Blessed is He who performed a miracle in this place. However, many of them remained in the hands of disciples who had copied them, and many were scattered about. May God help to gather and unite them.)

**[27]** And although I saw the intention of my master, Mar Aba, of blessed memory, that he was intent on gathering them together, nevertheless, I was not

commanded by him to print them all. Only for this was I explicitly commanded by him, spoken from his mouth on the day he ascended to heaven, with awesome words: to strengthen with all my might the academy of his, that Torah should not cease, God forbid. And also concerning these manuscripts, he raised his voice to me from the depths of his heart, that I should not change his words as they are written. Thus I was commanded to print them with haste.

**[28]** And I will add a word and behold my humility. For he set aside his opinion from great compositions. And he diminished himself to offer his opinion on these few and humble treatises, according to their high value. For it is known that the word of God was to Elijah the Pious, may his soul be sanctified. And the secrets of wisdom were revealed to him, as the light of his words has already been published in print. And he has ten hands more in the hidden matters in his writings, as Rabbi Aba the Gaon, may his soul be sanctified, elaborated in his introduction to Sefer Yetzirah. (And I heard from Rabbi Aba the Gaon, may his soul rest in peace, that all the holy writings in hidden matters from our master Elijah, may his soul be sanctified, were written before he reached forty, for from then on, greater understanding was added to him, so that there was not enough time to write all that was revealed to him). And Rabbi Aba, may his soul rest in peace, absorbed the finest flour from all the treasures of his master, may his soul be sanctified, to understand from his knowledge the fundamental principles of the inner path of the Tree of Life of the Ari, may his soul be sanctified. And they were engraved upon the tablet of his heart. And out of his humility, he polished and added a very small amount to these treatises. And he opened a crack like a needle's eye for him whose heart is open, to open a gate like the gate of the hall. And with the breadth of his understanding, he engraved and carved the matters, weighed them, transmuted them, and refined them for the path of Torah, service, and fear of God, to show the way they should walk, and the deed which they should do. And just as he sustained his soul to merit the multitudes with a word that is equal for every soul, so was the intention of his soul bound to this with a single cord as it ascended on high.

**[29]** And whoever did not witness his strength and humility on the day he was taken from us, has not witnessed strength and humility. He heard the morning prayer until the time his soul ascended on

high. Every hour and every moment he renewed his strength. At one moment he would humble his body with his words, as he felt that the dust would return to the earth as it was. And his face was black as a raven. And in the next moment, he would gird himself with wonderful devotion, and his face would shine like the light of the face of a living king. To bind his soul to his spirit, that it might return to God who gave it in purity, until his spirit and his soul were gathered unto Him, blessed be He, with a kiss. And they were bound up in the bundle of life with the Lord.

**[30]** And before God took him. Then he humbled his soul and turned his face with a low voice and spirit, speaking from the breath of life. And thus were his words, of blessed memory. Indeed, it is fitting to hasten the printing of the treatises as soon as possible. And you, my son, know that although I did not merit to study, I was granted from Heaven to teach others, and to establish the study of Torah. Thus, even though I did not merit to fear God, perhaps I will merit from Heaven that my words in these treatises will be accepted, to implant the fear of God, and pure Torah and service in the hearts of the upright who seek the ways of God. These are the words which He spoke to me.

**[31]** A correction: And one who knew that his humility was considered by him to be arrogance would not be surprised that it seemed to him that he did not understand the fear of God. As in the statement of our Sages (Berakhot 33b): "Is fear a trivial matter?" etc. "For Moses, it is not a trivial matter." It is like a person who is asked for a large vessel, and he has one that appears to him to be small. Or a small one, and he has one that appears to him to be large. The idea is that whoever is more humble does not perceive his humility; on the contrary, it appears to him as arrogance, and he considers his companions to be humble. And Moses, who was exceedingly humble above all men, certainly considered himself arrogant, and considered all Israel to be humble in comparison to him. And this is why, concerning Moses, who was exceedingly humble and considered Israel to be humble, he said that for them, fear is a trivial matter, because it is the consequence of humility, as our Sages said: "What wisdom accomplished... humility accomplished as its heel to its sole." But for himself, fear was considered a great matter, due to his considering himself still arrogant. And perhaps for this reason the Gemara brings the parable of the second, of a small vessel and he has

none, in order to expound the word "me'imkha" (from you) in the verse.

**[32]** And after these words, will not every eye that fears the word of God surely weep? When these matters, which proceed from the heart with humility and the fear of God for life, enter his heart. And even if a person is great in Torah, and his labor was in Torah, and all his days he did good deeds for his Creator, it may seem to him that he has no fear of God. What shall we answer after him?

**[33]** And although He is with me, I did not hasten to fulfill the words of His father. To hasten to that which He commanded me.

**[34]** And I was punished for this doubly in the fruit of my womb for the sin of my soul. The first time, on the other year, the 14th of Sivan, 5582 (1822), the day of the passing of my esteemed father, may he live. A son was born to me, and I circumcised him. And he was named after the soul of life. And he is no more, for God took him on the third day after the circumcision. And this year, the 5th of Kislev, it was Shabbat, the portion of Vayetzei, he departed from me, a splendor like a boy of eight, beautiful of form, pleasant, and beloved. And he already knew how to engage in discussion and debate in the Gemara, like Rabbi Simcha Naftali, may he be blessed. Righteous is the Lord, for I rebelled against His mouth. And He is merciful; He will atone for iniquity. And He will not add to sorrow anymore.

**[35]** Indeed, it is not from my clothing, God forbid, but rather the dire straits of the time, alas, are what caused it. For from the day the crown was lifted, we have seen no good, and I have remained like a stunned man, broken of heart, from what has entwined and continues to entwine. And I have not found for myself time to absolve myself from the service of Heaven, which I was commanded concerning his academy. As is known to all. And according to my measure, I have surmised the will of my master, my father, of blessed memory, that perhaps he would not be pleased to postpone the great work of Torah study for the many, on account of this commandment.

**[36]** And I also thought to connect his aggadic words to his discourses on Pirkei Avot, which he would expound on Shabbat, with concise and beautiful words, and his name was fittingly "Ruach Chaim" (Spirit of Life). For they are filled with the spirit of counsel, the spirit of understanding, and

knowledge, and they are life to those who find them.

**[37]** And also to gather all the responsa and arrange them. To call them by the name Nefesh HaChaim. For in his words, he gives soul and understanding to those who comprehend, as in the verse, "Whose spirit issued from you?" (Job 26:4). (And I have called these pamphlets Nefesh HaChaim, following the signature of my father, of blessed memory, in his responsa and all his letters). However, there is no available space for this due to my many preoccupations and the work incumbent upon me. May God grant expansion. And because of this, it has been delayed until now. And if I have erred, may God atone. (And I also had the knowledge of two great Gaonim, may their merit protect us, who were in the holy community of Vilna, may it be preserved. Their agreement was not to delay the earlier [work] in the opinion of my honored father, the Gaon, may his soul rest in peace. Until the scattered responsa in the world are gathered.)

**[38]** And now, after the heavenly anointing, they have stirred me to do the will of the righteous, my honored father, the Gaon, may his memory be a blessing. May it be His will to fulfill the desire of those who fear the Lord, who yearn for the Torah of life. And may the pleasantness of the Lord establish the work of our hands, to bring to light what is still in manuscript. And from on high, strength will be granted to the esteemed Rabbi, the greatly learned one, who seeks the hidden treasures of the fear of the Lord, Rabbi Avraham Simcha, may he live, who labored and toiled in the righteous deed for life, in the matter of printing these pamphlets. And the Lord has been good to the good, who have benefited from their goodness to assist. And all those who engage in this with their bodies shall receive a blessing from the Lord. And the merit of my honored father, the Gaon, may his soul rest in paradise, shall be a support for all who desire to do His good will, to bring upon them a blessing of goodness and beneficence.

**[39]** And you, O house of Israel. Go forth and behold the straight path that a person should cleave to. Set your hearts to all the matters spoken concerning the fear of Hashem for life, and they are worthy of Him who spoke them, and of those to whom they were spoken. And may it be His will that these excellent words be spoken among the fearers of Hashem, to grasp the walls of the heart of the beloved of Israel with the Torah of kindness, and

complete service, and pure prayer, and the righteous deed for life, who surrendered his soul in his lifetime for Torah and service. You shall add courage to every man who desires life, in Torah and service with all their heart and soul. And to awaken the treasure of goodness with abundant kindness

and compassion upon the souls of the house of Israel, may they live, and upon the soul of the one who answered.

**[40]** Isaac, son of the Gaon, our master Chaim, may his memory be blessed, of Volozhin:

## Chapter 2

# Gate I: The Nature of Man

22 Chapters

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### Gate I, Chapter 1

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[1] It is written, "And God created man in His image, in the image of God He created him." And thus it is written, "For in the image of God He made man."

[2] Herein lies the inner depth of the matter of "image" (Tzelem). It pertains to matters that stand at the pinnacle of the world, and it encompasses most of the inner secrets of the Zohar. However, here we shall speak of the word "image" in the manner of the early literalists, of blessed memory, concerning the verse, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."

[3] And this is because the word "tzelem" (image) and "dmut" (likeness) here are not in their literal meaning, for it is explicitly written (Isaiah 40:18), "And what likeness will you compare Him to?" Rather, its meaning is a resemblance to something in some matter. Like when one says, "I resembled a desert ostrich," for wings and a beak were not made for him, nor was his form changed into the form of an ostrich. Rather, his actions at that moment were incidentally perceived as if he were wandering and moving about like a desert ostrich, which is a solitary bird flying from place to place. This is according to the understanding of the early

literalists, may their memory be for a blessing.

[4] And similarly, thus is the matter of the word "Tzelem" (image/likeness). For they are similar in their meaning to some extent:

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### Gate I, Chapter 2

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[1] However, to understand the matter of His saying "in the image of Elohim" specifically, and not another Name. For the Name Elohim is known to signify that He, blessed be He, is the Master of all powers, as written in Tur, Even HaEzer, chapter 5.

[2] And the matter of His blessedness being called the Master of Powers, for the measure of the Holy One, blessed be He, is not like the measure of a mortal. For a person, when he builds a structure, for example, from wood. The builder does not create and bring forth the wood from his own power, but rather takes wood that has already been created and arranges it in a structure. And after he has arranged it according to his will, even though his power has been removed and withdrawn from them, the structure nevertheless remains.

[3] But He, blessed be He, just as at the time of the creation of all the worlds, He created and brought them into existence, blessed be He, from

nothingness by His infinite power, so too, from then until now, every day and every moment, the entire power of their existence, their order, and their sustenance depends solely on His blessed will, whereby He, blessed be He, infuses them each moment with new power and a flow of new light. And were He, blessed be He, to withdraw His power of infusion from them for even a single moment, in that instant they would all return to nothingness and void.

**[4]** And as the Men of the Great Assembly established, "He renews, in His goodness, each day, always, the work of creation." This means truly always, at every moment and instant. And their vision is explicitly stated concerning "the Maker of great lights," for He did not say "He made" but "He makes."

**[5]** Correction: And although there is no apparent novelty to the eye, nevertheless the four supernal foundations, which are the primordial roots and fathers of all, as mentioned in the Zohar, Va'era 23b, which are the root of all actions and their inner essence, and they are the four letters of the Tetragrammaton, blessed be He. Their intermingling and composition at every moment and instant in their root of roots is not grasped at all, and He, blessed be His Name, renews them every moment according to His will.

**[6]** And the matter of their intermingling each moment is the 670 permutations of the Name, Blessed be He, according to the change of their points, the 670 moments of the hour. And so too, each hour changes to other permutations, and furthermore, the measure of day is not equal to the measure of night; no day is like the one before or after it, in general. This is what is meant by "Renewing, precisely, the deeds of creation."

**[7]** And this is why He, blessed be His Name, is called the God of all Powers. For every individual power found in all the worlds, He, blessed be His Name, is their Master of Power, who bestows power and strength upon them every moment, and they are always dependent on His hand to change them and order them according to His will, blessed be He.

**[8]** Correction: And even though it is a common name for every being possessing power that exists in the world, and all the ministers above and below are called "Elohim" (divine ones), as it is written,

"the God of the nations." For all the nations will walk each in the name of its God. And see Zohar Vayikra 8a and Parashat Balak 201a concerning "And God came to Avimelech" and to Lavan and Bilaam, meaning their minister. For they are appointed over them to lead them. And likewise, the judges below are called "Elohim." And in Sukkah 92a, "And perhaps one of all the other names..." etc., see there.

**[9]** Indeed, their power is not from themselves, but from what He, blessed be He, has established within them as power and might to rule, etc. Therefore, He, blessed be His Name, is called: God of gods. And it is also written, "For the LORD is great above all gods. Worship Him, all gods." And even the idolaters call Him, blessed be He, Elaha d'Elahin.

**[10]** And therefore they are called "other gods," meaning that their power is not from themselves, but from the power of that which is higher than them. And that which is higher than them also draws its power from the power above it, all the way up to the True Source of Power of them all, blessed be He.

**[11]** And therefore it is said (Jeremiah 11:36): "And the LORD God is truth." For He is the true possessor of power for all, as all receive their power from Him, blessed be He. And they shall fall upon their faces and say, "The LORD, He is God."

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## Gate I, Chapter 3

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**[1]** Thus, in this analogy, as it were, the Blessed One created man and gave him dominion over countless myriads of powers and worlds. And He entrusted them into his hand, that he would be the speaker and the director of them according to all the details of his actions, his speech, his thoughts, and all the arrangements of his conduct, whether for good or, Heaven forbid, the opposite.

**[2]** For through his good deeds, words, and thoughts, he sustains and imparts strength to many holy powers and upper worlds, and adds holiness and light to them, as it is written (Isaiah 51:16), "And I have put My words in your mouth... to plant

the heavens and lay the foundations of the earth.” And as our Sages of blessed memory stated, “Do not read ‘your children’ (בְּנֵיךָ), but ‘your builders’ (בְּנוֹיךָ),’ for they are the ones who arrange the upper worlds, like a builder who arranges his structures, and they bestow great power within them.”

**[3]** And conversely, God forbid, through his actions, speech, or thoughts which are not good, he destroys, may it be likened to destruction, countless holy higher powers and worlds beyond all value and measure, as it is written (ibid. 49): “Your destroyers and your ruiners, etc.” Or he darkens or diminishes their light and holiness, God forbid. And he adds strength to the opposite, to the abodes of impurity, may it be likened to impurity.

**[4]** This is “And God created man in His image, in the image of God He created him.” For in the image of God He made him. Just as He, blessed be His Name, is the God, the Master of all existing powers in all the worlds, and orders and governs them every moment according to His will, so too His blessed will has empowered man to be the opener and closer of many thousands of myriads of powers and worlds, according to all the details of His governance in all his affairs, at every moment and instant, precisely according to the supreme root of his actions, words, and thoughts. As it were, he too is the master of their power.

**[5]** And our Sages of blessed memory said in Eichah Rabbah (on the verse, “And they went without strength,” etc.): Rabbi Akiva, in the name of Rabbi Yishmael ben Bava, says, “When Israel performs the will of the Omnipresent, they add strength to the Divine Might above, as it is said, ‘With God we shall do valiantly.’ And when Israel does not perform the will of the Omnipresent, they, so to speak, weaken the great Might above, as it is written, ‘You are feeble because of the Rock that bore you.’”

**[6]** And in many places in the Zohar it is stated that the sins of mortals cause a blemish above, etc. And likewise, the opposite is true, as stated above. And this is what is meant by “Give strength to God.” And in the Zohar, Parashat Bo, “And it came to pass on the morrow, that they gathered, etc., to stand before God.” When they desire to stand before God, it is indeed through the deeds of Israel that they stand. For when Israel performs improper deeds, it is as if they weaken the strength of the Holy One, Blessed be He. And when they perform

proper deeds, they give power and strength to the Holy One, Blessed be He. And in this vein it is written, “Give strength to God,” through what? Through proper deeds.

**[7]** And therefore it is said, “to God.” And likewise, “in God is strength.” Which means, the possessor of all powers, as explained above.

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## Gate I, Chapter 4

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**[1]** And this is the Torah of man: Let no Israelite say in his heart, God forbid, “What am I, and what is my strength, to effect any matter in the world with my lowly deeds?”

**[2]** However, let him understand and know and establish in the thoughts of his heart, that all the details of his actions, his speech, and his thoughts, at every moment and instant, are not destroyed, God forbid. And how great are his deeds, and how exceedingly they have grown and ascended! For each one rises according to its root to effect its operation in the highest heavens, in the worlds and the pure lights of the Upper Realms.

**[3]** Correction: And it is close to hearing that this too is included in their intention, of blessed memory, in “Avot: Know what is above you.” This means that even though you do not see with your eyes the awesome matters that are wrought by your deeds, nevertheless, know with certainty that all that is done above in the highest of high worlds, all of it originates from you according to your deeds and where they tend. According to them, they will go out and come in.

**[4]** And truly, the wise person who understands this in its truth, his heart will tremble within him with great trepidation. When he considers his deeds, which are not good, God forbid, and how far they reach in corrupting and destroying, even a light sin, God forbid. Much more than what Nebuchadnezzar and Titus destroyed.

**[5]** For indeed, Nebuchadnezzar and Titus did not cause any blemish whatsoever above, for they had no part or root in the upper worlds that their actions could touch at all. Rather, through our sins, the

attribute of divine might above was diminished and weakened, as it were. They defiled the Temple of the Lord, the upper Temple, as it were. And because of this, Nebuchadnezzar and Titus had the power to destroy the lower Temple, which is aligned with the upper Temple. As our Sages said (Eichah Rabbah): "The flour was ground." Behold, our transgressions destroyed the upper dwelling, the holy upper worlds. And they destroyed only the lower dwelling.

**[6]** And this is what David, peace be upon him, prayed for, knowing that it is as if one brings an axe to the thicket of a tree. He asked that it be counted for him as if he had destroyed [something] above in the high heavens. But in truth, his actions did not touch there at all, as was stated above.

**[7]** Furthermore, concerning this, the heart of man trembles from the Holy Land, which encompasses within its structure all the powers and all the worlds, as will be clarified, with God's help, below in Chapter 6 and in Gate 2, Chapter 5. For these are the Holy One and the Upper Sanctuary. And the heart of man, the center of the body, is the totality of all, corresponding to the Holy Temple, the center of the inhabited land, the Foundation Stone. It encompasses all the roots of holiness, like it. And the Sages, may their memory be blessed, hinted at this in the Mishnah of the chapter on the morning prayer: "He should direct his heart towards the Holy Temple."

**[8]** And in Zohar, Shelach 161, end of page 71a, it is taught: When the Holy One, Blessed be He, created man in the world, He prepared for him a likeness of the supernal, precious form, and gave him strength and power in the center of the body, where the heart resides, etc. Likewise, the Holy One, Blessed be He, prepared the world and made for it a single body, etc., and the heart resides in the center, etc., which is the strength of all, and all are suspended in it, etc. And the Temple is the Holy Congregation, where the Divine Presence, the Atonement Cover, the Cherubim, and the Ark reside. And here [in man] is the heart of all the earth and the world, and from here sustenance is drawn, etc. See there at length.

**[9]** If so, at the time when a person endeavors to think in his heart a thought that is impure, meaning, through adultery, behold, he is bringing in a harlot, the symbol of jealousy, into the Upper Holy Sanctuary, may He be feared, in the holy Upper

Worlds, Heaven forbid. And he increases, meaning, the forces of impurity and the *Sitra Achra* (the other side) in the Upper Holy Sanctuary. Much more and more than what was caused by the increase of the force of impurity by Titus when he brought a harlot into the Holy Sanctuary in the lower Temple.

**[10]** And likewise, every sin and transgression that any Israelite conceives in his heart, God forbid, is like a strange fire. In anger or other evil desires, may He preserve us. Is it not truly like the matter of the verse (Isaiah 64:11): "Our holy and beautiful house, where our fathers praised You, has been burned with fire"? May the Merciful, blessed be He, save us.

**[11]** And this is what the Name said to Ezekiel (43): "This is the place of My throne, and the place of the soles of My feet, wherein I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever; and the house of Israel shall no more defile My holy name, neither they, nor their kings, by their whoredom, nor by the carcasses of their kings in their high places. Now let them put away their whoredom, and the carcasses of their kings, far from My presence; and I will dwell among them forever."

**[12]** Correction: For the Tabernacle and the Temple encompassed all the powers and all the worlds, and all the arrangements of holiness. All its chambers, its treasuries, its upper rooms, and its inner chambers, and all the holy vessels. All of them were in the likeness of the Upper [Realms], an image, a form, a pattern of the holy worlds and their arrangements. The chapters of the Chariot. These were founded by David and Samuel the Seer. All the crafts of the pattern were understood by the hand of God upon them.

**[13]** And our Sages, of blessed memory, said in the chapter "Which is its place" (Zevachim 54b): "What is the connection of 'nu' (ornaments) to Ramah? Rather, they were sitting in Ramah and engaged in the adornment of the world." This is what is stated in Tanchuma, Parashat Pekudei, that it is equivalent to the creation of the world. And it enumerates there, in order, all the matters that were in creation, which were also in the Tabernacle. Therefore, the verse said concerning Bezalel, "And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge" (Exodus 31:3). For with these three [qualities] the worlds were created, as it is written, "The Lord by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding He

established the heavens" (Proverbs 3:19). And see Zohar, Pekudei 221a, and there 231b, and in Zohar Chadash, Terumah 35c. There it is discussed at length. Therefore, our Sages, of blessed memory, said (Berakhot 55a), "Bezalel knew how to combine the letters with which heaven and earth were created."

**[14]** And therefore, man, from the Holy Nation, who also encompasses all the orders of Creation and the orders of the Chariot, the entirety of all creation, is also a likeness and form of the Tabernacle and the Temple and all their vessels. He is arranged in the order of the connection of the parts of his limbs and his sinews and all his powers. And so, the Zohar divides the entirety of the form of the Tabernacle and its vessels, which are all hinted at in one man, in one, they approach in order.

**[15]** For behold, it is certain that the essence of holiness, the Sanctuary, and the indwelling of the Divine Presence, blessed be He, is man. If he sanctifies himself properly through the observance of all the commandments, which are also dependent on their supernal root in the limbs of the *Shi'ur Qomah* (Divine Measure) of all the worlds, as it were, then he himself is truly the Sanctuary, and within him is the Lord, blessed be He. As it is written (Jeremiah 7:4), "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these." And as our Sages, of blessed memory, said: "And I shall dwell *among* them" (Exodus 25:8), not "within him" but "among them," etc.

**[16]** And this is what our Sages, of blessed memory, stated (Ketubot 5a): "The deeds of the righteous are greater than the creation of heaven and earth." For regarding the creation of heaven and earth, it is written, "Indeed, My hand founded the earth, and My right hand spread out the heavens." But regarding the deeds of the righteous, it is written, "Your sanctuary, O Lord, Your hands have established." They began with the deeds of the righteous and concluded with their vision of the sanctuary. For indeed, truly, the righteous, through their deeds which are pleasing before Him, may He be blessed, they themselves are truly the sanctuary of the Lord.

**[17]** It can be said that the verse "And let them make Me a sanctuary, etc., according to all that I show you, etc., so shall you do" (Exodus 25:8) is to be understood in this manner. And our Sages, of blessed memory, expounded (Sanhedrin 46a): "so

shall you do" applies to future generations.

**[18]** And according to our way, it is also to be understood that you should not think that the ultimate intention of My desire is the making of the external sanctuary. Rather, know that the entire purpose of My desire in the pattern of the Tabernacle and all its vessels is only to hint to you that from it you shall see, and so shall you make yourselves, that you yourselves, through your desired deeds, shall be like the pattern of the Tabernacle and its vessels. All of them holy, worthy, and prepared for My Divine Presence to truly dwell within you. This is the meaning of "And they shall make Me a sanctuary, and I will dwell within them," precisely because "all that I am showing you, the pattern of the Tabernacle, etc." The ultimate intention of My desire is that you shall similarly make yourselves.

**[19]** And thus He, blessed be His Name, said to Solomon after the completion of the Temple's construction (1 Kings 3:5): "This house which you are building, it is only if you walk in My statutes, etc., and I will dwell specifically among My people Israel."

**[20]** For this reason, when the inner sanctuary within them was corrupted, the outer sanctuary was of no avail, and its foundations were destroyed, meaning.

**[21]** And this is what God said to Ezekiel (Ezekiel 43:10-11): "Son of man, describe the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities; and let them measure the pattern. And if they are ashamed of all that they have done, show them the form of the house, its arrangement, its exits and entrances, and all its forms, and all its statutes, and all its forms, and all its teachings. Make them known to them, and write them before their eyes, so that they may observe its entire form and all its statutes and do them. And this is clear. And as it is translated: 'And if they humble themselves from all that they have transgressed in their visions, the form of the house and its arrangements, etc.'"

**[22]** And by this, the verse will be understood: "And the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." The simple meaning of the verse is certainly as the Targum renders it: "and man became a speaking

spirit.” This means that when the body was alone, it was still mere dust without any life or movement. But when the breath of life was breathed into it, then man became a living being, capable of movement and speech. And see Ramban in his commentary on the Torah.

**[23]** However, regarding “And it was in man, it is not written.” Rather, “And man became,” there is room to interpret this according to what has been explained. That man, through the soul of life within him, becomes a living soul for the proliferation of countless worlds. For just as all the specific actions of the body and its movements are by the power of the soul within it, so too man is the power and the living soul of the upper and lower worlds without measure, as all of them are governed by him, as stated above.

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## Gate I, Chapter 5

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**[1]** And what arose in His will, blessed be He, was to assemble the lower man to the heads of the upper worlds, so that they would be governed by him.

**[2]** For it is known in the Zohar and the writings of the Ari, of blessed memory, regarding the order of emanation and the connection of the worlds, that each world is governed by the arrangement of its state and all its detailed affairs according to the inclination of the power of the world above it, which leads it like a soul leads a body. And thus the order proceeds, higher above higher, until the Blessed Unity, may He be exalted, the soul of them all.

**[3]** See Zohar, Bereshit, 21a: “And the entire world, above and below, from the beginning of the secret of the supernal point until the end of all the levels, all of it is one thing. This is a garment for that, and that for that. This is within that, and that within that.”

**[4]** And in the Zohar, section 62a, it states: “And all lights are unified, light in light, and light in light, and lights in each other, etc. The light that is revealed is called the garment of the King. The light that is concealed within, etc.” See there.

**[5]** The details of this matter are explained in *Etz Chaim*, Gate of Inner and Outer, Discourse 2, and in *Peri Etz Chaim*, the Introduction to the Gate of Shabbat, Chapters 7 and 8, and in the Gate of Shabbat, Chapter 24. That the outer aspect of every *partzuf* and world extends and clothes itself in the *partzuf* and world beneath it, and becomes its inner aspect and soul.

**[6]** And all the worlds are included and divided into four, as is known: which are the Ophanim, and the Chayot, and the Throne of His Glory, and His Holy Emanation, blessed be He.

**[7]** And the soul of each individual is the world upon which it rests. As it is stated (Ezekiel 1:21): “And when those went, these went; and when those stood, these stood; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the living creatures were lifted up with them; for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels.” And the living creatures themselves are also moved by the world of the Throne upon which they are situated, as our Sages have expounded: “The Throne bears its bearers.” And in the Zohar, Parshat Yitro, it is written regarding the Work of the Chariot, page 31a: “The living creatures carry and are carried by the holy Throne.”

**[8]** And the soul of the living ones of the Throne. This is the secret of the supernal root of the totality of Israel’s souls together, which is higher and exceedingly exalted even than the Throne itself. This is the Man who is upon the Throne, as it is written there, “And upon the likeness of the Throne,” etc.

**[9]** Correction: For the essence of man is planted above in the root of his soul. (And for this reason the body is called a shoe, see Tikkunim) opposite the soul. For only the aspect of his heels from the root enters into the body of man.

**[10]** And by this, the statement of our Sages, blessed be their memory, in Bereishit Rabbah, Chapter 12, and in Vayikra Rabbah, Chapter 9, will be understood: That the Holy One, Blessed be He, did not wish to instill jealousy in the Upper and Lower Worlds. And on the first day, He created the heavens and the earth. On the second, the firmament. On the third, the earth brought forth vegetation, and so on in this manner on the fourth and fifth days. On the sixth day, He came to create man. He said, “If I create him from the Upper ones, there will be no peace in the world. And if I create

him from the Lower ones..." Rather, "Behold, I will create him from the Upper ones and from the Lower ones. Dust from the earth, and He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life."

**[11]** And seemingly, would not envy then be greater than if He had created him from the lower realms alone, since now he has a portion from the higher realms, and he is entirely below with the higher portion within him.

**[12]** However, the matter is thus: that the complete person, as is fitting, has his root planted above in the root of his supernal soul, and it passes through thousands upon myriads of worlds until its other end enters the body of man below. This is because "the Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance" (Deuteronomy 32:9), whose root is connected and planted above, a portion of the Tetragrammaton itself, so to speak. And its strength descends like a rope until it arrives in the body of man (and see further on, chapter 17). And all his actions serve to awaken his supernal root, in the manner of a rope, for if one shakes its lower end, its upper end also awakens and moves.

**[13]** And it is easily understood by the discerning. For this is the matter also in the root of things above, in the secret of the Supernal Man, as it were. See *Adir BaMarom*, chapter 141, section 2, on the verse, "And the Lord God formed man..." concerning the secret of the Supernal Man. And it concludes: And all this is for what purpose? In order to draw out and enter into the hidden of the hidden, until the end of all hidden things. This is what is stated: "And He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." The soul of all life above and below is suspended from that soul and is sustained by it. And "man became a living soul" [Genesis 2:7] in order to draw out and enter into the rectifications, as has been explained, and to draw out that soul from level to level, until the end of all levels. So that that soul may be found in everything and spread throughout everything, etc. See there.

**[14]** And this is what is stated in the Zohar, Parshat Yitro, page 72b, concerning the verse, "Behind and before You have enclosed me" (Psalm 139:5). "Behind" refers to the work of creation (Bereishit), and "before" refers to the work of the Chariot (Merkavah). For from the perspective of the body, it is "behind" the work of creation, and from the perspective of the supreme root of his soul of life, it is "before" the work of the Chariot, even from the

world of the Throne. And also, because the soul of life is the secret of the breath of His mouth, blessed be He, as it were, as will be explained below in Chapter 15, see there.

**[15]** Therefore, the worlds are governed by the actions of man, for according to their inclination, they arouse their higher soul-root which is above them, which is their living soul. By their movement, they will move, and by their stillness, they will be stilled.

**[16]** As it is written, when the breath of life, which is higher than the worlds and their inner essences, was breathed into his nostrils, then man became a living soul for the worlds. And so it is written by Rabbi Chaim Vital, may his soul rest in peace, in the Gate: Holiness, Part 3, Chapter 2, that the soul of man is the innermost of all.

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## Gate I, Chapter 6

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**[1]** However, the matter still requires elucidation. For he, of blessed memory, spoke in his holiness in a concise manner, as is his way in all his holy writings concerning hidden matters. As he himself wrote in his preface there, that he reveals an inch and conceals thousands of cubits. This is not as it would seemingly be understood from his words, of blessed memory, there. That man is to the worlds like a soul itself, just as the soul is given and attached within the body of man. In that whatever the soul does, it is only by means of the body's vessel. That at that very moment, the body also does it. For this is certainly not possible.

**[2]** Furthermore, according to this principle, it would necessarily follow that at the very moment we utter "Holy" below, the angels in the highest realms would also sanctify us as one. And our Sages, of blessed memory, stated in Parashat Geihinnom, Chapter 3, Section 91, page 2: "The ministering angels do not recite songs of praise above until Israel recites them below, as it is said, 'Together they will sing like the morning stars, and then all the sons of God will shout for joy.'" The phrasing "and then" implies even more strongly that they will not begin to sanctify their Creator at all until Israel completes their threefold sanctification

below. Similarly, the Men of the Great Assembly arranged in the Blessing of the Sanctification of the Name: "You are Holy, etc.," and afterwards, "And the holy ones will praise You daily." Although from the language of the Zohar, Parashat Terumah, page 129, beginning of page 2, and there page 164, beginning of page 2, it seemingly implies that the angels sanctify their holiness together with us, as one, this is because their sanctification is immediate, directly following the completion of our utterance. It is called "one" in a single utterance.

**[3]** But the essence of the matter is that He, blessed be He, after He created all the worlds, created man last, a wondrous creation, a gathering force for all the hosts. For He included within him all the splendors of the wondrous lights, and the upper worlds and palaces that preceded him. And all the form of the supernal glory, in the order of the chapters of the Chariot. And all the specific forces found in all the upper and lower worlds. All were given strength and a portion of their essence in his construction and were included in him according to the number of his specific forces. As it is written in the Zohar, Yitro, peace be upon him: "When the Holy One, blessed be He, created me, He arranged within man all the images of the supernal mysteries of the upper world, and all the images of the lower mysteries of the lower world, and all is engraved in man, for he stands in the image of God, as it is written: 'And God created man in His image,' etc." (see there).

**[4]** And in Parshat Tazria, 48a, understand that from when man was created, etc. And at the beginning of Parshat Bamidbar, Rabbi Eliezer opened with "And God created man in His image, etc." Study this, etc. And in Avot d'Rabbi Natan, 135a, "like the appearance of man, etc." And there, in chapter 4, 141b, at the end of folio 71a, "the image that encompasses all images, etc." And in Ra'aya Meheimna, Parshat Pinchas, 238b, "And God said, Let us make man, etc." until "And this is 'Let us make man in Our image, etc.'" And similarly, they said this language at greater length in Tazria, chapter 9, folio 71a, see there. And in Zohar Chadash, Parshat Yitro, in Ma'aseh Merkabah, 32c, "the image of man, for this is the image that encompasses all images, etc." And there, page 33, at the beginning of folio 71a. And in Shir haShirim, 58b, "And God said, Let us make man in Our image, etc." Study well in all the aforementioned places. And see in Etz Chaim, Sha'ar haTzelem, chapter 1, and in Likutei Torah, Parshat Tetzaveh

and Parshat Ha'azinu.

**[5]** And this is the entirety of man, that every particular power within him is arranged in opposition to a world, and each particular power is arranged according to the measure of the stature of the totality of powers and worlds. For they are arranged, as it were, in the form of a human stature, as will be explained, God willing, in Gate 2, Chapter 5.

**[6]** Correction: And this was before the sin; he was then included only from all the worlds and their holy powers alone, and not from the powers of evil. But after the sin, the powers of impurity and evil were also included and mixed within him. And consequently, through this, He also mixed them within the worlds, for this reason: that he is included and shared from all of them, and they are aroused and changed according to the inclination of his deeds. And this is the matter of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

**[7]** The matter is that prior to the sin, although he was certainly fully endowed with free will to incline himself to whatever he desired, for good or, G-d forbid, the opposite, for this is the ultimate intention of the entirety of creation, and also, indeed, he subsequently sinned, it was not that his free will was due to the forces of evil being included within him. For he was a completely upright man, comprised solely of the arrangements of holy forces. And all his affairs were entirely upright, holy, and purified, absolute good, without any mixture or inclination towards the opposite at all. And the forces of evil stood aside, a separate matter, outside of him. And he possessed free will to enter into the forces of evil, G-d forbid, just as a person has free will to enter into fire. Therefore, when the *Sitra Achra* (the Other Side) wished to cause him to sin, the serpent was required to come from without to tempt him. This is unlike the present situation, where the evil inclination that tempts man is within man himself, and it appears to man as if he himself is the one who desires and is drawn to commit the transgression, and not that someone outside of him tempts him.

**[8]** And through his sin, which was drawn after the enticement of the *Sitra Achra* (the "Other Side," i.e., the realm of impurity), the evil forces became truly mixed within him. And likewise in the worlds. And this is the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, wherein good and evil became joined and mixed

within it and within the worlds, one within the other, truly. For "knowledge" signifies joining, as is known.

**[9]** And the matter is explained to one who understands in Nefesh HaChaim, Gate of the Shell of Nogah, Chapter 2, although he was brief there concerning the matter. And examine well in Gilgulim, Chapter 1. And as our Sages, of blessed memory, said (Shabbat 146a): "When the serpent came upon Eve, he cast into her impurity." This means, truly within her.

**[10]** And from then on, this caused great confusion in his actions. For all of a person's actions are in much confusion and great change. Sometimes good and sometimes evil. And he is always turning from good to evil and from evil to good.

**[11]** And even the good deed itself is almost impossible for most of the world to be entirely holy, pure, and completely clean, without any inclination towards any ulterior motive or a slight thought for oneself. And likewise, conversely, in the deed which is not good, there is also sometimes mixed in a thought for good, according to one's imagination.

**[12]** And even a perfectly righteous person, who never in his life performed any act that was not good, nor uttered any idle word that was not good, God forbid, nevertheless, it is almost entirely impossible that all his good deeds throughout his life should be in absolute, true perfection, and that even one of them should be entirely without any deficiency or flaw. And this is what is stated (Ecclesiastes 7:20): "For there is no righteous man on earth who does good and does not sin." This means that it is impossible that there should not be, at least, some deficiency in the good deed itself that he performs, for "sin" means deficiency, as is known.

**[13]** Therefore, when a person is brought for judgment before the Blessed and Exalted One, numerous and immeasurable accounts are required. Concerning every minute detail of all his deeds, words, and thoughts, and all the particulars of his conduct, in the ways of their inclinations, where they tended. And this is what is stated (in Scripture): "Behold, this only have I found, that God made man upright; but they have sought out many devices" (Ecclesiastes 7:29). And see Zohar, Emor, page 107, end of page 1a, and it is explained

there according to our words.

**[14]** And the matter continued thus until the time of the giving of the Torah, at which point that impurity ceased from within them, as our Sages, of blessed memory, stated (Shabbat, *ibid.*). Therefore, afterwards, concerning the sin of the calf, our Sages, of blessed memory, stated (*ibid.*, Chapter 9, Verse 1) that Satan came and mixed, etc. This means that he came from without, as in the matter of Adam's sin, as mentioned above. For they were expelled from within. And through the sin of the calf, that impurity returned and became mixed within them as at first. And this is what is stated (Hosea 6:7): "But they, like Adam, have transgressed the covenant."

**[15]** And this is what He, blessed be He, said to Adam and Eve: "For on the day you eat from it, you shall surely die." This was not a matter of a curse or punishment, for "from the Most High nothing proceeds" (Lamentations 3:38). Rather, the meaning is that by your eating from it, the impurity of evil will become mixed within you. And there will be no other rectification to separate it from you, so as to benefit you in your end, except through death and assimilation in the grave.

**[16]** And this is also the matter of what the Holy One, Blessed be He, said afterward: "Behold, man has become like one of us... Now, lest he stretch out his hand and take also from the Tree of Life and eat, and live forever." But is it not His will, blessed be His name, to bestow good upon His creations, and what concern is it to Him if he lives forever?

**[17]** However, this means that if he eats from the Tree of Knowledge and lives forever, he will remain, God forbid, without rectification. For the evil will not separate from him forever, God forbid, and he will never see lights and goodness in his days. For this reason, for his benefit, he was expelled from the Garden of Eden. So that he could come to complete rectification when the evil separates from him through death and digestion in the grave.

**[18]** And this is the matter of the four who died by the serpent's sting (Parashat Bameh Isha), that even though they themselves had no sin whatsoever, nevertheless they were necessitated to die due to the initial mixture of the evil through the sin of Adam the first man, by the counsel of the serpent.

**[19]** And the matter will continue thus until the time of the righteous end, when death will be swallowed up forever. And furthermore, it will be that evil will then be utterly consumed from existence in the world. As it is written (Zechariah 13:2): "And I will cause the spirit of impurity to depart from the land."

**[20]** And likewise, all the commandments are bound and suspended to their supreme root in the arrangements of the Chariot chapters and the stature of all the worlds. For each individual commandment, in its root, encompasses countless powers and lights from the arrangements of the stature. As it is stated in the Zohar, Yitro, page 5, section 2: "All the precepts of the Torah are united in the Holy King, the Most High. Some are at the head of the King, some in the body, some in the hands of the King, and some at His feet, etc." The matter is more clearly explained in the Tikkunim, section 210, page 129, section 2, see there.

**[21]** And in Zohar Terumah 165b, "All the commandments of the Torah are like limbs and organs in the mystery above. And when they are all joined as one, then they all ascend to one mystery." And there, in 165b, "In this Name are encompassed the 613 commandments of the Torah, which are the summation of all mysteries, both higher and lower, etc." And all these commandments are all limbs and organs, to reveal within them the mystery of faith. Whoever does not pay attention and does not contemplate the mysteries of the commandments of the Torah, does not know and does not contemplate how the limbs are perfected in the higher mystery. The limbs of the body are all perfected according to the mystery of the commandments of the Torah, see there. And so also wrote the Ari, of blessed memory, in Sha'ar HaYichudim, Chapter 2.

**[22]** And when a person acts according to the will of his Creator, blessed be He, and fulfills, with any limb or power within him, one of the commandments of God, the rectification pertains to that world and the superior power that corresponds to it, to rectify it, or to elevate it, or to add light and holiness to its holiness, from the desire and will of the Superior, blessed be He, according to the value and manner of his action, and according to the extent of the refinement and purity of the holiness of his thought at the time of performing the commandment, which joins with the primary deed for good. And according to the value

of the level of that world and the superior power. And from there, holiness and vitality are drawn also upon that power of the person \* with which he fulfilled the commandment of his Creator, which is directed towards it.

**[23]** Correction: And this is what they instituted in the wording of the blessings for the commandments, "Who has sanctified us with His commandments." And likewise, "and sanctified us with Your commandments." For from the moment it enters a person's thought to perform a commandment, immediately its impression is made above in its supreme root source, and it draws from there upon itself a surrounding light and supreme holiness that encompasses and envelops it.

**[24]** And it is written explicitly, "You shall sanctify yourselves, and you shall be holy." And as our Sages of blessed memory said (Yoma 39a), "Whoever sanctifies himself below, is sanctified by Him above." This means that holiness is drawn down upon him from above, from the supreme root of the commandment.

**[25]** As it is written in the Zohar, Tetzaveh, page 31, beginning of page 32: "And you shall sanctify yourselves, and you shall be holy." He who sanctifies himself from below, they sanctify him from above, etc. They sanctify him from above, etc., for the holiness of the Master rests upon him, etc. If the deed below is done with holiness, holiness is aroused above, and it comes and rests upon him, and he is sanctified by it, etc. (See there).

**[26]** And in Parashat Kedoshim, chapter 6, verse 2, at the time when a person below engages in a straightforward action, etc., a leader emerges and a holy, exalted spirit rests upon him, etc. And through that action, a holy, exalted spirit begins to sanctify him. He comes to be sanctified, and he is sanctified, as it is written, "And you shall sanctify yourselves," etc. And in Parashat Naso, chapter 4, verse 128, an exalted holy spirit is drawn down upon him, as it is stated, "Until a spirit be poured upon us from on high," see there.

**[27]** And through this holiness and the encompassing light, one is cleaving, as it were, to the Blessed One even during his lifetime. And this is what is alluded to by the verse: "And you who cleave to the LORD your God are all alive today."

**[28]** And this encompassing light serves him as aid

to complete the commandment. And through the completion, the light becomes stronger and elevates the upper head. And concerning this, the Sages of blessed memory said: "He who comes to purify himself is aided."

**[29]** It also draws and pulls his heart from this to acquire more commandments. For he now sits in the Garden of Eden itself, sheltered beneath the wings of holiness in the highest concealment. There is no place for the *yetzer hara* (evil inclination) to rule over him, to incite him, and to lead him astray from engaging in commandments. This is what is meant by "a commandment draws a commandment."

**[30]** And when he directs his heart to it at the time of performing a commandment, he will understand and feel in his soul that he is now encompassed and clothed in holiness, and a proper spirit is renewed within him. And this is what is meant by, "These are the commandments which a person shall do, and he shall live by them." "By them" means, truly within them, that he is then encompassed by the holiness of the commandment and surrounded by the atmosphere of the Garden of Eden.

**[31]** And likewise, God forbid, when one transgresses one of God's commandments, they also said in the aforementioned statement of our Sages, of blessed memory: "Whoever defiles himself below, they defile him from above." This means, as explained above, that from the root of that sin above, in the forces of impurity, he draws, meaning he draws the spirit of impurity upon himself, and it envelops and surrounds him.

**[32]** As it is written in the aforementioned chapter of Tzav, "And if he becomes defiled below, a spirit of impurity is aroused above, and it comes and rests upon him and defiles him." For there is no good or evil, holiness or impurity, that does not have a root and foundation above. And through an action below, an action above is aroused. See there. And in the aforementioned chapter of Kedoshim, "And at the time that he performs an action below in a crooked path, etc., then it is said and goes forth and a strange spirit rests upon him, etc." See there.

**[33]** And concerning this, Scripture states, "and you shall be defiled in them" (Leviticus 18:24). This means, God forbid, literally within them. For one is

then bound and encompassed by the spirit of impurity and the air of Gehenna, which enfold and surround them even while they are alive in this world. As our Sages, of blessed memory, have taught (Avot 5:1): "Whoever commits one transgression in this world, it enwraps them and goes before them for the Day of Judgment," as it is said, "they shall be enwrapped" (Job 15:35). This is to say, it is bound to them. And this is what David, our ancestor, peace be upon him, said: "Iniquity shall surround me" (Psalms 49:6).

**[34]** And by this, the statement of our Sages, of blessed memory, in Parashat Yitro (Chapter 6, Verse 2) will be understood: "Great is repentance, that transgressions are turned into merits for them," as it is said (Ezekiel 18:21): "But if the wicked man turns from all his sins that he has committed, and keeps all My statutes, and does what is lawful and right, he shall surely live." And at first glance, the proof is not conclusive. For with greater latitude, it is possible to interpret that "he shall surely live" refers to the judgment and righteousness that he performed after his turning.

**[35]** And as explained previously, his interpretation is correct. For the language of the verse implies this precisely: If it rests upon them, he will live by judgment and righteousness. It should have said, "in them he will live," as it is written, "and live in them," and as has been explained. And since it says "upon them," it certainly refers to his wickedness and his prior transgressions. For through his repentance, by abandoning his former deeds and subsequently doing judgment and righteousness, these [deeds of judgment and righteousness] will overcome his former deeds, transforming even them into merits and eternal life.

**[36]** And when one fulfills all the commandments completely, in all their details and minutiae, in the essence of the deed. And added to them is the great purity and holiness of thought. Behold, he has rectified all the upper worlds and their orders. And by means of his entire being, with all his powers and limbs, he becomes a chariot for them, and is sanctified by their supreme holiness. And the glory of Hashem always overshadows him.

**[37]** And see Zohar Terumah, page 157a: "Everything called by My name, and for My glory I created it, etc. And for My glory, it is. The word 'it' is precise. And the secret of this is... I was taught that this glory, etc., is all perfected above from the

perfection of the people of the world, when they are righteous, pious, and knowledgeable people who know how to make perfections, etc.” See there at length. And see well in Ra’aya Meheimna, Parashat Pinchas, page 239a. And it is stated in our Sages, of blessed memory: “The Patriarchs are the Chariot.”

**[38]** And likewise, Heaven forbid, if one of his powers or limbs is damaged through his sin, which he has sinned. The damage also reaches, according to its root, to that world and the higher power that corresponds to it in the arrangements of the Divine Stature, so to speak. To destroy and annihilate it, Heaven forbid. Or to lower it or damage it. Or to darken and diminish the brilliance of its light. And to weaken, enfeeble, and lessen the power of its holy purity, Heaven forbid. All this is according to the value of the sin and the manner of its commission, and according to the value and nature of that world and the height of its degree.

**[39]** For not all worlds are equal in their measure concerning blemish and corruption. For in the lowest, it is ruin and destruction, meaning. And above it, it is the prevention of the light. And in the highest above it, it causes only a diminution of the flow of its light or its reduction. And in the highest and most hidden, it causes only a diminution in the magnitude of the brilliance of its light and the purity of its wondrous holiness. And thus there are many different aspects.

**[40]** This is the matter that our Sages, of blessed memory, referred to in several places as the blemish of sin being a blemish upon the King’s image. In Zohar Yitro, page 5, section 2, and elsewhere, it states: “Whoever transgresses the commandments of the Torah is like one who transgresses against the body of the King.” As it is written, “And they shall go out and look upon the carcasses of the people who have transgressed against Me.” Against Me, indeed. Woe to the guilty who transgress the words of the Torah and do not know what they are doing. In Tikkunim, section 210, page 129, section 2, it states: “And whoever transgresses a commandment is as if he transgressed against the likeness of the King.” As mentioned above, the blemish extends and affects the parts and arrangements of the powers and the worlds, the measure of the stature. This is because all were included in Him and gave a portion of their essence in His building and creation.

**[41]** Annotation: And this is the simple meaning of the verse, “Let us make man” [Genesis 1:26], in the plural. Meaning that all of them will give strength and a portion in our creation, so that it will be inclusive and shared by all of them. As its explanation is elucidated at length in *Tzav L’cha Ha’adam* [a work by R. Chaim Vital], Chapter 9, Section 1, and in *Ruach Chaim* [a work by R. Chaim Vital], *Parashat Pinchas*, Section 108, Paragraph 2. And so also wrote R. Chaim Vital, may his soul rest in peace, in *Sha’ar HaKedushah* [a work by R. Chaim Vital], Part 3, Gate 2, and in *Likutey Torah* [a work by R. Chaim Vital], *Parashat Tetzaveh* and *Parashat Ha’azinu*, see there.

**[42]** And this is what is stated in Bereishit Rabbah, Chapter 8: “And God said, ‘Let us make man.’” With whom did He consult? Rabbi Yehudah in the name of Rabbi Yochanan said: He consulted regarding the work of the heavens and the earth. Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel said: He consulted regarding the work of each day. And in Kohelet Rabbah, Chapter 2, Verse 11: “What has been done, has been done” is not written here, but rather “has been done.” As it were, the Holy One, Blessed be He, and His Heavenly Court consulted regarding every limb of yours and established you in your perfection. And if you say there are two authorities, is it not already stated, “He made you and established you”? And this is clear.

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## Gate I, Chapter 7

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**[1]** And now the aforementioned matter is clarified in its entirety. That man is called the soul and the spirit of life of the Master of Masters of worlds. Not a soul like the soul that is given and attached literally within the human body, for this is not possible.

**[2]** Indeed, it is as with the specific movements and inclinations of the body’s limbs, which are by means of the life-soul within it, according to the movements of its vitality and inclination. So too is the matter that all the inclinations of the powers, the worlds, and the arrangements of the Divine Chariot, their rectification, their construction, and their destruction, Heaven forbid, is solely according to the matter of the arousal from the actions of man

below. And for the reason that he is included and perfected in the number of his specific powers and their arrangements, according to the order of the emanation and connection of the higher and lower powers and worlds, all of them. And this is from the side of the root of his supernal soul, which is the highest and most internal of all created worlds, as stated above in the fifth chapter. Therefore, he encompasses them all.

**[3]** And the reason explained in this chapter is due to the root of his soul, which is higher and more internal than the worlds. And the reason explained in the previous chapter is due to his being encompassed by all the worlds. All is One, as has been explained. And for this reason alone was the judgment of choice given to him, to incline himself and the worlds to whichever side he desires. Or even if, Heaven forbid, through his sins he has already caused and brought about the destruction of the worlds, the order of the Chariot, their ruin, and their descent, Heaven forbid. He has the power and sufficiency within his hand to repair what has been perverted and to build what has been destroyed, by virtue of his being encompassed and shared by all of them.

**[4]** And this is what David, peace be upon him, said: "The Lord is your shade at your right hand." This means that just as the inclination of the shadow of any object is directed solely according to the movements of that object, wherever it inclines, so, in this analogy, so to speak, the Holy One, blessed be He, connects to the inclination of the worlds according to the movements and inclinations of man's actions below. And it is also explained in the Midrash: The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Moses, "Go and tell Israel that My name is Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh." What is "Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh"? Just as you are with Me, so I am with you. And David also said, "The Lord is your shade at your right hand." What is "The Lord is your shade"? Like your shade. Just as your shade, if you play with it, it plays with you, and if you cry, it cries opposite you, and if you show it a frowning or pleasant face, it also gives you the same. So too, the Holy One, blessed be He, is your shade; just as you are with Him, He is with you.

**[5]** And in Zohar Tetzaveh, page 194, column 2, it is stated: "The lower world is sustained to receive constantly, etc. And to the higher world, nothing is given except according to its state. If it is sustained in light from below, then so it shines to it from

above. And if it is sustained in sorrow, they give it this judgment upon itself, according to its state. 'Serve the Lord with joy.' The joy of man draws to him another, higher joy. So too, this lower world, according to how it is aroused, so it draws from above, etc."

**[6]** And this is the matter of the Cherubim, which were fashioned like a man and his wife, their faces toward one another. And concerning Solomon's Cherubim it is written (II Chronicles 3:13), "and their faces toward the house," as will be explained, with God's help.

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## Gate I, Chapter 8

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**[1]** Behold, our Sages of blessed memory said concerning the Cherubim (Bava Batra 99a) how they stood. Rabbi Yehuda and Rabbi Nechemia. One said their faces were towards their brother. And another said their faces were towards the house. And to the one who said their faces were towards their brother, is it not written, "and their faces were towards the house"? This is not difficult: here [it refers to] when Israel does the will of the Omnipresent, and here [it refers to] when Israel does not do the will of the Omnipresent. See Rashi. And to the one who said their faces were towards the house, is it not written, "and their faces were towards their brother"? This means sideways, somewhat towards the house and somewhat towards each other. See Rashi, may his memory be for a blessing. And there is no way to reconcile this as above, [saying] here when Israel does, etc. For since the primary aspect of the Cherubim's making was their faces towards the house, they should not have made it as a sign that Israel does not do the will of the Omnipresent. And so also wrote Tosafot there, that presumably they were positioned initially according to what the will of the Omnipresent was. And it would seem that still the question arises: why were they positioned initially, Solomon's Cherubim, their faces turned sideways, and not truly face to face?

**[2]** The matter is as stated in the chapter "How Blessings Are Recited" (Berakhot 35b): "Our Rabbis taught: 'And you shall gather in your grain, etc.' (Deuteronomy 11:14). Since it is stated, 'This

Book of the Torah shall not depart from your mouth...' (Joshua 1:8), one might think that the words [of Torah] are to be taken literally. Therefore, it is stated, 'And you shall gather in your grain,' implying that you should conduct your affairs in accordance with them. These are the words of Rabbi Yishmael. Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai says: Is it possible that a person plows during plowing time, etc., and the Torah what will become of it? Rather, when Israel does the will of the Omnipresent, their work is done by others. And when Israel does not do the will of the Omnipresent, their work is done by themselves, as it is stated, 'And you shall gather in your grain.'"

**[3]** And seemingly it is perplexing that it is established in the verse, "And you shall gather your grain," [implying] when one does not do the commandments. But above this it is written, "And it shall be, if you hearken diligently to My commandments, which I command you this day, to love the LORD your God, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul..." And concerning this it is said, "And you shall gather your grain."

**[4]** However, the matter is as follows: It is certain that Rabbi Yishmael's intention is not that a person is permitted, Heaven forbid, to withdraw even for a short time from the study of Torah and engage in earning a livelihood, thereby being completely idle from the study of Torah for that time, Heaven forbid. Rather, Rabbi Yishmael hinted with his holy tongue, "Act with them in the manner of the Sages." This means, with them, with the study of Torah. That is to say, even during that time and short period when you are engaged in earning a livelihood out of necessity and the need to sustain your soul, at any rate, in the contemplations of your thoughts, you should be contemplating only the study of Torah.

**[5]** And similarly, Rava said to his disciples, "In the days of Nisan and Tishrei, do not present yourselves before me." This means not to come to his study hall. But certainly, Rava's disciples were not idle, Heaven forbid, entirely from the study of Torah, even in their homes during these days.

**[6]** And they said there, "Many acted like Rabbi Yishmael, and it succeeded for them. And many acted like Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, and it did not succeed for them." This is precisely concerning the multitude. For it is almost impossible for the general populace to constantly engage solely in the study of Torah, without dedicating even a small hour to

any matter of livelihood. And this is what is alluded to in Pirkei Avot: "All Torah that is not accompanied by labor..." However, for an individual, it is possible for him to be occupied solely with his Torah and Divine service throughout his days. It is certainly incumbent upon him not to withdraw even a short time from Torah and service for the sake of livelihood, God forbid. And this is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai.

**[7]** And behold, the verse, "And you shall gather your grain, etc." is derived from the general principle, "And it shall be that when you reap your harvest, etc.," which is stated in the plural. However, the verse "And you shall gather" is stated in the singular. Therefore, it is called "one who does not do the will of the Place" when he turns himself even slightly towards the pursuit of livelihood.

**[8]** Correction: And therefore in the first portion of the Shema it is written "and with all your might" (מאדך בכל). But in the portion "And it shall come to pass" (והיה) it is not written "and with all your might" (מאדכם ובכל). This is because the entire portion of "Shema" is spoken in the singular. And the individual who is able, he is obligated to fulfill "This Torah shall not depart from your mouth" (ספר ימוש לא) – words exactly as they are written. Therefore it is said "and with all your might" (ובכל) (מאדך), meaning with all your possessions, as stated in the Mishnah at the end of Berakhot. This means not to engage in livelihood at all.

**[9]** But the verse "And it shall come to pass" (Deuteronomy 11:13) was stated in the plural. For the multitude, it is almost necessary to engage, at least somewhat, even in financial gain for the sustenance of life. Therefore, it is not written therein "and with all your possessions" (Leviticus 27:30). (And although this is still not the way and the highest of the highest level according to the true will of the Blessed One, as Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai [understood]. Nevertheless, even according to him, it is not considered, God forbid, that in this one does not fulfill the will of God, when one turns oneself somewhat towards the pursuit of livelihood, and at the time of their engagement in livelihood, their heart acts with wisdom and they contemplate Torah matters and the fear of God. And according to Rabbi Yishmael, this is the primary will of the Blessed One in the governance of the general populace. And their dispute is: What is the primary will of the Blessed One, and the highest level in the governance of the general populace.)

**[10]** It is known that the Cherubim, one of which is alluded to by the Blessed One, and the second by Israel, His treasured possession. And according to the measure of Israel's closeness and cleaving to the Blessed One, or conversely, God forbid, all would be discernible in the matter of the Cherubim's stance, through miracle and wonder. If their faces looked directly towards the Blessed One, then the Cherubim also stood with their faces towards one another. Or if their faces turned slightly, sideways, so too would the matter be immediately discernible in the Cherubim. Or if, God forbid, they turned their backs, then the Cherubim too, in an instant, would turn their faces completely away from one another, God forbid.

**[11]** And in the manner of what our Sages of blessed memory said in Yoma (54a), that they would roll up the curtain for the pilgrims and show them the cherubim, who were intertwined with each other, and say to them, "See how beloved you are before the Place," etc.

**[12]** And in Zohar Terumah 152b, "When is He with compassion?" He said to him, "At the time when the Cherubim turn and gaze face to face. When the Cherubim gaze face to face, then all colors are rectified. Just as Israel arranges their rectifications before the Holy One, Blessed be He, so is everything established and so is it ordered."

**[13]** And in the portion "Acharei Mot," chapter 59, beginning of chapter 72, "Brothers dwelling together," etc., when they were one with another, gazing face to face, it is written, "How good and how pleasant," etc. And when a male turns his face away from a female, woe to the world, etc. And in "Zohar Chadash," Parashat Terumah, page 36, column 1: Whenever Israel were righteous, they were like Cherubim, cleaving in cleaving, face to face. When they sinned, they would turn their faces away from one another, etc. And thus the Cherubim, at that time when Israel were righteous, were face to face, etc. And through these secrets, they knew whether Israel were righteous or not, etc. It is written, "Serve the Lord with joy," the joy of the two Cherubim, etc. When it is found wanting upon them, joy turns away, etc., and the world turns away with mercy, etc. And see there at length.

**[1]** And behold, the generation of the desert merited to be eaters at the High Table, bread from heaven, day by day. And their garments did not wear out upon them. And they had no need for any worldly livelihood whatsoever. For it is said, they did not perform the will of the Omnipresent except by looking upwards with perfect sincerity and enslaving their hearts solely to Torah, Divine service, and His awe, blessed be He. Day and night, the words [of Torah] shall not depart from their mouths, precisely as they are written, without inclining to the side even for a brief moment for the sake of livelihood. And as our Sages, of blessed memory, said, "The Torah was not given except to those who eat from [heaven]." Therefore, they then positioned the Cherubim, according to how they performed the will of the Omnipresent, their faces directly towards one another. To show that they perceived His countenance uprightly, face to face with His holy people.

**[2]** Indeed, in the days of Solomon, when the entire multitude of Israel needed and were compelled to incline somewhat to the side for the sake of livelihood, at least for the sustenance of life. For this is the essential truth of His will, according to Rabbi Yishmael, who opines that it is for the many that it is more fitting to act thus, as it is written in Pirkei Avot: "Beautiful is Torah study together with worldly occupation..." and "Any Torah that is not accompanied by labor..." And all the sayings of Pirkei Avot are sayings of piety. However, even during their engagement in livelihood, their hearts should be guided by wisdom, by contemplation of Torah. Therefore, at that time, they first positioned the cherubim such that their faces would be slightly turned away, according to their doing the will of the Place. And yet, they were intertwined like a man and his wife in an embrace of affection, to demonstrate His love for us. For this is the essential will of the Place (and this is the opinion of Rabbi Yishmael. And he who says that even in Solomon's cherubim, they were first positioned such that their faces would be doing the will of the Place, their faces were literally towards one another, holds the opinion of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai).

**[3]** And seemingly, why was it still necessary to set up two cherubim facing each other? Was not the one cherub, which the Holy One, Blessed be He, alluded to, sufficient to be set up directly upright?

[4] Indeed, the matter is as stated: that His blessed unity with the worlds, the powers, all their orders, and their connections, and likewise all the orders of His blessed governance over us, is according to the measure of movement and arousal that reaches them from our actions below. And according to this measure, smiling and pleased countenances are also drawn down to us below. Therefore, the cherubim, which He blessed be His name alluded to, also needed to be positioned somewhat inclined, according to the measure of the inclination of the cherub that alludes to us. For this reason.

[5] Correction: And according to this, the statement of our Sages, of blessed memory, in Chapter 9 of Shabbat (88a) will be understood: "My beloved is like a cluster of henna among the vines of the forest, etc. Why are Israel likened to an apple, etc." And the Tosafot there raised a difficulty, for in this verse, it is not Israel who is likened to an apple, but rather the Holy One, Blessed be He. As it concludes: "So is my beloved among the youths."

[6] And as explained previously, it will be resolved, with the help of God. For since Israel attained Him and was likened to Him, blessed be He, in the simile of the apple, it is certain that this is because Israel are likened and assimilated in their actions to the matter of the apple. And just as we appear before Him, blessed be He, so too does He, blessed be He, come to appear to the worlds according to this very gradation and measure. Therefore, it is asked, in what matter and affair were Israel likened and assimilated in their pleasing actions to the apple, through which they attained Him, blessed be He, in the manner of the apple?

[7] And therefore, at the time of the splitting of the Red Sea, He, blessed be He, said to Moses, "Why do you cry out to Me? Speak to the Children of Israel that they shall go forward." This means that the matter depends on them. For if they were to be with strength of faith and trust, and to go forward and advance towards the sea, close to them, they would not fear, due to the intensity of their trust that it would surely split before them. Then, through this, they would cause an arousal above, so that the miracle would be done for them and it would split before them.

[8] "For like the steeds of Pharaoh, I have likened you, my beloved. This means that just as with Pharaoh's horses, where the rider guides the horse, contrary to the natural order of things, but in

Pharaoh and his host, the horse led its rider, as our Sages have taught. So have I likened you and compared you, my beloved, to this very principle. For even though I am the rider of the heavens, nevertheless, You, as it were, lead me through Your actions. For my connection, as it were, to the worlds is only according to the inclination of the stirring of Your actions. And this is what is meant by 'Rider of the heavens, with Your help.' And so our Sages have taught, 'Service is a necessity for the Highest.'"

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## Gate I, Chapter 10

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[1] And according to this, the meaning of the matter concerning the differing opinions among the great Sages of the early generations, may their memory be blessed, will be clarified. Whether a person of Israel is greater than an angel, or an angel is greater than him. Indeed, one of these two opinions brings explicit proofs from explicit verses. And according to our aforementioned words, it will be clarified that in truth, both of these are matters of Torah. However, they are in different aspects.

[2] For an angel is greater than man, both in the essence of its being and in the magnitude of its holiness and the wonder of its comprehension. There is no comparison or likeness between them whatsoever.

[3] And as it is written in *Zohar Chadash, Bereishit*, in the section *Midah Ne'emanah*, in the portion *Vayikra Elohim La'or Yom*: "The apprehension of the angels is a greater apprehension than that which is below them. The second apprehension, etc. The third apprehension is the apprehension of the lowest rung, whose foundation is in the dust, and this is the apprehension of human beings." And in *Zohar*, chapter 16, verse 2: "The closest angels first receive the power of abundance from the upper mirror. And from them it descends to the heavens and all their hosts. And from them to man, may he be blessed." And in *Zohar, Terumah*, page 129, verse 2: "The upper angels are more holy than us."

[4] However, in one matter, man has a great advantage over the angels. This is the elevation and connection of the worlds, powers, and lights to one

another. This is not within the power of any angel at all. And this is for the aforementioned reason. For the angel is essentially only a single, specific power, which does not encompass all the worlds together. (And so it is written in Etz Chaim, Sha'ar Pnimit v'Chitzoniyut, the beginning of Drush Yud, that the angel is not merely a specific aspect of that world in which it stands. But the soul of man, in all its three parts – Nefesh, Ruach, Neshamah – encompasses all the worlds, see there). Therefore, it is not within the power or ability of the angel at all to elevate, connect, and unify each world with the world that is spread out over them, since it is not included in and does not share in them.

[5] And also the ascent of the angel's essence to its level to connect with the world upon which it is situated, does not depend on itself. Therefore, the angels are called "standing," as it is said (Isaiah 6:2), "Seraphim standing." And I have given you paths among these "standing ones" (Zechariah 2:4).

[6] And man alone is the one who elevates, connects, and unifies the worlds and the lights through the power of his actions, because he is comprised of all of them. And then even the angel attains elevation and added holiness upon his existing holiness, which comes through the power of man's action, because he too is comprised within man. (And see something similar in Etz Chaim, Sha'ar Ha'iburim, the beginning of Chapter 4).

[7] And also the three aspects of the soul, spirit, and intellect (Nefesh, Ruach, Neshamah) of the person themselves, do not possess this power of elevation and connection to the worlds and to themselves, until they descend into this practical world within the human body. As it is written, "and He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living soul" (Genesis 2:7) within the human body, at which point the person became a living soul for all the worlds, as explained above in Chapter 4.

[8] And this is also the matter of the vision of the ladder of our father Jacob, peace be upon him. See R'a'm, Nasso, page 123, folio 2: "And He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, etc." It is stated concerning him: "And he dreamed, and behold, a ladder." A ladder, indeed, is the breath of life, etc. See there. And as we have stated, God willing, below in Chapter 19. And through this: "And behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it." This means, through the breath

of life, which is planted on the earth, its lower extremity is clothed in the body of man.

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## Gate I, Chapter 11

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[1] And this is the reason why the ministering angels in the high heavens delay in sanctifying their sanctification until after we sanctify our sanctification below (as mentioned above, Chapter 6, in the gloss), even though their sanctity is above our sanctity. It is not that they show honor to Israel, but rather that it is not within their power or ability at all, by themselves, to open their mouths to sanctify their Creator. This is until the voice of Israel's sanctity ascends to them from below.

[2] For the matter of reciting Kedushah is the elevation of the worlds and their connection, each world to the world above it, to increase their holiness and the purity of their light.

[3] And consider in the Palaces of the Divine Commands, in the second Palace, at the end of page 72, concerning the holiness of the angels which comes forth from the utterance of "Our Holiness" (may He be blessed). And these on the right say songs and ascend their desires upwards and say "Holy." And these on the left say songs and ascend their desires upwards and say "Blessed." And they are joined in holiness, all those who know how to sanctify their Master in unification. And all of them are mingled, these with these, in a single unification, and they are bound, one to another. Until all of them become a single bond and a single spirit, and are bound to those above, to be all one, to be mingled one with another.

[4] And examine in the *Pri Etz Chaim* in every chapter of the Gate of the Standing Prayer, where the intention of the matter of reciting the Kedushah is explained: it is the elevation and connection of the upper worlds, to add within them, through this, an addition of holiness and light. (And perhaps from this emerged the custom of Israel, who are accustomed to elevate themselves at the time of reciting the Kedushah). And this is not within the power of any angel or seraph to do by themselves initially, as stated above. Therefore, they will not open their mouths until the ascent of the breath of

their mouths, the holy ones of Israel gathered below.

**[5]** And if all of Israel, from one end of the world to the other, were to be silent, God forbid, from saying "Kadosh" [Holy], then necessarily, they too would be silenced from sanctifying their holiness. And see in the Zohar, Balak, 190b, and this is what is stated (Ezekiel 1:24): "When they stood, their wings were relaxed," meaning, when Israel below stands silent, then necessarily the wings of the heavenly hosts will be relaxed, for the matter of their saying "Kadosh" is also in their wings. And as our Sages, of blessed memory, stated (Chagigah 13b): "One verse says..." [and then they explain the verse]. "From where do we know this?" R. Nachman said: "Those that sing praises with them..." And see Zohar, Bereshit, 13, at the beginning of 72b: "A sound of tumult..." However, there it is explained that "their wings" is an expression of "gathering" or "assembly."

**[6]** And for this reason, the multitude of heavenly hosts are in legions. One legion says "Holy," and these are the Seraphim, as stated in the Palaces of Bereshit and in the Commandment of the Second Palace, there, 42:1, and there, Remez, end of p. 71. And as it is written (Isaiah 6): "Seraphim stood above Him, etc., and one called to another and said, 'Holy, holy, holy.'" And the second, opposite them, praises and says "Blessed." And these are the Ophanim and the Chayot, as our Sages, of blessed memory, stated in the beginning of the chapter of Gehenna. And it is there, "Blessed, blessed," it is the Ophanim who say it. And as the Men of the Great Assembly arranged in the Kedushah of Yotzer Kol, each legion sanctifies according to its source and root in the worlds.

**[7]** But the assembled people of Israel say both "Holy" and "Blessed," for they encompass all the sources and roots together. This is also the matter of reciting Shirat Ha'adam (The Song of Man), which our Sages, of blessed memory, stated: "Whoever recites Shirat Ha'adam daily..." For by a person reciting it, which encompasses all the powers, he gives strength to the angels and ministers of all these creatures to recite these songs, and through this, they draw their vitality and flow to influence all the lower realms. See regarding this in Likutei Torah, in the section "Ta'amei HaMitzvot," chapter "V'etchanan."

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## Gate I, Chapter 12

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**[1]** And regarding the fact that the soul, spirit, and intellect (Neshamah, Ruach, Nefesh) of a person are not capable of connecting the worlds until they descend into the human body, as stated above. For in order to rectify the World of Action (Assiyah), they necessarily had to be clothed in a body in the World of Action. Likewise, we find several verses that speak concerning these three levels mentioned above: Regarding the arousal from above through the level of action, King David, peace be upon him, said, "He who fashions together their hearts, He understands all their deeds." And according to the simple interpretation, it would have been fitting to say, "He understands all their deeds." But it says, "all their deeds," meaning that which pertains to their deeds. This is because He, blessed be He, is the fashioner who knows and understands how far their deeds reach and affect the rectifications of the worlds, or conversely, God forbid.

**[2]** And thus Kohelet said, "For God will bring every deed into judgment, concerning every hidden thing, etc." He did not say, "For God will bring every deed into judgment, etc." And this is because "Elohim" signifies the Possessor of all powers. And at the time a person stands for judgment before Him, blessed be He, they will not judge the deed alone as it is. Rather, they will also consider everything that was caused and brought about by his actions, whether good or bad, through all the powers and worlds. This is what is meant by "the deed of Elohim."

**[3]** And He said, "For all deeds." Not as though the matter pertains to all deeds, as it is written (Job 34:11), "For the deeds of a man He will repay him." And this is as was explained above (in Chapter 6, footnote), that when the purity of a person's thought to perform a commandment arises, immediately its imprint is made above in its supernal root, to build and plant many worlds and supernal powers. As it is written (Isaiah 51:15-16), "And I have put My words in your mouth... to plant the heavens..." And as our Sages of blessed memory said, "Do not read 'your children' but 'your builders'," as explained above.

**[4]** And consequently, encompassing light from

the Highest Holiness is aroused and drawn down upon him. This is what assists him in completing it. And after the completion of the commandment, the Holiness and the light withdraw to their root. This is the matter of the reward of the World to Come, which is the work of a person's own hands. For after his soul separates from the body, it ascends to be delighted and to satisfy its soul with the pure radiance of the lights, powers, and holy worlds that were added and increased by his good deeds.

**[5]** And as it is written, "All of Israel has a portion in the World to Come." They did not say "in the World to Come" in the sense that the World to Come was prepared from the time of Creation as a distinct entity, and if a person is righteous, they will be given a portion of it as their reward. Rather, the truth is that the World to Come is itself the work of a person's own hands. Through their actions, they have expanded, added to, and prepared a portion for themselves. Thus, all of Israel, each individual, has a portion of the holiness, the lights, and the splendors that they have prepared and added to the World to Come through their good deeds.

**[6]** And likewise, the punishment of Gehenna is also its essence, that the sin itself is its punishment. As it is said (Proverbs 5:22), "His iniquities will capture him, the wicked one, and by the cords of his sin he will be held fast." "Your wickedness will chastise you..." (Jeremiah 2:19). As has been explained, when a person commits one of the prohibitions of the Lord, which one should not do, the blemish and destruction are inscribed, Heaven forbid, immediately above in its root.

**[7]** And in contrast to this, the fullness of destruction is what establishes and strengthens the forces and armies of impurity and the husks. May the Merciful, blessed be He, save us.

**[8]** And from there, the spirit of impurity also continues upon himself, which envelops him at the time of committing the transgression. And after the spirit of impurity has acted, it departs to its place. And he, while still alive, is truly in Gehenna, which surrounds him at the time of committing the sin, only that he does not yet feel it until after his departure, when he is then ensnared in the net which he prepared, namely the forces of impurity and the harmful spirits that were created from his deeds.

**[9]** Correction: Indeed, the attribute of goodness is

greatly multiplied with vast difference and advantage, for the purity and added holiness that are added from his good deeds are eternal and endure forever, and his soul is refreshed by them with eternal delight. But the forces of impurity and the harmful spirits that were created and multiplied from his sins, after receiving all the punishment decreed for him, they die and perish of themselves.

**[10]** For the very essence of their vitality stems solely from the flaw of sin and the destruction it caused to the holy powers and worlds. From this, a meager flow of vitality and sparks of light is drawn to them through crooked channels, akin to the filling of a ruin. And since they received their judgment through them, "a mighty one swallowed and vomited them out," and their vitality ceased of its own accord, and their vessels were emptied by themselves. And this is the matter of Gehenna being called a leech, for just as a leech sucks out bad blood and dies immediately from it, so is the matter of Gehenna, as explained above.

**[11]** And as it is written, "The wicked dig for themselves a deep Gehenna," meaning that they themselves deepen Gehenna for themselves, and widen it, and ignite it with their sins. As it is said, "Behold, all of you kindle a fire, you gird yourselves with sparks; walk by the light of your fire, and by the sparks you have kindled. This you shall have from My hand: you shall lie down in torment" (Isaiah 50:11). Therefore, when the Men of the Great Assembly seized the Evil Inclination, Gehenna itself was extinguished. As it is written in Zohar Terumah 109b: "Just as the wicked are heated by the fire of the Evil Inclination, with every heat, so the fire of Gehenna was ignited. At one time, the Evil Inclination was not found in the world, and during all that time, the fire of Gehenna was extinguished and not ignited at all. The Evil Inclination returned to its place, and the wicked of the world began to be heated by it; the fire of Gehenna began to be ignited. For Gehenna is not ignited except by the heat of the strength of the Evil Inclination of the wicked."

**[12]** For the reward of a person's complete action will be given to him, for the action itself, whether good or, God forbid, evil, is itself his recompense, as explained above. And see Zohar, Korach, page 177a. And this is what is stated in Pirkei Avot: "The reward of a commandment is a commandment, and the reward of a transgression is a transgression." This is to say, for "all his deeds,"

etc., meaning the deed itself, which stands and is recorded as it is, as explained above.

**[13]** And therefore our Sages said (Bava Kama 50a): "Whoever says the Holy One, Blessed be He, is lenient, may his life be lenient." This is also found in the Jerusalem Talmud, Chapter 5 of Shekalim, and in Bereishit Rabbah, Parashah 57, and in Tanchuma, Parashat Tetzaveh, and in Shir HaShirim Rabbah. And at first glance, it is surprising, for even a man of kindness behaves with leniency.

**[14]** However, as stated above, it is not in the manner of punishment and vengeance, God forbid. Rather, "evil pursues sinners" (Proverbs 13:21), for sin itself is its punishment. Since the time of creation, He, blessed be He, established all the orders of the governance of the worlds to be dependent on the arousal of man's actions, whether good or evil, God forbid. For all his deeds and affairs are recorded of themselves, each in its source and root.

**[15]** And he is compelled to accept his judgment through those forces of impurity that he amplified through his actions, according to the value and nature of the blemish. And by this, the blemish of the worlds and of his soul will be rectified, of itself.

**[16]** Or by the power of repentance, which reaches its supreme root, the World of Repentance, the world of freedom and illumination for all. And from there, supreme holiness and a radiant light are emanated and flow, to purify and rectify the worlds as before, with the advantage of new light from the World of Repentance shining upon them.

**[17]** To this, there is no room for compromise, and this is what is stated in Avot: "And all your deeds are written in a book." This means that they are written and inscribed above of their own accord.

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## Gate I, Chapter 13

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**[1]** And similarly, concerning the arousal from above through the aspect of speech, the prophet Amos, of blessed memory, said (Chapter 4): "For behold, He who forms the mountains and creates the wind, and declares to man what is his thought."

For they said in the Zohar (Lekh Lekha, p. 6, b. 2; Vayichi, p. 214, b. 2 and p. 209, a. 1; Yitro, p. 71, a. 1; Tazria, p. 50, b. 2; Shelach, p. 161, a. 1. And in *Otzar Midrashim*, beginning of p. 293, and in *Zohar Chadash*, Song of Songs, p. 55, a. 4) that the tongue of declaration pertains to the secret of the matter.

**[2]** He warns here the Creator, may He be blessed, because he is now in this lowly world, which does not see and comprehend the building or destruction, God forbid, that is wrought above in the worlds from every word and utterance. And he might imagine, God forbid, to say, "What significance does a light word or conversation have that it should effect any action or matter in the world?" But know with certainty that every light word and conversation of his, whatever he utters with his lips, is not lost and does not go to naught, God forbid.

**[3]** Correction: And according to the order of the four worlds, Atzilut, Beriah, Yetzirah, Assiah, it would have been fitting to first say the language of Creation, and afterwards, Formation.

**[4]** Indeed, the matter is as follows: The term "Yetzirah" (Creation) signifies the formation of something from existing matter. The term "Bri'ah" (Creation) signifies something newly brought into being from nothing. As all exegetes have agreed (and as is stated in the Zohar, Bereishit, in the section "Midah Ne'emanah," chapter 17, at the beginning of page 71a), this is why it appears to us that now, after the initial creation, He only "Yotzer" (forms) mountains from existing matter. For the renewal from nothing already occurred in the six days of old. However, the truth is that just as it was then, so it is now, at every moment and instant, He creates them and renews them from nothing through the life-force of the Spirit that He renews within them by His will, may He be blessed, every moment. And so it is said in the Mishnah (Avot 5:1), "He is the Yotzer, He is the Borei." And this is as explained above. From this, the diligent inquirer will understand, according to the simple meaning, the matter of the four worlds called Atzilut, Bri'ah, Yetzirah, and Asiyah.

**[5]** For it is known that the worlds descended in stages, from one degree to the next. And whatever descended further down became more dense. And the totality of the worlds is divided into four distinct divisions according to their level of elevation. (Apart

from the uppermost effulgences, which cannot even be called by the name of nobility.)

**[6]** And the first of the four worlds that He, blessed be He, emanated, which we can call by a name, is called Atzilut. And Atzilut has two meanings: the language of connection, like "atzelo" (his connection), and the language of spiritual diffusion, like "vaya'tzel min ha'ruach" (and he diffused from the spirit). And like the nobles of his hands, which are always connected to the body, and also the beginning of the diffusion of his hands. For the world of Atzilut is entirely pure Divinity, as stated in the Introduction to the Tikkunim, "In Atzilut, He and His causes are one." And in "Pri Etz Chaim," Gate of the Sermons of ABYA, Chapter 7, and at the beginning of the Gate of the Visualization of the Worlds of ABYA in the Introduction of Rabbi Chaim Vital. And in the Gate of the Silsul of the Ten Sefirot, Chapter 3. And in the Gate of the Image, Chapter 1. And in the Gate of the Names, Chapter 1. And in the Gate of the Order of ABYA, Chapter 2 and the beginning of Chapter 3, see there. And it is called "Ayin" (Nothingness) that no thought can grasp, the essence of emanation and connection, for He, His life, and His causes are one.

**[7]** And the second world descended and was further diminished in degree than the first, whose existence is apprehended at least somewhat, such that it can be called "existent." And it is "existent from nothing," therefore it is called by the name "creation," as was explained above.

**[8]** And the third world emanated in order of degrees from the second world, and became more condensed, such that its existence is more grasped, and it is an existence from existence. Therefore, it is described by the name "Creation" [Yetzirah], like a creator of matter, which is an existence from existence.

**[9]** And the World of Action [Assiyah] is the completion of the work of all the worlds that preceded it, and their perfection to the ultimate true good, which is His blessed will concerning the entirety of the whole creation. And this is the lower world, wherein dwells man, who governs the worlds by the power of his deeds. As it is written, "And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good" (Genesis 1:31). And they said in Bereishit Rabbah, Chapter 8: "And behold, it was very good, and behold, it was good, man." And so it is there in Chapter 9. And in Chapter 4 there,

Rabbi Shimon ben Azzai said: "From the beginning of the creation of the world, the Holy One, blessed be He, desired to make a partnership with the lower beings." And so it is in Tanchuma, in the portion of Bechukotai and the portion of Nasso, see there.

**[10]** Therefore, the name *Asiyah* (Action) is derived from the concept of rectifying a matter, as in "and he gave it to the lad, and he hurried to do it" (Genesis 22:3), and many similar instances. Thus, they also said in *Sha'arei Gan Eden* (Gates of Paradise), "Asiyah is the rectification of a matter, increasing its greatness and elevation beyond what it was, as it is said, 'And David did it' (1 Samuel 18:5)."

**[11]** And as it is written in the Sukkah (Talmudic tractate), page 2b: Even the breath from a person's mouth has its place and station, and the Holy One, Blessed be He, does with it what He does. And even a word spoken by a person, and even a sound, is not empty; they all have their place and station. And in Parashat Metzora, page 5b, it is stated: Every word that a person utters from their mouth ascends on high, cleaves the heavens, and enters its appointed place. And in Parashat Naso, it is stated that the same word that a person utters from their mouth ascends and cleaves the heavens and stands in its appointed place.

**[12]** For whatever comes forth from his mouth is enacted above and arouses a higher power. Indeed, through good speech, one adds strength to the holy powers, as it is written (Isaiah 51:15-16): "And I have put My words in your mouth... to plant the heavens..."

**[13]** And in Zohar Emor 105a, it is stated: "There is no word and word, etc. And whoever brings forth a holy word from his mouth, a word of Torah, a voice is created from it and ascends on high. And the holy ones of the Supreme King are aroused and crowned upon their heads. And thus, union is found above and below." See at length in Parashat Vayakhel, R. Yitzchak 1a, the awesome wonders concerning the speech of holy words of Torah, that all worlds are illuminated from the joy, gladness, and exultation that enter the supreme holy palaces, and they are crowned with holy crowns. And see in Parashat Kedoshim, Chapter 5, end of page 71a.

**[14]** And it is also explained in many places in the writings of the Sages, that from every word, voice, and breath of speech or prayer, many holy angels

are created. Conversely, with speech that is not good, God forbid, one builds heavens and worlds of vanity for the forces of impurity, meaning, and causes, God forbid, the destruction and ruin of the worlds and the order of the holy Chariot, which are connected to the root of speech.

**[15]** And also see Zohar, Tzav, 31b, that there is nothing good and evil, etc. Woe to the creatures who see and do not know what they see, for there is no utterance that does not have a place, for the bird of the sky carries the voice. And how many thousands of accusers who grasp it and elevate it to the masters of judgment and judge it, whether for good or the opposite, G-d forbid, as written in Zohar, Lech-Lecha, 92a. And in the portion Kedoshim, mentioned above, "and there is no word and word," etc., and how many accusers are joined with that voice until it ascends and awakens a place of divine judgment, etc. And how many awaken upon that person. Woe to him who utters an evil word from his mouth, see there.

**[16]** And it is written (Ecclesiastes 5:5): "Why should God be angry at your voice and destroy the work of your hands?" And they said (in *Arakhin*): "Greater is one who speaks with his mouth than one who performs an action." And our Sages, of blessed memory, said (Sanhedrin 92a): "Whoever breaks his word is as if he worships idolatry." This is what is meant by "and declares to man his speech," meaning that when a person stands to give an accounting before Him, may He be blessed, then He, may He be blessed, declares to him the secret, the *raz d'milta* (the essence of the matter), what caused his sin above in the higher worlds. As we have explained above, the language of "declares" (*haggadah*) signifies the *raz d'milta*.

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## Gate I, Chapter 14

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**[1]** And likewise concerning the arousal from above through the examination of thought. David, peace be upon him, said, "He who fashions together their hearts, who understands..." And it should have been, "who understands all their deeds." Above, in Chapter 12, we explained this in terms of the examination of action, and it can also be interpreted in terms of the examination of thought.

**[2]** It is possible that two individuals commit the same transgression, yet their punishment is not equal. This may be because one person's intellect and comprehension are greater than his companion's, due to the root of his soul originating from a higher and loftier place than his companion's. The punishment corresponds to the nature of the blemish caused above, and the blemish of each individual reaches the root of his soul.

**[3]** As it is written in Tikkunim, at the end of Tikkun 13, "Whoever causes damage below, causes damage above." This is to the place from which his soul was cleaved. And there, in Tikkun 20, chapter 123, it states: "And when a person commits sins, according to that person, so do his sins ascend to the place from which his soul was cleaved." And his punishments are many, according to his levels. And so also wrote the Ari z"l in Sha'arei Yichudim, at the beginning of Tikkun Orot. And in Pri Etz Chaim, in the introduction to Sha'ar HaShabbat, chapter 1, and in Gilgulim. And it is not comparable for one who defiles the king's courtyard to one who defiles the king's palace, and certainly not the throne or his garments of glory, and even more so the crown.

**[4]** And although in any world that is higher and more exalted, sin does not have the power to effect such a great blemish and impression, its punishment is nevertheless greater. For one who is appointed to purify and polish the crown of the king, if he leaves upon it even a little dust, there is no comparison or likeness to his punishment compared to the punishment of one appointed to clean the courtyard of the king, even if he left within it much mud and mire. Therefore, the judgments of the Lord are abundant and true, with an infinite variation in the divisions of punishments, for each according to the degree of the blemish in the root of his soul, from which world it was hewn.

**[5]** Furthermore, the punishment of two individuals will not be equal because their intentions were not equal at the time of committing the transgression, and the blemish extends into the worlds. This is also according to the matter of thought at the time of action. If one person adhered his thought more strongly to the transgression, certainly he is deserving of a greater punishment, for then the blemish, Heaven forbid, reaches more exalted worlds. And for this reason, the punishment of an unintentional offender is lighter than that of a deliberate one. Therefore, they said (Yoma 29a) that thoughts of transgression are more severe than [the

act of] transgression.

**[6]** "He who forms their hearts together (meaning, He who sees their hearts' thoughts together, as our Sages, of blessed memory, expounded in Rosh Hashanah 18a) who understands all their deeds. This means that the Supreme Creator, may He be exalted, sees and understands the thoughts of their hearts which are joined to their deeds, and judges each one according to the nature of his heart's thought at the time of committing the transgression."

**[7]** And thus Solomon, peace be upon him, said: "For God will bring every deed into judgment, concerning every hidden thing." This means that besides the punishment for the actual commission of a transgression, God, blessed be He, will also bring into judgment every deed, to judge it also for the hidden thought. How and in what manner it was at the time of its doing.

**[8]** And so it is said (Proverbs 3:19-20): "The LORD by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding He established the heavens. By His knowledge the depths were broken open." Here, in a general principle, are encompassed all the worlds. Earth is the middle world. Heavens are all the upper worlds. And the depths are all the lower ones.

**[9]** And He then said, "My children, may they not stray from your eyes." And we find the term "eye" [ayin] several times in Scripture referring to the matter of thought, as it is written, "And my heart saw" (Genesis 32:12). "The wise man's eyes are in his head" (Ecclesiastes 2:14). And "may they stray" [yelizu] we find in the Mishnah to be a term for crookedness, as in, "he is crooked [niloz] and he makes crooked [maliz] his Father in Heaven concerning him" (end of Kilayim). Therefore, He said, "My children, be careful and compassionate towards the precious worlds that were created with wisdom, understanding, and knowledge. And be warned lest you cause, God forbid, crookedness and ruin to them all with one thought that is not good, God forbid."

**[10]** And these three aspects – action, speech, and thought – are the totality of the internal aspects of man, which are the three aspects of Nefesh, Ruach, and Neshamah. For action is from the aspect of the Nefesh, as it is written, "And the soul that does [them]" (Leviticus 18:29), and "the souls that do" (Leviticus 18:29), and many similar phrases. For

blood is the Nefesh, as the Nefesh dwells and is clothed in the blood of man. Therefore, its primary dwelling is in the liver, which is entirely blood. And the circulation of the blood throughout all the detailed parts of the limbs is the instrument of action, which gives them the vitality of movement and arousal, enabling them to operate and do that which is within their power. And if the circulation of the blood is prevented from one limb, that limb dries up and has no movement to do anything, and it is a dead limb.

**[11]** And speech is from the aspect of spirit, as it is written (2 Samuel 23:2): "The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue." And as it is translated according to (Isaiah 11:4): "And with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked." And it appears to the eye that with every word a person utters from his mouth, a spirit and breath emerge from the mouth. And the dwelling place of the spirit is primarily in the heart. For the spirit and breath of speech, its essence and beginning, ascends from the heart.

**[12]** And thought is the aspect of the soul that teaches a person knowledge and understanding in the Holy Torah. Therefore, its primary dwelling is in the brain, the vessel of thought, and it is the highest aspect within them. And so they said in Bereishit Rabbah, Chapter 14: "Five names were called for it, etc. Nefesh, this is the blood, etc. Ruach, etc. Neshamah, this is the character, the created [aspect]." This means his opinion and his thought, as explained by the Arukh and Rashi, may their memory be for a blessing.

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## Gate I, Chapter 15

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**[1]** And is it surprising? For the name "soul" (Neshamah) itself means "breath." And indeed, it appears to the eye that a person's breath is the exhalation rising from the heart, from below upwards. And also, it is a level of "returning light" (Or Chozer) and not a higher level.

**[2]** However, the matter that is called by the language of "breath" is not intended to be the breath of a person. Rather, it is, as it were, the breath of His blessed essence. As it is written, "and

He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.”

**[3]** And the Sages, of blessed memory, have already likened (in *Pirkei Avot*, Chapter 2) the matter of the emanation of the spirit of life in man to the making of glass vessels, in relation to the resurrection of the dead. They said, by way of *kal vachomer* (a fortiori argument): If from a glass vessel that is worked by the spirit of flesh and blood, etc., [it is possible to be revived], then all the more so from the spirit of the Holy One, Blessed be He! And so it is also found in the commentary of the Sages on Psalms, Psalm 2, see there.

**[4]** For the matter is analogous to a proof. When we observe the breath of the craftsman’s mouth in the glass vessel during its creation, we find within it three aspects. The first aspect is when the breath of exhalation is still within his mouth, before it enters the hollow of the tube. It is then called only “breath” (*neshimah*). The second aspect is when the exhalation enters and comes into the tube, and is drawn out like a line; then it is called “spirit” (*ruach*). And the third, lower aspect is when the spirit exits the tube into the glass and spreads within it until it becomes a vessel according to the glassblower’s will. Then he “consumes his spirit” (*mechali ruacho*), and it is then called “soul” (*nefesh*), a term signifying rest and repose.

**[5]** Thus, in this analogy. It is the matter of the three aspects of *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, and *Neshamah*, which are, as it were, influenced by the breath of His blessed mouth. For the aspect of *Nefesh* is the lower aspect, which is entirely within the human body.

**[6]** And in the aspect of the spirit, it comes by way of infusion from above. For its upper part and extremity are connected and grasped above in the lower aspect of the soul. And it descends and enters also within the human body and connects there in the higher aspect of the soul. As it is written (Isaiah 32:15), “Until the spirit is poured upon us from on high.” “I will pour out My spirit...” (Joel 3:1). For it is influenced in man by way of pouring and infusion, as mentioned above. And as the matter of their connection will be further explained below, if God wills, in length.

**[7]** However, the essence of the soul is the breath itself, whose inner being is hidden in concealment, and its source, blessed be He, is as it were within the breath of His mouth, may He be exalted. For

the essence of its being does not enter at all into the body of man. And Adam the first, before the sin, merited its essence, but by reason of the sin it was removed from him and remained only hovering over him.

**[8]** Apart from the Holy Ark, which merited the essence within its body, and therefore is called “Man of God” as is known, all three worlds, *Atzilut*, *Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Assiah*, from the aspect of their souls and above, are pure Divinity. As stated in the “*Sha’ar HaTzelem*” (Gate of the Image), Chapter 1, and at the beginning of “*Sha’ar Tziyur*” (Gate of Conception). The worlds of *Atzilut*, *Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Assiah*, in the introduction of Rabbi Chaim Vital, may his soul be sanctified. And in “*Sha’ar HaShemot*” (Gate of Names), Chapter 1.

**[9]** And without Him, no person has merited it. Only the clarity of sparks of light scintillates from it upon the head of the person who merits it, each according to his level and according to his measure.

**[10]** And see Ra’am, Nasso, chapter 23, page 2. “And He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life,” for this is the image of man, etc. And in *Zohar*, Ruth, chapter 64, page 3. “And if he merits, etc., then a greater arousal descends upon him from above, etc. An arousal from above awakens within him, a holy arousal, and rests upon man, and encompasses him from all sides. And that arousal which rests upon him from the supernal realm is indeed called “*Neshamah*” (soul), its name is, see there.

**[11]** And it is this [understanding] that grants man superior intellect to comprehend the inner intelligibles concealed within the Holy Torah. As it is written in the Holy Scriptures, “*Lech Lecha*” (Genesis 12:1), “A soul is awakened in a person with understanding and with the light of wisdom” (Ruth 4:11), and “I was awakened with wisdom” (Proverbs 3:13), etc. And consult *Etz Chaim*, *Sha’ar Mochin d’Katanut*, Chapter 3, may his memory be for a blessing: “However, not every person merits this.” And know that whoever possesses power in his actions, etc., then he will have wondrous remembrance in the Torah and will understand all the secrets of the Torah, etc., and the secrets of the Torah will be revealed to him in their proper order, therefore. And consult below regarding the matter in its supreme root, and you will understand.

**[12]** And this is what the verse states (Job 32:8):

"But it is the spirit in a person, the breath of the Almighty, that makes them understand." This means that the faculty of *ruach* (spirit) descends, is influenced, and enters within the person. However, the *neshamah* (soul), which is "the breath of the Almighty," meaning the breath of His mouth, may He be blessed, its essence is not influenced or revealed within the person. For it dwells on high, within His mouth, so to speak. It is only that it grants him understanding through sparks of its light upon him, to enlighten him in the depths of the hidden secrets of the Holy Torah.

**[13]** And concerning what is stated in the Zohar and by the Kabbalists, may their memory be blessed, that the soul's essence resides in the human brain. Their intention, may they be blessed, is concerning the sparks of its illuminating light that enlivens his brain and intellect. Not its essence itself.

**[14]** And the primary intention of the Sages, of blessed memory, was concerning the aspect of the three *Gevurot* of the spirit, the secret of the intellects. These sometimes flash and sometimes recede, and come as an addition for one who merits it, as is known, not concerning the aspect of the essential soul. And so too wrote our great master, the brilliant and pious Rabbi Eliezer, of blessed memory, in his commentary on *Heichalot* in the second *Heichal*. And all is one: the lower aspect of the soul that flashes in his knowledge and intellect to comprehend, this is the three *Gevurot* of the spirit in his intellects, as we will write before us, with God's help.

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## Gate I, Chapter 16

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**[1]** And the wise will understand. For such is the matter also in its highest root. For only the lower aspect of the Mother of Children, the secret of the supernal Soul of Life, enters and spreads within the inner being of the supernal man, by the secret of the addition after the rectification, through the desirable actions of the lower beings.

**[2]** And this is the secret of the holy intellects, the three *Gevurot* of His. Whose essence is Yod-Heh, as is known. As explained to one who understands

in *Ein Ayin* (or *Ein Be'er*), Gate of the Primordial Lights, Chapter 8. And in the Gate of Specifics, Chapter 13. And in the Gate of Unions, beginning of Chapter 4. And at the end of the Gate of Intellects of the Image. And in the Gate of Discourses on the Image, Discourse 2, may He be blessed in all the discourse, and in Discourse 8. There. And in *Pri Etz Chaim*, Chapter 3 of the Gate of Phylacteries. And in the Gate of Unifications, Chapter 5 of the Rectification of Sins.

**[3]** And this is what they said, that the soul resides in the brain. As it is written there in Sha'ar Anakh, Chapter 6, and in Sha'ar HaMuchin, Chapters 7, 8, and 12. And in Sha'ar Drushei HaTzelem, the beginning of Drush 2. And the matter is more clearly explained there in the glosses of the Holy Rabbi Chaim Vital, may his memory be for a blessing. And in Sha'ar HaPartzufim, the beginning of Chapter 1. And in Sha'ar Pnimit U'Chitzonit, Drush 4 and Drush 9. And in Sha'ar Klippat Noga, the beginning of Chapter 1. And it is clearly explained for one who is meticulous in examining all the Drushei HaTzelem.

**[4]** And a portion of it overlaps, encompasses, and illuminates his head in proximity of place. This is a secret of the crown with which his mother crowned him. In the secret of the breath and exhalation that issues from the mother's mouth to the encompassing light towards him. As it is written in the Priestly Writings, Gate of the Principles, end of Chapter 11, and in the Psalms, Chapter 5, verse 3. As mentioned above, that the essence of the soul is the breath of the upper mouth. But its core is entirely above, hidden and concealed in its supreme source within the mouth, and it illuminates from a distance.

**[5]** And with this, the intention of our Sages, of blessed memory, in Midrash Rabbah, Parashat Emor, will be understood, based on "For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding" (Proverbs 2:6). They said, it is like a king who had a son. His son came from school and found a communal meal before his father. His father took a piece and gave it to him, etc. He said, "I seek only from what is within your mouth." What did he do? He gave it to him, etc. This is to say that the beloved son sought to attain that sparks of light, in the aspect of the soul, should be bestowed upon him, whose source is hidden within the breath of His blessed Name.

**[6]** And they further hinted with their holy tongue, that they likened it to a child returning from school. They truly informed us that there is no entrance in the world to attain the level of sparks of the soul's light, unless through engagement, contemplation, and deep reflection in the Holy Torah with sanctity, for both come from one source, as is known to the understanding one.

**[7]** Correction: And according to this, the diligent student will understand, in a simple sense, the matter mentioned in the Zohar, Parshat Acharei, page 133a, that the Holy One, Blessed be He, the Torah, and Israel are bound one to another. Certainly, the depth of its intention is towards profound secrets. Nevertheless, the matter can also be explained simply according to this.

**[8]** The matter is that the Holy One, Blessed be He, is both hidden and revealed. For the essence of the Master of all, the Infinite, Blessed be He, is not apprehended, and no thought can grasp Him at all. And what little we apprehend, from the very little, is only by way of His connection to the worlds from the time He created and renewed them, to give them life and sustain them every moment and to govern them, as it is written, "And You give life to them all."

**[9]** Therefore, may He who is blessed be praised in our prayers as the Life of the Universes. For the entire intention of our heart in all prayers and petitions must be solely for the unification of the world, which is the Blessed Ein Sof. However, this is not from the perspective of His essence alone, in His aspect of being separate from the worlds. Rather, it is from the perspective of His simple will's connection to the worlds and His immanence within them to sustain them. And this is the fundamental root of the entire matter of service and commandments. And this alone is the extent of our comprehension. See below in Chapter 2, Sections 4 and 5 for the matter at length. And the entire life and existence of all the worlds is solely through the Holy Torah when Israel is occupied with it, for it is the light of all worlds and the soul and life of them all. And if the world, from its beginning to its end, were empty even for a single moment from engagement and contemplation in the Holy Torah, all the worlds would return to chaos and void, as our Sages have stated, "For the sake of the Torah..." as it is written, "And the life of the world He planted within us." For its supreme root source is above all the worlds. Therefore, the life of all depends on it.

**[10]** And they also said, "For the sake of Israel, etc.," as is written, that through a person's engagement and contemplation of the Holy Torah, they attain the illumination of the soul's essence within them, enabling them to comprehend the profound holy secrets thereof. For then they are called "Israel," as is known in the Zohar. And concerning every utterance from the mouth of God, it is the essence of the soul of man, the breath of His mouth, blessed be He. They will also live and be sustained, all the powers and worlds, which is also the highest and innermost of all worlds. And this is the Holy One, blessed be He, the Torah, and Israel, bound one to another. And this is what is meant by "In the beginning," for the sake of the Torah, which is called "beginning," and for the sake of Israel, who are called "beginning."

**[11]** And this is what is stated there: At the time Israel stood at Mount Sinai to receive the Torah, they desired to hear the Ten Commandments from the mouth of the Holy One, Blessed be He. As it is written, "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth."

**[12]** The seven holy stations, all merited that the radiance of His divine spark, in the manner of a soul from His blessed mouth, as it were, encompassed and illuminated them. And this is the secret of the crowns they merited at Sinai. And everlasting joy was upon their heads.

**[13]** And through this, they merited to attain the hidden secrets of the soul of the Holy Torah, as it is written in the Zohar, Parshat Behaalotecha, page 152a: "The Torah has a body, etc. The wise are servants of the Supreme King, they are those who stood at Mount Sinai, and they looked only at the soul, which is the root of all, the Torah itself."

**[14]** And this is what is stated in many places in the Midrash: "Zayin" they had at Sinai, and the Explicit Name was engraved upon it, which is the supreme apprehension in the soul and the secrets of the Torah, which is "Shem Meforash" (the Explicit Name). For so was the matter then above in its supreme root, as was mentioned previously in the chapter concerning the secret of "with the crown that his mother crowned him." And they expounded on this in the Midrash: "On the day of his wedding, this is Sinai, and on the day of his heart's joy, these are the words of Torah." And this is "with the crown," etc., referring to the crowns mentioned above that were at Sinai. "The life of the

king.” And see in Etz Chaim, Sha’ar HaKlalim, the end of Chapter 5.

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## Gate I, Chapter 17

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**[1]** And we will explain the matter of the connection of the three levels of soul, Nefesh, Ruach, and Neshamah, one to another. And this is the foundation and the essence of the matter of repentance. And this is the entire fruit of removing sins from the sinful soul, and purifying it from the filth of its impurity.

**[2]** And man should contemplate. How much he needs to be vigilant and to reflect upon all the details of his service to his Creator, blessed be He. So that his service may be whole and complete, holy and pure. And he should strive to constantly examine and scrutinize all his actions, words, and thoughts, which are the three aforementioned aspects. Perhaps he has not yet fulfilled His will and desire, blessed be He, according to the root of his soul, in comprehension. And all his days he shall add strength in Torah and commandments, to perfect his soul, his spirit, and his essence, purified as they were given. After he sees with the eye of his intellect how He, blessed be He, desires in His great kindness to improve his end, and is diligent in the rectification of the sinful soul, that even if it has already been submerged in the depths of the abyss of evil, nevertheless, everything will return to its place and its source, without being cast out.

**[3]** And the matter is that it is known in the order of the emanation of the worlds that the higher aspect of each world connects with the lower aspect of the world above it. And see Zohar Vayikra 10b, that all worlds are connected one to another, and one to another, like a chain that is connected one to another. And as is known in the writings of the Ari z”l, that the externality of the Malchut of each world and persona becomes the internality of the Keter for the world or persona beneath it. (This means that in a person’s acceptance of the yoke of His Kingship, blessed be He, to elevate all his actions, speech, and thoughts in Torah and Mitzvot to a higher degree, from this arises for him an internal will to subjugate his mind, speech, and actions to Torah and Mitzvot). This is in the secret of Keter Malchut.

**[4]** And so is this matter concerning the three aspects of man’s *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, and *Neshamah*. For each aspect of a sacred matter is comprised of ten specific aspects, which are its ten *Sefirot*. And the highest aspect of the *Nefesh* is grasped and connected with the tenth, lowest aspect of the *Ruach*. And the highest aspect of the *Ruach* is connected with the lowest aspect of the *Neshamah*. And the *Neshamah* likewise is connected and cleaves to the aspect of the root of the *Neshamah*, the secret of the Assembly of Israel, which is the root of the assembly of all the souls of all Israel together. And thus it is said, also the aspect of the root of the *Neshamah* is connected upwards, from level to level, until the very essence of the Blessed Ein Sof, may He be blessed.

**[5]** And this is what Abigail said to David: “And the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the LORD your God.” This means that even the level of his soul shall cleave, as it were, to the Blessed Ein Sof.

**[6]** And as it is written in Zohar Terumah 142b: “When that spirit ascended to be crowned, etc., that soul was bound to that spirit and illuminated from it, etc. And the spirit was bound within that soul. And that soul was bound within the ultimate thought, which is the secret. And that soul was bound within that higher spirit. And that spirit was bound within that higher soul. And that soul was bound to Ein Sof. And thus is the rest of all, and the binding of all, above and below, all in one secret, etc. And thus is the rest of the soul below. And concerning this it is written: ‘And the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the Lord your God.’”

**[7]** And in the portion “After” (Parashat Acharei Mot), chapter 2, verse 1, it is taught: “And the soul of my master shall be bound up in the bundle of life.” (1 Samuel 25:29). It should say “spirit” (*neshamah*) of my master. However, as we have stated, the portion of the righteous is interconnected. Everything is bound together: the soul (*nefesh*) with the spirit (*ruach*), and the spirit with the soul (*neshamah*), and the soul with the Holy One, Blessed be He. Thus, it is found that the soul is bound up in the bundle of life, etc. And see further in the portion “He Called” (Parashat Vayikra), the beginning of chapter 25.

**[8]** And this is the matter of “For the portion of the LORD is His people; Jacob is the lot of His

inheritance.” For they are, as it were, a portion of the LORD, cleaving to Him, blessed be He, through the connection of the three aforementioned aspects, like a rope tied above and descending downwards.

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## Gate I, Chapter 18

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[1] And all this is from His abundant goodness and great grace, blessed be He, who desired to justify us and improve our end. For this purpose, He wondrously devised a plan and established them in this matter: that each aspect of these three [implied: divine emanations/sefirot, or perhaps levels of spiritual attainment] should be connected to the aspect above it, so that through this, man can ascend and connect from below to above, little by little. According to the abundance of his engagement in His Torah and service, blessed be He, and the purity of his heart, and his love and awe. Until he ascends and cleaves to the Bundle of Life, as it were, to the Lord his God, blessed be He, according to his root and his level.

[2] Furthermore, there is another matter. For there are several transgressions for which the soul, when it sins in one of them, becomes liable to *karet* or, Heaven forbid, annihilation. And the matter of *karet* is that the soul's essence is severed and cut off from its root, and the cord that was bound and attached to it until now, by means of the aforementioned attachment, is disconnected.

[3] And as it is written in the aforementioned Zohar Terumah: "And there is a soul, etc., concerning which it is written, 'That soul shall be cut off from before the Lord.'" What is meant by "from before"? It means that the spirit does not rest upon it. And when the spirit does not rest upon it, it has no partnership whatsoever with that which is above, etc. And see there. And see in Likutey Ha'Torah, Parashat Ba, and in Mechilta, Parashat Ba, and at the end of Parashat Terumah, and in Sifrei, Parashat Behaalotecha and Parashat Shelach, "cut off" means nothing other than cessation.

[4] And this is what is meant by (Isaiah 49:2): "For your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God," meaning, between you and

your God Himself, as was explained above. And then you are submerged in the depths of impurity and the husks, meaning.

[5] See the Book of Life, Gate of the Totality of ABYA, beginning of Chapter 1. And in the Gate of Unifications, end of Chapter 4, and there, Chapter 1, concerning the Rectifications of Sins. And in the Tanakh, in Isaiah, chapter "For a spirit envelops from before Me." And in Gilgulim, Chapter 35. And so it is written in the holy writings of our great master, Rabbi Eleazar, may his soul rest in peace, in his commentary on the Palaces, in the Second Palace.

[6] And lest any be cast out from Him, let none be cast out. It is the decree of His blessed Will that the ten levels of the soul's aspect not be completely severed, God forbid. Rather, the nine lower levels, from Wisdom and below, are those that are severed. But the highest level, the secret of His Crown, is not severed. For by virtue of its cleaving and connection with the aspect of the Spirit, as mentioned above, it is judged as the aspect of the Spirit, which is not subject to excommunication, as will be explained below. And it is from the supreme grace of the Holy One, blessed be He, that through the aspect of the Spirit, meaning through confession of words from the heart, which is the aspect of the Spirit as mentioned above, the nine levels of the soul will also ascend to cleave to the aspect of the Spirit, as before.

[7] Correction: This means that even if the souls of Israel are submerged, God forbid, in evil desires, may it be far from us, nevertheless, His blessed will has established to elevate their souls through the aspect of His blessed Spirit. As in the verse, "And this is My covenant with them, says the Lord: My spirit which is upon you, etc. They shall not depart, etc." And as in the matter of "Yetzirah" (Formation). And this is "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt." And it is known in the Zohar that "Anafki" (I) is the aspect of Keter (Crown). And this is the interpretation of our Sages, blessed be their memory (Shabbat 105a): "Anafki, Ana Nafshi Katvit Yahavit" (I, I Myself have written and given My soul). And a pleasant utterance, etc. And these are the two aspects: Nefesh (Soul) and Ruach (Spirit). And the intelligent one will understand.

[8] Correction: This refers to the inner will that crowns a soul of Israel, which, by virtue of awe, is

never severed. See Maimonides, end of Chapter 2 of Laws of Divorce, concerning the case of a coerced bill of divorce, stating that it is valid only if he says, "I desire," provided the law permits coercion to divorce. He explains there the reason why he is not considered coerced: because his true will is to perform all the commandments, but his evil inclination overpowered him. And when he was beaten until his evil inclination weakened and he said, "I desire," he has already divorced of his own will. See his holy words there.

**[9]** And similarly, if one has transgressed and corrupted, Heaven forbid, the aspect of his speech through sins related to speech, such as slander and the like. Or other sins rooted in the aspect of the spirit, and thereby corrupted the aspect of the spirit. (And although the aspect of the spirit is not completely cut off, for we do not find the concept of being cut off in the Torah except for the aspect of the soul alone, "and that soul shall be cut off," and "the souls that do shall be cut off," and many similar phrases. And so is written in Likutey Torah, Parshat Bo, there, and in Chapter 6 of Gilgulim, and at its end there. Nevertheless, through sins rooted in the aspect of the spirit, one corrupts and damages it. And conversely, this strengthens the power of the spirit of impurity, meaning.) Because the higher aspect, the secret of his crown, is bound and attached to the world in the lower aspect of the soul, as mentioned above. He can be rectified through the aspect of the soul by thoughts of repentance in the contemplation of the heart, which is the aspect of the soul.

**[10]** But concerning the soul, it is never diminished at all. For the source of its root is from the World of Preservation, immune from the touch of strangers. And it is eternally cleaving to the root of the soul, as is known that they are inseparable companions forever. And human actions do not reach it at all to corrupt it, God forbid. And if a person sins in a thought that is not good, God forbid, he causes harm to himself alone, that sparks of the soul's light will depart and be concealed from him. But it is not that the soul itself is diminished, God forbid.

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## Gate I, Chapter 19

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**[1]** This is the meaning of the verse (Proverbs 18:14): "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit, who can bear?" This means that the infirmity and the impurity of sin, which are found in the realm of the *Nefesh* (for most sins are found in the *Nefesh*, which is the lower aspect, close to the *Sitra Achra* – "its feet go down to death," as it is written, "And if a soul sins" – these sins are in their souls, and much like this. See *Etz Chaim*, Sha'ar Ha'Akudim, end of Chapter 5, and *Pardes Rimonim*, Sha'ar Kri'at Shema al HaMittah, Chapter 8). This *Nefesh* can be repaired and even elevated through the realm of the *Ruach*, as mentioned above. But if the *Ruach* is wounded, meaning one has damaged and corrupted the realm of his *Ruach* through sins that are attached to the realm of the *Ruach*, then "who can bear it?" Its repair is through the realm of the *Neshamah*, which is known in the Zohar as "Mayim" (waters).

**[2]** And a person of understanding will comprehend that all the aforementioned matters concerning the three aspects of *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, and *Neshamah* of man, are also present, even in their supreme root, in these three aspects: the Holy One, Blessed be He, and His Divine Presence, and the children. For the lower actions cause the Divine Presence of our strength, the secret of the soul above, to wander from its supreme connection, in the secret of exile. (This is when the souls of Israel are immersed in evil desires, God forbid).

**[3]** And see *Etz Chaim*, Gate of the Diminution of the Moon, Chapter 2. And in the Gate of the Order of ABYA, Chapter 2. And in the Gate of the Shells, Chapter 3. And in the Introduction to *Pri Etz Chaim*, concerning the general principles of Zeir Anpin and Nukva. And in the Gate of Unifications, Chapter 1, concerning the rectification of sins.

**[4]** However, not all of its ten *sefirot*, but rather its nine *sefirot* from *Chochmah* downwards, as mentioned concerning man. But its highest aspect, the secret of its crown, which is its root point, is bound and cleaves to the world in the purity of the foundation of the *ruach* aspect, and is never separated from there. (Therefore, it is called a crown, which is its diadem).

**[5]** And see in the preface of the aforementioned *Sha'ar HaKavanot*. And in the Gate of Prayer there, concerning the Blessing of Species. And so also wrote our great master, of blessed memory, in his commentary on *Heikhalot*, in the second *Heikhal*

there. (And see in *Etz Chaim*, Gate of Kings, chapter 7, and in the Gate of the Diminution of the Moon, and in the Gate of the Shells, and understand what is written in *Sha'ar HaKavanot* in these two aforementioned places. And see further in *Sha'ar HaKavanot*, Gate of Rosh Hashanah, chapter 2, and understand all of the above.)

**[6]** But concerning the higher spirit, it is not separated, God forbid, from its place by the transgressions of those below. Rather, they cause a flaw and corruption, God forbid, in its *Keter* and *Malkhut*, as is known.

**[7]** However, concerning the soul, which is the secret of the intellects, its three higher aspects (G.R.) are as mentioned above in the aforementioned chapter. There, the actions of those below cannot in any way corrupt or impair them, G-d forbid. Rather, through their actions, they can cause their withdrawal from it, G-d forbid, as is known in the writings of the Sages, for they come solely as an addition and are dependent on the actions of those below, as they originate from the extension of the lower aspect of the Mother of Children (Um Abanim) within it, as is known. And as it is stated, "He established the heavens with understanding." And this is the world guarded from the touch of strangers, as is known.

**[8]** And this is the matter of the vision of the ladder set up on earth, etc. It did not say "set up in the earth," but "on earth," which means "to earth," and its meaning is that the head, the essence of its root, is in the heavens above. And from there it descends and lowers until it reaches the earth. And this is the soul of life of man, which is emanated, as it were, from the breath of His mouth, blessed be He. And from there it descends like a ladder and a chain and connects with the spirit, and the spirit with the soul, until it descends to this world in the body of man.

**[9]** And it is also explained in the Ra'avad's commentary on the Torah, Nasso, chapter 203, verse 2: "And He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." It is stated in the Gemara: "And he dreamed, and behold, a ladder." A ladder indeed, it is the soul of life, etc., see there. "And behold, angels of God were ascending and descending on it." As we have explained at length above, this refers to the living soul of the worlds, the powers, and the ministering angels. For all their ascents and descents, and all their arrangements of governance every moment, depend solely on the inclination of

the actions, speech, and thought of the human body every moment. (And it is written "ascending first and then descending" because the entire essence of man's Torah is to first elevate every world from below upwards, and afterwards, lights are drawn from above downwards.) Until afterwards, "And behold, the Lord stood above it," as mentioned above.

**[10]** And how sweet are the words of our Sages of blessed memory in the Jerusalem Talmud, Tractate Ta'anit, Chapter 2. Rabbi Yochanan said in the name of Rabbi Yishmael: The Holy One, Blessed be He, has joined His Name with Israel. It is like a king who had a key to a small palace. He said, "If I leave it as it is, it will be lost. Rather, I will attach a chain to it, so that if it is lost, the chain will remain upon it." Thus said the Holy One, Blessed be He: "If I leave Israel as they are, they will be swallowed up, etc. Rather, I will join My Great Name with them." And they, of blessed memory, spoke concerning the unity of the entire nation.

**[11]** Indeed, their eyes, of blessed memory, are accustomed to their holy way, and they also hinted at the unique individual. And their discourse, of blessed memory, requires study, for they likened the matter to a key and a chain, as explained above, that man is the opener and closer of the powers and the palaces above and the palaces below. For all are governed by the power of his actions, in the aspect of soul, which is the root and foundation of the aspect of the soul of all worlds.

**[12]** And the Master of all, blessed be He, in His great goodness to benefit His creations, was diligent in our rectification and said: "If I leave it as it is, there will be no connection between the three aspects of Nefesh, Ruach, and Neshama. For if the lower aspect of Nefesh falls into the depths of evil, God forbid, there will be no second to raise it, and it will be lost there forever, God forbid. As in the verse, 'And I will utterly destroy that soul.' And the soul that sins, with what shall it be atoned?"

**[13]** For this, the Blessed Creator marvelously devised and established the three levels of Nefesh, Ruach, and Neshamah. Each of these is connected by its upper aspect to the lower aspect of the level above it, in the manner of a chain. The upper end of each link grasps and enters into the lower end of the link above it. And through this, even if the Nefesh is severed and falls into the depths of the forces of impurity, may it be far from us, it can be

rectified and ascend by its connection to its upper aspect in the Ruach. And similarly, in the case of the corruption and blemish of the Ruach, as mentioned above.

**[14]** And this is what is stated there: "But behold, I will unite My Great Name with them." For the three levels, Nefesh, Ruach, and Neshamah, and the root of the soul, their source is from the three letters of the Great Name, Blessed be He.

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## Gate I, Chapter 20

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**[1]** And the explanation of the details of their rectification and connection through repentance, is that when man sins concerning the aspect of his soul, or even causes, God forbid, that all nine *sefirot* from *Chochmah* downwards are severed and cut off from their aforementioned connection, and descend wondrously into the depths of the *kelipot*, God forbid. Then, through sincere confession from the depth of the heart, with the movement of his lips, the aspect of the soul of the spirit, he arouses with the voice of his words upwards and upwards. And he causes an addition of holiness to be emanated from Him, blessed be He, up to the root of the soul first. And from there to his soul and his spirit. And the spirit illuminates its great light that flows upon it, also upon the aspect of the soul, due to the connection that still remains between them, as mentioned above, to consume and nullify the evil forces and the levels of impurity, and to release from captivity all its aspects, and to reconnect them as at first with the aspect of the spirit.

**[2]** And likewise, if one has damaged and corrupted the aspect of his spirit, Heaven forbid, through improper speech or other transgressions related to the spirit. And the nullification of Torah is equivalent to all of them. And conversely, he has strengthened the power of the spirit of impurity, meaning. And then his soul is also not whole as before, because it receives the flow of its vitality and light through the spirit, as is known. Behold, through true repentance in the heart, and lamenting the magnitude of his sin, as in "Their heart cried out to the Lord," and contemplating thoughts of repentance in the mind, which is the dwelling place of the sparks of the soul's light (and this is the

Malkhut of Binah), he also arouses a higher level to first bestow additional holiness and light upon the root of the soul. And from there, to his soul, and it will shine with the radiance of its light that has flowed upon it. Also upon the aspect of the spirit. And "the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, You will not despise." And he breaks the power of the spirit of impurity that he strengthened through his sin, and purifies the aspect of his holy spirit to connect with the aspect of the soul as it was at first. And from there, it will automatically flow also upon his soul to complete it in its former perfection.

**[3]** And likewise, if one has sinned, God forbid, with an impure thought, and thereby caused the sparks of radiance of his soul, which until then had been shining brightly upon his head, to depart from him. Then, through diligent engagement with Torah with abundant understanding, in the depth of his intellect, he arouses an additional measure of holiness to be emanated upon the root of his soul. And from there, to his soul, to return it so that its light may shine upon him, to enlighten him in the Holy Torah with abundant understanding in the secrets of purity. And from that holiness and light, it cascades and flows upon his spirit and his soul, to perfect them in their completeness.

**[4]** Therefore, our Sages of blessed memory said (Shabbat 119b): "Whoever answers 'Amen Yehei Shem' with all his strength, his decree is torn up. And even if there is a trace of idolatry within him, it is forgiven."

**[5]** For the primary intention of this praise is that an additional blessing and an outpouring of higher light shall be emanated and influenced upon all four worlds, Atzilut, Beriah, Yetzirah, and Asiyah. And this is "Yihyeh Shemi Rabba Mebaruch" (May His Great Name be Blessed). This means that a blessing and additional holiness shall be emanated from Him, blessed be He, up to the world of Atzilut. And from there, also to the worlds of Beriah and Yetzirah. "Almaya" is the world of Asiyah. And these are the root of the four levels of man: the root of the soul and Nefesh, Ruach, and Neshamah.

**[6]** And when a person directs the sanctity of his thought in uttering this praise, to awaken and bestow through it an increase of sanctity and blessing upon the root of his soul. And from there, upon his soul, spirit, and essence. By this, he causes the completion and annihilation of every

transgression and sin which he has committed in any of these three aspects, and they become as if they never were. And this is the entire essence of true repentance, as stated above. Therefore, he is forgiven for all his transgressions.

**[7]** Correction: And they said, may their memory be for a blessing, "with all his strength." This can be understood in two ways: either with all the strength of the one answering, or that the Name YH should be blessed with all His powers, in the manner of "Now, I pray, let the strength of my Lord increase."

**[8]** Indeed, the two interpretations are unified in one concept. The root source of the flow of holiness and blessings is in the Name Yod-Heh. From it, the World of Creation, which is the World of Thought, is descended and filled, from the emanation of the letters Heh-Yod of the Name Yod-Heh in the Yod. And from the World of Creation, the World of Formation, which is the root of the beginning of speech and the cogitation of the heart, is filled, from the emanation of the letter Aleph of the Heh. And from the World of Formation, the World of Action, which is the World of Deed, is filled, from the emanation of the letter Heh of the Name Yod-Heh in the letter Heh.

**[9]** And these are the root of the *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, and *Neshamah* of a person, which are all the faculties of the soul. And all the faculties of the Name Yod-Heh, meaning all His fullness. And this is the ten [letters] of the Name Yod-Heh, the Great One who blesses, etc. And see Tosafot, Berachot 3a, s.v. "Ve'Onin," etc.

**[10]** And this is also the matter of their statement, blessed be their memory (Avodah Zarah 8a): "The ox that was brought as a sacrifice, its horns preceded its hooves." This is because in its offering, it was occupied with rectifying what was crooked, rebuilding what was destroyed, drawing near what was distant, and uniting what was separated. And it elevated the purity of its thought and intention, to first bestow an abundance of light and holiness upon the higher aspects and levels within it, which are likened to the horns. These are the root of its soul and its spirit.

**[11]** And from there, he then continued concerning his spirit and soul, to purify all his limbs from his head to his feet. This is in accordance with the verse, "And it shall be, if you hearken diligently to My commandments..." (Deuteronomy 11:13),

referring to the commandments that a person tramples underfoot. These are the "hooves" of the animal soul. And this is what is stated in the Midrash (Vayikra Rabbah, Chapter 2, and Kohelet Rabbah, Chapter 7) that the swelling of his heel was a dimming, etc.

**[12]** Annotation: And this is what David, peace be upon him, said: "The Torah of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul." For through a person's engagement with the Torah of the Lord, which is perfect within him as it ought to be, it restores the person's soul to its root in its completeness. And he concluded there also, "Your servant is also careful about them; in keeping them there is a great reward." And he was careful about the language "they will shine" etc. This means that through his observance of all the commandments that correspond to all the limbs of Adam, his soul and body were purified, to the extent that even his heel was filled with great light and radiance. Regarding the matter of the apple of Adam's heel, it was dim, etc.

**[13]** And the inner aspect of the matter, "Your servant is also cautious, etc., with great circumspection." For the ultimate ascent of the attribute of the humble one, in its highest root, is in the "Radla," which is from the "Malchut" of "Adam Kadmon," the root of the soul of Adam the First. And as in the verse (I Chronicles 17:16), "Who am I, Lord God, and what is my house, that You have brought me thus far?" (and "thus far" refers only to royalty/kingdom), "and You have regarded me even as the stature of a man, O Lord God." (And in Samuel II 7:19, "And this is the law of man"). And "tor" is the "gilufin" of "Adonai." And the intelligent will understand. Therefore, Adam the First left his last seventy years for David, which is the "Zat" of "Malchut" of "Adam Kadmon." And he was fit to live another thirty years, to complete its "Gimel Rashi" (three heads). As in the verse, "The utterance of the man who was raised up on high" (Samuel II 23:1a). And this is also the root of the soul of the Messiah, concerning whom it is written (Isaiah 52:13), "He shall be exalted and lifted up and very high." And the Sages expounded on this: from Abraham, and from Moses, and from Adam the First (meaning, after the sin). And this is "The utterance of the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob." For then His divine kingship will be magnified and exalted in its first root place.

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## Gate I, Chapter 21

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[1] And this is the Torah of man. When he engages in Torah for its own sake, to guard and to fulfill all that is written therein, he purifies his body from head to foot. As our Sages, of blessed memory, expounded (Berakhot 16a): "Why are tents juxtaposed with streams, etc.? Just as streams elevate a person from impurity to purity, so too tents elevate a person from the twenty-eight [letters of the Hebrew alphabet] to the twenty-seven." And in the manner that our Sages, of blessed memory, expounded concerning the purification of the ritually impure in the *mikveh*: "all his flesh in the water" – meaning water in which his entire body is immersed. So too, in the study of Torah, the entire body of man is immersed therein. (And the Sages measured [the *mikveh*] as an *amah* by an *amah* in a height of three *amot* – these are the three worlds, and the *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, and *Neshamah*; the act, the speech, and the thought in Torah.)

[2] And just as a person's entire body is elevated and purified through engagement with Torah and commandments, so too all the worlds, which are the measure of a person's stature as previously explained in Chapter 6, are purified, cleansed, and elevated.

[3] And the upright person who serves in truth will not direct his mind and thought during his service to the Blessed One, even for the purpose of elevating and purifying his body and soul. Rather, the purity of his thought and intention will ascend, and he will turn upwards for the rectification and purification of the Holy Worlds.

[4] And this was also the entire essence of the service of the Patriarchs and all the early righteous ones, who observed the Torah even before it was given. As our Sages, of blessed memory, expounded concerning "from the clean beast" [Genesis 8:20], and they said, "From here Noah learned Torah." And they said [Yoma 28b], "Abraham observed the entire Torah." (And see also B'reishit Rabbah, chapter 22, and Bamidbar Rabbah, chapter 14. And in Tanchuma, Parshat Behar, and in Midrash Tehillim, Psalm 1).

[5] Not that they were commanded and acted thus

by dint of law. For if so, they would not, G-d forbid, have stood by their understanding and perception, even though they perceived that according to the essence of their soul's root, it was necessary for them to transgress and alter even a part of one of the commandments of G-d. And Jacob, our father, would not have married two sisters, nor would Amram have married his aunt, G-d forbid.

[6] Only through the attainment of their purified intellect can they grasp the awesome rectifications that occur in all the worlds, and in the higher and lower powers, with every commandment. And the great flaws, destruction, and ruin, God forbid, that will be caused by them if they are not fulfilled. Likewise, Noah offered specifically from the pure animal, for he saw and grasped the power and the higher root of every animal and beast. Which of them has the power of its root from the side of holiness and is fit for offering, and which of them has the power of its soul from the side of impurity and the *Sitra Achra* (the Other Side), and he did not choose it to offer before Him, blessed be He, for He would not desire it.

[7] And this is, "And Enoch walked with God." Noah walked with God. God with whom my fathers walked. It is explained: God, the Master of all powers. This means that they apprehended the matters of the upper and lower powers, the laws of heaven and earth, and their governance. And their order of administration, and their connection, and their composition through all the matters of human actions. And according to this order and matter, each one of them walked and conducted himself in all his affairs, according to what he saw and apprehended of the upper rectifications according to the root of his soul.

[8] Therefore, when our father Jacob, of blessed memory, attained the understanding that according to the root of his soul, he would bring about great rectifications in the higher powers and worlds if he married these two sisters, Rachel and Leah, and that they both would build the House of Israel, he toiled with immense efforts and labors to attain them in marriage. And similarly, the matter concerning Amram, who married his aunt Jochebed, from whom Moses, Aaron, and Miriam emerged.

[9] This is also one of the reasons why the Torah was not given to Noah and the holy Patriarchs. For if it had been given to them, Jacob would not have

been permitted to marry two sisters, nor Amram his aunt, even if they had attained that it was fitting for them according to the root of their souls. And truly, this was the entire building of the House of Israel, a chosen people, and the rectification of all the upper and lower worlds. As in the matter of our Sages' teaching: "And if you say, Cain married his sister, 'A world of kindness shall be built.'"

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## Gate I, Chapter 22

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[1] And when Moses came and brought it down to the earth, it is not in the heavens. And lest the great person, whose attainment is abundant, become wise, saying, "I am the one who sees the secret and the reasons for the commandments in the higher powers and worlds, which is fitting for me according to the root of my soul, or for whom and for whom according to their root, to transgress any commandment, God forbid. Or to postpone any detail of the act, to perform it with a deficiency of even one iota from the Written Law, or to change its time, God forbid." And for this reason, the Torah concluded, "And there arose no prophet in Israel like Moses" (Deuteronomy 34:10), and as our Sages, of blessed memory, taught: "These are the commandments; no prophet is permitted to innovate anything from now on." And as the Torah juxtaposed (Deuteronomy 13:1): "Everything that I command you, you shall observe to do; you shall not add to it, nor shall you diminish from it." For even if a prophet arises among you, etc. – meaning to add or diminish, God forbid – "you shall not listen to the words of that prophet. You shall follow the LORD your God, etc."

[2] And behold, King Hezekiah, who saw with the Holy Spirit that wicked offspring would issue from him, and therefore he did not take a wife (Berakhot 10a), and his intention was for the sake of Heaven, so as not to increase the wicked of the world. Nevertheless, Isaiah came to him with the word of the Lord and said to him, "You shall die and not live" (Isaiah 38:1), and not live in the World to Come. This is because you did not engage in the Oral Law. And all his tremendous righteousness did not avail him to bring him to the life of the World to Come, because he reasoned to exempt himself from one matter of the Torah of Moses, even though he saw

with his attainment of the Holy Spirit that wicked offspring would issue from him, and also that he was in a state of "sit and do nothing."

[3] For the reasons behind the commandments have not yet been revealed in their entirety to any person in the world, not even to Moses our teacher. Only to Adam the first man, before the sin, and this is the wine preserved in its grapes from the six days of creation. And the light that served on the first day, which Adam the first man gazed upon and beheld from one end of the world to the other, and so forth.

[4] For the Holy Torah is emanated from above, a head above all comprehensions. And how is it possible that the matter be entrusted to human comprehension to alter their course and their temporal order according to the breadth of his knowledge and his understanding? And as Isaiah answered Hezekiah: "What is entrusted to you, you must do, and what is pleasing before the Holy One, Blessed be He, He will do."

[5] And still, when prophecy existed in Israel, a prophet was permitted to innovate something for a temporary instruction alone, and even to transgress one of the commandments of God, such as Elijah on Mount Carmel and the like.

[6] Indeed, this itself is what we are commanded in the Torah of Moses: "To him you shall listen" (Deuteronomy 18:15). This is a commandment and a warning to listen to the words of the prophet, even when he prophesies in the name of the Blessed One, to transgress a certain commandment at the time it is necessary for it, as our Sages, of blessed memory, have expounded, apart from idolatry.

[7] But it is absolutely forbidden to innovate something to establish it for generations. For Esther, who was one of the seven prophetesses (Megillah 14a), even so, when she sent to the Sages, "Write for me for future generations," they replied, "Have we not already written for you?" until they later found a support for it from Scripture (Esther 7:1). And so it is certain that they too found support from Scripture. And examine the Midrash that Ramban, may his memory be a blessing, brought in the Parashah of Behaalotecha, from Rabbeinu Nissim Gaon, may his memory be a blessing.

**[8]** And since prophecy ceased from Israel due to our sins, even if all the Sages of Israel, to whom the Work of Creation and the Work of the Chariot were transmitted, were to gather, and their understanding and the purity of their intellect were to deepen to the extent of changing even a single detail of any commandment, or to bring forward or postpone its time, Heaven forbid, we will not agree nor listen to them. And even in Bava Kamma they said (Bava Metzia 59b), "It is not in the heavens."

**[9]** And still in the days of the Sages of the Talmud, they were permitted to innovate Rabbinic commandments when they found a basis in the Torah. For example, [the laws of] *Niddah* and the like, as mentioned above. And likewise, to decree ordinances, such as the Eighteen Decrees and the like. And when the Holy Talmud was finalized, we have nothing but to guard and to do all that is written in the Holy Torah, both written and oral, according to all their judgments and statutes, and in their time, and their details, and their precise specifications, without deviating from them in any way whatsoever.

**[10]** And when a person of Israel fulfills them properly, even if he does not intend and does not know at all the reasons for the commandments and the secrets of their intention, nevertheless the commandments are fulfilled, and the worlds are rectified by them, and holiness and light increase within them, according to the time, source, and

essence of each commandment. And strength is given to God, blessed be He. For the Creator, blessed be He, established the nature of the worlds to be governed by human actions. And each commandment is an offering that ascends on its own to effect its unique operation.

**[11]** And whoever the Blessed One has found worthy to attain the hidden secrets of the Torah and the Mitzvot, which the holy, exalted Sages of the Talmud have left us, such as Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai and his companions, and his disciples, and those who drank from his waters in later generations, like the holy Rabbi, the awesome man of God, the Ari z"l, who illuminated our eyes with some of the reasons and intentions of the Mitzvot – this is only so that each person may contemplate according to his intellect and attainment, how far all the details of his actions, his words, his thoughts, and all his affairs reach in the upper and lower worlds and powers. And he will be moved and stirred by this to perform and fulfill every Mitzvah and every aspect of his service to his Creator, blessed be He, with utmost precision, and with awe, reverence, and immense love, and with holiness and purity of heart. And through this, he will cause greater rectifications in the worlds than if he had fulfilled the Mitzvah without the holiness and purity of intention. However, the essential aspect of all Mitzvot, which is binding, lies in the details of the action within them.



## Chapter 3

# Reb Itzele's Long Annotation

Extended Commentary on Gate I

### Reb Itzele's Long Annotation

הגהה ארוכה לר' איצ'לה

[1] The matter of the image, which Rabbi Isaac Luria, of blessed memory, divided into three aspects: Tzadi, Lamed, and Mem.

[2] It is known that the primordial roots of all things are the root of the four elements: fire, wind, water, earth. And the principal agents are the three elements: fire, wind, water, referred to in the Holy Name as the three mothers: fire, water, earth, which are the mothers of all. And the action of these three is through the element of earth, which is acted upon and receives from them.

[3] And these are the three letters Yod-Kuf-Vav of the Name, Blessed be He, and the final Hei is doubled.

[4] And these are the forty-two letters of the Divine Name, each one in its entirety. And the active forces are the three letters of the Divine Name. And they are still in the category of intellect and the three brains. And upon their subsequent expansion into the heart and action, they are the three letters of the Divine Name. And this is the root of the attributes in the Kingship of Understanding, which expands in the *Zeir Anpin*, and the essence of the attributes are Wisdom, Strength, and Beauty. And

afterwards, the attributes in actual deed are Eternity, Splendor, and Foundation, and this is the seventy-two letters of the Divine Name.

[5] And see in the Zohar, Parashat Va'era, page 23, column b, that when the Holy One, Blessed be He, created the world, He made man in His image and fashioned him with His perfections, etc. Rabbi Shimon said: Come and see, there are four primordial ones, the secret of faith, and they are the fathers of all worlds and the secret of the supernal, holy chariot. And they are fire, spirit, water, earth. These are the supernal secret, and these are the fathers of all worlds, etc. (Ibid., page 24, column a). Come and see: fire, spirit, water, earth. These are the primordial ones and the roots of the upper and lower realms, and upon them all are sustained. And these are the four directions of the world, etc. Earth is cold and dry, and because of this it receives all. And all are made by it, and it receives from all to bring forth their fruit.

[6] And it is as stated above, that the principal agents in the world and in the soul are the three elements: fire, wind, and water. And through the element of earth, the power of the actions of these three elements is revealed in the world. Likewise, in the soul, through the human body, whose element is earth, the action of the power of the three elements—fire, wind, and water—within the soul is revealed. As explained in the aforementioned Zohar, "And all of them are servants in my work, etc., to bring forth their fruits."

**[7]** And it is apparent to the senses that the earth brings forth plants. Some of them are the offspring of fire, as in the case of "produce of the sun."

**[8]** And from them are the offspring of moist and cold waters. As in the verse, "And from the fruit of the moon, months." And from them are the offspring of wind. As in the saying, "The air is abundant." The wind after the rain is like rain; the sun after the rain is like two rains. As is known, the nature of fire and wind is to ascend. And water descends to a low place, to the earth. And if the elements of wind and fire also connect with the element of water, and they too give way and are drawn to the earth, then through the element of earth all plants are revealed, by the proper intermingling of all the three elements.

**[9]** And every natural change in all that exists in the world, from the depths of the earth to the heights of the heavens, is due to the change in the intermingling of the four elements, which are the primordial roots. And their intermingling is the inner soul of every thing. And from the quality of their intermingling within them, the many differences of particulars in every thing are drawn, in the image of its substance and the hue of its appearance in inanimate objects. And likewise, the change in plants in their taste, and their image and their hue. And likewise, the natural change of all living creatures: the image of their limbs, their appearance, their form, and their actions, are changed according to the intermingling of their soul and their blood from the four humors, which are the four elements.

**[10]** And all the intermingling of the four elements is drawn from the dominion of the stars, arranged in their watches in the firmament, as our Sages, of blessed memory, have stated: "There is no herb on the earth that does not have a star in the firmament that strikes it and says to it, 'Grow.'" And the stars in their governments receive, through angels on their missions, from the four living creatures of the Chariot.

**[11]** And all is drawn from the Name of HaShem, blessed be He, as explained at length in the Holy Writings. This means that all four primordial roots are one HaShem. For the will of HaShem, blessed be His Name, was to create the entire world in such a manifestation of HaShem that in all of existence, the power of the four roots would be found.

**[12]** Furthermore, all of a person's innate faculties, the inclination of his intellect, and the inclination of his will, change according to the changing of the four elemental humors within him. This is explained in Ra'aya Meheimna, Parshat Pinchas, page 234, column b. There are natural creatures that are upon bodies composed of the four elements, and they are pure. And corresponding to them are four impure, predatory creatures, upon four bitter humors: white bile, red bile, green bile, and black bile. And there are intellectual creatures that revolve around the Throne. And there are those above them, and higher than them.

**[13]** And the four roots of man above are the very image from which all forms of powers in man are found. As explained in the Zohar Chadash, Midrash HaNe'elam, Bereishit 4:9a. And it states: "The Creator, blessed be He, created man, and created him in His image and in His likeness, and prepared him from four distinct things: from fire, from spirit, from water, and from earth, etc."

**[14]** As explained in the Zohar, Tikun 38, page 34b: "It ascended as fire and spirit. And it descended as water and earth. And the secret of the matter is, 'And behold, angels of God ascending and descending on it' (Genesis 28:12) – ascending two and descending two, etc. Earth is the vessel of all."

**[15]** And it is that according to the inner disposition of the fire and wind within the human soul, which ascend upwards by their nature, so too are the specific inner forces of man drawn upwards. And according to the inner disposition of the water and earth elements within the human soul, so too are its specific forces drawn downwards.

**[16]** And although the manner of the internal intermingling of the elements within the human soul is not apprehended by the senses, neither how nor what it is, nevertheless, when the light of intermingling shines upon their vessels, specifically the element of earth, the root of the body, then the body produces abundance. Its strength, derived from the three mothers, Aleph, Mem, Shin (Air, Water, Fire), according to its action, as explained in the Zohar, Parashat Va'era, mentioned above. And the power of the intermingling of the roots of the three mothers, Aleph, Resh, Mem (Air, Earth, Water), are the roots from which all the body's actions are drawn. However, they are hidden and not apprehended.

**[17]** And even when we observe the actions of the body, which are drawn from the intermingling of the four elements, the elements themselves are not revealed to us through our senses; only through the actions that are apparent to us can we grasp the value of their spiritual intermingling, as explained in the Zohar, Parshat Yitro, in the verse "And you shall see," and in Tikkunei Zohar, and the Zohar Chadash. Therefore, they said in the Zohar and the writings of the Ari, of blessed memory, that "Tzelem" (image) is from the aspect of hidden worlds, and "Demut" (likeness) is from the aspect of revealed worlds. Also, their saying that "Tzelem" is male and "Demut" is female, and this is the power of the active and the passive.

**[18]** And this is "in Our image, according to Our likeness." Just as the Holy One, Blessed be He, is hidden from the perspective of His essence, and no thought can grasp Him, but only through His good deeds is His goodness revealed to us in all that is good, so too the soul, spirit, and essence that are in man are not apprehended by thought except according to their actions through the body. And even then, we do not see it, but only apprehend its existence, as our Sages, of blessed memory, said (Berakhot 10a): "These five bless my soul," etc. Just as the Holy One, Blessed be He, sees and is not seen, so too the soul sees and is not seen. And see Tomer Devorah, upon which all the words of the Holy One, Rabbi Moses Cordovero, of blessed memory, revolve, as he wrote at the beginning of the first chapter, and thus he said: "Man is fit to be likened to his Creator, and then he will be in the secret of the Supernal Form, image and likeness. For if he is likened in his body but not in his actions, he falsifies the Form."

**[19]** This is what is written in the Holy Writings: the essence of the soul's descent to the body is to refine within the eight aspects of the Image.

**[20]** The matter is as the word "tzelem" (צלם) signifies a mold or imprint (see Rashi's commentary on the verse "in Our image, in Our likeness"). For example, one who conceives in his mind a specific form to be ultimately realized from his thought. Initially, he activates his intellect to invent a mold and imprint in such a way that the specific form he desires can be produced by means of that mold.

**[21]** And He invents an internal mold by which the inner vessel is made according to the desired capacity. And also an external mold which

encompasses the walls of the vessel to define the walls in thickness and measure according to His will. And both are one, the image and the mold of One. But this enters the inner part of the vessel to make its cavity according to the measure. And this surrounds and encompasses to establish its walls according to the measure. Thus, for example, as the Creator, blessed be He, desired to create man from dust, which is the vessel to be used according to His will, blessed be He. He first prepared an image and a mold by which the form of man could be made with a body and limbs, by which he could perform specific actions according to God's will. And He created four roots from which the spiritual internal and encompassing image were conceived.

**[22]** Annotation: And as I am like a pelican of the wilderness, etc. (Psalms 102). It is explained that just as the pelican's actions are to distance itself from habitation and to cry out day and night with a mournful voice, so he distanced himself from his place and cried out and groaned day and night. And the dominance of the pelican's black bile humor causes it sadness to cry out, and laziness to sit in its place in the wilderness. So too, from his many troubles, the black bile humor overcame him, causing him to flee from the company of human beings and cry out mournfully, as it is said there: "For I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping" (Psalms 102:10), according to the nature of the illness of black bile, which has a craving to eat coals and embers and to weep always. And although his actions do not appear outwardly except for solitude and weeping, and eating dust, and the inner essence of his temperament and the dominance of black bile are not perceived by the senses, nevertheless, it is intellectually understood that the inner essence of the black bile, from the worry that has already entered him and the troubles of worries that surround and encompass him from without, these are the spiritual image and mold by which his actions took the form of such particulars as weeping, crying out, and solitude. Therefore.

**[23]** And now we shall examine the general concept of "image" (Tzelem) and "likeness" (Dmut) in the spiritual realm. When the Creator, blessed be He, in His simple will, desired to create the world, so that the form of all the particulars of the world would be revealed as they are, He emanated one force, which the philosophers call "hyle." We, however, call it "force," or "light," or "will." This means that He willed that His will be revealed

through two forces: one that is drawn upwards, and the second that is drawn downwards. And so that they would not separate, He created means between them, like the matter of fire which ascends upwards and earth which descends downwards. However, air is close to the nature of fire to rise upwards, and it can also descend downwards. And water, although it is drawn to the air, as our Sages, of blessed memory, said, "Three Persian measures of water from a cloud," nevertheless, they leave their high place in the air and descend to a low place in the earth.

**[24]** And although in spiritual matters one cannot speak of "up" and "down," especially concerning the supernal emanation, the concept of "up" and "down" is not solely related to a change of place. As it is written, "And you shall be only above and not below" (Deuteronomy 28:13), which means that one will be elevated in spiritual degrees and will not descend from their station. Just as there is the concept of "elevating in holiness and not lowering," so too is the concept of forces that "ascend upwards" (לעילא דסלקין), meaning they are drawn towards spirituality, to the highest of the highest degrees, and "descend downwards" (לתתא דנחתין), meaning to lower degrees.

**[25]** Correction: It is possible to say, through homiletical interpretation, that "remaining only above" is a condition and a commandment. This means that He, blessed be He, promises us all the aforementioned blessings in a manner such that we will remain only in the spiritual heights. And we will not descend below to the level of the unlearned masses. He then explains what the spiritual height in holiness is: "because you will obey the commandments of the Lord your God, to keep and to do them." This is the highest level of the highest levels. "And you will not turn aside from all the things." For by turning aside from all things, even to the right, one descends lower and lower, God forbid, to follow other gods.

**[26]** Correction: Also, what is stated in the Zohar of our Torah, "without awe and love, it does not ascend on high." This means that one who does not possess the proper yearning and love for the Torah, and who also does not fear departing from it as one departs from life, even if he studies at times, his learning will not be sustained in his possession at a high level as it should be.

**[27]** Also, through exegesis, we can say that

regarding the analogy of love and awe to two wings, like a bird whose wings are broken, nevertheless, it is essentially sound, and only that the lung is not pierced. So that the voice of Torah can be heard, to fulfill, "You shall meditate on it day and night." Therefore.

**[28]** For even in the World of Emanation and above, every aspect cleaves to the inner essence of the level upon which it resides. And it also descends to bestow existence upon the level below it. Just as it is the nature of fire to consume all physicality into spirituality, as is known concerning the sacrifices, and yet it engenders spirit. And it is the nature of the movement of spirit to engender fire, and yet it enters into the physical and sustains it. And it is the nature of water to follow the spirit in some movement, and yet it descends to a low place, to the dust, and causes all manner of physical things to grow.

**[29]** Thus was the will of the Holy One, blessed be He, to bring forth a power that would perpetually yearn to cleave to its root of roots, and that would also bestow abundance for the sustenance of the lower degrees. These are the heavens and their host, and the earth and its host (and see Ramban's commentary on the Pentateuch regarding this). For although the yearning of the spiritual host of the heavens is to cleave to the higher degrees, as it is said, "The heavens declare the glory of God," nevertheless, "their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." This refers to their bestowal upon the earth. To serve as a tent within them, in the language of "their lamp shines," meaning that through the sun, spiritual lights of the heavens are gathered to give illumination within the earth, from degree to degree. And see Zohar, Terumah, 136b and 137a.

**[30]** And from that power or will, the elemental forces were successively revealed and manifested, from level to level, until they influence and bestow upon even this entire lower reality. They appear according to the form of diverse particulars, as is the will of the Holy One, Blessed be He, that the creation of man be from dust. And through the three elements, fire, water, and earth, which are the spiritual image and mold, all the vessels of his body are found in such a way that man can perform particular actions through them according to His will, blessed be He.

**[31]** And through the detailed performance of the

commandments that a person performs in this land, his soul will ascend to the primordial roots above, according to His will. And the body is a vessel to bring forth the strength of these roots, such that through his actions in fulfilling the Torah and its commandments, he will reveal that the desire of the elements within his soul is to ascend to the head. As David the King, peace be upon him, said: "Yours, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is Yours; Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom, and You are exalted as head over all." He did not say "from You, O LORD, is the greatness," but rather "Yours, O LORD." This means that even all the powers that exist in the earth below are drawn to You, O LORD. And although from them they descend to the earth, it is because "all that is grasped in the heavens and in the earth is Yours, O LORD, the kingdom, and You are exalted as head over all," even in the earth.

**[32]** And behold, the will of the Holy One, Blessed be He, was to bring into existence, through the three mothers, Aleph, Mem, Shin, that vessels should exist, existing in degrees, degree by degree. And that in every degree the elements should be mingled in various ways. And that through each vessel, according to its examination, there should be recognized in various examinations its desire to be drawn upwards, and also to bestow downwards to the vessel below it. So that even in the lowest vessel of all, the first intention should be found, which is elevated to the head.

**[33]** To this end, their fusion in man is found in three vessels: in the brain, in the heart, and in the liver. These are the vessels of the Nefesh, Ruach, and Neshamah that are in man. And in each of these three vessels, the three mothers, Aleph, Mem, Shin, are embodied, to be revealed in different manifestations. That is, in the vessel of the brain, the fusion of the roots is discernible, according to thought. And this is what is known in the Zohar: according to the fusion of the four elements within the vessel of the brain, so will the intellect be revealed within it.

**[34]** And the one most capable of receiving and grasping profound intellect is he whose nature is dominated by choler (yellow bile) and melancholy (black bile). For yellow bile is of the element of fire, which ascends upwards into the depth of the intellect's spirituality. And through the air in the brain, it is embodied to form an image in the water

of the brain, and these intellectual images are rooted in the vessel of the earth element within his brain. And it is firmly established in his understanding, akin to the understanding that connects all faculties well from end to end. So that every vessel of his brain will be filled with the thought of Torah, to comprehend all the desires of the Blessed One and the thought of His service, blessed be He, and His greatness and His fear. And through this, his intellect will be drawn to His will, blessed be He, so that all his thoughts will be solely for God alone, in Torah and service, to the point that no impure thought that is not desired will arise.

**[35]** And further, the temperament of the elements descends to the vessels of the heart. And even though in the heart they are not as subtle as in the brain, their movements in the heart are more perceptible. For the brain is tranquil and still, while in the heart the elements operate with greater strength.

**[36]** Indeed, it was the will of the Holy One, blessed be He, that their temperament be revealed more within the vessels of the heart, for there is the source of life for all the limbs. And that the actions of the limbs should be drawn after the imagination of the heart, so that the elements are blended with greater strength. This will enable the more corporeal limbs to be aroused with great power towards their spiritual imagination.

**[37]** And in the heart, the element of fire is stronger. To elevate his heart in the ways of God and to draw all the powers of the body from the physicality of the world to be used in holiness. In Torah and service, and love of God, like the nature of fire to transform all physicality to elevate it upwards.

**[38]** And the power of the fire in his heart awakens the element of spirit to bring forth all the spirit of his speech in Torah and prayer, according to what he understood in his intellect. And this is a voice that encompasses fire, spirit, and water. As it is written in Ra'aya Meheimna, Parshat Pinchas, page 227, column b: "The voice of Hashem is upon the waters" (Psalm 29:3) from the side of water, which is the intellect, where it ascends with the wings of the lungs. "The voice of Hashem is a powerful flame of fire" from the side of the heart. When it emerges from the mouth, it is called speech, and thus all his speech is found in Torah and prayer.

**[39]** And the vessels of the heart and the mouth

are the source of strength. They are the means by which the power of the three mothers, א"מ"ש (Aleph, Mem, Shin), is brought forth according to their temperament, so that it may be solely for God alone. And His word is within them, and not in vain matters.

**[40]** And from the heart, their fusion is drawn to all the vessels of action, to fulfill in actual reality all the commandments of God. In love and awe from the side of water. And in the joy of a commandment from the side of fire. And in wondrous alacrity from the side of spirit. Until all the movements of his body's limbs are recognizable as being drawn solely to God alone. And all the body's vessels, which are of the earth element, are instruments for bringing forth their higher roots, the three mothers, אב, מזן, שבט, in action.

**[41]** And whatever increases the three fundamental elements of thought, speech, and action in their connection to their roots, as explained above, their light will increase internally and externally, and the entire body will be purified from dust, so that there will be no laziness or heaviness in the body's limbs. And one will be swift as a deer and light as an eagle to do the will of the Holy One, blessed be He. As it is written in the Zohar, Pinchas 265a: "The heart is purer than all. From it all good and all health that pervades all limbs. And all strength, and all joy, and all perfection that is needed for all limbs." And in the Zohar, Vayakhel 158b: "See, at the moment a person aligns his will with the service of his Master, that will ascends first to the heart, which is the sustenance and foundation of the entire body. And afterward, that will ascends to all the limbs of the body, and the will of all the limbs of the body and the will of the heart become united as one. And they draw upon themselves the radiance of the Divine Presence to dwell with them. And that person is a portion of the Holy One, blessed be He."

**[42]** And according to what preceded, the four exalted roots are the image and the spiritual imprint, by means of which the specific imprint of the human limbs is found in the likeness of the three vessels: the brain, the heart, and the liver. These are the Nefesh, Ruach, and Neshamah. And through them, the actions of thought, speech, and deed are revealed according to the Divine will. And they are drawn from the four letters of the Tetragrammaton, blessed be He.

**[43]** And since the light of the higher roots is exceedingly abundant in its root. They merely stand and encompass the person, such that the more the inner vessels of his body are purified, the more their light can descend and enter further within.

**[44]** And the Mem of Tzelem is the four supernal roots. And each root is divided into ten aspects, as is known. And the Lamed of Tzelem is the encompassing [aspect] of the three mothers who perform their work according to their intermingling in the brain. And the Tzadik is the inner brains according to the three mothers that enter the body in three vessels: brain, heart, and liver. And this is what is explained in Etz Chaim, that the Tzadik spreads throughout the entire body of Zeir Anpin in nine partitions, and the Lamed in half of Zeir Anpin.

**[45]** And regarding the fact that the Chet preceded the Lamed, and the Lamed preceded the Mem, behold, if it were the will of the Holy One, Blessed be He, that the higher roots should effect their operation in their vessels in the body of man from the day of his birth, it would be easy for man to merit the intellect of the image, as stated above. However, the will of the Holy One, Blessed be He, is that all the higher root operations should be concealed within the Nefesh, Ruach, and Neshamah at first, in their very essence, and not operate immediately in the vessels of the body from the day of his birth until the youth grows. And it is evident to the senses that to the extent the child grows in the vessels of the body, so too does his intellect, his speech, and his actions grow.

**[46]** Correction: And as is known in the Book of Life, the gate of intellects of smallness, which is why it is called Ze'ir Anpin, is such that even though it possesses all the vessels of intellects. However, the operations of the intellects of the vessels of the image do not perform their operations and are concealed within themselves. And it is like the language spoken in the Zohar, Balak, page 185, line 1: "He is Holy, and Great, and Exalted above all worlds. He diminished His light and gathered His holiness towards a person." Therefore:

**[47]** And indeed, while the foundations of his goodness within him are hidden and enveloped by higher, encompassing roots that have not yet sent their light inward, there is a place where the forces of evil can gain dominion over him, God forbid. (As is known in the Zohar, where the root of the Sitra Achra's dominion is located between the inner and

the encompassing). And a wild city, man is born from the side of the four ravenous beasts, defiled by the four bitter ones: the white bile, the red bile, the green bile, the black bile. These correspond to the pure foundations. As stated above in Re'eh, Pinchas, page 234b.

**[48]** And although there are intellectual beings that revolve around the Throne, and there are those above them and higher than them, nevertheless, they are rooted in their root in the aspect of "encompassing" and have not yet entered. And this is what "higher than them" signifies.

**[49]** And from the dominion of the side of impurity, evil traits are drawn from the four elements. From the element of fire, pride and anger are aroused. From the element of wind, evil speech. From the element of water, evil desires sprout. And from the element of earth, [the body] is enabled to bring forth their strength in thought, speech, and action in the body, for evil deeds. And for good deeds, the body is naturally lazy, heavy, and sorrowful. As Rabbi Chaim Vital elaborated in the Gate of Holiness.

**[50]** And when the Holy One, Blessed be He, desired to grant merit to Israel, He therefore multiplied for them Torah and commandments, by means of which they can subdue the Other Side and draw down the supernal roots that are drawn from the Name of HaVaYaH, Blessed be He. To purify their entire being, so that all the vessels of their intellect may be filled with the thought of Torah. And with all their heart, they shall meditate day and night on the words of Torah. And with their entire body, they shall engage in the practical commandments, which are the root of all supernal roots, which preceded the creation of the world.

**[51]** Correction: And this is what is explained in the Zohar regarding the judgment of the wicked in Gehenna. For it is taught that it is for judging the wicked of the world. And Gehenna is a burning fire day and night. Just as the wicked are warmed by their evil inclination, so is Gehenna ignited. For it is written, "It is a fire that consumes until destruction, for from this fire they came forth, and this fire shall consume them."

**[52]** For the primary dwelling of the evil inclination is in the heart. And the heart is like a furnace. When a foreign fire, which the Lord has not commanded, burns in the heart of man, through pride and haughtiness of heart, which is an

abomination to the Lord, then from the fire of pride, he thirsts for all kinds of desires. That is to say, just as those who thirst quench their thirst with water, so he finds a way to quench the thirst of his desires through the element of water in the brain, to devise thoughts on how to bring the desires of his heart from potentiality to actuality. As it is written (Isaiah 57:20): "But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot be calm, whose waters cast up mire and dirt." And these are the defiled and putrid waters that he draws from his brain, his evil thoughts and imaginings. And it stirs up the element of wind, from the wings of the lungs that blow upon the heart, to bring forth speech such as slander, gossip, mockery, and the like. And the element of earth, from where does it draw the strength of these three elements? And through them are revealed the actions of the camp of the evil inclination. And because man does not die while half his desire is in his hand, therefore he grieves in his heart, according to the nature of earth.

**[53]** And when a person strengthens his roots in holiness, behold, the element of fire within his heart elevates his heart in the ways of God, to cleave to his root. And he burns with the fiery sparks of God's flame, and thirsts for Torah and Divine service, as it is stated, "My soul thirsts for You" (Psalm 63:2), and it is written, "Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters" (Isaiah 55:1). And the element of water within his brain is aroused, and it sprouts for him all good understanding in Torah and Divine service, and to delight in the Lord through His commandments. As explained in the Zohar, Parashat Pinchas, section 27b: "The voice of God is over the waters" (Psalm 29:3) from the side of the waters, which is the brain, where it ascends with the wings of the lungs. "The voice of God breaks forth in flames of fire" (Psalm 29:7) from the side of the heart, and the element of wind within the wings of the lungs, which blows upon the heart, connects with them, drawing all kinds of liquids from the brain. And this is the voice that encompasses fire, wind, and waters, to fulfill, "You shall meditate on it day and night" (Joshua 1:8). And the element of earth is the vessel for bringing forth the strength of the holy roots, through speech and deed. And sloth and heaviness are apparent in him, lest he transgress, God forbid, the will of the Blessed Creator, even in a minor prohibition, and sorrow over his transgressions.

**[54]** In every sorrow of this kind, it is permissible,

for a good desire from the heart awakens understanding in the mind, from which judgments are stirred to comprehend one thing from another. How many corruptions it has caused in thought, speech, and action. And how far it is from God, and how great is the desolation. And whatever one increases in seeking His ways and investigating, holy powers are awakened. And one becomes embittered with bitterness over his soul, for it has clothed itself in the garment of thought, speech, and action which are not good. And the "May" (מֵי) in the mind is awakened to bring forth a tear for this. And the powers are sweetened by the grace of God, when the gates of tears are opened, which are the letters Yud and Hey from the Name Havayah, blessed be He. The 613 judgments are sweetened, which are from the 72 divine name combinations, whose numerical value is equal to "tear" (דמעה). And its first root is sweetened in its root with an open eye. As it is written, "My eyes flow and do not cease until the Lord looks down and sees from heaven." Therefore.

**[55]** And these are the very essence of the Holy One, Blessed be He's will to bring into existence the four supernal roots, as our Sages expounded in Bereishit (Genesis), for the sake of the Torah, which is called "reshit" (beginning), and for the sake of Israel, who is called "reshit." And when one fulfills Torah and commandments in thought, speech, and action for the sake of the Holy One, Blessed be He, he thereby draws down the Name of God upon himself. For Israel is bound to the Torah, and the Torah to the Holy One, Blessed be He.

**[56]** And in Zohar, Parashat Shemini, page 35b, Rabbi Chiyah said: "The Written Torah and the Oral Torah establish man in the world, as it is said, 'Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness.' Behold, the Torah is called 'image' and 'likeness.' This is because we have explained the matter of 'image' as referring to hidden worlds, and 'likeness' as referring to revealed worlds."

**[57]** Thus the Torah is encompassed from beginning to end, and this is what is stated in the Zohar, Parashat Emor, page 98, column 2: "The Torah is both concealed and revealed." Just as the Holy Name is both concealed and revealed, so too is the Torah, for the entire Torah is the Holy Name, and therefore it is both concealed and revealed.

**[58]** For, just as He, blessed be He, is called a hidden God, so too, although the worlds were

created in many degrees, with respect to Him, there is no change whatsoever. And it is only with respect to us that He is hidden, so that His actions may be seen by our eyes in various degrees, and so that we may apprehend His unity, blessed be He, in the hiddenness of the lowest degree.

**[59]** And all His concealment is precisely so that His unity's glory may be revealed to us in this manner. As will be explained in the coming chapters. It is known that the concealment of a bright light is for the benefit that it can be revealed through its covering, as explained in the Zohar, Bereishit 15a, "It is concealed within, etc." For this is His praise and the benefit of all, see there. And this is concealed, and through this it is revealed.

**[60]** Thus, the Holy Torah, with all the sublime purity contained within it, which is found among the supernal beings, contains levels that are roots for the vessels of action, speech, and thought, corresponding to the soul, spirit, and life-force of man. And within it are hidden secrets of secrets, revealed to us through the revealed aspects of the Talmud, which leads to the performance of the commandments. So that through the Torah and the commandments, both written and oral, we may draw upon ourselves and within ourselves the image of the hidden supernal beings, and the likeness of the actions of our bodies, which are hidden yet revealed. Therefore, it is also said that it is hidden, and through this it is revealed. As it is His will that we attain the hidden through the revealed. And this is solely from our side, in order to subdue the evil inclination through the performance of the commandments. And consequently, the light within it illuminates for us the supernal roots.

**[61]** And this is their interpretation, of blessed memory, in Hagigah 12a and Midrash Rabbah, Genesis, Chapter 11: "The light that the Holy One, blessed be He, created on the first day, man beholds from one end of the world to the other, etc., and He hid it for the righteous for the future." The explanation is: from one end of the world to its other end, meaning the entirety of existence, from the beginning of the worlds to the end of the world of action, it shone and came forth as one.

**[62]** As they expounded, may their memory be for a blessing, in Tractate Chaggigah 12, that Adam HaRishon was so tall that he reached from the earth to the firmament. And another said, from one end of the world to the other. And as they said,

may their memory be for a blessing, that these two are one measure. (And as is explained in Etz Chaim, that Adam Kadmon passes through all the worlds.) And it is explained in the Zohar that the light was hidden in the Torah.

**[63]** Correction: And in the manner of "from eternity to eternity," which they instituted (Berakhot 54a, and see Rashi there and 53b, s.v. "Vayevarekhu et shem"), and they said in the Zohar (Vayetzei 158b): "All blessings of the two worlds, revealed and hidden." And with all this, it is all one, as it is written: "Blessed is the Lord, God of Israel, from eternity to eternity." And this is from the end of the spiritual worlds to the end of the physical world, for truly they are considered as one.

**[64]** And therefore, in the First Temple, where the Divine Presence rested in completeness, and the hidden realms were joined with the manifest, all saw that the many were as one, saying only "Until the world." But in the Second Temple, when the five things were lacking, not all the world apprehended the Unity. And those who corrupted, corrupted. They instituted to say "From the world and until the world," to teach, at any rate, that this world is not the principal, but secondary.

**[65]** And in the language of the Sages, they further instructed those who attain [understanding] that the concealed world is one with the revealed world. Therefore, they did not say "from world to world" but rather "from the world to the world." For in truth, they are considered as one.

**[66]** And likewise, the stature of Adam HaRishon was from one end of the world to the other. And according to what is explained, the world that is concealed, the *Tzelem* (Image), and the world that is revealed, the *Demut* (Likeness), were illuminating and coming to him as one, in a strong bond. And this is the meaning of "behind and before You have formed me" (Ps. 139:5), and the expression "the shaping of silver." For the inner intellects were connected to the surrounding ones, and the surrounding ones to those surrounding them. And this is from the earth up to the firmament, as is known, for the heavens are surrounding. And Rabbi Eliezer did not mention the surrounding ones except in general terms. And Rabbi Yishmael ben Rabbi Yossi mentioned also the higher surrounding ones. And this is the *Mem* of the root, upper *Tzelem*. And this is his interpretation: "and from the farthest reaches of the heavens to the farthest

reaches of the heavens." For Rabbi Eliezer said, simply, "up to the visible surrounding firmament." And he added further that also from the farthest reaches of the firmament, which is later called "heaven," to the farthest reaches of the higher heavens. (And see Ramban's commentary on the Torah on the verse "And God called the firmament Heaven." And what he wrote there, "But it is more correct, etc.") And concerning this, they said in the Gemara: "This and that are of one measure." And see Tosafot there.

**[67]** And since he sinned and the encompassing [divine] image was removed from him, his stature was diminished to one hundred cubits. (See Ein Yaakov, Hagigah, there. And Maharsha, Part I, there.) This is the matter of the three inner vessels of the image. And each one is comprised of three operative fundamental principles. And his body, which completes all the aspects in his likeness, is completed to ten. And it is known that just as there is no measure to tens, so each one comprised of ten is one hundred. And although at first the encompassing [vessels] were as one with the inner [vessels], and according to what is explained, the place of the evil inclination's dominion is between the inner and the encompassing, therefore he stumbled with the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, the shell of Nogah. And the matters are extensive. And there is no room to explain them here. Therefore:

**[68]** And consider Zohar 31b, that the light was hidden for the righteous, and it concludes there, "and it is hidden specifically for the righteous, precisely for the righteous." The explanation is that "righteous" in every instance refers to action, for it is precisely through the actual performance of the commandments that the hidden Upper Light is aroused. And there are the exalted roots within the image. For this reason, our Sages said (Pirkei Avot 3:9), "Whoever's deeds are more numerous than his wisdom, his wisdom will endure." For the main thing is to conquer first, to subdue one's inclination to be subservient to the performance of the commandments, even if one does not yet possess the intellect of the image.

**[69]** Correction: And according to what has been explained above, just as *Tzelem* refers to hidden, concealed aspects, and *Demut* refers to revealed aspects, so too is the wisdom and intellect of the Divine Being the concealed *Tzelem* within it, bringing forth the *Demut* of the vessels of action in

actual practice through the performance of commandments. And just as at the beginning of the world's creation, the *Demut* of the vessels of action in the commandments, which arose in the initial thought, stirred the creation of the vessels of the *Tzelem*, so too now, the performance of commandments that man carries out in actual practice stirs the continuation of the *Tzelem* from the primordial roots.

**[70]** And for this reason, concerning the creation of man, it is written, "Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness." And when man begot Seth, it is written, "And he begot a son in his own image, after his likeness." At the creation of man, the Holy One, blessed be He, created the root powers, which are the image by which man can perform the commandments, as it is written, "to serve and to guard." And the Sages, may their memory be blessed, expounded: this refers to the positive commandments and the negative commandments.

**[71]** But the choice was in his hand. And the likeness was in potential, not in actuality. For this reason it is written, "Let us make man in our image." In our likeness, with the letter *kaf* signifying resemblance. And therefore it is written afterward, "And God created man in His image; in the image of God He created him." And his likeness was not mentioned.

**[72]** And concerning man, when he begot Seth, and he begot in his image, after his likeness, the image was recalled in the palm of imagination. For after the image was removed from him and diminished to only a hundred cubits, as stated above in the gloss, only the likeness remained. And through the likeness of his actions, he aroused [the ability] to draw down the image. And Seth too was able to complete his image through the specific likeness of his good deeds, according to his choice and his acceptance of the Kingdom of Heaven.

**[73]** And the acceptance of the Divine Will in action is the essential inner point that, as it were, caused Him to contract the creation of all worlds so that man could be created in the world of action. Thus it is said in the Zohar concerning the attribute of His blessed Kingship, that it is the completion of all the Sefirot and perfects the nine aspects. And this is ten and not nine. As is explained in Etz Chaim, the essence of His blessed Kingship is that it should be magnified to be possessed of ten in the aspect of a

countenance. Therefore.

**[74]** And the teaching of the explanation of the letters is first the letter Tzadi, which is in action. And afterwards, the letter Lamed, which is in the category of encompassing intellect in the brain. And afterwards, the letter Mem, which is in the category of the N.H.Y.M. of Binah, for "if not to Binah shall it be called." And this is the matter of the "son of forty" [days] to Binah, and the forty days of the formation of the fetus. And the Mem is closed at the end of the word "Em" (mother), as is known that in conception it is closed. Therefore.

**[75]** And this is their statement, of blessed memory: The first union is not according to a person's deeds. And the second union is according to his deeds. As is known in the Zohar (Amor 4:104), "Seven unions of *Dukhnah* stand upon him, one image." And this is the matter of the three levels of the aforementioned image. For the intermingling of the four primordial elements and roots is not equal in every soul (*Nefesh, Ruach, Neshamah*). For the garment of the four elements and the intellects of the four roots are drawn according to the father's and mother's level of holiness at the time of the union. And it does not yet depend on the deeds of the offspring that will be.

**[76]** And then the order of their emanation and the intermingling of their temperaments is the Mem first, the four upper roots, and afterwards the Lamed, the emanation of their actions, which are the three foundational elements, as is stated, except for the element of earth. And all of this is still in the aspect of intellect and encompassing the intellect alone. And thereafter, they spread out into the attributes and the deed, the three (*Gevurah, Chesed, Tiferet*), as is stated above. And this is the first union, which depends solely on the holiness of the father and mother.

**[77]** And from then onward, all the rectifications and the drawing down of the intellects for union to bring forth their actions in the world is the second union. It is dependent according to his deeds. And their order then is *Tzelem* (צ"ל). And from this you will understand the matter in its root in the upper worlds.

**[78]** And therefore, all the rectifications of the worlds are called "unions" (or "marriages") in the Zohar and the writings of the Ari, of blessed memory. And it might seem surprising that it is

understood that this is merely a metaphor for the joining of spiritual matters. Similar to a person who mentally joins two concepts in his intellect, and from the joining of these two concepts, a new concept is born, based on the premise of the first two concepts. And what led the holy ones on high to liken a spiritual matter to such a physical metaphor?

**[79]** However, the matter is to shut the mouths of those who speak and broaden their mouths and tongues, and fill their mouths with laughter concerning the faithful of Israel. For they say that all the actions of the commandments that a person performs below cause great rectifications in the upper worlds.

**[80]** And therefore, an example was shown: just as we cannot comprehend or understand how from a lowly act, such as coitus, a wondrous creature, complete in stature and full of spiritual intellect capable of grasping wondrous, spiritual, and holy matters, is created from a putrid drop, so too can we not understand the true root of the rectification of the worlds and the supernal powers that are interwoven with spiritual lights through the performance of the commandments that man performs below in this lowly world, as the Blessed God commanded us. And see Kuzari, Ma'amar 3, Siman 23.

**[81]** Annotation: It is known that even the union of kisses, which is the cleaving of spirit to spirit, does not give birth to anything other than angelic souls, which are intellectual beings. And from the union of male and female are born human souls, which are drawn from the highest of the high to perform their actions on earth by virtue of their supernal strength.

It is possible to connect this matter to the verse (Ecclesiastes 11:5): "As you do not know the way of the spirit, nor how the bones grow in the womb of her who is with child, so you do not know the work of God that he does, all of it." The meaning of "the work of God" is the work that God commanded, which man shall do and live by them. For the word "does" (עושה) implies the completion of the matter, like "he hastened and did it" (Genesis 18:7), and like "and he did not trim his mustache" (2 Samuel 19:25). Therefore.

**[82]** And all agree that the powers of the higher constellations awaken to grant a portion to man. As our Sages, of blessed memory, said: "Whoever is born under the star of [Mars] will be a strong and wise man," etc. "Whoever is born under the star of [Jupiter] will be a righteous man," etc. Nevertheless, they do not grant a portion of their power except upon the arousal of the act of union in actuality. Similarly, the powers from the higher worlds do not grant their portion in life except in proportion to man's actual deed in practice, in the commandments and in the study of Torah which leads to action.

**[83]** Then they awaken to bestow their supernal light also below, through the fusion of the four supernal roots within the soul, in the intellect. And likewise in the heart. In the character traits. And in action.

**[84]** And although the details of the concept of the Image [of God] are extensive according to the writings of the Ari, may his memory be a blessing, it is sufficient for the general understanding. Give to the wise, and they will become wiser still.



## Chapter 4

# Gate II: The Power of Man's Actions

18 Chapters

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### Gate II, Chapter 1

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**[1]** It is written: "to love the LORD your God and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul." And our Sages, of blessed memory, said in the first chapter of Ta'anit and in Sifrei: "What is the service of the heart?" Say: This is prayer.

**[2]** Behold, the love that He commanded should be in all your heart. This is simple: for it is among the commandments dependent on the heart. And similarly, the matter of love in all your soul that He commanded. This means even to give one's soul for Him, blessed be He, from the intensity of the wonder of love for Him, blessed be He. As it is written in the first chapter: "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul."

**[3]** However, in this chapter, there is a novelty that it has introduced: that even the service, which is prayer, must be performed with all one's heart and with all one's soul.

**[4]** And for this reason, it is also not written "and with all your possessions" in this portion, as it is in the first portion, where it is written "and with all your might." For the first portion deals with the matter of the commandment of love alone. It is

fitting to say that the love should also be "with all your possessions." This refers to money, as our Sages, of blessed memory, stated (Berachot 61b): "If you have a person whose possessions are dearer to him than his own body, it is as if he loves [God] 'with all your might.'" But in this portion, where it is also written "Prayer is service," it is not as fitting to say "and with all your possessions."

**[5]** And behold, regarding what is written "with all your heart" concerning the matter of prayer, its intention is simple and elucidated in the verse for two matters.

**[6]** The first [principle] is to turn the heart away from the distractions of thoughts, and to incline it towards the complete intention for the words of prayer with a whole heart and depth of soul. As our Sages, of blessed memory, stated in the Baraisa in the chapter "Ein Omdin": "The one who prays needs to direct his heart to Heaven, as it is said, 'You prepare their heart' (Psalms 10:17)." And as they also understood from the verses concerning Hannah: "For Hannah was speaking in her heart" (1 Samuel 1:13). From this, we learn that the one who prays needs to direct his heart. And as King David, peace be upon him, wrote: "With all my heart I have sought You" (Psalms 119:10).

**[7]** And in Zohar, Parashat Beshalach, page 63, folio 2, it states: "Whoever prays before the Holy King must present his requests and pray from the depth of the heart, so that his heart may be found

whole with the Holy One, Blessed be He, and he may direct his heart and his desire.”

**[8]** And therefore the Sages of blessed memory said (ibid., chapter Tefilat HaShachar) that one who prays must pause, etc., so that his mind may be drawn to it. And this is what is meant by “with all your heart” – that the entire heart should be filled solely with the intention of the words of prayer. For if any other thought arises in his heart, then the heart is divided between two thoughts.

**[9]** And the second [point] is also to root from within oneself in the service of prayer, the pleasures of the world and its enjoyments entirely. And only to look upwards towards the loftiness of the Creator, blessed be He. As they said (Yevamot 105b): “One who prays must direct his heart upwards.” Until the entire strength of his heart is drawn only upwards, to delight in the Lord alone in the words of prayer. And in the manner of the early pious ones who would wait for an hour so that they might direct their hearts to the place. And in the manner explained by our Rabbi Yonah, may his soul rest, there regarding the matter, “And to your heart give heed.” And as they said in Shemot Rabbah, Chapter 22: “A person must purify his heart before he prays.”

**[10]** However, the entire essence of the purity of the heart is only for the sake of the commandment, and not a prerequisite, even for the matter of prayer, although it is called “service of the heart,” as was explained somewhat above at the end of Section 1, that the essence of all commandments is the deed. See there.

**[11]** And to understand the matter of the verse, “and with all your soul,” concerning the service of prayer, it is necessary first to explain the meaning and concept of the blessing, as it were, to Him, blessed be He. For we find several times in Scripture, “and you shall bless the Lord your God,” “Blessed is the Lord forever,” and many similar instances. Likewise, in the words of our Sages, of blessed memory, we find (Berakhot 7a) that he said, as it were, to Rabbi Yishmael, “My son, bless me.” And similarly, the entire formulation of the prayers and blessings, all of which were established by the Men of the Great Assembly, they begin and conclude with “Blessed.”

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## Gate II, Chapter 2

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**[1]** And the matter is that the word “Baruch” is not a language of praise and commendation, as is commonly understood. For when [a son] said to Rabbi Yishmael, “My son, bless me,” he did not utter any praise in his blessing, but rather a prayer and a plea for mercy. Similarly, in Bava Metzia (114a) we say, “And He blessed you,” implying holiness, for a blessing is not needed. And the Gemara refutes this, saying, “But is it not written, ‘You shall eat and be satisfied, and you shall bless the Lord...’?”

**[2]** But the truth is that “baruch” (blessed) signifies a language of addition and increase, as in the verse, “Take now my blessing” (Genesis 27:38), and “Bless your bread” (Deuteronomy 23:5), and “Bless the fruit of your womb” (Deuteronomy 7:13), and many similar instances in Scripture. These cannot be interpreted as language of praise and commendation, but rather as language of addition and increase.

**[3]** And in the Zohar it is said in many places, “to draw blessings,” etc. Not to “spread” blessings, but to “gather” blessings. An increase and abundance of blessings, etc. And see in Ra’aya Meheimna, the beginning of Parshat Ekev, page 111a and 111b, that “Blessed are You, HaShem,” means literally, to draw living ones from the Source of Life, in the name of the Holy One, Blessed be He, etc. And it is written, “And you shall eat and be satisfied, and you shall bless HaShem your God.” And it is through these words that man draws forth these blessings, etc. See there at length.

**[4]** And so it is written in *Pri Etz Chaim*, Gate of the Holy Ones, Chapter 1, may his memory be a blessing: “The secret of Blessed is in all kinds of abundance.” And so it is written there, at the end of the Gate of Creation, and in the second chapter of the Gate of Standing, and at the beginning of Chapter 3 there, and in the Gate of Shabbat, at the beginning of Chapter 12, and in the Gate of the Prayer of Rosh Hashanah, Chapter 3, see there. And so it is written by Rabbi Shlomo ben Aderet, may his memory be a blessing, concerning the matter of “Ishmael, my son, has blessed me,” see there.

[5] However, the matter of blessing Him, may He be exalted, does not refer to the essence of the One Master, Blessed be He, as it were. Heaven forbid, heaven forbid. For He is exalted above all blessing. But the matter is as stated in the Zohar: "The Holy One, Blessed be He, is hidden and revealed." For the essence of the Infinite, Blessed be He, is hidden from all hidden things, and one must not, God forbid, refer to Him by any name at all, not even by the name Havayah, Blessed be He, nor even by the smallest dot of the Yod in the letter Hei.

[6] And furthermore, what the Blessed One, may He be exalted, calls "Ein Sof" (Infinite) is not a designation for Him, may He be exalted, but rather the intention is concerning our apprehension of Him from the aspect of the emanations flowing from Him, through His will to connect with the worlds. And for this reason, they called Him "Ein Sof" and not "Ein Reshit" (No Beginning). For in truth, from the aspect of His essence, may He be exalted, He has neither end nor beginning. It is only from the aspect of our apprehension of His emanations, may He be exalted. For behold, all our apprehension is only a beginning. But there is no end to reaching, through apprehension, to apprehend His emanations, may He be exalted, that flow.

[7] And what is grasped by us somewhat, and we call and describe with certain attributes, names, appellations, and measures, as we find them in the Torah and in all the language of prayer, are all only from the aspect of His blessedness's connection to the worlds and the forces from the time of creation, to establish them, to give them life, and to govern them according to His will, blessed be He. (And these are what they called by the name "the emanation of the Sefirot").

[8] And according to all the variations in the details of the arrangements of Providence that descend and are drawn to this world, whether by judgment, or by kindness, or by mercy, through the supernal powers and their intermingling, the names, appellations, and attributes change. For each specific matter of the arrangements of Providence, a unique appellation and specific name is designated, as their meanings indicate. These attributes are from the side of the created powers, such as "Merciful" and "Gracious," meaning mercy and grace towards the created beings.

[9] And even the unique Essential Name, YHVH, Blessed be He, we do not unify Him solely in His

Essence, Blessed be He. Rather, it is from the aspect of His unification, Blessed be He, with the worlds, as explained: He was, and is, and will be, and He causes all to be. Meaning, He, Blessed be He, unifies Himself by His will with the worlds to bring them into being and sustain them every moment. And this is what the Ari, may his memory be blessed, stated in his holy language, brought in the introduction to *Pri Etz Chaim*: That all the appellations and names are names of His Essence that extend into the Sefirot and their vessels.

[10] Correction: And what is stated in Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer, that God created the world, was He and His Name alone. Specifically, before He created the world of creation. This means, He and His essence, blessed be He, and His Name, which is the world of Atzilut, alone. But if the Blessed One had not emanated the world of Atzilut from Himself, it would not have been fitting for His essence, blessed be He, to be, to be, and to be.

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## Gate II, Chapter 3

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[1] And this is their statement, blessed be their memory, in Shemot Rabbah, Chapter 3: "The God of your fathers has sent me to you." At that moment, Moses was clarified in his affairs, etc. At that moment, Moses was requesting that the Holy One, Blessed be He, make known to him the Great Name, etc. The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to Moses, "Whose Name do you seek to know? According to My deeds, I am called. Sometimes I am called El Shaddai. Or Tzevaot, or Elohim. Or Havayah. When I judge the creatures, I am called Elohim. And when I wage war against the wicked, I am called Tzevaot. And when I suspend a person's sins, I am called El Shaddai. And when I have mercy on My world, I am called Havayah, etc. Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh, I am called according to My deeds."

[2] And in Ra'ah Ma'alot, Parashat Bo, page 42b, it states: "For you saw no image, etc." For it is written, "And the image of the Lord shall he behold, etc." This means that even this image was not in His place, but rather when He descended to rule over them and spread Himself upon His creations, etc. For before the creation, He was a likeness in

essence, and He formed a form, but He was unique without form or likeness. And whoever becomes known to Him before creation, that He is beyond likeness, it is forbidden to fashion for Him any likeness or image whatsoever, etc., and not even with the Holy Name, nor with any letter or vowel point whatsoever. And this is what is meant by "For you saw no image, etc." But after He fashioned the likeness of the supernal Chariot of Man, He descended there and was called by that likeness, YHVH. This is so that they may know Him in His likeness, etc., "El Elohim Tzvaot, Ehiyeh." This is so that they may know Him in every attribute, how the world is conducted with mercy and with judgment, etc. Woe unto him who likens Him to any attribute, etc. Rather, His likeness is according to His dominion over that attribute, and even over all creations, etc. When it is removed from Him, He has no attribute nor likeness, may peace be upon him.

**[3]** And in Parashat Pinchas, 25a, it states that He is not called YHVH and by all His names except by the extension of His light upon them. And when it withdraws from them, He has no name at all from Himself, etc., see there.

**[4]** And in the Tikunim, section Ta'am, chapter 21, folio 2, he elaborated on the matter of the limbs of the Divine Stature, as it were. He then said that the entire matter is to reveal in each and every limb of His body His dominion, so that mortals may understand how the world is governed, and to know what is fitting to call each limb, and how its name is changed according to that limb. And there is a limb that is called within it "Havayah Rachamim" (the Tetragrammaton of Mercy). And there is a limb that is called within it "Elokim" (God). And there is a limb that is called within it "Yod," etc. He then showed the Cause of Causes, etc., that the Cause of all causes is One in all His names, and does not change in any of them. For the distinctions are in the names, and not in Him, etc. See there. And see further in Ra'aya Meheimna, Pinchas, folio 247, folio 2, and folio 248, folio 1. And see in Etz Chaim, at the beginning of the Gate of Circles and Straightness, and there at the end of this gate, at the beginning of the second edition, and you will understand there according to our words.

**[5]** And this is the entirety of our apprehension, so to speak, of the Blessed One, all stemming from the matter of His connection to the worlds and His diffusion within them. As it is written in the Zohar,

Parashat Bo, mentioned above: "Even He has no form in His place, but when He descends to rule over them and diffuses Himself upon His creations, He appears to each one according to their vision, sight, and imagination." And this is what is meant by "And through the hands of the prophets, I have likened [Myself]."

**[6]** Correction: And by this, the statement of our Sages, of blessed memory, in *Chazit* concerning "My dove, my perfect one" (Song of Songs 5:2), of blessed memory, will be understood. Rabbi Yana'i said: "My twin, as it were, I am not greater than her, nor is she greater than me." This appears wondrous, but according to our words, it is explained. Since all attainments, to some extent, that are spoken of concerning the Blessed One are only by virtue of His connection to the worlds, and His entire initial intention in the creation of the worlds and His connection to them was solely for the sake of Israel, as stated by our Sages, of blessed memory: "In the beginning, for the sake of Israel..." Therefore, it is said, "My twin, I am not greater than her, nor is she..." meaning, in these two aspects. Understand this.

**[7]** Therefore, the Sages of the Great Assembly established the wording of all the blessings for the commandments in the second person singular and the third person singular. They begin with "Blessed are You" (הוא אתה ברוך), which is in the second person singular. And they conclude with "who has sanctified us, etc., and commanded us" (קדשנו אשר כן), which is in the third person singular.

**[8]** That by virtue of His blessed will's connection to the worlds, we have some measure of apprehension. We speak in the presence of "Blessed are You, Lord..." etc. For the worlds are those that require the matter of the increase and abundance of blessing from His blessed essence that connects to them. And this is "King of the Universe," as stated in the aforementioned *Ra'a'm* [a work by Rabbi Isaac Luria], "When He descends to reign over them and spreads over His creations..." etc.

**[9]** And He who commands us and sanctifies us is His essence, blessed be He, the Infinite, blessed be His name, alone, concealed from all concealments. Therefore, they ordained in the language of the hidden, "Who has sanctified us and commanded us."

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## Gate II, Chapter 4

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**[1]** And the reason for this is that within every blessing are included the two aforementioned distinctions, because the foundation of the corner of our faith, may He be exalted, is that the entire intention and focus of our heart in all blessings, prayers, and petitions is solely for the One of the world, the unique Master, the Infinite Blessed One.

**[2]** However, we do not speak to Him, may He be exalted, concerning His essence alone, in the aspect of His being utterly abstract and separate, as He was before creation. For if that were the case, how could we possibly describe Him, God forbid, with any name or appellation whatsoever in our blessings and prayers?

**[3]** And even if it were not for the fact that the Blessed One showed us that His will is to connect to the worlds and to reign over His creations according to their deeds, we would not have been permitted at all to pray to His essence, the Blessed One, to connect to the worlds and to oversee His creations. Therefore, we preface by saying, "You are the Lord, King of the Universe." The explanation is: Since it was Your will to bring the worlds into being and to connect to them, to reign over them, therefore our request is that the Blessed One, the source of will, should reign thus forever.

**[4]** And also, according to the examination of His essence, blessed be He, without His connection to the worlds, there is no place for Torah and commandments at all. And concerning this it is said (Job 35:7): "If you have sinned, what do you accomplish against Him? If you are righteous, what do you give Him, or what does He receive from your hand?" And likewise it is written (Proverbs 9:12): "If you are wise, you are wise for yourself." For to the essence of the Master of all, blessed be He, every human deed, whether good or evil, does not affect Him in His essence at all, God forbid.

**[5]** And this is the teaching of our Sages, of blessed memory, in Bereishit Rabbah, the beginning of Parashat Matot, "The words of the Lord are pure..." (Psalms 12:7). Rav said: "The commandments were given only to purify..." (Yoma 86a). "For what concern is it to the Holy One,

Blessed be He, whether one slaughters from the neck or from the nape of the neck?" (Chullin 42b). And so it is in Tanchuma, Parashat Shemini, on the verse, "This is the living creature..." (Leviticus 11:2). And in Midrash Tehillim, Psalm 18, see there. And in Tikkunim, Tikkun 20, end of page 71a: "The highest of the high is elevated above all; He is blessed to all, and He needs no blessings from another, for there is no one who bestows upon Him. Thus it is written: 'And He is exalted above all blessing and praise.'" (Psalms 150:6).

**[6]** Correction: And concerning the intentions in prayer and blessings, to intend in each blessing a specific intention for a specific Sefirah, not, God forbid, for the essence of the Sefirah. For this is a cutting of roots, God forbid.

**[7]** For concerning the service of the sacrifice, the Sages, of blessed memory, stated in the Baraisa at the end of Masechet Menachot, and this is from the Sifrei, Parshat Pinchas: "Come and see what is written concerning the sacrifices for which neither El nor Elohim is mentioned, but only Havayah, so as not to give [power] to the claimant to dispute. As it is written, 'Whoever sacrifices to gods shall be utterly destroyed, except to the Lord alone.' And see below, in Sha'ar HaGimel, Chapter 9."

**[8]** Thus also in the service of prayer. It is utterly forbidden to intend any particular power or specific Sefirah, but rather the essence of the unique Master, the Infinite Blessed One, the totality of all powers. For He connects through His will, for a hidden reason known to Him, to act in that Sefirah and that power, which are in the order of emanation that He established through His will. Each specific Sefirah is for a particular matter through which He acts in this matter in the worlds.

**[9]** And see in the Responsa of Ribash, Siman 147, wherein R. Yitzchak ben Shushan responded to Ribash, of blessed memory, regarding this matter. And according to our words, it will be more readily resolved. And behold. And see in the language of the Ari, of blessed memory, which we mentioned within, at the end of Chapter 2. And see further in Tikkunim 222, section 3: "And He is called by all His names..." to show to every one of Israel from where He is called, according to their needs, etc. See there. And likewise in the Tikkun mentioned within, they said: "to show in every limb..." to make known to humankind, etc. And he knows to call Him in every limb as is fitting.

**[10]** And this is what is stated in the Zohar, Part 4, Chapter 1, concerning the question: "Why do we pray to the Holy One, Blessed be He, in various degrees?" Sometimes we pray to Him in the Sefirah of Knowledge, and in the measure of "Known." At other times, prayer ascends to the right, and at other times to the left, and at other times to the middle column. Every prayer ascends to the degree of Knowledge. But certainly, the Tetragrammaton (Havayah) is in every Sefirah and every Sefirah. At the time one desires mercy for the world, it ascends to the right. And at the time one desires... And all of this is in relation to the Tetragrammaton (Havayah), who is in every place. And thus it is stated in the Sifrei: "He is our God, in all that we call out to Him. To Him, and not to His attributes."

**[11]** Rather, the entire intention of our heart in all blessings and prayers must be directed towards the essence of the Blessed Ein Sof, may He be exalted, by virtue of His connection to the worlds as He wills. From these worlds, all the attributes and names are differentiated, acting to draw down and extend from His essence, may He be exalted, light and a flow of holiness, according to the arousal that reaches them from the deeds of man, of every person from the chosen people. Whether by grace, or by judgment, or by charity, or by mercy. Whether little or much. Thus it is in this manner and measure, with immense precision, in proportion and weight, concerning His connection, may He be exalted, to the powers and the worlds, to alter the order of their connection for the extension of the flow of their light, and all the details of their governance. Whether towards judgment and wrath, or towards grace and mercy. And also the measure of the judgment and the grace, whether little or much.

**[12]** As stated in the aforementioned treatises, the commandments were given solely to refine the created beings. This means that they are of great necessity for refining and purifying, to separate the dross from all the faculties and created worlds, so that they may be refined and purified. Likewise, "to refine" also implies to unite and connect all the faculties and created worlds, perfected and ordered according to the Divine intention and will, blessed be He. Consequently, the House of Israel, the chosen people, will also be united in His unique Name, blessed be He, as His portion and inheritance. For it is for this sole purpose that all the commandments and all the holy service, in their entirety, have come into being.

**[13]** This is the matter of the blessing to Him, may He be exalted, in all blessings and prayers, the meaning of which is truly an addition and an increase, as its plain sense indicates, as stated above. For this is His will, may He be exalted, for a reason concealed with Him, may He be exalted, that the supernal powers and worlds be rectified and unified through the blessings and prayers. So that they may be prepared and fit to receive the flow of holiness of the supernal light. And to draw and increase within them the holiness of the light and abundant blessings from His essence, may He be exalted, who unites with them and spreads within them. And consequently, this added blessing and holiness will also flow upon the chosen people who caused and brought about all this honor.

**[14]** And this is what Rabbi Yishmael said when the Holy One, Blessed be He, asked of him, "Yishmael, my son, bless me." [He prayed], "May it be Your will that Your compassion overcomes Your anger, and may Your compassion roll forth, etc., and may You deal with Your children with the attribute of mercy and go beyond the strict letter of the law for them."

**[15]** And see, *Zohar Chadash, Ruth*, section 57, page 2, paragraph 10, beginning with "And you shall eat and bless the Lord your God." And Rabbi Yitzchak said: Great is the power of the Grace After Meals, for it adds strength to the blessing in the Heavenly Court. Therefore, the Sages of blessed memory said (in *Berachot* chapter "How are Blessings Recited"): And in *Zohar Chadash* there, "Anyone who eats and does not bless is called a thief," as it is said, "He is a thief of his father and mother." And his father is none other than the Holy One, blessed be He, etc. For he steals and withholds from the worlds the flow of blessing and holiness that He should have influenced within them through his blessing.

**[16]** And likewise, all the verses like "Bless the Lord, O my soul," "Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe," and all similar expressions, all pertain to this matter. And it is the will of the Blessed One to be joined with creation. Concerning this it is said, "The service is a necessity for the Higher Realm."

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## Gate II, Chapter 5

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**[1]** However, to understand the essence of the matter of the increase and abundance of blessing in the worlds through human actions, and the nature of this matter, that the worlds require this. Behold, our Sages of blessed memory said (Berakhot 10a): "These five 'Bless the Lord, O my soul' [Psalms 103] – against whom did David say them?" He said them not except against the Holy One, blessed be He, and against the soul. Just as the Holy One, blessed be He, fills the entire world, so too the soul fills the entire body, etc. And so they said in Vayikra Rabbah, Chapter 4, and in Devarim Rabbah, Chapter 2, and in Midrash Tehillim, Psalm 103, and in Tikkunim, the beginning of Tikkun 13. And as explained in Ra'a"m, Parashat Pinchas, 247b and 248a. And see in Etz Chaim, Sha'ar Pnimiyut v'Chitzonut, the end of Drush 11.

**[2]** Correction: And although our Sages, of blessed memory, likened the Holy One, Blessed be He's, connection to the worlds to the connection of the soul to the body, let not the reader be mistaken, God forbid, that the likened is similar to the likeness, God forbid. For in truth, there is no comparison or resemblance between them in any way, as is explained in the Zohar and in Ra'aya Meheimna in many places. And the verse is full of words: "And to whom will you liken God?" (Isaiah 40:18). And also, anyone who has eyes of intellect will understand how it is possible to take a likeness from the created beings for the Creator, may He be exalted.

**[3]** And the Sages, of blessed memory, did not liken the essence of the soul to the essence of the Creator, blessed be He. Rather, they likened it to this matter: that even though the soul is a created power from Him, blessed be He, nevertheless, it is impossible to grasp its essence, to ascribe to it any title or action, except from the perspective of its connection to the body. How much more so the Creator, blessed be He, whose essence can only be grasped from the perspective of His connection to the worlds.

**[4]** And it is also that which gives [understanding]. For since it cannot be likened to any created being, for even the highest heavens are darkness in comparison to the Creator, and to anything that one might imagine, it will not be equal. Therefore, they were compelled to choose a path of analogy to some spiritual created being, as in the verse, "She

is more precious than pearls." And even though there is no likeness or value between the Torah and pearls, therefore the verse itself concludes, "All your desires are not to be compared to her."

**[5]** And it is written in Rosh Hashanah 24b and Avodah Zarah 36b in the Baraisa: All countenances are permitted except for the countenance of a human. And it explains the reason, for it is written, "You shall not make with Me, you shall not make Me." And similarly in Zohar Yitro, page 6, end of page 111, see there.

**[6]** And in Bereishit Rabbah, section 267, they said: "It is written, 'For there is a man whose labor is in wisdom, etc.'" Rabbi Yudan said: Great is the power of the prophets, for they liken the image to its Creator, as it is said (Daniel 8:16), "And I heard a human voice between the banks of the Ulai." Rabbi Yitzchak bar Shila said: We have another verse that clarifies this even more, as it is said, "And upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man, etc." And in Bamidbar Rabbah, section 19, "The wisdom of a man makes his face shine." Rabbi Yitzchak said: Great is the power of the prophets, for they liken the image of the Supernal Might to the form of a man, etc. See there. And so it is in Kohelet Rabbah, chapter 8, verse 1, and in Tanchuma, Parashat Chukat.

**[7]** And at first glance, it is wondrous. For to whom will you liken Him, etc. However, the matter is as explained above, that all our apprehension, so to speak, of the Blessed Ein Sof is only from the aspect of His connection to the worlds. And the order of the state of the worlds and all the forces, both higher and lower together, in general, are arranged, so to speak, in all their details like the form of a human body, in the arrangement of all its limbs and sinews and all the details of the matters within it, and their unification one with another. Which includes them all together within itself, all the forces and the worlds, as stated above in Chapter 1.

**[8]** And this is the matter of the "Measure of the Stature" (Shi'ur Koma) that is mentioned in the words of our Sages, of blessed memory, in the Midrashim. And see in Etz Chaim, Gate of Circles and Straightness, branches 2, 3, and 4, and there, at the end of the gate, at the beginning of the second edition. And he wrote there that this is a hint to the verse, "And God created man in His image, in the image of God He created him." And

see further at the beginning of the Gate of the Image and in the Gate of the Depiction of the Worlds of Atzilut, Beriah, Yetzirah, and Asiyah, there.

**[9]** And His essence, blessed be He, extends and is concealed within all, and fills them, and He is their soul. As it were, in the manner of the soul that extends and is concealed within the human body. Therefore, we are permitted to describe Him, blessed be He, in this manner.

**[10]** Correction: And this is the meaning of all the attributes mentioned in relation to Him, blessed be He. Eye, hand, and foot, and the like – all are from His blessed connection to the worlds, which are arranged in this order through all these limbs. And they are essential names for the faculties and the worlds, not borrowed.

**[11]** And likewise, in man, the names are not borrowed, nor are they in man merely as a sign and hint to the hidden, sublime matters, as in the case of a person's name, which is a sign for that form and mold that was agreed upon to be called by that name. Rather, they are also intrinsic in man, inasmuch as he is included, perfected, and ordered in the image and likeness of the form of the worlds.

**[12]** And examine in the Guide, Part I, chapter 26, in particular. And in the book Avodat HaKodesh, chapter 26, on the division of the purpose. And what he [the author of Avodat HaKodesh] objected to regarding the Rambam in chapter 65 of that part. And at the beginning of Sha'arei Orah, and in Pardes, the Gate of Appellations, chapter 1. And in the Shlah, in the introduction to Toldot Adam.

**[13]** And Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon, may his memory be blessed, also wrote in *The Guide for the Perplexed*, Chapter 72 of the First Part, that the entire world in its totality is called "the measure of the stature" (Shi'ur Komah). He elaborated extensively in likening the totality of the world's parts to the parts of the human body and all its affairs. And that He, blessed be He, is the soul of the world, in the manner of the soul to the human body, as is stated there. And his words, may his memory be blessed, are worthy of him who uttered them, for it is explained in the Zohar, Toldot, page 134, column 3, as is stated there. And from his words, may his memory be blessed, it is understood by us concerning the order of all the worlds together.

**[14]** It is commonly stated by our Sages, of blessed memory, that man is an icon and a likeness of the King of the Universe, may He be exalted. As it is written in Sanhedrin (46a and b): "His corpse shall not remain overnight... for he who is hanged is a curse of God." It is taught: Rabbi Meir said, he gave a parable, to what is this like? To two twin brothers, etc. One they appointed king, and one went out to banditry. The king commanded and they hanged him. Anyone who sees him says, "The king is hanged," etc. Rashi explained: Even man is made in the likeness of the Omnipresent. And in Midrash Rabbah, Parashat Behar, chapter 24: "He who strikes a man and he dies, etc." [Exodus 21:12]. It is like a man who damaged the king's icon, etc. The king said, "Did you not read...?" For whoever touches my icon, he is lost, etc. Thus, if a man kills a soul, etc., it is as if he is removing the king's icon. The meaning is that the one who concludes the verse with the reason for this, states: "For in the image of God He made man."

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## Gate II, Chapter 6

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**[1]** Just as the connection and sustenance of a person's soul to their body are by means of eating and drinking, without which it would separate and depart from the body, so too the connection of the Divine Essence to the worlds, which are the secret of the Great Man, in order to establish and sustain them, and lest His soul abhor them, it is His Divine Will that it be dependent upon the engagement in Torah, the performance of commandments, and the service of prayer by the Chosen People. Without this, He, blessed be He, would withdraw His Divine Essence from them, and immediately they would all return to nothingness and void.

**[2]** And therefore our Sages, of blessed memory, said (Ta'anit 3b): "For like the four winds of heaven I have scattered you..." Just as the world cannot exist without winds, so the world cannot exist without Israel.

**[3]** Correction: See Zohar, Va'era, page 12b. For the four foundational elements, Aramean [אַרְמֵעַ] are the primordial and uppermost roots. The lower and higher [realms] are sustained upon them. And they are for the four directions of the world. And see

Zohar, Ra'aya Meheimna, Pinchas, page 267b, that upon the four good foundational elements, man's soul has dominion, [and so do] the four Chariot angels known in the four winds of the world. Their root is the root of the root, the six [letters] of the four letters of the Tetragrammaton, Blessed be He. And as it is stated in the Zohar, "From the four winds come the winds," etc.

**[4]** And this is what they said in Vayikra Rabbah, end of Chapter 4: "Bless the Lord, O my soul." What did David see to praise the Holy One, Blessed be He, with his soul? Rather, he said, "This soul, etc. This soul does not eat in the body, and before the Holy One, Blessed be He, there is no eating, etc." And similarly, they said in this style in Midrash Tehillim, Psalm 103: "Just as the soul does not eat and does not drink, so too the Holy One, Blessed be He, does not eat and does not drink."

**[5]** When they mention eating and drinking more than other pleasures, they have conveyed to us this aforementioned matter. And it is that even though the soul itself does not eat nor drink.

**[6]** Nevertheless, the entire essence of the soul's union with the body as one, and its existence for its allotted days, is dependent upon the body's food and drink. This is the matter. Although certainly, the essence of the unique Master, Blessed is He, is not touched, God forbid, by any of the actions of the commandments, Torah, or service, nor does He care at all, as it is written, "Thus God does not eat and does not drink." And as stated above in the aforementioned passages in Chapter 4.

**[7]** Indeed, the entire essence of the Holy One, Blessed be He, connecting to the worlds, which are arranged as one, in the form of a human being in all its details and all its organs of sustenance, is decreed by His will to be dependent on the good deeds of His holy people. For these deeds are the sustenance and drink for the worlds, to establish, sustain, and increase their holiness and light through His connection to them, as is fitting according to the supreme will, may He be exalted. All this is according to the abundance of the deeds of the chosen people, who are the ones who repair and unify the worlds, making them worthy to receive the abundance of light and the increase of His holiness, similar to how food adds strength to the body and refines it.

**[8]** Correction: And also concerning the soul of

man itself. As our Sages, of blessed memory, stated in Kohelet Rabbah, Section 2, Verse 19: "There is nothing good for man that he should eat and drink, etc." All eating and drinking mentioned in this scroll, in the Torah and in the Written Law, refers to [spiritual sustenance]. And so it is stated there in Section 5, Verse 14, and in Section 8, Verse 12. And it is written (Isaiah 3:10): "Say of the righteous that it is good, for they shall eat the fruit of their deeds." And likewise, the opposite, Heaven forbid, is written: "And they shall eat of the fruit of their ways." And in Re'em, Parashat Tzav, 29b, it states: "The sustenance of the soul is the sustenance of the Nefesh, Ruach, and Neshamah, etc." See there. And there, in Parashat Pinchas, 267a, at the end, it states: "The soul is sustained by words of Torah, which are bread for it, just as worldly words are bread for the body." And there, 244b, at the end, it states: "And the soul that is occupied with Torah shall eat the bread of its father, etc." And see further there, 252b, regarding this. And this is the matter of the table of the righteous in the World to Come. As David, of blessed memory, stated: "You prepare a table before me, etc." And this is: "Come, eat of my bread."

**[9]** Correction: And behold, among types of food, there are foods whose power is solely to strengthen the four elements of the body, so that they may be in their initial strength. And there are foods whose power is to increase the strength of the four elements through an abundance of quality. And all of man's toil is to increase his bodily strength beyond the measure of his health. And he is not satisfied with minimal eating, in moderation, for the measure of his life. So too, the soul will not be filled with minimal eating of Torah and good deeds. And this is the entirety of man: to increase Torah and add commandments until an abundant increase of holiness and blessing is drawn down in the upper and lower realms, beyond the measure of the line that the Creator, blessed be He, inclined at the time of creation.

**[10]** As explained in the aforementioned work, all our service is to draw down encompassing lights in a great expansion of light. This is beyond the measure of the straight line of light that He, blessed be He, drew down at the time of creation for the purpose of the recognition of the life and existence of the worlds.

**[11]** Correction: And so it is according to this, the value is truly significant. The matter of a person

eating below, pure and clean from dross, is in accordance with the value of the sustenance of the worlds from his pure deeds. Whether little or much.

**[12]** And therefore, before the sin of Adam, his food was purified and clean from all dross and impurity. And they said (Sanhedrin 59b) that the angels would roast meat for him and filter wine for him. (And this matter of roasting and filtering, how greatly it magnified the power of Adam's soul, the secret of Primordial Man, more than the value of all the highest supernal powers. So much so that even the angels roasted his food for him, so that it would be a fearsome, consuming fire, a fire that burns away all impurity of the food, according to its very high value. And also the joy of the supernal wine was filtered from all sediment, according to its high value. And in the manner of wine preserved in its grapes). And after the sin, he mixed evil with good in the nourishment of the worlds, as it is written, "Thorns and thistles shall sprout forth," etc.

**[13]** And from this source, the generation of the desert also merited, prior to the sin of the calf, concerning the manna, which nullified even other foods and was absorbed into their limbs. As our Sages, of blessed memory, stated in the chapter of Yom Kippur (Yoma 74b): "Rather, what do I expound? 'And a peg shall be to you,' etc., after they sinned." And similarly, our Sages, of blessed memory, stated (Shabbat 30b): "For in the future, the Land of Israel is destined to bring forth..."

**[14]** This is the meaning of the verse, "Come, eat of my bread." Our Sages, of blessed memory, expounded upon this in *Midrash Rabbah*, *Tzav* 32b, and *Parashat Ekev* 2a, concerning the Torah, as noted there. This means truly of My bread, as it were, the bread of the Holy One, Blessed be He. As it is written in *Parashat Ekev* there, "He prepared a table for you," etc., as noted there.

**[15]** And in *Parashat Balak*, chapter 2, at the end of page 71a, "For from it you shall eat, that strong tent, etc." For He is righteous, as it were, He sustains it and gives it sustenance, etc. Therefore, "For from it you shall eat," and there is no sustenance in this world except from Him, see there. And also consult *Ra'avad* in *Har*, chapter 10, page 71a, and in *Parashat Pinchas*, there, chapter 24, beginning of page 2a, and in the *Zohar* there, chapter 25, beginning of page 72b, on this matter.

**[16]** And thus the Maggid said to the holy Rabbi Yitzchak (in the portion of Beshalach) concerning the Manna, that all creatures require sustenance, etc. And even the Sefirot, which are emanated, require, as it were, sustenance, etc. And the sustenance of the Sefirot is Torah and good deeds performed below. See there at length.

**[17]** And in the *Zohar*, *Parashat Mishpatim*, section 121, verse 1: "Israel is sanctified to the Lord, the first of His harvest." And Israel is called a great and mighty Name. And sustenance for all is in two places. In the two places of the Torah, which is sustenance above. In the two places of prayer, which is sustenance, etc. And even angels have no sustenance except through Israel, for if Israel were not engaged in the Torah, sustenance would not descend to them from the side of the Torah, which is likened to a tree. This is what is stated: "It is a tree of life" (Proverbs 3:18), and its fruit is the commandment.

**[18]** And Rabbi Moses Cordovero, of blessed memory, hinted at this matter in his book *Elimah*, his words being brought in this regard in the book *Shomer Emunim*, see there. And in *Tola'at Yaakov* and at the beginning of his book *Derech Emunah*. And this is the matter of their statement, of blessed memory: "Israel sustains their Father in Heaven."

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## Gate II, Chapter 7

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**[1]** And likewise, in the opposite manner. The deeds which are not good, God forbid, are to the worlds like bad foods, the essence of which will be explained, blessed be He.

**[2]** And as it is written in *Ra'aya Meheimna* in the portion of *Emor*, page 99, column 2, and page 101, column 1. It states: "On the day of Rosh Hashanah, Isaac went out alone and called Esau to prepare for him the delicacies of all the world, each according to his way, etc. And he lay upon his bed of judgment and called Esau and said, 'Hunt me game and make me savory dishes, etc.' And it came to pass, as soon as he had gone out, etc., that Esau his brother came from his side, bearing the burdens of the world's workers, and he too made sharp delicacies for the two, to carry arguments, etc. And

he said, 'Let my father arise and awaken to his judgment and eat the many evil deeds of all the world, etc.'

[3] And in Tikkunim 240:47:2, "And prepare for me delicacies as I love," from the commandments, "for the commandments of the letter Dalet [which represent sustenance] are for the Sitra Achra for one who transgresses them." And these are what Esau brought to Isaac, saying, "Let my father arise and eat of his son's game." And the Sitra Achra, through them, was brought to the left side to make the Holy One, Blessed be He, taste the sins of His children, who eat bitter things, etc.

[4] And in the Zohar, Parashat Pinchas, page 232, at the end of folio 1, it states: "And that heart is not its way, etc., from the impurity of the deeds of the common people. Rather, it grasps all the selection, etc., and all the intentions, and all the good deeds. And all that impurity and entanglement and filth, which are evil deeds, are placed upon the head, as it is said concerning them, 'And Aaron shall lay upon the head of the goat all the iniquities of the children of Israel...' and the goat shall bear upon it all their iniquities. And also elsewhere, in a similar vein, at the end of the page, see there."

[5] Just as the food of the body, when it is not good and not assimilated by the body, does not nourish and sustain the body, but rather turns within it into refuse, filth, and excrement, and also weakens and debilitates the entire body, because through this the soul does not extend within it as it should, and sometimes becomes sick from it; so too is the matter of deeds which are not good and pleasing, Heaven forbid. They turn within the worlds into refuse and filth, as it were. And this is the strengthening of the forces of impurity and the husks. May the Merciful One save us. Which are called vomit and excrement, as our Sages, of blessed memory, stated concerning the verse, "You shall cast them away as a menstruous woman; you shall say unto it, Get you hence" (Isaiah 30:22).

[6] And so it is stated by Rabbi Pinchas in the aforementioned page 32, and see there. And there, in Parashat Tetzaveh, chapter 2, verse 1, it is called a defiled refuse heap and excrement, and each one in Tikkunei Zohar, section 129, paragraph 1. And in Zohar Chadash, in the aforementioned section, Parashat Bereshit, page 6, column 3, in Parashat "Eikh Kakh Atanfer," which is the Sitra Achra, the "old man." And there, in Parashat Behar, page 39,

column 4, and there is no excrement but the Evil Inclination. And see in the Ta'amei HaMitzvot of the Ari, zt"l, Parashat Yitro, regarding this. And so it is the place of their nourishment in the Upper Root. See in Etz Chaim, Sha'ar Ha'arat HaMuchin, chapter 5.

[7] Annotation: And by this, the statement of our Sages, blessed be their memory (Megillah 25b) will be understood: "All jesting is forbidden, except for the jesting of idolatry, which is permitted," as it is written (Isaiah 46:2): "Bel bows down, Nebo stoops; their idols are on beasts and cattle; your burdens are carried in wagons, a load for weary beasts." And seemingly, according to this, the end of this matter there will be greatly surprising, where it concludes: "And I will bear and deliver, and I have always been amazed by this."

[8] And according to our words, it is clear to the intelligent one, as stated above, that everything we speak of concerning the Blessed One is solely from the perspective of His connection to the worlds, which are all arranged as one, like the likeness of a human form, so to speak, in all its limbs and matters, truly. And all the deeds of a person of Israel are to the worlds like nourishment to the body. And the deeds that are not good, Heaven forbid, are transformed within them into filth and defilement, and these are the forces of impurity.

[9] This is what the verse states: that the *akum* (idolaters/those who worship foreign gods) cannot endure and bear, nor can they properly expel and remove the filth that defiles them. Rather, "they have bowed down and collapsed together," etc. This means they have no inherent strength or power to expel and remove the filth from themselves.

[10] Not so is the Blessed and Awesome One, whose deeds are terrible. For when He grasps with His judgment, He does not hasten, Heaven forbid, to send forth at once all the forces of judgment and the *kelipot* (husks/shells), which are the impurities and filth that have been created in the parallel worlds and are directed towards the organs of digestion in man. For they would destroy, God forbid, the entire world. Rather, He bears them and endures them, as it were. And He removes them from the worlds, as is fitting, little by little, to enact judgment in the world through suffering, gradually over time, in accordance with the verse (Amos 3:2): "Only you have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your

iniquities." Thus, I will visit upon you all your iniquities. As is known from our Rabbis, of blessed memory, concerning this (Avodah Zarah 4a): "Until the end of days, the filth of impurity, which are the forces of impurity, will be emptied from the worlds entirely, after the reception of punishment by man is completed." As is written within, after the completion of the reception of punishment, they are vessels of themselves, and then the worlds will return to their original strength and perfection. Understand this.

**[11]** And this was also the matter of the service of Pe'or, as it is written in the aforementioned section of the Tikkunim: "And the four hundred and eighty-eight commandments are for the sake of the Master for him who works upon them." And this is the matter of the verse: "If the Lord washes away the filth of the daughters of Zion."

**[12]** And this is what is written in Nefesh HaChaim, Parshat Acharei, section 69, paragraph 1, concerning Jeroboam when he made two calves, that the Holy One, Blessed be He, said to the angels: "Behold, all the abundance that I have been giving you will be transformed into filth for you."

**[13]** And this causes great blemish, sickness, and corruption, and a weakening of strength, God forbid, in the worlds, according to the nature and manner of the deed. And according to its level in its root in the worlds. For then, in those worlds to which those deeds reach, the emanation and connection of His essence, blessed be He, is not in them in its true completeness as is fitting, according to the intention of His will, blessed be He. For He does not rest in a place of blemish as long as its impurity is still within it and its filth has not been washed. And since all the worlds, in general, are connected and unified as one, it follows that all the worlds also feel, to some extent, this blemish.

**[14]** and they do not return to their true health and rectification as before. Only when these impure forces are emptied to dust, through man receiving his fitting punishment, as it is written in Ra'a'm Pinchas 314, end of page 1 and beginning of page 2, there, see there, that by this they are automatically expelled, and immediately their end is finished. And see above in Chapter 1. And then, automatically, the blemish and corruption of the worlds is healed, and they are purified from their filth and contamination, and return to their original rectification.

**[15]** Or through complete, true repentance, which reaches its supreme root called the World of Repentance, the world of freedom and the supernal light of all. And from there, a holy, supernal light is awakened and drawn, which is the waters of purification to wash and cleanse all the filth and refuse of the forces of impurity. And they are nullified and consumed. And this is the matter of the verse, "If the Lord shall wash away the filth of the daughters of Zion." And likewise, "And I will sprinkle clean water upon you, etc."

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## Gate II, Chapter 8

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**[1]** And this is the statement of our Sages, of blessed memory (Bava Kamma 50a): "Whoever says the Holy One, Blessed be He, is lenient, his life is a surplus." This is seemingly wondrous. And it has already been explained somewhat above in Chapter 12 of Gate 1.

**[2]** And according to our words here, the matter is more clearly explained with good reason, that it is not in the manner of vengeance, God forbid. Rather, just as it is the nature of man that if he eats food which, by its nature, spoils and harms his body, that food will harm him, or he will even become ill from it, and if it is poison, he will die from it, and he himself is liable for his soul. So it is in the matter of the sins of the sinful soul, God forbid. Since it is so, He, blessed be He, established by His will the natural order of the state and affairs of the worlds, that man's good or bad deeds, God forbid, are like food and sustenance for them. There is no room for leniency in this. And he is compelled to expel the impurity that he amplified by his sin in the worlds, by means of one of the two aforementioned rectifications.

**[3]** And now you will perceive and understand the matter of the addition and abundance of blessing, and how greatly our holy service in its entirety is necessary for the very essence of the establishment of the worlds, and to draw down and bestow within them abundant blessings and added holiness. This is by way of the connection of His blessed essence to them, according to the supreme will, blessed be He, akin to eating and nourishment, as mentioned above. And this is His will and His glory, blessed be

He, for a reason hidden with Him, blessed be He, which is beyond our capacity to comprehend.

**[4]** It is fitting for every person of the holy nation whose heart trembles, that their deeds be desired before the Blessed One, to refine this thought and the purity of the desired intention, in the engagement with Torah and the performance of all the commandments, to draw and add through that sustenance holiness and new light in the worlds.

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## Gate II, Chapter 9

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**[1]** And especially when one stands to pray before Him, blessed be He, for at that appointed time, it is the primary sustenance for the worlds and for the soul of man himself. As it is written in the Zohar, Bereishit 24a: "His food is prayer, which is considered a sacrifice."

**[2]** And in the aforementioned *Ra'am* (commentary) in Parashat Emor, chapter 7, it states: "And Rebecca said to Jacob, etc." [Genesis 27:13]. This is to awaken Him with His delicacies. And Jacob awoke from sleep, clothed in prayers and supplications, etc. And he said, "Who then has prepared venison, with [his] prayers and supplications, and eaten of all, etc." [Genesis 27:31]. And in Parashat Pinchas, page 235, it says: "And he ate of the venison" [Genesis 27:30] – these are the prayers that go and are perfected, etc.

**[3]** And in Zohar, section 266, pages 1 and 2, it explained the entire order of the verse, "I ate my honeycomb," etc., also concerning the order of the entire prayer, from its beginning to its end, see there. And similarly, in *Ra'aya Meheimna*, section 244, page 1, they also explained it concerning the order of prayer in a slightly different manner, see there.

**[4]** And there the Rama (Rabbi Moses Isserles) states in his commentary on the secret that it is forbidden for a person to taste anything until the Upper King eats. And what is prayer, etc., until the Upper King eats? And this is the three first [offerings/parts] and the three last. When He eats, etc. See there at length. And all of this is concerning the aforementioned intention, which is

the drawing down of added holiness, blessing, and illumination to all worlds, as is explained in the Zohar, Parshat Vayechi, mentioned above. See there well. And the true worshipper must intend for this.

**[5]** Annotation: And the service of prayer was instituted in opposition to the daily offerings, which were also at their appointed times, the essence of the aforementioned nourishment. As in the verse, "My offering, My food" (one lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the second lamb you shall offer between the evenings; as in the morning and evening meals which are the essence of nourishment), and it is written, "for he offers the food of his God," and it is what our Sages of blessed memory said in *Hazit Ra'ayti*: "My flock" refers only to my sustenance, "for they shepherd me in the two daily offerings," etc. And see Zohar, *VaYetze*, page 164a, beginning with "My offering, My food," etc. And in *VaYeihi*, Remaz 2, and Remach 1, "Benjamin, a wolf that tears," etc. And in *Bo*, 37b, "My beloved shall come to his garden and eat," etc. See all these discourses at length. And in *Vayikra*, page 4a, and there on page 7, end of a, and in *Balak*, page 2b, end of a, and in *Pinchas*, Rama 1a, they expounded the entire matter of the verse "I have eaten my honeycomb," etc., concerning the secret of the matter of the offerings. See there. And there in *Pinchas*, 92b. And see there, Ram 72b, a wondrous matter in this regard.

**[6]** And similarly, he detailed and explained there all the organs of the vessel that cooks and digests food in man, which are also in the order of the chapters of the Chariot, [corresponding to] upper worlds and powers, referred to by the very names of those organs, which are the vessels that cook and refine the offering. Look well there in Zohar 4:224a and 4:234-235, and in *Ra'a* there. And in the secret of the four degrees of the offering, a pleasing aroma to God. Three degrees are "you are a pleasing aroma" in order, in the three principal organs of digestion: liver, heart, brain. "A pleasing aroma" in the liver. "Pleasing" in the heart. "Aroma" in the brain. (And to elaborate on their meaning is too much for me to extend). Through them are settled the three aspects of Nefesh, Ruach, Neshamah, whose principal dwelling is within these three organs. And another higher, hidden degree, the aspect of Neshamah to Neshamah, the secret of the root of the soul cleaving, as it were, to Him, blessed be He. And this is "to God."

**[7]** And therefore our Sages said (Berachot 55a): "When the Temple stood, the altar atoned. Now, the sending of a person atones for him."

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## Gate II, Chapter 10

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**[1]** Not only in the phrase "Baruch Atah," which signifies an abundance of blessing and abundance, does this intention belong, but rather in every single word of the entire prayer service. This holy intention also belongs. For every word of the prayer or of any blessing ascends upwards through the "great ones with wings that carry them." To effect its operation in its unique, supreme root. And thereby, as it were, one becomes a partner with the Creator of the universe, to build and plant many, many worlds.

**[2]** As it is written in Tikkunim, Tikkun 18, paragraph 35, letter bet, and kaf-bet: "When a person emits vain words and speech during prayer, it is like birds opening their wings and mouths to receive them. This is what is alluded to by the verse, 'For a bird of the sky may carry the message, and one with wings will report what was said' (Ecclesiastes 10:20). And the Holy One, Blessed be He, takes these words and builds worlds with them, concerning which it is said, 'For as the new heavens and the new earth...' (Isaiah 66:22). And the secret of the matter is, 'And I have put My words in your mouth...' (Isaiah 51:16) 'to plant the heavens...' (Isaiah 51:16) and 'to say to Zion, You are My people' (Isaiah 43:6). Do not read 'Ammi' (My people), but 'Immi' (with Me), meaning in partnership. And so it is written there in Tikkunim 279, paragraph 106, letter bet."

**[3]** And the intelligent one will understand from his own knowledge that it was not for naught that 130 elders, and among them several prophets, were required for the institution of such a small supplication and brief prayer. Rather, they attained through their holy spirit and the attainment of their supreme prophecy, and it was clear to them the paths of all the orders of creation and the chapters of the Chariot. For this reason, they established and instituted the form of blessings and prayers with these specific words. For they saw and attained how a path of light resides within each individual word among them, which is greatly

needed for the rectification of the multitude of worlds and higher powers, and the ordering of the Chariot. As our Sages, of blessed memory, said: "The service is a necessity for the Higher Realm."

**[4]** This is the meaning of our Sages' statement: "The Holy One, Blessed be He, desires the prayers of the righteous." In Tanchuma, Parshat Toldot, it is stated: "And why were the Matriarchs barren?" They said: "It was because the Holy One, Blessed be He, desired their prayers." And in Zohar, Toldot, page 137a, it is written: "Isaac remained with his wife for twenty years and she did not bear until he prayed his prayer, because the Holy One, Blessed be He, desires the prayers of the righteous." Why? Because through the prayers of the righteous, the Holy Chambers are nourished and increased for all who are in need. And it is explicitly written (Proverbs 15:8): "The prayer of the upright is His delight."

**[5]** Therefore, our Sages of blessed memory called the matter of prayer "things that stand at the height of the world." (Berachot 6b) This means that the words themselves, the words of prayer, stand at the height of the worlds.

**[6]** And in Zohar Vayakhel, Rabbi Elazar says: The prayer of a human being is the service of the soul. It is established with exalted mysteries, and people do not know. For the prayer of a human being pierces the air, pierces the firmaments, opens openings, and ascends on high. And see in Etz Chaim, there, and on page 202, column 1, and the beginning of column 2, wondrous, marvelous matters concerning the ascent of every word and every word of prayer. And at the beginning of Parashat Va'etchanan, Rabbi Shimon, the beginning of column 72, and at the time of prayer, all those words that a human being utters from their mouth in that prayer, all of them ascend on high and pierce the firmaments until they reach [their destination] and are adorned.

**[7]** And He awakens with His voice from below the Upper Voice, the Great Voice known in the Zohar. (And as it is written many times in the Zohar that prayer ascends to draw down blessings from the depth of all things. And this is the Great Voice): And this is what is meant by "The voice is the voice of Jacob." For the voice of man's prayer awakens the Upper Voice in response. Therefore, our Sages said (Ta'anit 16b) concerning the verse, "She gave her voice to me" (Song of Songs 2:14), and they said

this refers to a prayer that is unworthy. Meaning, only his voice is found, and his voice did not cause the Upper Voice to awaken with it. This is what is meant by "She gave her voice to me alone" (Song of Songs 2:14), therefore [He hated her]. And this is what is meant by the verse (Joel 2:11): "And the LORD shall utter His voice before His army."

**[8]** And for this reason, although our Sages (z"l) called the matter of prayer "service of the heart," nevertheless they concluded from verses of Scripture that one must articulate with his lips.

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## Gate II, Chapter 11

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**[1]** And concerning "before his strength" (lifnei chailo), this is a great hint to the essence of prayer. For its entire intention is to direct oneself solely to add strength to holiness. Just as a man of valor casts aside all his own affairs and needs, and willingly gives his life only for the honor of the king, so that the royal crown of that kingdom may be magnified and His sovereignty exalted, so it is exceedingly fitting for the upright person to direct all his intention and purity of thought in his prayer solely to add and grant strength to the holy worlds. And to awaken with his voice the Upper Voice, to draw from it blessings and light for all, to remove the spirit of impurity from the world, and the world will be perfected in His blessed sovereignty. And not concerning his own affairs and needs at all.

**[2]** And our eyes see in the text of the Rosh Hashanah prayer that it is arranged from its beginning to its end solely for the glory of His blessed Kingship, that it may be exalted as it was at first, before the sin of Adam the first man. And also the text of the prayer for the entire year, although according to its plain appearance, most of it is arranged concerning our own needs. Certainly, it is clear to every understanding person, and it is decided from its place, that the Men of the Great Assembly did not intend [for it to be understood] solely according to the plain interpretation of the words, as explained above in Chapter 10.

**[3]** And they instituted prayers in place of the continual offerings, which ascended entirely as a whole burnt-offering to the High Place, and

contained no portion for the common person whatsoever.

**[4]** And even though the Halakha is definitively established in the Talmud, that an individual is permitted to innovate something in his prayer for his own needs and his suffering, in each blessing according to its subject matter. Even in this, it is necessary that the ultimate intention not be for his suffering. And this is not the correct way for those who are upright in their hearts.

**[5]** For truly, it is wondrous how one can even request or plead before Him, blessed be He, to remove suffering and afflictions from oneself. It is like the matter of physical remedies. If the physician administers sharp medicines, or if the physician is compelled even to completely cut off a limb so that the poison of the illness does not spread further, would the patient plead with him not to administer the medicines or not to cut off the limb? Is it not the patient himself who hired him for this purpose? Thus, how can one pour out his plea before Him, blessed be He, to remove afflictions from himself? Are they not a poultice and a medicine of life to atone for his sins? As our Sages, of blessed memory, stated (Shabbat 55a): "There are no afflictions without sin." And if not, then with what shall the sinning soul be atoned?

**[6]** However, the ultimate intention must be solely for the sake of the Higher Need. For where there is a desecration of His Name, Blessed be He, such as the suffering of the entire people of Israel, as it is said, "Behold, they are smitten and afflicted," it is incumbent to plead and pour out supplication before Him, Blessed be He, concerning the desecration of His Name, Blessed be He. And only for the sake of His Name shall it be done.

**[7]** And also the individual, concerning his suffering, even if there is no desecration of God's Name in the matter. There is also a place to plead before Him, blessed be He, concerning the great suffering above, at the time when a person is immersed in suffering below. As our Sages, of blessed memory, stated in Mishnah, Chapter 6 of Sanhedrin: Rabbi Meir said, "When a person suffers, what does the Divine Presence say? 'My head suffers, my limbs suffer.'"

**[8]** Annotation: And these two ways the Tanna alluded to both in the Mishnah, Chapter 3 of Rosh Hashanah. "And it was, when Moses held up his

hand, and Israel prevailed..." (Exodus 17:11). And do the hands of Moses make war? Rather, to tell you... (Yoma 85b). Similar to this matter, you say...

**[9]** Here is the one manner mentioned in a place where there is a desecration of God's Name, blessed be He. It is said that Scripture hinted to us in the war with Amalek that there was a desecration of God's Name, blessed be He, in this matter. As is known from the words of our Sages, of blessed memory, in Pesiqta, "It is like a bathhouse..." And so they said there that he would cut words and throw them upwards. This is what is written: "And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand..." And are the hands of Moses [alone]...? Rather, it is only when Israel looked solely upwards, that the cry of their prayer was not before Him, God forbid, concerning their suffering, but only concerning the desecration of the Name of their Father in Heaven, God forbid. Then they too would prevail. And if not, etc.

**[10]** And he further said that even in a matter where there is no desecration of God's name, the verse concerning the Nehushtan hinted to us the manner and essence of prayer and supplication that is pleasing before Him, blessed be He. And is it that a serpent kills, and so forth? Rather, it was at the time when they cast aside their own suffering entirely, and looked and poured out their plea and supplication solely upon the greatness of the suffering above that they caused at the time of their transgression, meaning to say. And also the suffering that is now wrought above, due to their being immersed at present in the suffering of punishment for their sin. Then they would be healed, etc.

**[11]** Correction: And what is written, "My head is disgraced, my arm is disgraced," refers to the phylacteries of the ministering angel and the phylacteries of the Holy One, blessed be He. For our Rabbis, of blessed memory, said (Berakhot 6a) that the Holy One, blessed be He, places phylacteries. And the matter of His phylacteries, may He be exalted, is His cleaving to do good to us in all things. As it is written there, "The phylacteries of the Master of the Universe, what is written in them? 'And who is like Your people Israel, a nation united?' For what nation is so great?" And similarly, all the verses there are only praises of Israel. And all of them are written in His phylacteries, and this is in the manner of "The Lord has avouched you this day to be His own treasure" (Deuteronomy

26:18), for just as in our phylacteries are written praises of the Holy One, blessed be He, so His phylacteries, as it were, are praises of us. For there is the matter of cleaving. And this is the matter written, "Israel, in whom I glory" (Isaiah 60:21), the secret of the phylacteries of the Master of the Universe. For phylacteries are called glory, as our Rabbis, of blessed memory, said. And see Zohar, Beshalach, page 62, beginning of page 62.

**[12]** Therefore, when a person is distressed, the connection and cleaving, as it were, between the person and the Blessed One is not in its full completeness as it ought to be. This is the matter of "my head is shorn, my arm is shorn" (Isaiah 15:2), which are the places of the phylacteries, where the holy connection was fitting to be.

**[13]** And they said in Shir HaShirim Rabbah, Chapter 2: And in the vision concerning the verse, "I sleep, but my heart is awake" (Song of Songs 5:2), what are these twins? If one has a pain in his head, the other feels it. So the Holy One, Blessed be He, said concerning His people, "I am with him in distress" (Psalms 91:15). And in Tanchuma, Parshat Acharei, "Every salvation that comes to Israel is from the Holy One, Blessed be He," as it is said, "I am with him in distress..." (meaning, and it concludes, "and I will show him My salvation"). Your salvation is that it is said, "and for your salvation" (Habakkuk 3:13). And in Shir HaShirim, Psalm 13, "My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation" (Psalms 13:5). Rabbi Eliezer said: This is one of the difficult verses, that the salvation of the Holy One, Blessed be He, is the salvation of Israel. It is not written "in our salvation" but "in Your salvation," etc. Your salvation is our salvation. And see Zohar, Parshat Emor, page 102, beginning of page 103, concerning the verse, "Salvation belongs to the Lord" (Psalms 3:8).

**[14]** And this is "With him I am in distress." This means that when the Holy One, Blessed be He, associates Himself with the suffering, then He will deliver him, etc. And when a person does not feel the pain of his torments, due to the great bitterness of his suffering, as it were. These bitternesses are precisely the purification of his transgressions. And he is atoned for by this until his own sufferings are removed from him (and these are the holy *gevurot*, as is His way, the Holy One, Blessed be He, to sweeten bitterness with bitterness. And this is the rectification of the *middot* in their root).

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## Gate II, Chapter 12

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[1] Therefore, our Sages, of blessed memory (Berachot 63a), said: "Whoever associates the Name of Heaven with his suffering, his sustenance is doubled." The reason for this is that, aside from the suffering that occurs above when one receives his punishment through afflictions, may it be interpreted, there is no comparison or likeness whatsoever between this suffering above and the immense suffering that one caused above at the time of committing the transgression, may it be interpreted. It is like the case of a beloved son who was enticed by wine, fell to the ground, and broke his joints and his body, and he is in mortal danger. He himself does not feel the danger to his life at all at that moment, as it is written (Proverbs 23:35): "They struck me, but I felt no pain; they beat me, but I did not know it." However, his father's heart is greatly distressed by this. And when the physicians bind the broken bones and apply sharp poultices and bandages, the son cries out in pain from the sharp remedies that eat into his flesh. And although his father is distressed by his cries and his many groans now, there is no comparison whatsoever between the suffering of now and the first suffering and anguish that his father experienced at the time he fell and broke his bones, when he almost despaired of his life then.

[2] Indeed, it is precisely in this manner. This is the matter of sin, meaning that when a person commits it, he causes immense and immeasurable sorrow above. And the person himself does not feel this at all at that time, nor does he know that it is to his own soul. For he is then considered as dead, God forbid, as our Sages stated (in the chapter "He Who is Mute"): "The wicked, in their lives, are called dead." And there are sins through which his soul is completely severed, God forbid, from the bond of holiness. But He, blessed be He, is the compassionate Father. As it were, He grieves in his distress. And out of His abundant mercy and kindness, blessed be He, He sends him sufferings, which are a poultice and bandage to cleanse his sin. Then the person feels the pain of his sufferings and is distressed. And through this, sorrow is also aroused above, as mentioned. However, this sorrow is in no way comparable to the sorrow he caused above at the time of committing the sin,

God forbid.

[3] And therefore, when the ultimate purpose of man before Him, blessed be He, is to remove his suffering from himself, it is only concerning the suffering of the Upper Worlds that participates with him in his suffering. And when he truly repents for his sin that caused the suffering of the Upper Worlds, then the afflictions are removed from him. Not only that, but his measure is given to him and his sustenance is doubled, in return for the two kinds of suffering he caused above, and for which he now repents for both. His transgressions are turned into merits.

[4] And this is what our Sages, of blessed memory, said in Chanah (Berachot 31b): "And she was bitter of soul and prayed to the Lord." This means she cast words upwards. Meaning, even though she herself was bitter of soul, nevertheless she cast her sorrow aside and did not care at all to pray for herself. Rather, she cast the words of her prayer before Him, blessed be He, concerning the sorrow above that is caused by her being currently immersed in sorrow.

[5] And therefore they said there that Moses also "cast words upwards" (Deut. 1:37), "Do not read 'El Hashem' [to the Lord], but 'Al Hashem' [against the Lord]." And according to the plain meaning, what compelled our Sages of blessed memory to interpret "Do not read" and to say that he "cast words upwards"? However, it is for a higher purpose that they interpreted it so, as has been written.

[6] And one who understands will comprehend thusly, as it is further written there that Elijah also rebuked the Heavens, as it is said, "And You have turned their heart back" (1 Kings 18:37). This is akin to "O Rock of my heart" (Psalms 73:26). See also Zohar Terumah 128, beginning of page 72b. And as it is written (Isaiah 50:1), "Because of your transgressions was your mother sent away; because of your iniquities did I send you away." This is what is meant by "And You have turned their heart back." And it is similarly explained in *Pri Etz Chaim*, Sha'ar HaKri'at Shema, Chapter 8, there.

[7] And concerning the prayer of an individual for their suffering, their intention should be solely for the needs of the Divine alone. This is even more so with the fixed and ordered currency of the prayers, established by the holy Sages of the Assembly. It is

certainly fitting not to intend in them one's own apparent need, but rather the needs of the Divine alone. This is to draw an abundance of blessing and holiness to the worlds through His blessed connection to them. As has been written at length.

**[8]** And even though our Sages of blessed memory also said (Eruvin 65a), "I could absolve the entire world from the judgment of prayer, for it is said, 'intoxicated, not with wine'," what can be said now in these generations? For every person is like one lying at the head of a rope, and in the heart of the seas all the days, under the yoke of the toil of livelihood. And therefore, no one pays heed to turn his heart and thought away from the confusions of his immense worries about the vanities of this lowly world, to prepare himself to meet his God, blessed be He.

**[9]** Therefore, it is certain that each person, according to their intellect and comprehension, is obligated to set counsel within their soul and seek stratagems for the war of [divine] service. To escape the confusion of impure thoughts that might cloud their mind regarding the proper service of prayer. For the service of prayer now stands in our stead for the service of the sacrifice, which was entirely dependent on the intention of the High Priest. For with his intention, he could either render it fit or unfit. And through the sanctity of his intention, the sacrifice would ascend as a pleasing aroma before Him, blessed be He.

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## Gate II, Chapter 13

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**[1]** And the counsel advised concerning this is as the Maggid said to the Beit Yosef in the second warning at the beginning of the book Maggid Meisharim, may his soul be sanctified: "Be exceedingly careful not to think during prayer any thought, even of Torah and commandments, except for the words of the prayer themselves."

**[2]** Examine his words carefully, for he did not say to intend with the intention of the words themselves. For truly, in the inner depth of the intention of prayer, we do not know to what extent. For even what has been revealed to us of the intentions of prayer from our early saints, may their

memory be blessed, the holy exalted ones, and up to the last holy man, a fearsome man of God, the Ari, of blessed memory, who performed wonders and great deeds with wondrous intentions, these are not even comparable to a drop from the sea, in relation to the inner depth of the intention of the Men of the Great Assembly, the composers of the prayers, who were 120 elders, and among them several prophets.

**[3]** And let every intelligent person understand. For there is no person on dry land who can effect such a wondrous and awesome rectification. To encompass and conceal within the fixed and ordered form of prayer, in one manner, the rectifications of all the upper and lower worlds, and the arrangements of the chapters of the Chariot. And that each time one prays, new rectifications will be brought about in the order of the worlds and the powers, and the drawing down of new and different divine intelligences. Understand that they ordained it until the coming of the redeemer. For never was there, nor will there be, any prayer in particular that resembles the one before it and the one after it, in general. For the garments worn in the morning are not worn in the evening, and those worn in the evening, etc., as is written in Tikkunim 22b. And similarly, each day to the one before it and the one after it. And therefore our Sages said (Chagigah 9b and Midrash Rabbah Bamidbar 9): "What is crooked cannot be straightened," referring to one who nullified the recitation of Shema, etc., or prayer, etc. And as is written at length in the Pri Etz Chaim, Chapter 7 of the Gate of Prayer, see there.

**[4]** And this is impossible except through the Supreme Prophecy and His Holy Spirit, blessed be He, which appeared to them with a tremendous manifestation at the time of the rectification of the wording of the prayer and blessings. There, blessed be He, He placed in their mouths these specific words, containing within them all the rectifications. Therefore, who is it that has stood in the counsel of God, in the depth of His intention, blessed be He? What path illuminates the light of each individual word among them?

**[5]** Rather, the essence lies in the service of prayer. When a person utters each word of prayer from their mouth, they should then visualize in their mind that word with its letters, in its form, and intend to add to it the power of holiness, which will bear fruit above, to increase their sanctity and their light. As explained above in chapter 6, this is why prayer is

called "matters that stand at the height of the world," for each word in its very form ascends above, each one to its source and root, to effect wondrous actions and rectifications.

**[6]** And it is a wondrous, tested, and proven remedy for those who accustom themselves to this. To nullify and remove from oneself, through this, all vain thoughts that disturb and hinder the purity of thought and intention. And whatever his habit in this increases, purity will be added to his thought in prayer. And it is a simple intention:

**[7]** Correction: And although it is a decided halakha in the Talmud that prayer can be recited in any language, this is for the purpose of fulfilling the commandment of prayer, as explained above at the end of Section 1, that in all commandments, even the commandment of prayer, which is called "service of the heart," its essential requirement for validity lies in its practical aspect. However, for the most excellent fulfillment of the commandment, one must certainly also add purity of thought and complete intention. And according to the magnitude of the purity of intention, so will the act of the commandment grow, especially the service of the heart in prayer. Although one who prayed in any language has fulfilled his obligation, there is no comparison to one who prays in the Holy Tongue, specifically with those words that stand at the height of the world, and cleaves all his powers to them.

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## Gate II, Chapter 14

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**[1]** Indeed, the explanation of the aforementioned verse at the beginning of our discourse, "and to serve Him... and with all your soul," is that the complete service of prayer requires it to be with the soul. This is a great matter for those who know and understand somewhat. And when a person perseveres in his prayer at this level, which will be explained, God willing, purity will be added to his purity.

**[2]** For we find in several places in Scripture and in the words of our Sages, of blessed memory, that prayer is called by the name "soul" (nefesh). For there are several strong laws concerning the

fundamentals of prayer that can be understood from these verses. It is written concerning Hannah, "And I poured out my soul before the Lord." And it is written, "Bless the Lord, O my soul." "Praise the Lord, O my soul." And our Sages, of blessed memory, in the first chapter of Berachot (5a) said, "Two who entered to pray, and one preceded the other to pray and did not wait for his companion, his prayer is torn up before him." As it is said, "He tears his soul in his anger." Rashi explained, "It is said to you, 'You have caused yourself to tear your soul before you.' And what is this soul? It is prayer, as it is said, 'And I poured out my soul,' etc."

**[3]** The matter is that the service of prayer is in the place of the service of the sacrifice. Just as the essence of the sacrifice was to elevate the soul of the animal upwards, and the entire purpose of atonement was dependent on the sprinkling of the blood, which is the soul. And likewise, the essence of the burning of the entrails was for the intention of elevating the soul. So too is the essence of prayer: to elevate, surrender, and cleave one's soul upwards. For the power of human speech is called "soul," as it is written, "and man became a living soul" (Genesis 2:7), and it is interpreted as "a speaking spirit." And it is also apparent to the eye that with every word a person utters from their mouth, a spirit and the breath of the heart emerges from their mouth. And speech is the essence of man's soul, for this is man's advantage over the animal. Therefore, every word that emerges from a person's mouth is a power and a part of their soul.

**[4]** Annotation: Regarding the sacrifices in the Temple, which were entirely a reflection of the Supernal Image, their ascents and chambers, and all the vessels with which they served, the supernal worlds and powers, and the lights of the holy palaces, were all bound and unified through them, in order of the degrees above and higher, up to the Infinite Blessed God. As is elucidated in many places in the Zohar. In Parashat Bereshit, page 45, section 2. Noah, page 65, section 1. Lech Lecha, page 91, section 2. Vayigash, page 206, section 2. Vayechi, page 243, section 1. Pekudei, page 259, section 2. Vayikra, chapter 5, beginning of page 72. Tzav, chapter 26, section 2. Zohar Chadash, Tzav, chapter 38, section 1. And there in Shir HaShirim, page 51, section 2. May it be seen. In all these places, the matter is awesome. And see in Pri Etz Chaim, chapters 5 and 6 of the Gate of Prayer, the order of elevation and unification in detail.

[5] And therefore it is called a "korban" (offering), as stated in the Bahir: "Why is it called a korban? Rather, it is named so because it brings close the holy forms, etc. And they said, 'for a pleasing aroma,' etc. The spirit descends and unites with those holy forms, and is brought close through the korban, and this is why it is called a korban." (End of quote). And see Zohar Vayikra, beginning of page 5 and page 8, column a. And in Ra'a'm Pinchas 296, b: "And it was called a korban, because through it they were brought close, etc." And see Pa'aneach Raza, chapter 5, from the Gate of Prayer.

[6] And since, due to our sins, the service of our Holy Temple has ceased, only the service of prayer remains in its place. For it too has the property of connecting and unifying the worlds, ascending ever higher to the Blessed Ein Sof, as is explained in many places in the Zohar. And more explicitly in Parashat Vayakhel, page 213, folio 2: "When one serves his Master with prayer, I cleave to my Beloved like a coal to an ember, to unify these lower firmaments of holiness, to crown them with one lower Name. And from there and onward, to unify the higher, inner firmaments, so that they all become one, etc." And while my mouth and lips are murmuring, my heart shall intend, my will shall ascend ever higher, to unify all in the secret of secrets, where all wills and thoughts are anchored in the secret of the covenant in Ein Sof.

[7] And as explained in the *Pri Etz Chaim*, the entire essence of the matter of prayer, from its inception until after the standing [amidah], is the rectification of the worlds and their elevation from below upwards, to become connected and integrated, each one into the world above it, and ever upwards until the Infinite Blessed One. And see there, chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7 of the Gate of Prayer, the matter in its entirety.

[8] And see in *Re'em* (Rabbi Eliyahu Mizrahi) at the beginning of Parashat Ekev, that this is the distinction between blessings on commandments and blessings on enjoyment, and blessings of prayer. For blessings on commandments and enjoyment are the extension of abundance from above to below, a blessing from above downwards. But blessings of prayer are the rectification of the worlds themselves and their elevation, and the connection of each world to the world above it. And see in *Pri Etz Chaim* at the beginning of the Gate of Blessings and at the beginning of Chapter

3 there. (And what is further written there in *Re'em* "from above to below" [לתתא מעילא] – this is the extension of abundance from above to below after the standing [in prayer]. And this too is from the aspect of returning and elevating the worlds, each one to that which is above it. As written in *Pri Etz Chaim* in the first chapter of the Gate of Prayer and at the beginning of the Gate of Kaddishim in section 12 and section 1 in that place):

[9] Therefore, when one stands to pray before their Creator, blessed be He, they should divest their body from their soul. This means they should remove all the vain thoughts that come from the body's faculties, which have been imprinted and adhered to their soul. So that the service of their prayer shall be only with the soul and its supreme desire.

[10] And this is: that before one stands in prayer, one must nullify and remove from oneself in thought all the pleasures of the body and its enjoyments, and all of its affairs. Until one establishes in one's thought a disdain for the body, as if one were not a body at all. And only one's soul alone is the one speaking its prayer. And in speaking, each word is a strength and a part of one's soul. One should cleave to it exceedingly, to give and pour out one's very soul completely into it. And to cleave it to the Upper Root of the words of prayer, which stand in the heights of the world. As it is written in the Zohar, Vayakhel, mentioned in the gloss, "And while his lips move, his heart should intend, his desire should ascend higher and higher to unify all in the secret of secrets, where all desires and thoughts are bound in the secret of the covenant in the Infinite Light."

[11] And then it will be considered as if he is removed from this world, and he is among those who ascend on high. Until even after prayer, it will be very difficult for him to turn his thoughts to the affairs of this world. And it will be in his eyes as if he is falling and descending from a high rampart to a deep pit. And like the early pious ones who would remain for an hour even after prayer. And this is also what the Ari z"l wrote as the reason for this: to prolong the stay of the intellect, etc. And this is the meaning of their statement z"l (Yevamot 105b): One who prays must direct his heart upwards.

[12] And so it is written, his love for the Blessed One will multiply and blaze with the strength of his soul. Until he truly desires and yearns that when he utters that holy utterance, that word from the

formulation of prayer, his soul will depart entirely from the body and ascend, cleaving, as it were, to the Blessed One.

**[13]** As it is written here, "and to serve Him with all your soul." Similarly, Hannah said, "And I poured out my soul before the Lord." This is clear. It can also be understood from our Sages' statement (Ta'anit 8a): "A person's prayer is not heard unless he places his soul in his hand." This means to elevate and cleave his soul upwards in his prayer. And "his hand" is explained as its root being from the verse, "and its branch will not be fresh" (Job 15:32).

**[14]** Annotation: As our Rabbi Yonah, may his soul be sanctified, wrote in Parashat Ekev, chapter 25, verse 2, concerning one who prays: "He must direct his eyes downward and his heart upward." May his memory be a blessing. He explains there: "Meaning, he should conceive in his heart as if he is standing in the heavens, and remove from his heart all the pleasures of this world and all bodily delights." This is akin to what the ancients said: "When you wish to direct your intention, simply separate your body from your soul." And after he reaches this state of contemplation, he should also consider as if he is standing in the Holy Temple, which is below [the heavens], because through this, his prayer will be more acceptable before the Omnipresent." From my teacher, the Rabbi, may his light shine. Thus concludes Rabbi Yonah.

**[15]** And it is known that Rabbi Yitzchak was a holy disciple of the Master, Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman, of blessed memory. And his words are indeed the words of Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman, of blessed memory, in the Parashah "Acharei" [afterwards], in the verse, "You shall do My judgments, etc." And he states there: "And those who abandon all worldly matters and do not attend to them are as if they are not embodied. And their entire intention and thought is solely in their Creator. This was the case with Chanuch and Eliyahu, in their cleaving of their souls to the Honored Name, they will live forever in their body and soul."

**[16]** And this is also what Rabbi Yitzchak brought in the name of the Sages of old: "Cast off your body from your soul." This means that the body, its affairs, and its pleasures will be despised and loathed in his eyes. So much so that he will have an immense yearning to cast himself aside, and that the entire yearning of his soul will be towards

his Creator, blessed be He, as if he were not a corporeal being, but rather like one of the ministering angels in the highest heavens, separated and detached from all worldly matters. And this is the intention of Rabbi Yitzchak, may his memory be for a blessing: that he should think in his heart as if he were standing in the heavens. This means that he will feel within himself that all the sensations of the body, which is dust from the earth, have been nullified for him. And all his sensations will be concerning matters of the soul, to bind it to its root in the heavens with great love. So much so that if any pleasure of this world, which a person's soul desires, were placed before his eyes, he would utterly despise and hate it. And this is the meaning of "Those who love the Lord hate evil." And this is the meaning of "Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise Him in the heights."

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## Gate II, Chapter 15

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**[1]** And concerning the phrase, "and with all your soul." It is known the dispute of our Sages, of blessed memory, in several places in the Talmud. According to one opinion, the word "all" means the entirety. According to another opinion, it means a part, and whatever is. And so is the matter here; both are true. For there are several aspects and levels in this. Each person, according to the power of the purity of his heart and thought, such that a person's consciousness is excellent in the purity of thought and intention, can cleave his entire soul, due to the greatness of love and longing for Him, may He be blessed. And each one according to his strength, and also according to the matter of the preparation of the purity of his heart at that time. For not all times are equal in a person regarding the purity of thought. However, this is fitting and proper: that at least he should strive for his intention to be acceptable, to cleave to Him, may He be blessed, with his love and the purity of his heart, [even if it is] a part of his soul with every word. Therefore, the verse "and with all your soul" should be understood in two ways, as explained above, each according to his strength, level, and preparation.

**[2]** And the principal preparation for this is according to his conduct throughout the day and

night in Torah study and commandments. And the level of Hannah was that she poured out her entire soul before Him, blessed be He, in her prayer. Therefore she said, "And I have poured out my soul," etc. And "poured out" means completely, as is known in the Talmud. (And this is to say that she had no remaining desire for the matters of this world. For "soul" means desire, as it is written (Samuel I 20:4), "What does your soul desire, and I will do for you?" And the general desire is bound within the entirety of the soul.)

**[3]** And behold, all that has been mentioned above concerning prayer, whose essence is the pouring out of the soul to cleave to Him, blessed be He, with every word, meaning the pouring out of the entire soul to Him, may He be exalted. Without intention or discernment regarding the particulars encompassed within the soul. However, there is a higher level in this matter. And that is to intend regarding the particulars that are encompassed within the soul, but it requires training to accustom oneself from one level to another. For after one has already become accustomed in his prayer for some time to the matter of pouring out and cleaving of the entire soul, thereafter he should transfer himself to intend regarding the particulars from which his soul is comprised.

**[4]** Correction: And you must know that even when one prays at the level of the particular souls connecting to each other, one should not neglect their place from connection to the soul as a whole, for the particular is necessary for the general, and the general is necessary for the particular. That is to say, before prayer, the main thing is to connect one's entire soul and will, which encompass all the particular faculties and wills, to be encompassed within the light of God. And for every word and every word that one prays, one should cleave the particular faculties of Nefesh, Ruach, and Neshama. And according to the strength of the general connection, a straight line of light will be drawn upon every particular, so that all the particulars of one's will can be encompassed in the connection of the general encompassing power.

**[5]** And see *Etz Chaim*, Discourses on Circles and Straightness, and this is the matter explained there, that the line of light drawn from the Infinite Light, Blessed be He, did not reach the lowest extremity of the surrounding [worlds]. And see *Mevo Shearim*, Chapter 2, and the matter of the surrounding [worlds] nested within each other, which are made

through the drawing of the line of light, will be understood. This means that every individual power, according to its level, needs to connect itself to the general. And also, the general is according to the value of the individual. And the beginning of the distinguished line of light is the drawing of the general thought into the middle heart of every body, for every word is drawn from the breath of the heart. And this is clear to one who understands from his own knowledge.

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## Gate II, Chapter 16

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**[1]** For it is known that the soul of man, in its entirety, is comprised of three specific levels, which are Nefesh, Ruach, and Neshamah. These themselves are the three levels of action, speech, and thought, and this is the entirety of man.

**[2]** And also in every word there are three levels of action: speech, thought. These are Nefesh, Ruach, Neshamah, and they are its letters, vowels, and cantillations. As it is written in the Introduction to the Tikkunim (7b): "Cantillations are souls (Neshamot). And vowels are spirits (Ruachot). And letters are souls (Nefashot)." And similarly in the name of the book, "Reshit Tikkunim" (357b), see there.

**[3]** Correction: And even though in the writings of the Ari, may his memory be a blessing, they are divided into four levels: Tav, Nun, Sofit, Aleph, as is known, they are all one. And their essence is only three root levels. For in all the books of Tikkunim, they are divided only into three levels: Tav, Nun, Sofit, alone. And the matter of the crowns of all the letters is not mentioned therein, only the three rays of Shaatnez, Gimel, Tzadi, which are a matter in themselves.

**[4]** The reason for this is explained in the Holy Writings, Gate 9, Nun, Tav, Aleph, Chapter 6, may his soul rest in peace, briefly. In this too, the matter of the Tikkunim's statement will be understood, for at times it says that the letters themselves are the body, etc. And in other places, we found that the letters are the soul, etc. If so, the letters are called the body, etc., and the crowns, etc., are the soul of the letters. And just as the soul is never separated

from the body, so too the crowns are never separated from the letters in a Scroll of the Law. This is not the case with the dots and cantillation marks, etc. For the crowns participate and are joined to the essence of the letters, which are the body, and the crowns are the totality of the letters, etc. And because of this, the crowns are not alluded to or mentioned in the Tikunim, for they and the letters participate together, etc. For upon mentioning the body, the soul is implied in general, for they are partners as stated above. Thus concludes the quote. And see there at length.

**[5]** The letters are in the aspect of action, for letters themselves without vowels are impossible, except in the aspect of action, meaning the action of writing, just as God is written in the Torah without vowels. For in speech, it is impossible to utter them except by joining the vowels to them. Therefore, the letters alone without vowels are called in the aspect of soul (meaning with the crowns, as stated in the gloss), which is the aspect of action, as is known.

**[6]** And the vowels are in the aspect of their spirit. As stated above, the vowels come with the letters by means of man's attachment, which is in the aspect of spirit. And just as the essence of man's vitality is through the aspect of the spirit within him, such that when the spirit departs from him, he is dead, even though a part of his soul still remains within him, as is known. So too, the essence of the vitality of the letters' movement is the vowels. For without them, it is impossible to utter the letters from the mouth. And as is written in many places in the Tikunim: "And the intelligent ones, these vowels, will shine, they will illuminate in the letters."

**[7]** And the reasons for the combination [of letters] are the level of thought and the intention of the heart, which is the level of the soul, as is known. For they are movements and the governance of the points and letters, and their inclination to one side or another, which is a matter dependent on thought and intellect.

**[8]** And in the Zohar, Shir HaShirim, chapter 57, verse 4, according to the "Torah Zahav" (Golden Torah), they are the movements of the "ta'amei" (flavors/nuances) of the letters, which are structures that come from the "Resha d'Malka" (Head of the King) to bestow understanding and wisdom upon all the letters. And see there further concerning the three aspects of "Taf," "Nun," and "Aleph" at

length.

**[9]** And there, the Name of God, may He be blessed, is in motion, which are the flavors, and they are perfection and completion in understanding, and they are the vessels for knowing knowledge, etc. All of them are from His wisdom, and in our understanding, etc. The motion, which is the perfection of all things, where is it in a human being? Rather, the secret of this is, etc., within our understanding and knowledge, etc. Whether standing upright or walking, etc., all of it is from knowledge and understanding, etc. See there.

**[10]** And therefore they are called "tastes." Just as the taste and explanation of any matter is the hidden intellect within that matter, from which a person can understand it with their thought.

**[11]** And in rectification 18, 35, verse 2: "And the letters are like the body in relation to the vowels, as the body is to the soul, etc." And the essence of the vowels is the soul. The soul is the crown over all, and from it are the two crowns which are the flavors of the movement of the vowels and the letters. And it is suspended in thought. And the vowels are suspended in speech. And the letters are in action.

**[12]** Therefore, the true worshipper, with desirable intention, should intend to pour out and unite in his prayer all three aspects of Nefesh, Ruach, and Neshamah, within which his soul is comprised. When he utters each word of the prayer from his mouth, which contains all three aspects of Nefesh, Ruach, and Neshamah in its letters, vowels, and cantillation, he should strengthen himself with the purity of his heart, with the intensity of his desire, to bind and connect through it from below upwards, in the order of the degrees: his soul to his spirit, and his spirit to his soul, and that all of them should ascend to the root of that word in the Upper Worlds.

**[13]** This is the matter that was stated in the Zohar, volume 3, page 106, beginning of page 107: "And the intelligent ones, etc., they are those who possess intellect to comprehend in prayer how it ascends, etc., through letters, vowels, and cantillation marks, etc." (See there). And there, on page 108, beginning of page 109: "And those who have strength within them to stand in the King's palace in the standing of prayer, etc. They are crowned with all the cantillation marks, vowels, and

letters.”

**[14]** And through this, all these three aspects will be rectified. Even if, Heaven forbid, one has damaged any of them through his actions, speech, or thoughts which are not good, and has caused, Heaven forbid, through them a distancing and separation of the connection between them, as mentioned above in Chapter 1, Section 18. Now, through this, they will be rectified to return and connect, each to its fellow, as it was at first. For this is the root and principal matter of repentance, as discussed at length in the light of [the text], see there. And this is the matter of the verse (Isaiah 6:10): "Make the heart of this people fat, and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn and be healed." For in the end of the verse, the order is reversed from the order of interpretation.

**[15]** For the heart is, as is known, the aspect of thought. And the ears are the vessels for hearing speech. And the eyes are the vessels for sight, to perceive the matters of actions in actuality. And these are the three aspects of Nefesh, Ruach, and Neshamah.

**[16]** And through the sins of man, they depart from him gradually, in order. When it enters the thought of man, even if only from the side of the soul, to commit any sin, then the aspect of the *Neshamah* immediately departs. For it is an aspect that is very high and exalted. And if, God forbid, he sins further, then the aspect of the *Ruach* also departs from him entirely, or is damaged and corrupted, God forbid. And then his connection to the aspect of the *Neshamah* is not complete as it should be. And if, God forbid, he sins greatly and adds further to his sin, then the aspect of his *Nefesh* is also damaged or severed, God forbid, entirely from its connection to the aspect of the *Ruach*.

**[17]** And when he returns in repentance, he returns to attain them in order from below upwards, the reverse of the order of their initial withdrawal. First, he attains the level of the soul (Nefesh). And afterwards, the spirit (Ruach) comes and dwells upon it and becomes connected to it. And afterwards, sparks of the light of the soul (Neshamah) come and envelop them. And then all are connected to each other as is fitting. And by this, the verse is explained of itself.

**[18]** And although it was explained in Chapter 1, Section 20, that if one has sinned or been excommunicated, Heaven forbid, in the aspect of his soul, and has lowered all nine of its *sefirot* into the depths of evil, through his repentance he emanates and draws holiness and upper light from above onto the aspect of his soul first. And from it, this is drawn onto his spirit. And then the spirit shines with the radiance of the light, as great as that which flows upon it, also onto the soul. And through this, it ascends from the depths of evil to cleave to the aspect of the spirit as before. And similarly, thus, when the spirit is flawed, Heaven forbid, as mentioned. And as is known in the words of the Ari, of blessed memory, that to rectify any *partzuf* and aspect, one must draw new lights and intellects from above, upwards, through all the *partzufim* and levels entirely, until that *partzuf* and aspect which needs to be rectified, to which the intellects have been drawn.

**[19]** This is solely for the purpose of elevating the soul from the depths of impurity in which it has become immersed, or to repair its defects. It is necessary to draw holiness and supernal light from above downwards. To expel and consume with the fiery sparks of this flame the forces of impurity that have become immersed within it, or to fill its deficiency. And to elevate it, purified and repaired, so that it may cleave to the Spirit. And similarly, in the case of the Spirit which has become impaired, in order to return and repair it as it was at first.

**[20]** But after they have already been rectified by repentance, their subsequent entry into the human body is from below upwards, as stated above. And this is the meaning of "and he returned" (וּשָׁב), that when he returned each aspect to its place, then he was healed.

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## Gate II, Chapter 17

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**[1]** However, God still has words for the one who serves Him with holiness, in a more particular aspect. This is in the aspect of the root of the soul, which is the "neshamta leneshama" mentioned in the Zohar. It is called "Chaya" (Living). And the Ari (Rabbi Isaac Luria) attained and understood the aspect of the "Yechida" (Unique) which is included

within it, the secret of the world of Adam Kadmon.

[2] And as is explained to the one who understands in *Sha'ar HaMuchin* (The Gate of Intellects) at its end, that Adam HaRishon merited the true levels of *Chaya* (Living Essence) and *Yechida* (Singular Essence) in their principal place. And see at the beginning of *Gilgulim* (Reincarnations) and in the commentary there.

[3] And this is the principal intention of their words, of blessed memory, when they expounded the verse, "Let the earth bring forth living souls" (Genesis 1:24), even the soul of Adam the First Man, and even the soul of the Messiah. For this aspect is the secret of the upper "Earth of Life" (Eretz HaChaim). (This means the root of the element of earth from the four primordial roots, the Father of all worlds, as mentioned in the Zohar, Vayera, page 23b, see there).

[4] And see Zohar, Shemot 12a, and in Parashat Shlach 176b, the secret: "And the earth brought forth a living soul," etc. And in Parashat Shemini 39b, "and every living soul," etc. And see the Mishnah in Parashat Va'etchanan. And see Ramban on the verse "Let us make man." For the spirit of God spoke within him. And therefore Adam was prepared to live forever, for wisdom revives its possessor. And therefore it is called "living." And this is "the earth brought forth a living soul." And through his sin, it was removed from him. And see what the Ari, of blessed memory, wrote in P'tahot 15, and at the beginning of Parashat 21, and in Parashat 35 of *Gilgulim*.

[5] And since then, no man has merited it while still in this world. And Enoch, when he attained this level, inherited the loftiness of Adam the First Man, as stated in Zohar, Terumah, page 35, side 3, and there in She'elot u'Teshuvot, page 54, side 4, see there. And in Ra'aya Meheimna, Kedoshim, chapter 3, and in our Mishnah, chapter Va'etchanan, as the Ari z"l explained in Parashat Bereshit, in the discourse of Adam the First Man, and in *Gilgulim*, chapter 18, see there. And as stated there, chapter 35. The world could not bear it, and he was compelled to depart from this world. And similarly, Elijah departed from this world when he attained a measure of that supernal radiance, as stated in chapter 19 of *Gilgulim*. And as stated in the Zohar, Vayigash, page 101, beginning of page 102: "The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to him, etc., and the world cannot bear you with the sons of man." And

we hope to attain it after the Resurrection, if God wills, that a spirit will be poured out upon us from on high.

[6] And this is the aspect of the root of human thought. For the aspect of thought is when one cleaves his thought to consider a particular matter. And this is the aspect of the soul, as it is written, "And the spirit of Shaddai shall give them understanding" (Job 32). And then, the thought is apprehended, at least, by the person himself who is thinking. But the root, the source, the origin of the general power of thought, is entirely hidden and concealed, such that it is not apprehended even by the person himself, from whence it is found. And this is the aspect of the root of his soul.

[7] And this is the hidden aspect. It is the aspect of the combinations of the letters of the Divine Name. This is the root of the souls of the letters and their spiritual power in their Upper Root. And the truth of the essence of the order of their combinations in their Upper Root is not grasped by us now, since we do not now grasp the aspect of the root of the soul. And after the resurrection, we will contemplate its understanding in the secret of the order of the combinations of the letters in their holy root. And this is what was said in the Zohar, Parashat Behaalotecha, page 152a: "Torah, etc. And for the World to Come, we will be able to contemplate soul with soul of the Torah."

[8] And this is the aspect of the root of the souls of all Israel together. From Malchut of Atzilut to Zeir Anpin, they are called "Knesses Yisrael."

[9] Annotation: And it is called in the holy writings, "God of the spirits of all flesh" (Numbers 27:16). See Zohar, Parashat Korach, 126b, "And they said, 'God of the spirits...' etc., for He is the place of souls, etc., there they ascend and from there they come." Our Sages, of blessed memory, expounded: "His father and his mother..." (Genesis 45:13). His mother is the Ten Sefirot. See Zohar, Bamidbar 119a, and at the beginning of Parashat Pinchas, and there, 128b, and in Ra'ayah Meheimna, Terumah 272b, and at the end of Adir Ba'Marom 266a, and in Zichronot Ruth 59b. See also Etz Chaim, Sha'ar HaMelachim, beginning of Chapter 7, and in Peulat Chochmah, Sha'ar Olam HaAsiyah, Chapter 2, and in Sha'ar HaKri'at Shema, Chapter 5, and in Sha'ar Ha'Amida, end of Chapter 16. This is the matter of the verse, "You have burdened me from the womb..." (Isaiah 46:3). See also Peulat

Chochmah, Sha'ar Rosh Chodesh, Chapter 3. Therefore, the entirety of Israel together is called the limbs of the Divine Presence. See Zohar, Pinchas 231b, and there, 238, beginning of 128b, and 242, end of 128b.

**[10]** This is the meaning of the verse, "Go and proclaim in the ears of Jerusalem, etc., 'I remember for you the devotion of your youth, etc., when you followed Me in the wilderness, etc.'" The verse refers to all of Israel by the name Jerusalem. For it was the assembly of all Israel when they ascended to behold the face of the Lord God on pilgrimage. And there all of Israel received the abundance of holy Torah and awe, each according to the root of his soul's grasp from Knesset Yisrael. And for this reason, the Upper Jerusalem is called, as it is written, "Your wedding love," meaning "your bridal chambers."

**[11]** This is the matter of the Shekhinah, which is mentioned everywhere, the simple meaning of the Shekhinah. It means the establishment of a dwelling. As our Sages, of blessed memory, stated (Bereishit Rabbah 4 and Tanchuma, Chukat): "From the day the Holy One, Blessed be He, created His world, He desired that He should have a dwelling in the lower realms." And the primary establishment of His dwelling, may He be exalted, was in Jerusalem, the revelation of His holiness without the concealment of garments. And this is what our Sages, of blessed memory, said (Shabbat 145b): "If people find a place in the city, they are considered to be in the city; if they find a place outside the city, they are considered to be outside the city." And the discourse of our Sages, of blessed memory, requires further study.

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## Gate II, Chapter 18

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**[1]** And behold, after one has become accustomed and ordered their prayer with the attachment of the three aspects of Nefesh, Ruach, and Neshamah (N.R.N.) within their soul's totality, through the letters, vowels, and cantillation marks in each word, as explained previously in chapter sixteen. They should strengthen the purity of their thought and intention. To then cleave all three aspects of N.R.N. to the aspect of "Neshamta l'Neshamta" (Soul to

Soul) mentioned above, which is the root of their soul. This is achieved through the permutations of the letters of the word in their supreme root of holiness.

**[2]** And when one cleaves to this level, then it is possible to consider oneself as if one is not in the world at all. And consequently, all things will be nullified in one's eyes. For this level is higher than the level of man at present, as previously explained. And one will include oneself in the root of one's soul, within the general supreme root of the souls of Israel together.

**[3]** Therefore, they ordained that immediately after standing [in prayer], one should surrender his soul, spirit, and essence completely to death with the verse, "Unto You, O Lord, I lift up my soul." And to elevate them together with the soul, spirit, and essence of the three worlds, and to encompass them within the Divine Presence of Atzilut, as stated in *Pri Etz Chaim*, Chapter 7 of the Gate of Prayer. This is the primary intention of all prostrations mentioned in the Torah. As stated in the Zohar, Parashat Korach, page 176, column 2, as mentioned above. Learn from Moses and Aaron, who surrendered themselves to death. Why? Because it is written, "And they fell upon their faces, and said, O God of the spirits of all flesh..." And in every place of prostration, it is a place of [divine] presence. "God of the spirits" refers to the realm of the souls of the world, and all souls ascend there and come from there. Therefore, one must intend with the heart's desire as if one has completely departed from the world, as stated in the Zohar, Parashat Bamidbar and the beginning of Parashat V'etchanan. And examine carefully in *Pri Etz Chaim* in every chapter of the second section of the Gate of Prostration, and understand. And examine further there in chapters three and four, and in *Likutei Torah*, Parashat Shelach, page [number], there.

**[4]** Therefore, the Men of the Great Assembly ordained that the verse, "Adonai, open my lips," be recited before commencing the Amidah prayer. For one who merits this level during prayer, through this concentration of thought, his body can become like a silent stone, mute, and unable to open its mouth. Rather, it is He, blessed be He, who will open his lips to speak before Him the words of prayer. Therefore, it specifically says "Adonai," which is the secret of the aforementioned *Knesset Yisrael*. And consult the *Pri Etz Chaim*, at the end of

the Gate of Creation, concerning this verse before prayer, about which our Sages, of blessed memory, said it is like the long prayer (*Berakhot* 4b). And our Sages, of blessed memory, said that one who prays must direct his heart upwards, as Rabbi Yonah, of blessed memory, explained there. Likewise, the early pious ones would wait an hour, etc., so that they might direct their hearts to the place. And this is clear.

**[5]** Correction: Therefore, the entire order of prayer is divided into four parts, which correspond to the four levels of Nefesh, Ruach, Neshamah, and the root of the soul. The sacrifices are in opposition to the level of the Nefesh and the world of Assiah. For they come for the sins of the Nefesh, as it is written, "And if a soul sins, etc., and he shall bring, etc." And Pesukei D'Zimra are in opposition to the world of Ruach, the world of the singing angels. And the Shema and its blessings are in opposition to the Palaces of Beriah, as is known. The world of souls.

**[6]** And in the recitation of the sections concerning the sacrifices, up to "Bish" [a specific point in the prayer service], one should intend to elevate all the

levels of souls of Assiah, which is the inner aspect of Assiah, to be included in the spirits of Yetzirah. And he should also include his own soul with them, to connect it to his spirit. And from "Bish" up to the blessings of the Shema, he should include all the souls of Assiah and the spirits of Yetzirah, and also the levels of his soul and spirit within the souls of Beriah. And from the blessings of the Shema up to the Amidah, he should include and elevate all the Nefesh, Ruach, Neshamah, Chayyah, and Yechidah of Beriah, Yetzirah, and Assiah, and his own Nefesh, Ruach, and Neshamah with them, to include them together in the root of the soul and the root of the assembly of all the souls of Israel together.

**[7]** And see a little of this in the "Gate of Prayer," Chapter 1, from the section on prayer. And this is what the Ari, of blessed memory, hinted at in his statement, "And through this, the Divine Presence is included from all of them," etc., see there. And this is what the Ari, of blessed memory, said: to accept upon oneself the holiness of prayer, commandments, and "love your neighbor as yourself."



## Chapter 5

# Gate III: The Soul and Divine Providence

14 Chapters

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### Gate III, Chapter 1

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**[1]** And concerning what is written here, "to the Place." Similarly, in Avot they said, "When you pray, do not make your prayer a fixed routine, but rather supplications and entreaties before the Place, Blessed be He." They alluded, may their memory be for a blessing, by the word "Place" to a great matter. And the matter requires explanation to understand the depth of their intention, may their memory be for a blessing, in this. And to make the verses that allude to this understandable:

**[2]** And our Sages of blessed memory stated in Pirkei Avot that all their words are like embers of fire. Just as an ember, even if only a spark of fire is visible within it, if you exert your strength to turn it over and fan it, the more you fan it, the more it will ignite and the spark will spread within it, until it becomes entirely a blazing flame. Then you can benefit from it, using its light and warming yourself beside it. However, only beside it, and not grasping it. For once it becomes a blazing flame, one must be careful not to be burned by it.

**[3]** Thus, in this analogy, all the words of the Sages are likened. For even though the matters appear brief and simple, they are like a hammer that shatters. For whoever turns them over, twists them,

and scrutinizes them, his eyes will be illuminated by their great light, as he will find profound matters within them. As our Sages of blessed memory said, "Turn it over and over, for everything is in it."

**[4]** But one must be exceedingly careful with their embers. Not to enter into contemplation and investigation of matters that one is not permitted to contemplate excessively. As they said there, "Be warmed by the light of the Sages." This means not to distance oneself entirely from contemplating their words, for one will not benefit from their light at all. And also, not to approach too closely, lest one be burned, as mentioned above. Only from a distance. As he concluded thereafter, "Be careful with their embers," etc.

**[5]** And behold, here it is also written "place." Although its simple meaning is understood, when we scrutinize it, we find that it encompasses and hints at a great matter within this.

**[6]** For the matter of the Blessed One, may He be exalted, being called "Place." The Sages of blessed memory expounded this in Bereishit Rabbah, Parashah 58, concerning the verse, "And he chanced upon a place." Rosh Hashanah, in the name of Rabbi Eliezer, said: "Why is the Name of the Holy One, blessed be He, concealed and called 'Place'? Because He is the place of the world, and the world is not His place." And in Shemot Rabbah, Parashah 45, and in Tanchuma, Parashah Tetzaveh, it is stated: "And the Lord said, 'Behold, there is a

place with Me, and you shall stand upon the rock' (Exodus 33:21)." [This is interpreted to mean:] "My place is subordinate to Me, and I am not subordinate to My place." And thus it is written in the Zohar, Psalms, Chapter 90.

[7] And according to its simple meaning, meaning, just as a place endures and holds some object or thing resting upon it, so too, by this analogy, the Creator, Master of all, blessed be He, is the true place that endures and sustains all the worlds and all creatures. For if, Heaven forbid, He were to withdraw His power from them for even a single moment, there would be no place for the existence and vitality of all the worlds. As it is written, "And You sustain them all."

[8] And this is the cornerstone of the faith of Israel, as stated by the Rambam, may his memory be for a blessing, at the beginning of his book. Therefore, in the Zohar, the Master of All, Blessed be He, is called the Soul of All, Souls.

[9] Just as the soul animates and sustains the body, as it is written (Sanhedrin 91b), "Is it possible for a piece of flesh to last three days, etc.?" So too, He, blessed be He, alone is the life of all worlds, as is known in many places in the Tikkunim and in the Zohar. See at the beginning of the introduction to the Tikkunim in the discourse "אליהו פתח" (P'tach Eliyahu), etc. Likewise, our Sages, of blessed memory, likened the sustenance of the entire world by His strength, blessed be He, to the sustenance of the body by the powers of the soul. They said, "Just as the soul fills and nourishes the entire body, so too the Holy One, blessed be He, fills and nourishes [all]." This is the simple meaning of why He, blessed be He, is called the "Place of the World."

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## Gate III, Chapter 2

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[1] Indeed, the inner essence of the "place of the world" is a matter of great magnitude. For when the Blessed One is called the "place of the world," this has no comparison whatsoever to the concept of a place that contains any object standing upon it, where the essence of the vessel's existence and sustenance has a reality in itself. The place merely

shelters it so that it does not fall and break. Similarly, concerning the life and sustenance of the body by the soul: the body has a reality in itself and does not cease to exist even when the soul departs from it.

[2] But the existence of all the worlds, their entire genesis and being each moment, is solely from Him, blessed be He. And were He to withdraw His will, blessed be He, from causing them to exist each moment, they would be utterly null and void.

[3] And solely because no created being, not even the highest among the supernal ones, has the power to grasp the essence of the matter, how all the worlds and all their hosts are in themselves nothingness, and only each moment they are brought into existence from Him, blessed be He. For this reason, they chose to liken Him, blessed be He, and to explain to the listening ear among the wise, by the term "place."

[4] Annotation: And by way of homiletic interpretation, we can load upon the verses (Job 28:12) "But where shall wisdom be found?" For the great wisdom, above all wisdom, is that which is attained from Him, blessed be He. This is the wondrous wisdom from which, at every moment, existence is found. And what is the place of understanding? Meaning, there is no intellect in existence that we can designate as an appropriate place for understanding to be apprehended, to comprehend this wondrous power. And it concludes: "And He knows its place."

[5] Even though His wisdom, blessed be He, decreed it so, to give His existence to His world in a manner that all intellect is unable to grasp how their formation is a continuous emanation from Him, blessed be He, every moment. And it is possible for the eyes of flesh to perceive the world as having existence and reality in itself, God forbid. Our Sages, of blessed memory, illuminated the eyes of the intellect by likening it to the matter of place. For just as a vessel standing in a certain place, even though the vessel truly has existence in itself, nevertheless, if the vessel had no place upon which to stand, it would be as if it were not.

[6] Furthermore, He, blessed be He, is likened to a place. Just as a place sustains a vessel, even if it is not equal in value to the vessel, and even if a place sustains many different vessels, this causes no change in the place. The place sustains and

encompasses them all equally. So too, He, blessed be He, sustains all the worlds, even though there is no comparison between Him, blessed be He, and them. For all are as naught before the Infinite. And even though, from our perspective, there appear to be various differences and distinct levels among creations, and even though forces of impurity and the *Sitra Achra* exist in all their degrees, the sustenance of all is solely from Him, blessed be He, alone. Nevertheless, there is no change in Him, blessed be He, for He does not change. From His perspective, He sustains them in the manner of a place. And although this is beyond all intellect to comprehend how and what, and it is wondrous, therefore the Sages have said, "Behold, a place comes, my place is attached to me." This means that no thought can grasp how He is in the aspect of a place without change. Only He, blessed be He, alone, who comprehends His essence, comprehends how He is the place of all worlds without change. As in the verse, "And He knew her place." And this is precisely what is meant by "comes." As in the saying, "What comes to the mouth is not revealed to the tongue."

**[7]** Thus, even though the entire world is perceived and appears as a reality in itself, blessed be He is its place. Were it not for His will to bring the worlds into being, they would all be as if they were not.

**[8]** And this is what is alluded to in the verse, "Let the words of your mouth be restrained from speaking, and your heart from thinking." If your heart runs, return to the place for which it was said, "running and returning." It says "to the place" specifically. This means if the thought of a person's heart runs to grasp the intellectually apprehended, how their existence is drawn forth moment by moment from Him, blessed be He, then return to the place to grasp the value of the intellectually apprehended from the imagined perceptible, in the aspect of place, as mentioned above. And see the commentary of Ramban, may his memory be for a blessing, on this Mishnah.

**[9]** And to this is the intention of our Sages, of blessed memory. To present parables concerning His blessedness's connection to the worlds. Even though there is no value or resemblance at all between the parable and that which is likened, except in some particular aspect. And even this is only in a semblance of sorts.

**[10]** And as it is written in *Ra'ayah Meheimna*,

Parashat Pinchas, 247b and 248a: "And it is to be known, etc., in a similar manner to this, the soul, etc. And what is the Master of the Universe? He has no known name nor known place, but rather in every direction is His dominion. Or is it so that the soul, etc., not in every direction is its dominion? Rather, there is no limb empty of it, etc. By all those names and appellations it is called, etc., to reveal. His dominion over them. So too, the soul, in relation to the dominion of all the limbs of the body, is likened to Him. Not that it is likened to Him in its essence, for He created it, etc., and further, etc. And because of this, it is likened to Him in its dominion over all the limbs of the body, but not in any other matter. And see there at length."

**[11]** And similarly, all the matters that our Sages, of blessed memory, mentioned there concerning His blessedness's resemblance to the soul in the body, all of it is only concerning His blessedness's diffusion in the worlds and His filling them and His dominion over them, as was previously stated. For only in this matter alone do they resemble each other in their essence.

**[12]** And thus they hinted in the *Tikunim*, at the end of chapter 38, saying that His voice and His speech are heard from the belly, and from the angels, and from the heavens, and from the earth, that they may be known to Him in all that is above and below, like the soul that rules over its entire body, even in the smallest limb, and there is no limb empty of it.

**[13]** He is precise in saying, "Like the soul that fills..." and so forth. And from this, it is understood that even in this matter itself, those who likened it [the Divine Presence] to it were not entirely equal. For although they said what they said: "Just as the soul fills the entire body, so too the Holy One, Blessed be He, fills the entire world." And similarly, what is written in the aforementioned *Tikunim* treatise: "Like the soul, etc., and there is no limb empty of it." And there, in the *Tikkunei Zohar*, it states: "In every limb, it is YHVH, etc., there is no place empty of it, like the soul that is found in every limb and every part of the body." The filling of the world by the Holy One, Blessed be He, is not like the filling of the body by the soul, because even with that, the body still exists by itself, separating itself before it. Rather, it spreads into the innermost parts of all its details and sustains it. For even when the soul departs from the body, the body does not cease to exist because of it. But the Master of all, may His name be blessed, fills all the worlds and all

creatures, and they do not separate, God forbid, from Him, may He be blessed, at all in truth. And there is truly nothing else besides Him, may He be blessed, in all the worlds. From the highest of the high to the lowest abyss of the earth. So much so that one can say that there is no creature or world here at all, but rather everything is filled with the essence of His simple unity, may He be blessed.

**[14]** And see the Rokeach at the end of the root of the holiness of Unity, may his memory be for a blessing: The Creator does not require a place or location, for He was before all existence, and there are no walls or beams that separate Him, for He did not create anything that could harm Him.

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### Gate III, Chapter 3

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**[1]** And this is the matter of the verse (Jeremiah 23:24): "Do I not fill heaven and earth?" And it is more explicitly stated in the Mishnah of the Torah: "Know this day, and lay it to your heart, that the LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other." And thus you have been shown to know that the LORD, He is God; there is none besides Him. And this is literally as it is understood, that there is absolutely none besides Him, blessed be He, in any aspect or particular point in all the upper and lower worlds and all creations. Only His simple, unique essence, blessed be He, alone.

**[2]** And this is the inner meaning of the statement of our Sages, of blessed memory, in Midrash Rabbah, Parashah 2, D'var Achar: "For the LORD, He is God" (Deuteronomy 4:39). Yitro gave might, etc. Rachav, etc. Moshe, even in the void of the world. As it is said, "For the LORD is in the heavens above, and on the earth beneath; there is none else" (Deuteronomy 4:39). What is "none else"? Even in the void of the world.

**[3]** And this is also included in the general statement of our Sages, of blessed memory: "He, blessed be He, is the place of the world, and the world is not His place." This means that even all the places that are perceived by the senses in reality are not places in themselves. Rather, He, blessed be His name, is the place of all places. From His

perspective, blessed be He, they are all considered as if they do not exist in reality at all, even now, as they were before creation.

**[4]** Indeed, we have already prefaced our words at the beginning, that our Sages of blessed memory likened their words to embers of fire. One must be exceedingly careful with their embers, not to enter into contemplation and investigation beyond measure, in matters where permission is not granted to investigate extensively, lest one be burned, G-d forbid. And so it is with this awesome matter. This is said only to the wise and understanding person who grasps the inner essence of the matter to the extent of the heart's capacity, through going and returning [in thought]. This is to ignite the purity of his heart for the service of prayer. But excessive contemplation in this is an immense danger. And concerning this it is said in the Holy Writings: "And if your heart runs, return to the place," as mentioned above in Chapter 2, and as will be written, G-d willing, below in Chapter 6.

**[5]** And truly, I would have refrained from speaking on this matter at all, for the early Sages, of blessed memory, concealed the matter greatly, as you will see from the words of the Holy One, the Rokeach, of blessed memory, brought above, who spoke of it only in allusion. For they were faithful to the spirit of their understanding and covered the matter.

**[6]** But I have returned and seen that thus it was fitting for them according to their generations. But now many days have passed without a teacher. And each man walks in his own way, straight in his eyes, to follow the inclination of his intellect. And every imagination of the heart of man is filled only with soaring in his thought to whatever his intellect will answer. And that which surpasses all is that this is the Torah of all mankind, and it has become a proverb even in the mouths of fools, saying: Is it not that everywhere and in everything there is absolute Divinity? And their eyes and their hearts all the days are to delve and contemplate this, until even very young lads, from their youth, take their hearts to establish all their deeds and their conduct in this according to this intellect of theirs.

**[7]** And how much excessive caution a person must exercise in this matter, and guard his soul exceedingly with a guard of guards. For if, Heaven forbid, it enters his heart to establish this thought for ourselves, to permit ourselves to act according to this thought as well. Behold, from this, Heaven

forbid, the destruction of many foundations of the Holy Torah could be born, meaning. And easily, Heaven forbid, he could be ensnared in the net of the Evil Inclination, which will show him a leniency based on this thought, for example, to contemplate words of Torah with disdain, even in defiled places. This is after it has first been established within him that all is absolute Divinity. And our Sages, of blessed memory, were exceedingly emphatic about this and decreed with their Holy Spirit that he should have no portion in the World to Come, meaning. As it is written (Berakhot 24b) that included in "For the word of the Lord has despised it" is also one who contemplates words of Torah in defiled thoroughfares. And from this, the interpretation of this verse, "cutting off shall be cut off," etc., is heard, and our Sages, of blessed memory, interpreted it in Perek Helek (Sanhedrin 90b) as: "cutting off" in this world, "shall be cut off" in the World to Come. And how many other errors could arise, Heaven forbid, if the conduct were established in practice according to this path.

**[8]** And this is what has brought me to enter into discussion on this matter, and to warn and distance from the error that could arise from it, G-d forbid. And to understand thoroughly all that our Sages, of blessed memory, hinted to us in this, and they are like all of God's upright ways. And now is the time to act.

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## Gate III, Chapter 4

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**[1]** And to return the matter to its proper place. We will explain a holy saying of our Sages, of blessed memory, which is explained in the Tree of Life in many places. It is that He, blessed be He, fills all worlds with complete equality. Yet we find that even in the upper worlds, each world is distinct and different from its fellow in various aspects, concerning His connection to it. As it is written in the introduction to the Tikkunim: "The ten Sefirot of Atzilut, the King is one with them and their essence; they are one with their life; that which is not so is in the ten Sefirot of Briah, which are not Him and He, one, etc."

**[2]** And see in the aforementioned work, the Gate of the Emanation of the Ten Sefirot, at the

beginning of the Order of Emanation, it is briefly written that the Blessed Ein Sof, in its aspect of clothing and diffusion throughout all the worlds, does not touch or cleave except to the World of Emanation alone, and not to the Worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action. Therefore, from there downwards, their essence changes. And there, in the Gate of the Discourses of ABYA, chapter 7, in the explanation of the aforementioned saying of the Tikkunim, it is written that Emanation entirely, even the aspect of the vessels, is called complete Divinity. This is not so in the Worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action, see there. And similarly, the essential distinction between Emanation and the three Worlds of Creation, Formation, and Action concerning Divinity is explained there, see at the beginning of the Gate of the Image of the Worlds of ABYA in the introduction of the Ramchal, and in the Gate of the Emanation of the Ten Sefirot, chapter 3. And the Gate of the Image, chapter 1. And the Gate of the Names, chapter 1. And the Gate of the Order of ABYA, chapter 2 and the beginning of chapter 3. And similarly, there are many distinctions of aspects and various matters between the worlds, in great detail. This is explained throughout the Zohar and the words of the Ari, of blessed memory.

**[3]** And observe well at the end of the book "Four Hundred Shekels of Silver" concerning His blessed Unity's knowledge of human actions beforehand. For the Ari, of blessed memory, divided this matter between the worlds. And furthermore, we find several verses such as "Most High God," "Dwelling in the heavens." For were it not written, one could not say them. And likewise, the Sages, of blessed memory, counted ten sanctifications and three sanctified camps, each higher than the other. But the truth of the matter: incline your ear and turn your heart, and you will walk securely.

**[4]** For it is explained in many places in the Zohar that the unique Master, the Infinite Blessed One, fills all worlds and encompasses all worlds. And this is to say that from His perspective, may He be blessed, He is called by the aspect of "fills all worlds." And from our perspective, according to what we are commanded in the Holy Torah concerning our conduct in Torah and Mitzvot, and according to our sensory perception, may He be exalted, He is called by the aspect of "encompasses all worlds." For the aspect of "fills all worlds" is the glory of God, concealing the matter from our perspective.

**[5]** And the matter is indeed true: that from His perspective, blessed be He, even now, after He created and innovated the worlds by His will, He fills all the worlds, places, and creatures completely equally and with simple unity. And there is truly nothing else besides Him, as it is literally understood. This is as stated in explicit verses and in the name of the Rokeach, may his soul rest in peace. And as our Sages of blessed memory ordained for us to say before prayer: "You were before the world was created, You are after the world was created." This means that even though the worlds have already been created by His simple will, blessed be He, nevertheless, there is no change or renewal, Heaven forbid, nor any separation because of them from His simple, unified essence. And He is He even now, just as before creation, when everything was filled with the essence of the Infinite, blessed be He, even in the place where the worlds now stand.

**[6]** And direct your heart to the words of the Holy One of God, our Rabbi Samuel, father of the Holy Rabbi Yehudah the Pious, in the "Shir HaYichud" which he composed. Especially on the second day, "There is no end..." and "There is no inside that separates between You..." (see there). And especially on the third day, "He encompasses all and fills all. And since all is You, You are in all..." (see further on this).

**[7]** And this is what our Sages of blessed memory said regarding the analogy they drew between the Holy One, blessed be He, and the worlds: "Just as the soul is pure in the body, so is the Holy One, blessed be He, pure in His world" (Vayikra Rabbah 4:4). This means that just as the soul, although it spreads throughout all the details of the human body, both the clean and even those filled with filth, dirt, and impurity, nevertheless, they do not create any separation whatsoever concerning its purity and holiness, and its purity stands firm – so is the matter. Even though He, blessed be He, fills all places, both the pure and sanctified places and those that are not pure, nevertheless, they do not create any separation whatsoever, nor do they cause any change, God forbid, to the purity of His essence and His simple unity, blessed be He. And this is what is said (Malachi 3:6): "For I the LORD do not change."

**[8]** And as it is written in the Zohar, page 88, end of folio 4, "And all Israel who received the Torah from Him, they serve Him as One, in Him, and in all

His holy letters and names, and in all the upper and lower hosts that were created in Him, and in all the upper and lower creatures. And above all, He is One; and below all, and within all, and outside all, He is One, etc. Thus He is within all worlds, as He is outside all worlds, and is not changed, etc."

**[9]** Correction: And according to what will be clarified, God willing, below, is the matter of the distinction between the two names Havayah and Elokim. For the name Elokim signifies the aspect that is from our side, and the Essential Name Havayah, blessed be He, signifies the aspect that is from His side, may He be exalted. For this reason it is said, "I am Havayah, I have not changed."

**[10]** And see the corrections of the second chapter concerning the ears. He said: "And four letters, which are YHWH, He does not change in any place." Changes exist in the vessels of the body, but in Him there is no change at all. Thus it is said: "For I, the Lord, do not change."

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## Gate III, Chapter 5

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**[1]** But nevertheless, these are His mighty deeds and awesome acts, blessed be He. For even so, He, as it were, contracted His glory, blessed be He, so that the existence of worlds, forces, and created beings could be found, renewed in various aspects and distinct matters, and in different locations, holy and pure places, and conversely, impure and defiled ones. And this is the aspect that is on our side. That is to say, our comprehension does not grasp by sense except the matter of their existence as they appear. For according to this aspect, all the order of our obligatory conduct was established, which we were commanded by His word, blessed be He, a statute that shall not be transgressed.

**[2]** And from this aspect, the Sages, of blessed memory, likened it, as it were, to the soul in relation to the body. As it is written in the Zohar, "He, blessed be He, is the soul of all worlds." Just as in a person, only the body is perceived by the senses, while the soul, though it fills the entire body, is in a state of concealment from the eyes of flesh and revealed to the eyes of intellect. So too, according to our revealed apprehension, we perceive the

existence of all the worlds and all creatures, and that He, blessed be His name, as it were, extends and conceals Himself within them all, to give them life and sustain them, in the manner of the soul which extends and conceals itself within all the detailed parts of the body's limbs to give them life.

**[3]** And all the names, appellations, attributes, and measures concerning Him, blessed be He, which we find in the Holy Scripture, all speak from this aspect, as it is from our perspective and the order of our obligations and conduct, which is from His connection, blessed be He, to the worlds from which they derive and by which all the changes of the detailed orders of providence are drawn, all as stated above in Chapter Two.

**[4]** And this is what is stated in the aforementioned introduction to the Tikkunim: The Ten Sefirot of Atzilut, the King is one with them, and their essence is one with them. They are one, and their life is one. It is not so with the Ten Sefirot of Briah; they are not one, and He is not one with them. Their essence is one. And He, who is above all, descends in the Ten Sefirot of Atzilut, and shines in the Ten Sefirot of Briah, and in the ten legions of angels, and in the ten spheres of the firmament. And He is not changed in any place, a hint to the two aforementioned aspects, as is explained.

**[5]** And in Bereishit Rabbah, Chapter 4, they said: "When He desires, 'Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?' (Jeremiah 23:24). And when He desires, He spoke with Moses from between the two staves of the Ark." (Exodus 25:22). It is taught in the name of Rabbi Akiva: "Sometimes the world and all its fullness cannot contain the glory of His Divinity. Sometimes He speaks with a person from between the hairs of his head, etc." (Shmot Rabbah, Chapter 3). This is also alluded to in Shmot Rabbah, Chapter 3. The wise will understand that these two aspects are also hinted at.

**[6]** And therefore, blessed be He, is called by the Sages of blessed memory by the Holy Name, Blessed be He. For this honored Name encompasses these two aspects together. For "Holy" means separate and exalted. And this is in accordance with His aspect, blessed be He, who is truly separate and distinct, and exceedingly exalted above all matters of division and change, God forbid. Rather, all is filled with absolute unity alone, in complete equality, and elevated above all blessing and praise. And He does not need to be

blessed, Heaven forbid. See Tikkunim, section 10, page 130, end of page 1. And also, according to this aspect, no matter of addition or increase of blessing is at all relevant. Since all is simple unity alone, as before creation. As it is written (Isaiah 40:25), "And to whom will you liken Me, and to whom shall I be equal? says the Holy One." For this verse is said concerning the essence of His unity, blessed be He, as is known in Ra'a"m and Tikkunim.

**[7]** And from the aspect of our attainment of the reality of the powers and the worlds, He is called Blessed, as it were, from the aspect of His connection to them. For they are the ones who require the matter of addition and multiplication of blessing and abundance through the desirable actions of man, as stated above in Chapter 2. And this is the Holy One, Blessed be He, meaning that from His aspect, He is Holy, and He Himself is called Blessed, as it were, from our aspect, and all is One.

**[8]** And concerning this aspect, which is from our perspective, are the verses that are stated: "Most High God," "He who dwells in the heavens," and many similar phrases.

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## Gate III, Chapter 6

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**[1]** And behold, all the foundations of the holy Torah, all the admonitions and commandments, both positive and negative, all proceed according to this aspect: that from the perspective of our attainment, there is certainly a distinction and difference between places. In pure places, it is permitted, and indeed we are obligated, to speak or contemplate words of Torah. But in defiled places, we are forbidden even to contemplate words of Torah. Likewise, all the matters and arrangements of our obligatory conduct, which we are commanded from His mouth in the holy Torah, and without this aspect from our side, there is no place for Torah and commandments at all.

**[2]** And although in truth, from His perspective, blessed be He, His essence encompasses all with absolute equality, without any separation, division, or change of places whatsoever, but rather all is

simple unity, just as before creation. However, we are not able and also not permitted to enter at all to contemplate this awesome matter, to know and grasp how the One Master, blessed be He, fills all and all places with simple unity and complete equality. Far be it, far be it!

**[3]** And as Rabbi Elazar Rokeach, may his memory be blessed, wrote in the root of the holiness of unity. He said: "Concerning that which is beyond your comprehension, do not investigate." And it is written at the beginning of the Baraisa of Sefer Yetzirah: "The Creator returns to His place, He who created all." And in another Baraisa: "And if your heart runs, return to the place for which it was said: 'And the living creatures ran and returned.'" The meaning is: When you think in your heart about the Creator of the world, what He is, and how His dwelling is in every place, and His actions are beyond comprehension, then seal your mouth from speaking and your heart from contemplating. Remove the thought from your heart. And if your heart runs to this thought, hasten and quickly do not contemplate, and return to the unity of the world's place, to His service and His awe, etc. And concerning this matter, a covenant was made not to think about His divinity, which no wise person can know." Thus far he concluded. And see there at length.

**[4]** And all the hosts of the heavenly multitudes inquire, "Where is the place of His glory?" for they are unable to grasp the essence of the matter of the aforementioned "place of the world." This is their statement, of blessed memory, in the chapter "One Does Not Investigate" (Chagigah 13b): "For when they say, 'Blessed be the glory of the Lord from His place,' it implies that His place is not known to Him." And Moses, of blessed memory, desired with his soul to grasp this matter, saying, "Show me, I pray, Your glory," which is precisely the aforementioned "place of His glory," and it was not granted to him.

**[5]** And He alone, blessed be He, Who comprehends His essence, is the Knower of the essence of this wondrous and hidden matter. And the hidden things belong to the Lord our God, and we are not permitted to contemplate except that which He has permitted us and that which is revealed to us for our comprehension. And this is in the aspect that He, blessed be He, is called "Encompassing all worlds" from the fact that, despite all this, He, blessed be He, in His simple

will, contracted His glory so that the perception of the existence of worlds, powers, and newly created beings would be visible to the eye of comprehension.

**[6]** And for this reason, we are obligated to know and establish in our hearts an unwavering faith. For from our perspective, there is certainly a distinction between different places and matters concerning judgment and great law, as previously stated, for this is the cornerstone of faith and the fundamental root of all the Torah and commandments.

**[7]** This is also one of the reasons why, after the unification of the first verse of Shema, we say "Baruch Shem K'vod Malchuto l'Olam Va'ed." As will be explained later in Chapter 11, the intention of the unification of the first verse in the word "Echad" (One) is to intend that the unique Master, blessed be He, is One in all His worlds and creations, a simple unity as its plain meaning suggests. All of them are considered as nothing, and there is absolutely nothing else besides Him, blessed be He. This is so that we do not, God forbid, delve into contemplating the essence of the matter, how and what it is. Therefore, we then say "Baruch Shem K'vod Malchuto l'Olam Va'ed," where it will be explained that the intention is concerning the aspect that, from the perspective of our attainment, the existence of worlds and creatures appears renewed by His will, blessed be He, and they require blessing from Him. He is the one who rules over them; this is His "Baruch Shem K'vod Malchuto" (Blessed be the Name of His glorious kingdom forever and ever), etc. (And this is the matter that the first verse is called in the Zohar "Yichuda lla'a" [Higher Unification], and the verse "Baruch Shem K'vod Malchuto" is called "Yichuda Tata'a" [Lower Unification]. And it is clear.)

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## Gate III, Chapter 7

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**[1]** And these two aspects mentioned above, from His blessed side and from our side, are themselves the matter of the *Tzimtzum* (Contraction) and the Line mentioned in the words of the Ari z"l. And what is explained there is that from the aspect of the *Tzimtzum*, no change or distinction of place, above or below, front or back, is fitting for Him.

Rather, there is complete and true equality. And all matters of changes, distinctions of places, and all names and appellations are said only from the aspect of the Line. See at the beginning of the book *Otzot Chaim*, and know that all the words of the Ari z"l in the hidden matters are parables, and the inner meaning of the *Tzimtzum* and the *Havayah* (Divine Name) refers to these two aspects mentioned above, which are in essence one aspect and one matter entirely.

**[2]** For the light of the word *tzimtzum* here is not in the sense of removal and transfer from place to place, to gather and unite itself unto itself, G-d forbid, so as to create an empty space. Rather, it is in the manner of what they said in Bereishit Rabbah, Parashat Matot, "And she *tzimtzem* her face and did not see the king." And in Eichah Rabbah, at the beginning of Aleph-Bet, concerning "Ani HaGever," it states: "And she *tzimtzem* her face behind the pillar," the meaning of which is there the language of concealment and covering (see the Arukh, entry *tzimtzem*). Thus, here the word *tzimtzum* means concealment and covering.

**[3]** And the intention is that His blessed Unity, in the aspect of His essence that fills all worlds, is contracted and hidden from our comprehension, as in the verse, "Truly, You are a God who hides Himself" (Isaiah 45:15).

**[4]** And our attainment is what we attain of the existence of the worlds, one descending from above the other in various aspects, which we call a "line," akin to a descending line. This is what the Ari z"l stated: that from the aspect of *Tzimtzum*, meaning from the aspect of His unified essence, Blessed be He, which fills all the worlds, although from our perspective it is contracted and hidden, yet from the aspect of His essence, the concept of higher and lower is not applicable. Only from the aspect of the line, meaning from the aspect of our attainment, that we, from our side, perceive the order of the worlds through a descent like a line, is the concept of higher and lower applicable from our perspective.

**[5]** And furthermore, even though from the aspect of *Tzimtzum* (Contraction), meaning even though He, blessed be He, contracted and concealed from our apprehension the light of the singular essence of His unity that fills all existence, it would still not be correct to ascribe to Him "up" or "down" even from our perspective, if we were to apprehend an

equal concealment in all places, akin to a surrounding circle where "up" and "down" and spatial division are not applicable. However, from the aspect of the line, meaning that since His will, blessed be He, decreed that even after the *Tzimtzum* and concealment, the concealment is not equally apprehended by us in all places, and we apprehend different apprehensions in distinct levels of particulars through the process of emanation, like a line of light illuminating our apprehension to grasp the revelation of His blessed light in worlds and distinct powers. For in every world and power that is more elevated, the revelation of the Divine light within it is greater.

**[6]** And also, our attainment of the revelation of His blessed essence in this world is likewise in various levels and degrees in distinct places, just as our Sages of blessed memory established ten sanctities and three sanctified camps. Each is higher than the other in the value of its sanctity. Thus, from the perspective of the line of light of our attainment, the revelation of His blessed essence is that which justifies the higher and the lower, and all the divisions of places and the various levels and their details explained in the words of the Ari of blessed memory. Likewise is the matter of the verses, "Most High God," "Our God in heaven who dwells in heaven," and many similar phrases. For from the perspective of our attainment, it is justified to say that in this place, the revelation of His blessed Divinity is more discernible to us than in another place, because the revelation of His blessed essence is, in its nature, concealed from our attainment. And in the manner that our father Jacob, peace be upon him, said when he stood at the site of the Temple, as our Sages of blessed memory received: "This is none other than the house of God." Meaning, that in this place, it is also attained by the perception of the Master, that there is nothing there but the revelation of His blessed Divinity alone.

**[7]** This is the matter of the void and empty space that the Sages, of blessed memory, mentioned. The essence of *Tzimtzum* was for the revelation of the vessels. This means that His will, from a hidden aspect within Him, blessed be He, decreed to conceal the light of His unified essence, blessed be He, in this space for the duration of the existence of all worlds and creatures. This is a profound concealment, so that through it, a wondrous matter might be brought into being: that worlds and countless forces can be seen and apprehended

through gradation and emanation. And His light, blessed be He, would shine within them, a subtle light with immense measure and precision, and through endless veils. And this is until, through emanation and immense veils, even places that are impure, and the forces of impurity, evil, and the *Klipot* (husks/shells) in the lowest of the lower degrees, can come into being. It appears and seems as though, God forbid, it is a void empty of the light of His unified essence, blessed be He. And we apprehend only a subtle, meager trace and a meager light, like a fine line, for example. Until, as it passes through the order of the many gradations and veils to the lowest of the low forces, the forces of impurity and evil, the revelation of His light, blessed be He, is not at all discernible to our apprehension. And this is what is stated there: that the line of light did not reach the lowest extremity, nor did it cleave to its bottom. And through this, the aspect of high and low, etc., is found, may peace be upon him. And this is an entrance for the one who understands.

**[8]** And the contraction, and the line, are all one, and one matter. And this means that although it is certain that even in the place of all the worlds and creatures, everything is filled even now, only with His essence, blessed be He, as before the creation, nevertheless, it is in the aspect of contraction, meaning in the aspect of concealment alone, hidden and covered from our comprehension. So that through this contraction and concealment, all our comprehension of the worlds will be through the chain of emanation and the drawing down of the revelation of His light, blessed be He, within them, in a graduated order alone, like a line, for example, as mentioned above.

**[9]** And this is what is stated there in Sha'ar Igulim v'Yosher, Branch 2, that the line, the thread of light, was not drawn and spread out immediately downwards, but rather slowly, meaning, through very many degrees, in a precise measure according to the necessity for our comprehension of the matter of the worlds and their ordered gradation. And the one who understands will understand from his own knowledge according to this, the root of the entire matter explained there, for it is impossible to detail and explain well all his words, may his memory be for a blessing, there.

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**[1]** Therefore, inquiry and contemplation into the essence of the matter of Tzimtzum are forbidden, as taught by the Ari z"l, as previously mentioned. We are not permitted at all to contemplate or to know and grasp the essence of the matter of the place of the world, how it is that all is filled with His simple Unity, blessed be He. And there is absolutely nothing else besides Him, entirely from His perspective, blessed be He. And the truth is that this is entirely within the category of questions and inquiries that the Sages of blessed memory taught us (in the chapter *Ein Dorshin*), from the verse, "For ask now of the days that are past, which were before you, since the day that God created man upon the earth..." (Deuteronomy 4:32). And you do not ask...

**[2]** And the Ari, may his merit protect us, who was permitted and wondrously revealed profound and exalted secrets. He already explained, may his soul be sanctified, that the inner intention of the verse "from the day that God created man," etc., pertains to the world of Adam Kadmon. And also concerning the matter of Adam Kadmon, he wrote that we are not permitted to speak or inquire into the matter of its inner essence. Only concerning the lights emanating from it alone, and even this, only from the lights of Sag and thereafter, and not from the lights of Ab, within it. All the more so, we are not permitted, God forbid, to contemplate the essence of the matter of Tzimtzum as it is from His perspective, blessed be He. Rather, concerning the matter of the Kav, meaning the emanation of the worlds, for our understanding in this is what has deepened and broadened the discourse. But concerning the matter of Tzimtzum, he spoke of it with waxing and waning, and did not speak of its essence in detail. And see at the beginning of the book *Orot Chaim*, page 2, beginning of page 73. And he only revealed its existence in general to the wise and understanding from his own knowledge. For it is certainly fitting for the upright, wise of heart, who is constantly occupied with Torah study and commandments, and whose spirit is faithful to God, to know the existence of this awesome matter in general, that the One Lord, blessed be He, fills all, and there is nothing else besides Him, blessed be He. This is to ignite the purity of his thought for the service of prayer, to direct his heart with awe and dread and trembling to the place that is the place of the world. (And the place of the world is itself the

intention of the matter of Tzimtzum. And it is explained as stated above.)

**[3]** As our Sages of blessed memory stated, "One who prays must direct his heart to the Place." And similarly they said, "When you pray, do not make [a prayer] etc., but rather supplications and entreaties before the Holy One, blessed be He." This is akin to what Rabbi Eliezer said to his disciples (Berakhot 28b): "Know before Whom you are praying."

**[4]** And likewise, particularly the first verse of the Shema, in the word "Echad" (One), it is fitting for the true worshipper to direct the sanctity of his thought that He, blessed be He, from His side is truly One, as its plain meaning suggests, and also in all created beings, a simple unity alone, as before the creation, and as will be discussed, God willing, below.

**[5]** Also, to be in awe and trembling lest one transgress, God forbid, any of His commandments, for the heavens are full of His glory, as it is written (Jeremiah 23:24): "Can anyone hide himself in secret places, and I not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth?" And as David, peace be upon him, said: "I have set the Lord always before me."

**[6]** And this is the matter of the desecration of God's Name, which is mentioned in many places, as explained in the Zohar, the verse "desecrators of Him," etc., which is a language of emptiness and vacating space. So is the matter here, that one shows, God forbid, as if the place where he stands is empty and devoid of Him, blessed be He, and he is not concerned with transgressing His commandments, blessed be He. And in this vein is their saying, of blessed memory (in the beginning of Kiddushin), "Whoever transgresses a sin in secret is as if he is pushing the feet of the Divine Presence."

**[7]** And with this, the great difficulty that perplexes every wise heart is resolved. From where did the Ari, of blessed memory, permit himself to speak and even mention the matter of Tzimtzum, given that contemplation of it is forbidden? And as explained regarding the matter of Tzimtzum, truly the matter is operative in all places and times, even in this world, for those remnants whom the Lord calls to know the reality of this awesome matter for the aforementioned reasons. Likewise, in Ra'aya Meheimna and Tikkunim, and in the holy Rabbi Shmuel, the author of Shir HaYichud, of blessed

memory, and the Rokeach, of blessed memory, who mentioned the matter with a hint to the one who understands, all from these mentioned reasons. As is clear to one who understands in Rokeach, there, in the root of the holiness of Yichud, see there.

**[8]** However, guard your soul exceedingly. Remember and do not forget what has been explained above, that this is said only for the general knowledge of the matter, knowledge of the heart, according to the measure of the heart alone. But do not investigate or contemplate, Heaven forbid, the essence of the matter. And also, be exceedingly careful that it does not lead to establishing the entire order of conduct in action based on this awesome matter. For it is easy for this to result in acting in many matters contrary to the laws and foundations of the Holy Torah, and not to transgress, as it is written and as it is said: "And you shall know this day and return it to your heart, that the Lord is God in the heavens above." And so forth. "To your heart" specifically means only with the understanding of the heart and the measure of the heart alone, and as they said in prayer: "Let him direct his heart to the place."

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## Gate III, Chapter 9

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**[1]** And concerning the verse, "Know this day, etc., that the L-RD is G-d." The distinction between these two Names is as follows: The Name Elokim is also used for some particular power that flows from Him, blessed be He. And the Name Havayah is used for the source of all powers that flow from Him, blessed be He. As our Sages, of blessed memory, said in Bereishit Rabbah, after the completion of all the acts of creation, He mentioned the full Name (i.e., Havayah Elokim) concerning the whole world. For the Name Havayah, blessed be He, is the source of all things within Him. And at the time of creation, with each utterance, a particular power or powers were drawn from the Source of All to bring that thing into being and to create it and its existence. For this reason, only the Name Elokim was mentioned throughout the acts of creation. And He said that the drawing of all the powers was completed according to His will, blessed be He, for the needs of the world. Then it was said, "On the

day that the L-RD G-d made..." the full Name.

**[2]** And this is, "Know this day and take it to your heart, that the Lord, He is God..." This means that one should not intend to be subservient and cleave through any service to any particular power or powers that are in the heavens above and in the earth below. Rather, one should direct everything to the Name of the unique Essence, the Holy One, blessed be He, the source and totality of all the powers that are drawn from Him.

**[3]** This was the entire essence of the idolatry of the early generations, from the days of the generation of Enosh, when the matter of idolatry began in the world, as it is written, "Then it began to be called by the name of the Lord." They worshipped the powers of the stars and constellations, each to a specific star and constellation that he chose for himself. It was not that each one thought that that star was the God who created everything, for it was always in the mouths of the idolaters to call Him, blessed be He, "God of gods," as our Sages, of blessed memory, said. Likewise, the prophet Malachi said in his rebuke to Israel, "For from the rising of the sun to its setting, My name is great among the nations, etc. For great is My name among the nations, says the Lord of Hosts." Rather, the beginning of the error of the generation of Enosh was that they thought, in their confused understanding, that although the Lord is exalted and His glory is above the heavens, His glory does not extend to overseeing the creatures of this lowly world. Therefore, they thought that He, blessed be He, had removed His providence from them and delivered them to the powers of the spheres and constellations, that they should govern this world according to their will. And it was considered by them a profanity and a grave prohibition, and great insolence against Him, blessed be He, to pray to His honored and awesome Name to ask Him for their lowly needs. For this reason, they enslaved themselves and directed all their acts of worship and requests to the powers of the stars and constellations (and the manner of their making idols, and their sacrifices and incense to them, see in Tikun 66).

**[4]** And they would also know how to adjure the angels appointed over the constellations, to discern good and evil, and that through this, they would bestow upon them goodness and pleasures in this world, by virtue of the power with which they were appointed over them by the Master of all,

blessed be He. And there were few, select individuals, who truly recognized and knew that although He, blessed be He, is exalted in His dwelling, nevertheless, He looks down upon the heavens and the earth.

**[5]** And among them were those who worshipped animals and birds, as it is written (Malachi 1:17), their intention was also to cleave themselves through this to the power and the supreme constellation of that creature, which would bestow upon them from its strength and dominion, as it was appointed over it from the Divine Presence. And this is what the cursed women said to Jeremiah, "But since we stopped burning incense to the Queen of Heaven and pouring out libations to her, we have lacked everything..." (Jeremiah 44:18).

**[6]** And some would enslave themselves, sacrifice, and offer incense to any person they saw whose dominion of fortune was exceedingly great, thinking that through their enslavement and service to him, their fortune would rise with his fortune.

**[7]** And from them, even though the intention of their service was not to derive the pleasures of this world, their intention was to attain through it certain intellectual insights that they desired. Such as the wisdom of sorcery and similar insights.

**[8]** And some attach themselves to the service of certain individuals in order to draw down the influence of faith, trust, and matters of the future. And this is entirely idolatry. And in general, you shall have no other gods, as Ramban, may his memory be blessed, expounded in his commentary on the Torah there. And consult the Likutei Torah, Parashat Noah, concerning the generation of the dispersion.

**[9]** And even to be enslaved and cleave to some service for the aspect of the Holy Spirit that is in some prophet and master of the Holy Spirit. This too is called idolatry, literally. As we find with Nebuchadnezzar, who prostrated himself before Daniel. This was not because he considered them gods, creators of all. Rather, in his prostration, he intended to be enslaved and cleave to the Holy Spirit within him. As it is written (Daniel 2:46): "Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face and prostrated himself before Daniel, and commanded that an offering and sweet incense be offered to him. The king spoke and said to Daniel, 'Truly, your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings, and a

revealer of mysteries.” And it says there (Chapter 4): “And others came before Daniel, etc., and that the spirit of the holy God is in you, etc.” And our Rabbis said (Sanhedrin 93a): The reason Daniel was not present at the time of the commandment to bow to the idol was that Daniel said, “Let me go from here, so that I do not fulfill the verse, ‘You shall burn their images of their gods.’” And it is also said, “Let Daniel go from here, so that they do not say, ‘The fire is for their God.’” See Zohar Chadash, Ruth, page 72b. And in Bereshit Rabbah, Parashah 36, and in Tanchuma, Parashat Vayechi, and thus you find in Daniel, etc. What is written? “Then King Nebuchadnezzar, etc., and commanded that an offering and sweet incense be offered to him.” But Daniel did not accept, because just as punishment is exacted from idolaters, so too is punishment exacted from the idol itself. And they also said there that this is the reason why our Father Jacob, peace be upon him, did not want to be buried in Egypt. Behold, the Sages called this matter idolatry. Even though the intention was for the spirit of the holy God that was within him.

**[10]** It can be explained according to this that the verse “You shall have no other gods before Me” means, God forbid, not to direct one’s intention in any matter towards any specific aspect or particular power, even if that power is an aspect of “before Me.” This means, even towards a specific aspect of the Divine Presence within a person, or a specific aspect of holiness within any high power among the highest. This is akin to the statement of our Sages (Rosh Hashanah 24b) concerning “You shall not make with Me,” even an image of the ministering angels who serve before Me on high, such as Ophanim, Seraphim, and Chayot HaKodesh.

**[11]** And although the primary prohibition of the verse concerning all the aforementioned idolatry applies specifically to the four types of service, nevertheless, now that the service of prayer, with the subjugation of the heart’s intention, is in the place of sacrificial service, certainly the prohibition also pertains to this.

**[12]** And this is what is written: “Whoever sacrifices to gods shall be anathema, except to the Lord alone.” This means that one should not, Heaven forbid, direct intention in any service or matter to any particular power among the powers that the Creator, blessed be He, has established (for the name “Elohim” is common to any

possessor of a particular power, as is known and as was previously explained). Rather, one should direct intention solely to the unique Essence of the Blessed One alone, whose meaning is He Who brings all into being, meaning the totality and source of all powers, as was previously explained.

**[13]** And this is what is meant by “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One.” Meaning, all the individual powers that are drawn from the Blessed Holy One are unified and gathered in His blessed essence, as a single source of His oneness. And this is from the aspect of His blessedness’s connection with the worlds.

**[14]** And for this reason, wherever the Torah commanded concerning the matter of sacrifices, it clarified it specifically in Parashat HaShem. And as our Sages, of blessed memory, said (end of Masechet Menachot), “Come and see what is written in the section of sacrifices: it is not stated therein ‘El’ or ‘Elokim,’ but only ‘LaShem,’ so as not to give the adversary grounds for dispute.” And see Zohar Chadash, Bereishit 6a, 7a, and 7b, where the matter is more clearly explained.

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## Gate III, Chapter 10

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**[1]** And according to our path concerning the two aforementioned aspects, from His side, blessed be He, and from our side, which has been explained, the difference and distinction between the two names, YHVH and Elohim, will be further clarified. For the name Elohim signifies the Master of all powers. And for a little explanation of its meaning, see the beginning of Gate 1. And for a more thorough explanation of the Master of powers: every power, from the lowest of the low to the highest of the high, its continuation of existence and vitality is through the power above it, which is its soul that spreads within its interiority. And as is known from the words of the Ari, zt”l, that the light and interiority of the soul of every power and world is itself the exteriority of the power and world above it. And thus the order proceeds, higher above higher, whether in the totality of powers.

**[2]** For the totality of all created beings and the lower powers are from the intermingling of the four

elements. And the root of the four elements is from the four angels called the four camps of the Divine Presence, whose acronym is Aleph, Reish, Gimel, Mem, Nun. And the root of these four angels is from the four Chayot of the Merkavah, which are the totality of all the roots of the souls of all lower created beings. For all the thousands of myriads of species of wild animals have their soul-root descending from the face of the lion in the Merkavah. And the souls of all species of domesticated animals descend from the face of the ox. And those of all species of birds from the face of the eagle. As it is written in Zohar Pinchas, Remez 202b: "The secret of the offerings, etc., the face of the ox extended to the beasts of the spirit from it, etc." (See there).

**[3]** And therefore, in each one, the same species rules over them whose form and name are like the form and name of the face within the Chariot, as our Sages have stated (Chagigah 13a) and in Midrash Shemot Rabbah (Parashah 23): "A lion is king among the living creatures," etc. And the soul of man is from the face of man. Therefore, man is arrogant over all. For such is their essence and their totality, all four faces of the Chariot, that of man. As it is written: "And from its midst, the likeness of four living creatures, and this is their appearance: the likeness of a man towards them." And see regarding this in Zohar, Parashat Yitro, page 72b: "Man is the complete vessel of all," etc. And in Parashat Tazria, page 48, end of page 71a: "And the likeness of their faces," etc. And in Parashat Bamidbar, page 118, verse 2: "And the likeness of their faces," etc. And see Zohar Chadash, Yitro, in the Work of the Chariot, page 32, verse 3, and page 33, beginning of verse 1. (And the root of the root of man is from the Man upon the Throne, as stated above in Chapter 1, Section 6). And the root and life of the four living creatures are from the world upon them. And so on, upwards and upwards.

**[4]** And see Zohar Yitro, section 2, page b: We learn, "In the supernal secret, there are four living creatures that are within, etc., and they are the ancient ones of the Ancient Holy One, etc. We learn, 'As above, so below,' and there are those below them, and so it is in all worlds; all are bound one to another and this to this. And in Ra'ayah Meheimna, 'There are living creatures that surround the Throne of Creation, etc., and there are living creatures of [the world of] Yetzirah, etc., and there are four living creatures of the four elements, etc.' And see Etz Chaim, Sha'ar Kitzur AVi" A, chapter 8.

And there, at the end of the chapter, concerning the powers of the human soul, see there."

**[5]** And the root of all roots for them is from the four letters of the Name Havayah, blessed be He, and these are the primordial roots, the secret of faith, the father of all worlds, as mentioned in the Zohar, Parashat Vayera, page 23b.

**[6]** And likewise, the details of the powers and the species, all of them. For each one, there is a root, and a root to the root, ascending higher and higher. As our Sages of blessed memory said (Bereishit Rabbah 10:7): "There is no blade of grass, not one, that does not have a constellation in the heavens that strikes it and says to it, 'Grow,' as it is said, 'Do you know the statutes of the heavens?'" (Job 38:33). And see Zohar Terumah 151b and Parashat Kedoshim 6a for the matter at some length.

**[7]** For that star and constellation is the inner essence of its soul, its vitality, and the root of that plant from which it receives the power of growth, which is its soul, as is known. And the root and soul of that star and constellation is the angel appointed over it, from whom the star receives the power of growth to sprout and nurture that plant, as stated in the aforementioned Zohar Terumah, "And concerning that star, one is appointed," etc. And the root and soul of the angel is from the power and the world upon which it depends.

**[8]** And therefore, the angels are sworn by the Names. For that Name is the very soul, life, and light of that angel in the world, and the power by which it is illuminated and sustained. See Zohar, Balak, section 1, chapter 1: "All these holy angels above do not exist and cannot exist except by the supernal light that illuminates them and sustains them. And if the supernal light ceases from them, they cannot exist." Also see Etz Chaim, Sha'ar Tziyur Olamot ABYA, in the introduction of the Ramchal, and there at the end of chapter 1, and in Sha'ar HaShemot, chapter 7, that the angels are levels of vessels, and the Names are their very essence and the inner core of their souls. Therefore, it acts within them and directs them wherever it inclines them, like the soul that directs the body. And so it is said, "Higher and higher still."

**[9]** And likewise concerning the souls in every world. Every soul's root and source of its vitality is from the aspect of the soul of the world upon which it is situated, which becomes and is called by it a

soul for the soul. And so it is for all of them.

**[10]** And He, blessed be He, is the God, Master of all powers. For He is the soul and life and root of roots of all the powers. As it is written, "And You give life to them all, every moment." Therefore, He, blessed be He, is called the Soul of all souls, and the Root and Foundation of all worlds.

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## Gate III, Chapter 11

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**[1]** And the matter, as is known in the Zohar, is that He, blessed be He, and His word are one. And every word and utterance of the Holy One, blessed be He, in the act of creation, when He said, "Let there be," is the soul and life of that thing which was created within it. And all the myriad, myriad species within it, along with the constellations appointed over them, and the angels appointed over those constellations, and their root and the root of their root, ascending higher and higher in every world.

**[2]** And from then onward, throughout all the days of the world, His blessed Word stands within them to illuminate them and sustain them every moment in all the particulars of their affairs, their changes, and the order of their state.

**[3]** Therefore, in all the Ten Utterances, only the name Elohim is mentioned, for that utterance is the possessor of the powers of that thing and all its species that were created within it, which is His soul that spreads throughout the interior of all its detailed parts. It is only that now our eyes are veiled from seeing with the eyes of flesh how and in what manner His speech, blessed be He, spreads within them.

**[4]** And for the future, it is written (Isaiah 40:5): "And all flesh shall see together that the mouth of the Lord has spoken." This means that our apprehension will be purified to the extent that we will merit to apprehend and see, even with the eye of flesh, the matter of the diffusion of His spoken word, blessed be He, in all things in the world. Just as apprehension of this kind existed at the time of the giving of the Torah, as it is written: "And all the people saw the sounds." This is also included in the statement of our Sages, may their memory be

blessed, in *Parashat Eilu Ovrei* [Talmud Bavli, Berakhot 58a]: "Not like the 'seeing' of the World to Come, the 'seeing' of this world." The 'seeing' of the World to Come is written with *Yod-Heh* and read with *Aleph-Dalet*, but the 'seeing' of this world is written with *Yod-Heh* and read with *Yod-Heh*. Understand this.

**[5]** An emendation: And it is possible to say, in accordance with this, the statement of our Sages, of blessed memory, concerning the verse (Mekhilta, according to Rashi's commentary on the Chumash) that they would hear the visible and see the audible. And this means that their physical powers were so nullified at that time, and their perception was greatly purified. So much so that all the reality of tangible, physical matters, which they previously saw with the sight of their senses, was now nullified for them. Their sensory perception was replaced by the sight of their intellect, and they contemplated them in their entirety. Thus, for example, if someone wanted to explain to them the matters of tangible, physical things, he would have to tell them, to make them hear with their ears, that they exist in reality. And the spiritual matters, which previously required understanding their essence by hearing with the ear, they now saw with the sight of their intellect, and wondrous is their perception.

**[6]** And this is the matter of the verse (Isaiah 30:20): "And your Teacher shall not hide Himself any more, and your eyes shall see your Teacher." And see Zohar, Yitro, page 34, end of page 1a, "wings are covered so as not to be hidden," etc. See there well the entire matter.

**[7]** And therefore, blessed be He, He began the first of the Ten Commandments with "I am the Lord your God." For this is the entire foundation of faith that every Israelite must establish in his heart: that only He, blessed be He, is the true Master of Power, and the soul, life, and root of his own essence and that of all creatures, powers, and worlds whatsoever. This is the meaning and interpretation of the Name Elohim, Master of all powers.

**[8]** However, despite this, according to its interpretation and meaning, this Name implies that there also exist worlds and renewed powers from His simple will, blessed be He, who contracted His glory and left, as it were, a space for the existence of powers and worlds. Rather, He, blessed be He, is their soul and the root source of their vital force, which they receive from Him, blessed be He, who

spreads and hides within them, as it were. This is akin to the spreading of the soul throughout the human body. For even though it spreads to every part and specific point within it, nevertheless, we cannot say that the body is nullified before it as if it were not in existence at all. And similarly, with every power and upper world that spreads throughout the entire essence of the power and world beneath it, nevertheless, the lower power and world also exist in reality. And this is according to our perspective concerning our comprehension, as was previously stated.

**[9]** But the Essential Name Havayah, blessed be He, indicates the aspect and matter as it is from His blessed perspective. This was explained above. (And even though the Name Havayah, blessed be He, is also called by this name from the perspective of His blessed connection with the worlds through His will, for the essence of the unique Master, the Infinite, blessed be He, in its aspect of being abstract from the worlds, is not alluded to by any name at all. Nevertheless, the worlds are null and void in reality before Him, blessed be He, from this honored Name. And this is akin to the aspect as it is from His blessed perspective.) Therefore, the Essential Name is called the Unique Name, blessed be He.

**[10]** And this is what is meant by "For the LORD, He is God" (Deuteronomy 4:35). This means that although from our perspective of comprehension He is called by the name Elokim, and from His own exalted perspective He is called by the aspect of the Name Havayah, blessed be He, in truth, it is all one, and "the LORD, He is God." As explained above in Chapter 7 concerning the matter of Tzimtzum and the Kav, that it is all one.

**[11]** And this is also included in the general matter of the unification of the first verse of the Shema, "Hashem our God, Hashem is One." This means to intend that He, blessed be He, is our God, the Master of powers and the root source of our souls and our life, and of all creatures and worlds. And even though He created and brought into existence powers, worlds, and creatures, nevertheless, from His perspective, blessed be He, He is in the aspect of the Tetragrammaton and One, in that all creatures do not at all, God forbid, create a separation against His simple unity, blessed be He, who fills all, and is also called now the Existent and One.

**[12]** Correction: And by this, the statement of our Sages, blessed be their memory (Pesachim 51a), concerning the praise of "Baruch Shem K'vod Malchuto L'olam Va'ed" [Blessed be the Name of His glorious kingdom forever and ever], especially in the Shema, which they ordained to be recited quietly, will be understood. It is like the parable of a king's daughter who smelled the aroma of a pot, etc., and her servants began to bring it to her secretly. And seemingly, the parable of our Sages, blessed be their memory, is perplexing, for is it not great praise?

**[13]** And according to the simple understanding, it should be said that according to the truth, it is not praise at all. For example, would it be considered praise to a mortal king to say that he rules over tens of thousands of ants and gnats, and they willingly accept the yoke of his kingdom? All the more so, there is no value at all for Him, blessed be He, whose holiness and the intensity of His simple unity are incomparable, and all the worlds are as nothing before Him. Certainly, in truth, it is not praise at all that we praise Him, blessed be He, who is blessed and glorified with the honor of His kingdom over created worlds, all of which are lowly and of no account before Him. Rather, it is in the place of His greatness that His humility is found, for His will decreed that He accept praise from us. For this reason, the Sages, may their memory be blessed, likened it to the dregs of a pot. And they ordained that at the very least, it should only be said in secret.

**[14]** According to the aforementioned understanding, the inner intention of the Sages, may their memory be blessed, is as follows: After we have unified Him with the verse "Shema," which signifies His absolute, simple unity, and that there is absolutely nothing besides Him, and that all worlds are as if they do not exist at all, how then can we praise Him afterward, that He is blessed with the glory of His kingdom over the worlds? For even the worlds exist in reality, and He, blessed be He, reigns over them. This is not considered praise in opposition to the immense unity of the "Shema" verse. Rather, it is His blessed will that, notwithstanding this, we praise Him with this praise. This is because such is the matter from the perspective of our comprehension and our conduct according to the foundations and statutes of the Torah, which are all built upon this aspect, as explained above. For this reason, they were spoken in secret.

**[15]** And it might seem difficult from what Rabbi Yirmiah said to Rava (in the chapter "He used to read") that he would lengthen greatly the word "Echad" (One). And he said to him, "Since you have crowned it above and below and to the four winds of heaven, you no longer need [to lengthen it]." And according to this, the language "you have crowned" concerning the word "Echad" is somewhat difficult. However, this too is not broken. For it is known to those who know the words of the Ari, of blessed memory, that the beginning of God's initial thought concerning creation was in the secret of the Kingship of Ein Sof (The Infinite), and understand.

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## Gate III, Chapter 12

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**[1]** This is the matter that our Sages, of blessed memory, expounded (Chullin 7b) on the verse, "For the Lord, He is God, there is none else beside Him." Rabbi Chiya said: Even sorcery. For all the affairs of sorcerous actions are drawn from the forces of impurity of the impure chariot. And this is the matter of the wisdom of sorcery that the Sanhedrin needed to know. That is, the wisdom of the names of impurity and the knowledge of the affairs of the forces of the impure chariot by their names. Through this, the sorcerers perform strange actions and matters, by adjuring the forces of impurity in their aspect of goodness, that they should bestow vitality within them to perform wonders contrary to the order of natural forces and the constellations. And see Etz Chaim, Gate of the Shell of Noga, beginning of Chapter 4.

**[2]** Because the Creator, Master of all, blessed be He, established the affairs of the higher powers above the powers of nature that are drawn from the stars and constellations, so that they would have the ability to perform actions even contrary to the natural powers of the stars and constellations that were established within them at the time of creation. For it is known that the Creator, blessed be He, established within every power and world a power and ability to govern and incline the power and world beneath it, wherever the spirit may lead, etc.

**[3]** And concerning what is stated there, that they nullify the Heavenly retinue, meaning that the Creator, blessed be He, has established power

within the forces of impurity only to invert the order of the forces of the constellations and zodiacal signs. But it is not within their power, G-d forbid, to alter the order of the holy operations of the forces of the Divine Chariot.

**[4]** And conversely, when they are adjured by the names of the holy powers, their entire operational capacity is immediately and completely nullified. As it is written in Tikkun 18: "These who know [how to act] with the husks, they perform sorcery in their names, and by the Divine Names of the Holy One, Blessed be He, these husks are nullified, and the decree is annulled." And see Etz Chaim in the aforementioned chapter. For their power is not from themselves, G-d forbid. For there is none else besides Him, Blessed be He, the Possessor of all powers. And indeed, truly, all is filled only with His simple, unified essence, Blessed be He, and there is no other reality of power whatsoever besides Him, neither the powers of impurity, nor any power, nor any world, nor any created being at all. Therefore it is said, "There is none else besides Him," even concerning sorcery.

**[5]** And this is what brings the name of the Talmud, Avodah Zarah, the incident of that woman who was trying to take dust from beneath the feet of Rabbi Chanina. He said to her, "Take, your work is not succeeding, for it is written, 'There is none besides Him.'"

**[6]** And Rabbi Yitzchak Luria asked, why is it called "sorcery oil" (כשפים שמן) that diminishes the heavenly host? For Rosh Chodesh is different, for its merit is abundant. Certainly, Rabbi Chanina did not consider himself to have such abundant merit from his Torah and his many good deeds, by virtue of which his heart was assured that the action of sorcery would not prevail over him. But the matter is as explained above, for in truth, the impure chariot forces have no power of their own, God forbid. Rather, it is He, blessed be He, who established their power above the natural forces of the stars and constellations, so that through this they would have the ability to perform actions, even to change the natural order of the constellations. And without Him, blessed be He, they are nothing and void.

**[7]** And therefore, even Rabbi Chaim did not rely on the merit of the holiness of his Torah and his many deeds. Rather, he knew and perceived within himself that this faith was truly established in his

heart: that there is no power whatsoever besides Him, blessed be He. And he attached himself with the holiness of his thought to the Master of all powers, the One Lord Who fills all worlds, and there is no dominion or existence of any other power whatsoever here. Therefore, his heart was firm and confident in this, that the actions of sorcery, which are drawn from the powers of the impure chariot, would not dominate him. This is what is meant by "Your words are not supported," for it is written: "There is none besides Him."

**[8]** And truly, it is a great matter and a wondrous remedy to remove and nullify from oneself all other judgments and desires, so that they will not be able to rule over him, nor will they make any impression at all. When a person resolves in his heart to say, "Indeed, the Lord, He is the true God, and there is no power in the world besides Him, blessed be He, not in all the worlds at all, and all is filled only with His simple Unity, blessed be He." And he nullifies in his heart a complete nullification, and pays no attention at all to any power or desire in the world. And he enslaves and cleaves the purity of his thought only to the One Master, blessed be He. Thus, He, blessed be He, will suffice for him, and by itself all the powers and desires in the world will be nullified from him, and will not be able to act upon him in any way at all.

**[9]** Annotation: And this is the matter of their statement, blessed be their memory, in the Mishnah of Rosh Hashanah (29a): "Make for yourself a fiery serpent..." And is it a serpent that kills or a serpent that gives life? Rather, when Israel looks upward and subjugates their hearts to their Father in Heaven, etc. This means when they looked upward to the aforementioned serpent and contemplated its evil power, and nevertheless they nullified it from their hearts and paid no attention to its fearsome power, and truly subjugated their hearts only to their Father in Heaven, they would be healed. And this is the true matter of sweetening the forces of judgment at their root. And it is clear to the one who understands.

**[10]** And this matter is also included in the general intention of the Zohar in the introduction, page 12, end of folio 1a: "The fourth commandment is to know that the Lord is God. As it is said, 'You shall know this day, etc., that the Lord is God.' And to include the Name of Elohim within the Name of Havayah. And when a person knows that all is one, and does not make a separation, even that *Sitra*

*Achra* [the Other Side, i.e., evil] will be removed from the world, etc. And understand."

**[11]** And He decrees a word and establishes it to effect wondrous matters and miracles, contrary to the order of the forces of nature. This is because the purity of his heart's faith is enslaved and cleaves to the truth, that He alone, blessed be He, is everything, and with Him, blessed be He, all is equal every moment. To act according to the order of nature which He established, or contrary to the order of nature. As we find concerning Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa, who would decree a word and act according to his will at all times, contrary to the order of nature, as he said: "He who said to oil, 'Burn,' said to vinegar, 'Burn.'" This means that with Him, blessed be He, this is equal to that, as stated above. And so too the Creator, blessed be He, sufficed with His hand. And many such instances are brought in the Talmud concerning the wonders of His affairs.

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### Gate III, Chapter 13

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**[1]** And this was the essence of the service of the Patriarchs throughout their days. For through the wonders of their righteousness and the purity of their heart's sanctity, they would cleave their thoughts to His blessed will all their days without a moment's pause. And they nullified in their will all the powers in the world, and they were considered as nothingness and void before them. And therefore, they merited wondrous miracles in the destruction of systems and their armies, as mentioned above. And therefore, His blessed Name was uniquely associated with them, to be called the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, etc. And as He Himself said, "The God of your fathers." And for this reason, our Sages of blessed memory said, "The Patriarchs are themselves the Chariot."

**[2]** Indeed, the level of Moshe Rabbeinu was even higher. As the Torah testified, "And there arose not a prophet in Israel like Moses..." (Deuteronomy 34:10). And the very distinction of his level from their level is that the Blessed One Himself said, "I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name YHVH I did not make Myself known to them." (Exodus 6:3).

**[3]** The matter is the very distinction explained above between the Name Elohim and the Name Havayah, blessed be He. For mostly, concerning the apprehension of the Patriarchs, we find the Name Elohim stated: "The Elohim before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked." "The Elohim who has shepherded me from my youth." And so we call Him, blessed be He, "the Elohim of Abraham," etc., as explained above concerning the sanctity of their level, that they did not perceive any power or matter in the world at all. However, the apprehension of their prophecy was not through the complete nullification of powers from their existence. And this is what is stated: "And I appeared to Abraham, etc., by El Shaddai," whose meaning is also akin to the meaning of the Name Elohim, meaning: "I am the Master of all powers, and when I will it, at every moment, I shatter the order of all powers from what I established within them at the time of creation." This is El Shaddai. But in the aspect of the matter of My Name Havayah (as its meaning was explained above in Chapter 11), I was not known to them in the apprehension of their prophecy.

**[4]** But Moses' attainment of prophecy was in the manner of the unique Essence Name, Havayah, blessed be He. Therefore, there was no force separating him from the light of his prophetic attainment. Likewise, through all the miracles of God that were performed by him, all saw the complete nullification of the existence of all forces, and there is absolutely nothing besides Him, blessed be He, in its full meaning. As it is written, "You have been shown to know that the Lord is God..." And this is the matter and meaning of the unique Name Havayah, blessed be He, as stated above.

**[5]** Thus it is written, "And God spoke to Moses, and said to him, 'I am YHVH.'" He informed him of the essence of the perception of his prophecy, that even the Name Elohim is, for Him, entirely a manifestation of YHVH. This is in the manner of the verse, "For YHVH is God; there is nothing else besides Him." And from then on, it is only mentioned, "And YHVH spoke and said." And this is what is meant by, "And there arose no prophet like Moses... who knew YHVH face to face." And this is what is stated in Tikkun 26: "And concerning the Patriarchs, He did not appear except with sandals, etc. But concerning Moses, without any covering at all." And the secret of this is [implied in] "And I appeared to Abraham, etc." End quote.

**[6]** And this is also the matter of their saying, of blessed memory, in the chapter "Covering the Blood": "Greatness" is stated concerning Moses and Aaron more than concerning Abraham. For concerning Abraham it is written, "And I am dust and ashes," while concerning Moses and Aaron it is written, "And what are we?"

**[7]** For dust and ashes, at any rate, still appear to exist as dust. But Moses said, "And what are we?" as if there were no existence in the world at all, completely. (And although Aaron was also included in this aspect, as stated in their teaching, "Great are Moses and Aaron," it is because Israel's complaint was directed at both of them that He answered them in the plural. However, the essence of this awesome level was solely his.)

**[8]** Correction: The matter of dust and ashes is akin to the intention of the red heifer, whereby the letters of the Divine Name can be included in their root source in the Aleph, which is the simple power of all letters. And the distinction between dust and ashes is akin to the distinction between garments of skin and light.

**[9]** And this is what is stated in Shemot Rabbah, Chapter 11: Isaac said to Moses, "I am greater than you, for I bared my neck, etc., and I saw the face of the Shekhinah." Moses replied, "I am more exalted than you, for you saw the face of the Shekhinah and your eyes dimmed, etc., but I spoke with the Shekhinah face to face, and my eyes did not dim." This is clear to the one who understands. And see what Rabbi Chaim Vital, may his memory be blessed, wrote in his book Sha'arei Gilgulim, in the chapter on their statement: "Abraham, Abraham! Jacob, Jacob!" – there is a pause in the taste. But "Moses, Moses!" – there is no pause in the taste. This is concerning the matter of interruption and a slight separation from the matter of the body. See there.

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## Gate III, Chapter 14

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**[1]** And for this reason, Moses was ready for prophecy at every moment, as it is stated, "Stand and I will cause you to hear," etc., and as our Sages of blessed memory have said. And likewise,

he would attain his prophecy in all places, wherever he might be, in complete equality without any distinction whatsoever. As our Sages of blessed memory stated in Shemot Rabbah, Chapter 2, and in Bamidbar Rabbah, Chapter 2, and in Hazit, Chapter 3, concerning the verse, "His pillars were made of silver," of blessed memory: "Why did the Holy One, blessed be He, speak with Moses from within the bush, etc.? To teach you that there is no place empty on earth that is empty of the Divine Presence, for even from within the bush He spoke with him," etc. And this is according to the contemplation of his awesome level.

**[2]** Annotation: And this is also one of the reasons. That our father Jacob, peace be upon him, said "Shekhml"u" [a phrase implying God's presence in all realms], while Moses, peace be upon him, did not say it, as our Sages, may their memory be blessed, stated (Pesachim 56a). For the concept of praise in "Shekhml"u" implies that there are also existences of powers and worlds, as explained above in Chapter 11, see there. Therefore, our father Jacob, peace be upon him, said it according to his level, as mentioned above. However, the level and attainment of Moses, peace be upon him, as we have explained, is also the very essence of the unity of the word "Echad" [One] in the Shema, as explained there. Therefore, he did not say "Shekhml"u" concerning the uniqueness of the Blessed One.

**[3]** And only he whose soul desired, "Show me, I pray, Your glory," to stand upon the essence of this awesome matter, and to see how He, blessed be He, fills all the earth with His glory, and there is no place empty of Him. This was not granted to him, and He, blessed be He, answered, "You cannot see Me, for no man can see Me and live."

**[4]** And he would continually grow and ascend in this level until he succeeded and merited it before his departure from the world. To the greatest extent possible for human strength to merit while still in this world. As we find in Mishneh Torah in the portion "Ve'haya Im Shamo'a" that at the beginning it says, "to love the L-rd your G-d, etc." And immediately after it, in the following verse, it says in the language of one speaking for himself, "and I will give the rain of your land, etc." which is the Giver and the Doer. For he became nullified in his own eyes from all existence, and only the Divine Presence alone speaks, therefore it says, "and I will give." And this is what our Sages of blessed

memory meant when they said, "The Divine Presence speaks from Moses' throat." And as it is written, "Mouth to mouth I speak with him," not "to him" but "with him," truly within him.

**[5]** And to this level of perfection, no person has yet attained, except for Him, from the time of Adam the First's sin. Nor will any person on earth attain it until the coming of the Redeemer, may He come speedily. As the Holy Torah testifies, "And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like Moses..." (And even though it is stated in the past tense, the Torah is eternal and applies also to future generations. For after each generation passes from the world, we can say that in this generation, no prophet arose like Moses at this level). Therefore, they said in the Midrash Rabbah, "A person is obligated to say, 'When will my deeds reach the deeds of my forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?'" And they did not say, "the deeds of Moses, our teacher."

**[6]** However, it is fitting for every one who truly fears God, that at least when he stands to pray, he should, with the purity of his heart according to his ability and comprehension, nullify all the powers in the world and all his own powers, as if there were no existence in the world at all. And he should cleave in his heart only to Him, blessed be He, the Master, the Unique One, blessed be He.

**[7]** And in any case, at times. For truly, not all times are equal concerning the purity of the heart. And especially in these generations, it is almost impossible to pray constantly at this high level. And Rabbi Eliezer already said, "I can exempt the entire world from the law of prayer." Nevertheless, the pure worshipper who always sees and contemplates with the purity of his heart that all his affairs should be pleasing before the Master of all, blessed be He, can attain to pray, at least at times, at this level.

**[8]** And now it is clear what our Sages of blessed memory intended in their statement that one who prays must direct his heart to the Place. Likewise, their statement of blessed memory in Pirkei Avot: "And when you pray, do not make your prayer a fixed routine..." but rather mercy and supplication before the Holy One, blessed be He. For one must be very careful with his soul not to direct or set the intention of his heart in his prayer, G-d forbid, to any *sefira*, even from the emanated ones. Not only is it forbidden to direct [one's intention] to any *sefira*

or higher power alone, for this is service without the True G-d and a cutting of roots, G-d forbid, but it is also fitting and proper that he nullify by his will a complete nullification of all higher and lower powers, and also of all his own powers, as if they do not exist. (And this is not only concerning prayer. Rather, even engagement in Torah, that it be established within him properly, also requires that it be according to this level. Similar to their statement (Sotah 21b): "Torah is only established in one who makes himself as if he is nothing.") And to direct and cleave the purity of his heart in his prayer solely to the Place of the World, He who is the One

of the World, the Infinite Holy One, blessed be He, who fills all the world and all the worlds, and there is no place devoid of Him.

**[9]** And see the Rokeach, may his memory be for a blessing, at the end of the root of remembering the Name, may he rest in peace. And when one says "Blessed are You, Lord," let him not think of the honor seen in the hearts of the prophets and the vision of the Throne, but rather of the Lord, He is God in the heavens and on earth, in the air and in the sea, and in all the world, who is the God of the Patriarchs. Thus far he. And understand.



## Chapter 6

# Gate IV: The Primacy of Torah Study

34 Chapters

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### Gate IV, Chapter 1

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[1] Furthermore, I have said that I would come in a scroll of a book, written concerning the great obligation of engaging in Torah study, for every Israelite, day and night. And to expand somewhat on the language that speaks of the greatness, preciousness, glory, and loftiness of the Torah. And the upright person who engages and contemplates it, with the Torah of kindness upon his tongue, to bring pleasure to his Creator and Maker, blessed be He. And the man of knowledge who strengthens himself to support it, and to aid it, and to uphold its integrity, especially since for many days now, the engagement with the Holy Torah has been diminished among Israel in every generation.

[2] And now, in these generations, alas, it has fallen greatly, greatly. It is situated in the secret of the lowest rung, meaning. As our eyes see now among the multitude of our people, the immense suffering of the burden of livelihood, may God have mercy.

[3] And also some of those who desire closeness to God, they have chosen for themselves to establish the entirety of their study in books of awe and ethics all their days, without establishing the primary engagement with the Holy Torah in its verses and numerous laws. And they have never in

their lives seen the lights, nor has the light of Torah shone upon them. May God forgive them, for their intention is for Heaven. But this is not the way for the light of Torah to dwell within them.

[4] And the truth is that the books of reverence are like all of God's straight paths. For the generations of the past were fixed all their days in the study and contemplation of the Holy Torah, rooted in the tents of the academies, in [the study of] Gemara and Pshat. And the flame of love for the Holy Torah burned in their hearts like a consuming fire, with pure love and reverence for God. And all their desire was to magnify His glory and to make it magnificent. And they expanded their borders with many worthy students, so that the land would be filled with knowledge.

[5] And when the days lengthened, behold, thus has been the way of the inclination from eternity to be jealous of the people of God, blessed are they, when they walk in the way of God properly, to cast poison into them. Until some of the disciples placed all their fixed times and their occupation solely in the dialectic of Torah alone and not at all besides. And we learned in our Mishnah: "If there is no awe, there is no wisdom." And many other sayings of our Sages, of blessed memory, are like this, as will be brought below in Chapter 4, with God's help. For this reason, some of their great ones, the eyes of the congregation, whose way was holy, stirred themselves to labor for the betterment of the entire house of Israel, to set matters aright

and to mend their breaches, to remove the stumbling block from the way of the people of God. And they filled their hands to come with rebukes, admonitions, and measures. And they composed books of awe to straighten the hearts of the people, so that they would be occupied with the Holy Torah and with service in pure awe of God.

[6] However, any person of understanding whose intellect is sound will comprehend from his own knowledge that their intention was not, Heaven forbid, to neglect the diligent study of the body of the Torah and to be occupied solely with books of admonition. Rather, their praiseworthy intention was that the principal establishment of study and devotion should be solely in the Holy Torah, both Written and Oral, and its abundant laws. These are the body of the Torah, and also in pure reverence for God.

[7] And now, in these generations, alas, it is the reverse. The high is low. For many have placed the primary focus of their study for most days solely on books of awe and ethics, saying that this is the entirety of man's purpose in his world, to constantly engage with them. For these books ignite the hearts, whereby the heart will then be humbled to subdue and break the evil inclination and its desires, and to straighten oneself in good character traits. And the crown of Torah lies neglected in a corner. And with my own eyes I have seen in one district how this has spread among them to such an extent that in most of their study halls, there are only ethics books in abundance, and not even a complete Talmud. And their eyes are blinded from seeing, and their hearts from understanding. This is not the path that God has chosen, for He will not desire it. And soon, with the passage of time, they may, God forbid, be without a priestly teacher, and what will become of the Torah?

[8] Indeed, who can halt his words for this? To inform the tribes of Israel faithfully, those who fear the L-rd and contemplate His Name, the path they should walk in the light of Torah. Woe to us on the Day of Judgment. Woe to us on the Day of Rebuke for the sin of the nullification of Torah. For He, blessed be He, will be jealous for it and demand vengeance for its insult.

[9] And first, I will speak concerning the matter of Torah study for its own sake, what the concept of "for its own sake" is. For this too is a fruit of sin for many who refrain from engaging in holy Torah,

thinking that the concept of "for its own sake" means great, uninterrupted devotion.

[10] And there is a graver illness than this. For they opine in their minds that engagement with Torah without cleaving [to God] is nothing and without any benefit, God forbid. Therefore, when they see that their hearts do not incline towards this level, that studies should be with constant cleaving, they do not begin to study at all. And thus, the Torah is lost, God forbid. And from the continuation of the matters, it will be explained, with God's help, by itself, the loftiness of the holy Torah and the person engaged in it properly.

[11] For this reason, it is necessary to bring some sayings of our Sages, of blessed memory, from the Talmud and Midrashim, and the Zohar, in which wonders are spoken of concerning the exaltedness of the holy Torah and the one who engages in it, and the greatness of its reward and punishment, meaning. Although all these sayings are known and famous, nevertheless, I have gathered them to inflame the hearts of those who desire to cleave to the love of His divine Torah, and to dwell in the shadow of the Most High, terrible [in His glory].

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## Gate IV, Chapter 2

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[1] The matter of engaging in Torah for its own sake. The clear truth. For "for its own sake" does not mean attachment, as most people now suppose. For the Sages, of blessed memory, said in a Midrash that David, peace be upon him, requested from the Holy One, blessed be He, that one who engages in Psalms should be considered by Him, blessed be He, as if he were engaged in [the study of] Nega'im and Ohalot. Behold, therefore, engagement in the laws of the Talmud with deep thought and effort is a matter more elevated and beloved before Him, blessed be He, than reciting Psalms.

[2] And if one were to say that the purpose is specifically cleaving, and that the entire essence of Torah study depends solely on this, then is there any cleaving more wondrous than reciting Psalms properly all day long?

[3] And who knows if the Holy One, Blessed be He, agreed to this through him. For we do not find in the words of our Sages, of blessed memory, what answer the Blessed One gave to his question (and as we find in Bava Batra 17a, "And the other, it is mercy that he sought").

[4] And even though it would have been sufficient for the matter of cleaving [to God]. If one were to engage in one tractate, or chapter, or a single Mishnah, and dedicate his entire life to it in cleaving. This is not how we find it with our Sages, of blessed memory, who said about Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai that he did not leave a verse, Mishnah, halakhot, or aggadot, etc. And this was because he always bore in mind that he had not yet fulfilled the obligation of Torah study for its own sake with what he had learned until now. For this reason, he was diligent his entire life to constantly add learning from day to day and from hour to hour.

[5] And in *Mishlei Rabba*, Chapter 10, Rabbi Yitzchak says: "Come and see how severe is the Day of Judgment that the Holy One, Blessed be He, will judge all the world, etc. One who possesses Scripture but not Mishnah, the Holy One, Blessed be He, turns His face away from him, and the torments of Gehenna gain dominion over him, etc. And they take him and cast him into Gehenna. One who possesses two orders or three, the Holy One, Blessed be He, says to him: 'My son, why did you not learn all the Halakhot, etc.' One who possesses Halakhot, the Holy One, Blessed be He, says to him: 'My son, why did you not learn *Torat Kohanim*, which contains, etc.' One who possesses *Torat Kohanim*, the Holy One, Blessed be He, says to him: 'My son, why did you not learn the Five Books of the Torah, which contain the recitation of Shema, phylacteries, and mezuzah.' One who possesses the Five Books of the Torah, the Holy One, Blessed be He, says to him: 'Why did you not learn Haggadah, etc.' One who possesses Haggadah, the Holy One, Blessed be He, says to him: 'My son, why did you not learn Talmud, etc.' One who possesses Talmud, the Holy One, Blessed be He, says to him: 'My son, since you occupied yourself with Talmud, did you gaze upon the Chariot, etc. How does My Throne of Glory stand, etc. How does *Chashmal* stand. And in how many ways does it turn, etc.' See there at length."

[6] And it is also likely so. For there are many extensive laws in the Talmud that when a person engages with them, he needs to contemplate and

deepen his thought and intellect in their material aspects. Such as laws of acquisition and the laws of a menstruous woman, which are the very bodies of the laws, or the discourse in the Talmud and the general principles of laws concerning fraud, which a deceiver could claim. And it is almost impossible for him to have complete cleaving [to God] at that time as is fitting.

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## Gate IV, Chapter 3

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[1] But the truth is that the matter of "for its own sake" (*lishmah*) is explained as "for the sake of the Torah." And the matter is as Rabbi Asher ben Yechiel (the Rosh) zt"l explained regarding the statement of Rabbi Eliezer ben Tzadok (Nedarim 51a): "Do things for the sake of their doer, and speak of them for their own sake." His words: "Do things for the sake of their doer." For the sake of the Holy One, Blessed be He, who did everything for His own purpose. And speak of them for their own sake. Let all your speech and discourse in matters of Torah be for the sake of the Torah, such as to know and to understand and to add learning and debate, and not to provoke or to boast. End of his words.

[2] Be precise in explaining the change in his language, Rabbi Eliezer ben Azariah, in the matter of action, he said "for His Name" (*lishmo*), implying the agent. But in the matter of speech, he said "for His Name" (*lishmo*), implying the purpose. Therefore, concerning the matter of action, he explained it as for the Name of the Holy One, Blessed be He, who performed everything for His own sake. And concerning the matter of study, he explained it as for the Name of the Torah, etc.

[3] And his intention, may his memory be a blessing, is explained thus: The performance of a commandment certainly requires it to be done in the most excellent manner, with devotion and the purest of pure thoughts, according to one's understanding and attainment. This is in order that the Upper Realm may be aroused to bring about the rectification of the worlds and the higher powers and orders. This is "for His praise," for all of God's actions are for His sake, and our Sages, may their memory be a blessing, said, "for His praise."

**[4]** And although it is certain that even in the commandments, the actual performance is the essential element that prevents them from being nullified, and the excessive intention and purity of thought do not nullify them at all, as was explained at length at the end of Chapter 1, blessed be His name, nevertheless, the sanctity and purity of his thought join with the essential actual performance to arouse and effect greater rectifications in the worlds than if the commandment had been performed without attachment and sanctity of thought.

**[5]** But concerning man's conduct during the study of Torah, in the laws of the commandments and their rulings, it is said, "and speak of them," meaning, to speak concerning the matters of the commandments and their rulings. "It shall be for its sake." This means, for the sake of the Torah's study, that is, to know and to understand and to add lesson and dialectic.

**[6]** And Rashi, of blessed memory, had another interpretation there, and "spoke of them for the sake of Heaven." Therefore, he explained that your entire intention should be for Heaven. However, concerning the matter and explanation of "for its own sake" (lishmah) as our Sages, of blessed memory, stated in many places, it is certain that Rashi, of blessed memory, would also interpret it according to the interpretation of the Ra'ash, of blessed memory, here, according to his version. And Rashi, of blessed memory, here also does not intend [the meaning of] cleaving [to God]. Rather, it comes to exclude [the possibility] that his study should be for the sake of provocation and arrogance, as the Ra'ash, of blessed memory, wrote. As is evident from the conclusion of the words of the wise, "Do not make them a crown for self-aggrandizement," etc.

**[7]** And this is what concludes the Talmud regarding Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai, who left no [legacy] to fulfill what is stated: "To bequeath to those who love Me, [riches and honor]." The matter is explained there throughout that entire section as a statement of the Holy Torah itself, "which cries out in the street." For it has the power to bequeath and give a good reward to all who ponder and engage with it, truly out of its own love. That is to say, to add to it lesson and discourse. And this is "those who love Me."

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## Gate IV, Chapter 4

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**[1]** However, it is certainly impossible to say that the study of Torah does not require any purity of thought and fear of God, God forbid. For we have learned a complete Mishnah: "If there is no fear, there is no wisdom." And they said (Yoma 72b): "What is the meaning of 'Why is there a price in the hand of a fool to buy wisdom, but he has no understanding'?" Woe unto the scholars who engage in Torah but have no fear of Heaven, etc. And in Shemot Rabbah, Parashah 44: "Whoever knows and does not have the fear of sin, has nothing. The folds of the Torah are in the fear of sin."

**[2]** And in the introduction to the Zohar (11b) Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai said that awe is the gate for entering into faith. And by this commandment, the entire world is sustained, etc. And this is the root and foundation for all other commandments of God. "Whoever guards awe, guards everything. Whoever does not guard awe, does not guard the commandments of the Torah," etc. (See there).

**[3]** And in Parashat Behar, 108a, it is asked: What is the yoke? It is written, "as this Torah." Thus, it is also necessary for a person to first accept upon himself the yoke, and afterwards to serve Him with all that is required. And if he does not first accept this yoke, he will not be able to serve. The same applies to "Serve the Lord with fear." What is "fear"? As it is said, "The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord." And it is in this manner, in the first instance, that all is [connected]. For through this, he enters into higher holiness. And if this is not found within him, the higher holiness will not dwell within him.

**[4]** And they also said: "Whoever's fear of sin precedes his wisdom, his wisdom endures." For the fear of God is the beginning, the very essence of the existence of the wisdom of the Torah. As our Sages, of blessed memory, stated (Shabbat 31a): Rabbi Yehuda said in the name of Rabbi Meir: "And the faithfulness of your times" (Isaiah 33:6) - "faithfulness" refers to the order of Zera'im, etc. The Gemara discusses this verse and concludes: "And yet, the fear of the Lord, that is His treasure." What is the analogy? The verse likens the Torah to

abundant produce. And a treasure is that which holds a multitude of produce and preserves it within. The fear of God is the treasure for the wisdom of the Holy Torah, by means of which it will endure within a person. And if a person has not first prepared for himself the treasure of fear, then the abundant produce of the Torah is like grain lying in the open field, trampled by the foot of the ox and the donkey, God forbid, and it does not endure within him at all.

[5] And thus they said concerning this verse in Shemot Rabbah, Chapter 30: "You find a person who has learned Midrash, Halakhot, and Aggadot, but if he lacks the fear of sin, he possesses nothing. It is like a person who says, 'I have a thousand measures of grain.' [The other] said to him, 'Do you have a place to store them?'" As it is said, "And He shall be the faithfulness of your times" (Isaiah 33:6). See there.

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## Gate IV, Chapter 5

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[1] And according to the measure of the treasure of awe that a person has prepared for himself, so, according to that measure, can the fruits of Torah enter, be preserved, and endure within him, according to what his treasure can hold.

[2] For a father distributing grain to his sons, he distributes and gives to each one the measure of grain according to the capacity of the son's storehouse which he prepared beforehand. For even if the father desires and his hand is open to give him much, nevertheless, since the son cannot receive more because his storehouse is not so large as to hold more, the father also cannot give him more at this time. And if the son did not prepare even a small storehouse, the father will not give him anything at all, since he has no preserved place where it can be sustained with him.

[3] Thus is the Blessed One, His hand is open, as it were, to always bestow upon every person of His chosen people, abundant wisdom and exceeding understanding. And that it may be established among them and bound upon the tablet of their hearts, to delight themselves with them when they come to the world of rest, with their learning in their

hands.

[4] Indeed, the matter depends on the treasury of awe that precedes a person. For if a person has prepared for himself a great treasury of pure awe of God, so too will God grant him wisdom and understanding in abundant overflow, according to what his treasury can hold. Everything is according to the size of his treasury.

[5] And if a person has not prepared even a small treasury wherein there is no fear of Him, blessed be He, whatsoever, may it not be so. Then He, blessed be He, will also not bestow upon him any wisdom whatsoever, for it will not endure with him. For His Torah is abhorred, may it not be so, as our Sages, of blessed memory, have taught.

[6] And concerning this, Scripture states (Psalm 111:10): "The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord." As explained in the Introduction of the Zohar (page 7, line 2), "The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord, etc. Why does this verse say 'beginning of wisdom,' etc.? Rather, it is the beginning for entering into the level of supernal wisdom, etc. The first gate to supernal wisdom is the fear of the Lord, etc." (See there).

[7] It is now explained. Although reverence is one commandment, and they said in the Jerusalem Talmud, at the beginning of Pe'ah, that all commandments are not equal to even one word of Torah, nevertheless, the commandment of acquiring reverence for Him, blessed be He, is exceedingly great. This is because it is essential for the fundamental existence and preservation of the Holy Torah, and without it, it is loathsome, God forbid, in the eyes of creatures. Therefore, it is necessary that it precede a person's engagement with Torah.

[8] Correction: And by this will be explained the statement of our Sages, of blessed memory, at the beginning of Chapter HaRoeh: "The Holy One, Blessed be He, does not give wisdom except to one who possesses wisdom, as it is said, 'And wisdom and might are His' (Job 12:13), and 'To all the wise I have given wisdom' (Proverbs 1:1). 'He gives wisdom to the wise' (Daniel 2:21)." And at first glance, it is perplexing. For if so, from where did the first wisdom originate with the Master?

[9] Indeed, the matter is as it is explicitly written that even fear is called wisdom, as it is stated (Job

28:28): "And unto man He said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom." This is for the reason mentioned above, that it is the good treasury of wisdom, so that it may be preserved and endure within him. Therefore, it is said that the Holy One, blessed be He, does not give and bestow the supernal wisdom of the Torah, so that it may be preserved with him and his learning remain in his possession, except for one who possesses wisdom, meaning the treasury of fear. For as stated above, it is necessary that this precede within a person.

**[10]** And a person of understanding, who grasps the inner meaning of their words, of blessed memory, will understand this according to our path, based on the secrets of the Zohar and the writings of the Ari, of blessed memory, who stated that the Supreme Wisdom is revealed only through the attribute of His Kingship, blessed be He, which is the acceptance of the yoke of His commandments, as stated above.

**[11]** And by this, it will also be understood that we find our Sages, of blessed memory, saying, "The Holy One, blessed be He, has in His world only four cubits of Halakha alone" (Berakhot 8a). And in the chapter "Ein Omdin" (Berakhot 33b), they said, "The Holy One, blessed be He, has in His treasury only a treasure of the fear of Heaven alone." And according to our words, truly, it is all one. Therefore, they said, "a treasure of the fear of Heaven." Thus far.

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## Gate IV, Chapter 6

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**[1]** To this truth, that this is the true path which He, blessed be He, chose. That at all times a person dedicates himself to study, it is fitting for him to settle himself before he begins, at least for a short time, in pure fear of God with purity of heart. To confess his sin from the depths of the heart, so that his Torah may be holy and pure. And he should intend to cleave in his study to Him, to the Torah, to Him, to the Holy One, blessed be He. This means to cleave with all his strengths to the word of God, this is the Halakha. And in this, he is truly cleaved to Him, blessed be He, as it were. For He, blessed be He, and His will are one, as stated in the Zohar. And every judgment and Halakha from the Holy

Torah is His will, blessed be He, for His will decreed that it should be so, kosher or invalid, impure or pure, forbidden or permitted, liable or acquitted.

**[2]** And even if one is occupied with matters of Aggadah that have no practical bearing on any legal ruling, he is nonetheless cleaving to the Word of the Holy One, Blessed be He. For the entire Torah, in its generalities and particulars and nuances, and even what a young student asks his teacher, all issued from His mouth, may He be exalted, at Sinai. As our Sages, of blessed memory, stated at the end of Chapter 2 of Masechet Megillah, and at the beginning of Chapter 1 of Masechet Berachot, page 5, line 1, and in Kehilat Rabbah, Chapter 11, section 1, and there in section 5, Chapter 6, and in the Jerusalem Talmud, Chapter 2 of Pe'ah, and in Vayikra Rabbah, Chapter 22, see there. And in Shemot Rabbah, Chapter 43, it is written: "I have written for you these words" – at the time the Holy One, Blessed be He, revealed Himself at Sinai to give the Torah to Israel, He said to Moses, in order: Scripture, Mishnah, Halakhot, and Aggadot, as it is stated: "And God spoke all these words." Even what the student asks the teacher, all of it.

**[3]** Furthermore, even at the time when a person is occupied with Torah below, every word that he utters from his mouth, these are the very words that, as it were, also emerge from His (God's) mouth at that very moment. As we find in the first chapter of Gittin concerning the concubine in Gibeah: "and his concubine played the harlot against him, and went away from him" (Judges 19:2). Rabbi Abitur said, "A fly found her." Rabbi Eliezer said, "This means..." And Rabbi Eliezer found Elijah and asked him, "What is the Holy One, Blessed be He, doing?" He replied, "He is occupied with the concubine in Gibeah, and what is He saying? 'My son Jonathan, thus he says. My son...'". And this is because Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua were discussing the matter of the concubine in Gibeah at that time. Therefore, at that very moment, He, may He be blessed, also repeated their words.

**[4]** And He, blessed be His name, and His word are one. As is expounded in the Holy Torah, in the verse "to love the Lord your God," etc. And our Sages expounded this in Nedarim (62a) that it refers to the engagement with Torah, see there. And the end of the verse is "and cleave to Him."

**[5]** And therefore David, peace be upon him, said, "Better for me is the Torah of Your mouth..." He said

this because my heart rejoices in my labor in the Holy Torah with great strength, when I bring to my mind that it is the Torah of Your mouth. For every single word of the Torah that I am currently engaged with, all of it emanated and is still emanating from Your mouth, blessed be He. Therefore, the sanctity of the entire Torah is equal, without any division or alteration whatsoever, God forbid. For it is all truly the word of His mouth, blessed be He. And if even one letter is missing from the Torah scroll from the verse "Aluph Timnah," it is rendered invalid, just as if a letter were missing from the Ten Commandments, or from the verse "Shema Yisrael." As also stated by Rambam, may his memory be a blessing, and it is a principle of the Oral Law, chapter 3 [chapter 2].

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## Gate IV, Chapter 7

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**[1]** And for this reason, it is fitting for a person to prepare himself at all times before he begins to study. To consider his Creator, blessed be His name, with purity of heart and fear of God. And to purify himself from his transgressions with thoughts of repentance. So that he may be able to connect and cleave to the time he is engaged with the Holy Torah, with His blessed word and His will. And also to accept upon himself to do and to fulfill all that is written in the Written Torah and the Oral Torah, and that which he will see and understand as his path and conduct from the Holy Torah. Likewise, when one wishes to contemplate a matter of Halakha, it is fitting to pray that the blessed One will grant him merit to resolve the matter according to Halakha. To direct oneself towards the truth of the Torah.

**[2]** And likewise, in the midst of study, permission is granted to a person to pause for a short while, before the awe of the Blessed One, which he accepted upon himself before commencing study, is extinguished from his heart. To contemplate anew, for a little while, the awe of God. As our Sages, of blessed memory, said (Shabbat 31a): "It is like a man who said to his messenger, 'Bring me a kor of wheat up to the attic.' He said to him, 'Did you mix in with it a kab of husks?' He said, 'No.' He said, 'It would have been better if you had not brought it up.'" And this refers to the midst of engagement with the produce of Torah wisdom,

into which it is also fitting to mix his awe of Him, so that his learning may be sustained in his possession.

**[3]** Therefore, the *Baraisa* connects to this by stating, "Rabbi Yishmael's school taught: A person may take a *kav* of leaven from a first-born of grain and not worry." This is a law concerning theft and fraudulent overcharging, whose place is in the Book of Damages, so what is its relevance here? However, they have taught us regarding this: Just as in a transaction, even though it appears to be theft or fraudulent overcharging, nevertheless, because the *kav* of earth is the preservation and sustenance of the entire measure of grain, one does not worry about it being theft. Similarly, a person is permitted to interrupt and set aside a short period from his study to contemplate a little with awe of God, and he does not worry about this being a nullification of Torah, because he is the cause for the wisdom of the Torah to be sustained within him.

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## Gate IV, Chapter 8

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**[1]** Indeed, deduce from this also the matter of the two parables which the Sages of blessed memory likened concerning Torah and awe. This is the opposite of what many of our people erred in regarding this. They establish their entire engagement in study solely in books of awe and ethics.

**[2]** Just as in the matter of the treasure preceding the produce within it. And would it ever enter a person's mind that since the entire existence and preservation of the produce is the treasure, he would occupy all or most of his time solely with building the treasure, and never bring any produce into it? So how could it enter a person's mind to say that this is the ultimate purpose of a person of Israel, to dedicate his entire study to building the treasure of the Holy One, blessed be He, alone, and it is an empty treasure. And from all his labor, he has not achieved anything but one commandment, "You shall fear the Lord your God." And even this is not called a treasure at all.

**[3]** The Sages, of blessed memory, did not intend

by their aforementioned statement, "The Holy One, Blessed be He, has nothing... except an abundance of wine," to imply that He possesses only wine. Rather, they referred to that awe within which are contained the multitude of seeds: Scripture, Mishnah, Halakhot, and other matters of Torah. For awe is their good treasury and guardian, ensuring their preservation within Him. They are arranged and sharp on His tongue, and inscribed on the tablet of His heart, as is proven and necessitated by what is further stated: "The Holy One, Blessed be He, has nothing in His world but the four cubits of Halakha alone."

**[4]** And as is known in the root of the matter, concerning the two aspects of Torah and fear of God in the higher attributes. For the aspect of fear of God has no substance of its own, as it comes purely as the receptacle for the supernal abundance from the aspect of Torah. As it is written, "And the Lord is in His holy temple" (Habakkuk 2:20). See also Tikkunim 2, 3b, and 3.

**[5]** For it is written (Proverbs 15:16): "Better is a little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and turmoil therewith."

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## Gate IV, Chapter 9

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**[1]** And similarly, concerning the permissibility of pausing in the midst of study to contemplate the fear of God for a little while. For the Sages, of blessed memory, likened it to the permissibility of mixing a *kav* of spices into a first-sheaf offering of grain. From this, we also learn: Just as if one mixes more than a *kav* of spices into a first-sheaf offering of grain, which is not necessary for the sustenance of the grain, this is considered robbery and deception. So too, concerning fear. If a person prolongs it for a time exceeding that which is necessary for the sustenance and preservation of the "harvest" of the Torah, this is considered stealing that excess time. From the Torah, which he should have been learning at that time. For he is not permitted to engage in contemplation and acquisition of fear except according to what he weighs in his intellect, according to his nature and circumstances. This is the time that is necessary and essential for him to engage in acquiring fear

and moral instruction, for the purpose of preserving and sustaining the "harvest" of the Torah.

**[2]** Indeed, a person who is steadfast in the study of Torah for its own sake, as we explained in Chapter 3 concerning the matter of "for its own sake," does not require great toil, effort, and a long duration of study in books of reverence until reverence for the Blessed One is established in his heart. This is unlike a person who is not steadfast in the study of Torah. For the Holy Torah itself clothes him with the fear of God upon his countenance with little time and minimal effort. For such is the way and the inherent quality of the Holy Torah, as it is written, "Whoever engages in Torah for its own sake... clothes him with humility and reverence."

**[3]** And in the great Proverbs, Chapter 1, "Wisdom and instruction, fools despise them." If instruction, then why wisdom? And if wisdom, etc. Rather, if a person has learned Torah and sits and occupies himself with it to his needs, then he has wisdom and instruction in his hand. And if not, etc.

**[4]** And in the vision of Ezekiel, chapter 47, verse 12, it is written: "And on the bank of the river, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees of food..." (Ezekiel 47:12). And what is the tree that grows in this river? These are the Sages of Torah who possess Torah, Scripture, Mishnah, Halakhot, Aggadot, good deeds, and the service of Sages of Torah. They likened it to a parable, for what is it like? Thus, the Sages of Torah in this world, through the study of Torah, once they have read Scripture and reviewed it, the words of Torah are sweet to them. The Holy One, Blessed be He, has compassion upon them and grants them wisdom, understanding, knowledge, and intellect to perform good deeds and to study Torah, and all is prepared before them.

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## Gate IV, Chapter 10

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**[1]** And at the time of engagement and contemplation in Torah, certainly, there is no need then for the matter of cleaving at all. As stated above, in the engagement and contemplation alone, one is cleaved to His will and His word, blessed be He, and He, blessed be He, His will, and

His word are one.

**[2]** And this is the matter of their statement, blessed be their memory, in Shemot Rabbah, Chapter 33: "A person takes an object, can he possibly acquire its owner?" But the Holy One, blessed be He, gave the Torah to Israel and says to them, as it were, "You take Me." And this is what is stated in many places in the Zohar, that the Holy One, blessed be He, and the Torah are one.

**[3]** And greater than this, in Parashat Beshalach, page 71a, it is taught: "The Holy One, Blessed be He, is called Torah, and there is no Torah except the Holy One, Blessed be He."

**[4]** And also, since the supreme root of the Holy Torah is in the highest of the worlds, called the worlds of Ein Sof. This is the secret of the concealed garment mentioned in the hidden wonders of wisdom from the teachings of our master, Rabbi Isaac Luria. It is the beginning of the secret of the letters of the Holy Torah. As it is written, "The Lord possessed me at the beginning of His way, before His works of old." And this is what is meant by "it preceded the world," meaning it preceded all the worlds. For they said in Bereishit Rabbah, Chapter 1, that it preceded the Throne of Glory. And the truth is that it preceded, so to speak, even the World of Atzilut, Blessed be He, as mentioned above. However, Atzilut is called "Ayin" (nothingness), and from the secret of the Throne begins the secret of the Divine Stature, so to speak. Therefore, they said it preceded the Throne of Glory.

**[5]** And therefore, through Her, all the upper and lower worlds were conceived and created. As it is written (Proverbs 8:30), "And I was with Him as a nursling," and our Sages, of blessed memory, said: "Do not read 'aman' (אמן), but 'oman' (אומן) [craftsman/artist]," etc. And in Proverbs Rabbah, Chapter 29, "Wisdom has built her house" – this is the Torah, which built all the worlds.

**[6]** The matter is that the Holy Torah is His blessed Word. And by His blessed utterance, in the act of creation, all the worlds were created. Through the arrangement of the permutations of the letters, according to the order of the 271 gates, within and without, in the utterance "In the beginning, God created...", the supernal worlds were emanated and created, hosts upon hosts in everything. The order of their state, the details of their affairs, and

all that is included in them. And similarly, by every utterance and every utterance within it, in the manner described above, all the details of the species and affairs that belong to that category upon which that utterance was spoken were created.

**[7]** As it is written in the Zohar, Terumah, 161a: "When the Holy One, Blessed be He, created the world, He looked into the Torah and created the world, and by the Torah the world was created. As they established, it is written: 'And I was with Him as a nursling' (Proverbs 8:30). The Holy One, Blessed be He, created the world; before the world was created, the Torah preceded it, etc. And when the Holy One, Blessed be He, desired to create the world, He looked into the Torah, into every word and every word, and made it the craft of the world, because all the words and deeds of all worlds are in the Torah, etc. In the Torah it is written: 'In the beginning God created' (Genesis 1:1). He looked at this word and created the heavens. It is written: 'And God said, Let there be light' (Genesis 1:3). He looked at this word and created the light. And so it is with every word and every word that is written in the Torah; the Holy One, Blessed be He, looked and made that word. And concerning this it is written: 'And I was with Him as a nursling,' meaning the entire world was created by this. Therefore."

**[8]** And therefore, the entire Torah in general, and all the worlds, their generalities and particulars, their order, and all their matters, are all included and alluded to in the Ten Utterances of Creation. As our great master, the Gaon, the pious, Maran Rabbi Isaac Luria, may his soul be sanctified, wrote in his commentary on the *Sefer HaTziniut* in the fifth chapter. And see regarding this in the Zohar, *Bereishit*, page 47a.

**[9]** And therefore they said in the Zohar, "The Torah is the light of all worlds, and their life, sustenance, and root of all."

**[10]** The matter is that the worlds proceed according to the order of emanation and gradation, such that each higher and loftier world is solely the soul, vitality, existence, and light of the world beneath it. However, the advantage of the World of Atzilut over the three worlds of Beriah, Yetzirah, and Assiah is that it extends and illuminates all three worlds beneath it. See in Etz Chaim, Sha'ar Pnimit v'Chitzonut, Drush 2, and there, Resh, Drush 8, and Resh, Drush 10, and in Sha'ar Drushei AB"Y" A,

Chapter 7, and in Sha'ar HaShemot, Chapter 1, and in Sha'ar Kelipat Noga, Chapter 1. For it is entirely pure Divinity. As it is written in the Introduction to the Tikkunim: "The Sefirot of Atzilut, the King, they are one with Him, and their essence is one with them, and their vitality is one with them. This is not so with the Sefirot of Beriah, for they are not one with Him, and their essence is one with them."

**[11]** And therefore, the Holy Torah, whose supreme, hidden root is elevated far above even His blessed Emanation, as stated above, and the Holy One, Blessed be He, and the Torah are as one. It is the soul, the life, the light, and the root of all worlds. Just as in the time of creation, all were emanated and created through it, so too since then it is their soul, their life, and their sustenance according to their order and state. And without the constant flow of its light into them every moment, to illuminate them, to give them life, and to sustain them, they would all return to absolute void and emptiness.

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## Gate IV, Chapter 11

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**[1]** And for this reason, the essential life, light, and existence of all the worlds are established correctly. This is only when we engage with it properly. For the Holy One, Blessed be He, the Torah, and Israel are all one. For each individual in Israel, the root of their higher soul is attached and grasped in the letter Aleph of the Torah, and they become truly one.

**[2]** And therefore they said in Bereishit Rabbah, Chapter 1, that the thought of Israel preceded the twenty-four [books of scripture]. This is not to dispute what was said, that the Torah preceded the twenty-four, for all are one in their root. And it is one and the same. And this is what is meant by the 'thought' of Israel. As it is written, "Israel ascended in thought," meaning the beginning of thought, the secret of the supernal desire, as it is written in the Zohar, Vayera 118b: "For Israel ascended in the desire of the Holy One, Blessed be He, before the world was created."

**[3]** And the Will is the beginning of everything, absolute Divinity, as it were. From the Infinite Worlds, as mentioned there in Parashat Noah,

section 65, verse 1, and in the Mitzvot of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, section 2, it is said: "I have raised up," etc., that when the Supreme Will, etc., and all those lights from the secret of the Supreme Thought, above and below, are all called Infinite. See there well, and in the glosses of Rabbi Chaim Vital, may he rest in peace, there, and in Etz Chaim, the Gate of Circles and Straightness, the beginning of chapter 4, and in the Gate of the Emanation of the Ten Sefirot, the beginning of chapter 2. And for all of them, "In the beginning" is for the sake of the Torah, which is called "beginning," and for the sake of Israel, who are called "beginning."

**[4]** And therefore our Sages, of blessed memory, said (Mo'ed Katan 25a): "One who stands over a deceased person at the time of the soul's departure is obligated to rend his garments." To what is this analogous? To one who witnesses a Torah scroll being burned. For the sanctity of the soul of each and every Israelite is precisely the sanctity of a Torah scroll.

**[5]** And therefore, from the time of creation, the Torah was still hidden in its concealed root, unknown to all the supernal worlds. Only from afar did it illuminate all the worlds to give them life and sustain them. Its essence did not descend directly to this world for the assemblies below to engage with it. The worlds were still unstable and trembling, not yet in their true state. And our Sages, of blessed memory, called this the "two thousand years of chaos" (תהו). And they were suspended until the time of the giving of the Torah. As is known from their statement (Shabbat 88a) that the Holy One, blessed be He, made a condition with the supernal and lower worlds: "If Israel accepts the Torah, and if not..." And so it is in Shemot Rabbah, chapter 43, and Devarim Rabbah, chapter 8, and at the beginning of Tanchuma. And in Rabbah on Shir HaShirim, it states: "I likened you, my beloved" (Shir HaShirim 1:15) - the Sages said, "my beloved of my worlds who accepted My Torah." "If they had not accepted, I would have returned My worlds to chaos and void," for Rabbi Eliezer said in the name of Rabbi Akiva, "The earth melts" (Job 12:24) - "I have established pillars." "Were it not for Israel who stood at Mount Sinai..." "And who established the world? I..." "By the merit of 'I am the Lord your God,' I established its pillars."

**[6]** And since it descended, as it were, from its hidden root source to this world, as our Sages of blessed memory said, "Moses came and brought it

down to earth." The entire vitality and existence of all the worlds is solely through the breath of our mouths and our thoughts within it.

**[7]** And the truth, without any doubt whatsoever. For if the entire world, from end to end, were empty, Heaven forbid, even for a single moment, from our engagement and contemplation in Torah, then immediately all the upper and lower worlds would be destroyed and would become naught and void, God forbid. And likewise, the abundance of their light or its scarcity, Heaven forbid, all depends solely on the matter and extent of our engagement in it.

**[8]** Therefore, we bless it, "He planted within us life everlasting." Just as a planting is done to bear fruit and increase goodness, so too, if we hold fast to the Holy Torah with all our strength, as is fitting, we bequeath eternal life and draw down from its hidden root, which is above all worlds, added holiness, blessing, and great light throughout all the worlds. This is what is stated in the great Proverbs, Chapter 2: "Above all else, guard your heart, lest you flee from the study of Torah." Why? Because from it flow forth life, to teach you that from the study of Torah, life flows forth eternally.

**[9]** And also to rebuild the ruined ones with great rectifications. To connect, unify, and perfect the upper realms with the lower realms. And all the worlds shall be as one, illuminated and radiant. As our Sages, of blessed memory, stated in Perek Helek (Sanhedrin 99b): Rabbi Eliezer said, "Whoever engages in Torah for its own sake is as if they make peace in the Heavenly host and the earthly host, as it is stated, 'Or he shall take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; he shall make peace with me' (Isaiah 27:5)." Rabbi said, "As if they built palaces above and palaces below, as it is stated, 'And I have put my words in your mouth...' (Isaiah 51:16) to plant the heavens and lay the foundations of the earth."

**[10]** And in the forefront. His legs are pillars of six. Why are they likened to pillars? Because they are pillars of the world, as it is said, "If not for My covenant day and night..." And in Proverbs, "Wisdom has built her house..." The Holy One, blessed be He, said: If a person merits and learns Torah and wisdom, he is considered before Me as if He created the heavens and as if he established the entire world. And there, in the chapter "Woman of Valor," they said: The Holy One, blessed be He,

said to Israel: "My children, be occupied with Torah day and night, and I will reckon it to you as if you are establishing the entire world."

**[11]** And in Zohar Bereishit 47a, it states: "Whoever engages in Torah every day will merit to have a portion in the World to Come. And it will be accounted to him as if he built worlds. For by Torah worlds were built and perfected, as it is said, 'The Lord by wisdom founded the earth...' (Proverbs 3:19). And it is written, 'And I was with Him as a master craftsman...' (Proverbs 8:30). And whoever engages in it perfects worlds and sustains them. And behold, by spirit God created the world, and by spirit it is sustained. This spirit is of those who labor in Torah..."

**[12]** And there, in the portion of Vayeshev, after he first elaborated on the awesome station of man who engages in Torah in this world and in the world to come, and his great punishment in both worlds if he slacks off from it, Heaven forbid. He concluded and said thereafter: "The world does not endure by its own existence, nor does the world exist by its own sustenance, but only by the Torah, which is the sustenance of the worlds above and below, as it is written: 'If not for My covenant day and night...' etc."

**[13]** And in Parashat Terumah, page 161, section 1, after he elaborated on the matter of explaining how all the worlds were created in the Torah, he then said: Since the world was created, not a single word would have endured until the Will arose to create man, who would strive in the Torah, and because of him the world would endure. Now, whoever contemplates the Torah and strives in it, as it were, he sustains the entire world. The Holy One, Blessed be He, contemplated the Torah and created the world. A human being contemplates it in the Torah and sustains the world. It is found that the work and sustenance of the entire world is the Torah. Therefore, blessed is the human being who strives in the Torah, for he sustains the world.

**[14]** And in Parashat Vayikra, chapter 11, end of page 72, it is because the world was not created except for the sake of the Torah, and all the time that Israel is occupied with the Torah, the world is sustained. And all the time that Israel is idle from the Torah, what is written? "If not My covenant day and night..." etc.

**[15]** And therefore they said in the chapter

"Degrees of the Torah" that whoever engages in Torah for its own sake is called a "friend" (re'a). For, as it were, he becomes a partner with the Creator of the Beginning, blessed be He. For he is the one who now sustains all the worlds through his engagement with Torah. And without this, they would all return to chaos and void. And as it is written in the aforementioned Midrash, "My beloved is mine, and I am hers" (Shir HaShirim 2:16), referring to the worlds that accepted My Torah, etc.

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## Gate IV, Chapter 12

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**[1]** And all the more so, the true novelties of Torah that are renewed by man. There is no comparison to the greatness of their awesome wonders, their essence, and their effect on High. For every single word that is renewed from the mouth of man, the Holy One, Blessed be He, kisses it and crowns it. And from it, a new world is built in itself. And these are the new heavens and the new earth that the Scripture spoke of.

**[2]** As it is written in the introduction of the Zohar (42b): Rabbi Shimon opened and said, "I have put My words in your mouth." How much a person must strive in the Torah, day and night. For the Holy One, Blessed be He, hearkens to the voice of those who are occupied with the Torah. And for every word of Torah that is renewed by the one who strives in the Torah, one firmament is created. We learned: At the moment a word of Torah is renewed from the mouth of a person, that word ascends and stands before the Holy One, Blessed be He. He takes that word and kisses it and crowns it with seventy engraved and inscribed crowns. And a word of wisdom that is renewed ascends and rests upon the head, and flies from there and spreads through seventy thousand worlds, and ascends to the Ancient of Days. And that hidden word of wisdom that is renewed here, when it ascends, it joins with those words of the Ancient of Days, and ascends and descends with them, and enters into eighteen hidden worlds, which no eye has seen. From there they emerge, flying and coming, full and complete, and stand before Him, may He be exalted. At that moment, the Ancient of Days rejoices in that word and finds pleasure in it. He

takes that word and crowns it with seventy thousand thousand crowns. That word flies and ascends and descends and becomes one firmament. And so, every word of wisdom becomes firmaments that exist in complete existence before Him, may He be exalted, and He calls them "new heavens." These are the hidden secrets of higher wisdom. And all these other words of Torah that are renewed exist before the Holy One, Blessed be He, and ascend and become the lands of the living, and descend and are crowned. And everything is renewed and becomes one new land from that word that is renewed in the Torah. And concerning this it is written, "For as the new heavens..." (Isaiah 65:17) "...which I am making." It is not written "which I made" but "which I am making," meaning it is constantly being made, and these are the renewals and secrets of the Torah. And concerning this it is written, "And I have put My words in your mouth..." (Isaiah 51:16) "...to plant heavens and to lay the foundation of the earth." Rabbi Eliezer said: What is the meaning of "And in the shadow of My hand I have hidden you"? He said to him... And now, when this word ascends and is crowned and exists before the Holy One, Blessed be He, He conceals that word and hides that person, until from that word new heavens and a new earth are made. And to say to Zion, "You are My people" (Isaiah 65:23). Do not read "My people" but "My people to be a partner with Me." Just as I, with My utterance, created heavens and earth, so too you. Blessed are those who strive in the Torah.

**[3]** And in Parashat Vayechi, chapter 26, verse 14, it is written: "The mandrakes gave forth a fragrance." These are they that Reuben found. And "all delicacies are upon our doors." These caused all delicacies, new and old, to be upon the doors of the House of Study and the House of Prayer. "New and old" refers to the new words and ancient words of Torah that were revealed through them. "My beloved, I have hidden you for yourself" teaches us that whoever diligently studies Torah as it ought to be studied, and knows how to innovate words and to renew words as they ought to be renewed, these words ascend to the King's lap. And the Holy One, blessed be He, opens for them gates and hides them. And at the time when the Holy One, blessed be He, enters to delight with the righteous in the Garden of Eden, He brings them forth before Him, looks upon them, and rejoices. Thus the Holy One, blessed be He, is adorned with sublime crowns and rejoices. And from that hour, they are written in the book. Fortunate is his portion, whoever diligently

studies Torah as it ought to be studied. Fortunate is he in this world, and fortunate is he in the world to come.

**[4]** And in the verse, "And on the bank of the river, on this side and on that side, shall grow every tree of food" (Ezekiel 47:12), it is explained that all this is written concerning the study of Torah. And it says there, "What is it that he is renewed as a firstborn for those who renew the Torah, who renew the Torah every day, always." The white, which is a firstborn, etc., who renews the words of Torah, in which all rejoice, etc., a joy is renewed for his father every day, etc. And in every place where Torah is renewed, in the academy of the House of Study and in the academy of the House of Learning, a joy is renewed for the Holy One, Blessed be He, every day, always, etc. See there.

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## Gate IV, Chapter 13

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**[1]** And through engagement with the Torah and its commandments, His blessed will is perfected in creation, which was solely for the sake of the Torah that Israel would engage with it, as our Sages, of blessed memory, stated: "In the beginning, for the sake of the Torah..." and "for the sake of Israel..." and "for the sake of Moses..." who is the intermediary in the reception of the Torah. And, so to speak, He, may He be exalted, rejoices in His works, His world, and His creatures, who bring favor before Him, may He be exalted, as in the first hour at the time of creation, as He, may He be exalted, Himself, so to speak, hoped.

**[2]** As it is written in Midrash Rabbah, Genesis, Chapter 9, concerning a king who built a palace. He saw it and it pleased him. He said, "Palace, palace, may you find favor [before me] always." So the Holy One, Blessed be He, said to His world. "My world, my world, may you find favor before Me at all times, just as you found favor before Me at this hour." And so it is said in praise of the Torah: "A hind of grace and a doe of favor."

**[3]** And in Zohar, Tzav, page 35, entry 1, Rabbi Eliezer opened and said, "And I have put My words in your mouth..." We have learned: "Every person who engages in the words of Torah, and whose lips

murmur Torah..." And not only that, but he sustains the world, and the Holy One, Blessed be He, rejoices with him, as if on that day He planted the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth, as it is said: "To plant the heavens and to lay the foundations of the earth."

**[4]** And in Parashat Terumah, 155b, Rabbi Eliezer began and said, "It is time to act for the Lord; they have made void Your law." [Psalm 119:126] At all times the Torah is upheld in the world, and people strive in it. It is as if the Holy One, Blessed be He, rejoices in His servants and rejoices in all the worlds. And the heavens and the earth stand firm in their existence. And not only this, but the Holy One, Blessed be He, gathers all His retinue and says to them, "Behold, I have a holy people on earth, adorned with the Torah for their sake." And when they saw the joy of their Master in the people, they immediately opened and said, "And who is like Your people Israel, a single nation on earth?"

**[5]** And in the eighth chapter of the Zohar, Israel is righteous, for the Holy One, Blessed be He, gave them the Holy Torah, the joy of all, the joy of the Holy One, Blessed be He, and His delight, as it is written, "I was His delight day by day."

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## Gate IV, Chapter 14

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**[1]** And also the worlds and all creatures are then in exceeding joy, and illuminated by the radiance of the Upper Light that flows upon them from the supreme root-place of the Torah. As it is written in the chapter "Degrees of the Torah": "It gladdens the Place, it gladdens the creatures." And likewise the Torah said, "I was His delight day by day."

**[2]** And in the Zohar, Vayakhel, 217a, it begins and says: "Then those who fear God spoke, etc." (Malachi 3:16). Why does it say "spoke" (nedabru) and not "spoke" (daberu)? Rather, it means they spoke above all those holy chariots and all those holy hosts. Because these are holy words ascending on high, and how many are they who precede and carry them before the Holy King, and are adorned with many crowns in those supernal lights, and all of them spoke before the Supreme King. Who has seen the joy? Who has seen the

praises that ascend through all those firmaments before the Holy King? And the Holy King looks upon them and is adorned by them, and they ascend upon His head and become a crown, and descend and sit upon His bosom within His strength, and are placed upon His head. And thus the Torah said: "And I will be His delight day by day" (Proverbs 8:30). It is not written "and I will be" (ve'hayiti) but rather "and I will be" (ve'ahyeh) at all times and in every era, because supernal words ascend before Him, therefore.

**[3]** And at any time that a person engages with and cleaves to [the Torah] properly, the words are joyful as if given from Sinai. As it is written in the Zohar, Parshat Chukat, page 161: "Open this Torah, etc. Come and see, the words of Torah are holy, they are exalted, they are hidden, they are as it is written, 'More desirable than gold, etc.' Whoever strives in Torah is as if standing every day on Mount Sinai to receive the Torah. Thus, 'This day you have become a people.'"

**[4]** And in Parashat Acharei Mot, section 69, paragraph 1, it is taught: "Whoever listens to the words of the Torah is righteous in this world, and it is as if he received the Torah from Sinai. And even from any human being, one must also listen to the words of the Torah. And whoever inclines his ear to receive, gives honor to the King of Holiness, and gives honor to the Torah. Concerning him it is written, 'Today you have become a people' etc."

**[5]** The reason for this is that just as at the sacred standing at Sinai, one was, as it were, cleaved to His word, blessed be He, so too now, at all times, when a person engages in and contemplates [the Torah], he is cleaved to His word, blessed be He, through it. This is because the entirety is a utterance from His mouth, blessed be He, to Moses at Sinai, and even what a young student asks his teacher, as mentioned previously in Chapter 6. And also now, at the time a person engages with it, with every word, that very word is then hewn, as it were, as a flame of fire from His mouth, blessed be He, as it is written. And it is considered as if he is now receiving it at Sinai from His mouth, blessed be He. Therefore, our Sages, of blessed memory, said several times, "And the words were joyous as their giving from Sinai."

**[6]** And then a flow of light and blessing descends and is drawn from its supernal root-source, upon all the worlds. And the earth also shone with its glory

and was blessed. And it brings much goodness and an abundance of blessing to the world.

**[7]** And in the teachings of Rabbi Isaac Luria, in the eighth chapter of the eighth section, it is said: "When one studies Torah, behold, he brings goodness to the world, and he is able to seek mercy and pray before the Holy One, Blessed be He, and to cleave the heavens and bring rain to the world." And so on.

**[8]** And he also said there, may his soul rest in peace, that when Israel is occupied with Torah and does the will of their Father in Heaven, the Holy One, blessed be He, Himself turns to them with blessing, as it is said, "Truth shall spring from the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven" (Psalm 85:12). And there is no "looking down" except for blessing, as it is said, "Look down from your holy habitation, from heaven, and bless your people Israel" (Deuteronomy 26:15).

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## Gate IV, Chapter 15

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**[1]** And behold, the one who blesses is blessed. And by the blessing of the worlds, the person who engages in it properly, which is the cause of all this, is also blessed. And the glory of God hovers over him all day, and he attains a noble soul from a holy place, according to the measure of the greatness of his engagement and cleaving to Him, as it is written: "A person sanctifies himself below, and they sanctify him above." A little sanctifies him greatly.

**[2]** And in the introduction to the Zohar, 12b, "The fifth commandment, etc., in this verse there are three commandments, etc." And one is to engage in the Torah, to strive in it, and to expand [one's study] each day to rectify one's soul and spirit. For when a person engages in the Torah, he is rectified with another holy soul, as it is written, "Let the waters swarm with living creatures" (Genesis 1:20). The soul of that holy living creature. And when one strives in the Torah, in that subtle stirring that stirs within it, one merits that living soul, and to return like holy angels, etc. For this is the Torah which is called "waters," and they will swarm and bring forth the fragrance of a living soul from the place of that living creature, and draw it downwards, as it is said.

And thus David said, "Create in me a pure heart, O God, to engage in the Torah, and then renew a steadfast spirit within me" (Psalm 51:12).

**[3]** And He is the One who rules and governs all. And all harsh judgments are removed from Him, and they have no dominion over Him, Heaven forbid. This is true whether he is in this world. As it is written in the first chapter of Berachot (5a): "Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel says: Whoever is occupied with Torah, suffering is removed from him." And in the chapter "How We Calculate" (Eruvin 54a): "If he feels pain in his head, let him occupy himself with Torah, as it is said... If he feels pain in his throat, let him occupy himself with Torah, as it is said... If he feels pain in his intestines... If he feels pain in his entire body, let him occupy himself with Torah, as it is said: 'And to all his flesh, healing.'" And in a similar style, they said in Vayikra Rabbah, Chapter 12, and in Tanchuma, Parashat Yitro, and in Midrash Tehillim, Psalm 109, see there.

**[4]** And in the merit of the verse, "He raises the destitute from the dust," etc. A person who has committed many transgressions and has been decreed death, etc. And he returns and repents, and studies Torah, Prophets, and Writings, and reviews Mishnah, Midrash, Halakhot, and Aggadot, and serves the Sages. Even if a hundred decrees were issued against him, the Holy One, Blessed be He, removes them from him, etc.

**[5]** And there, at the gate of the 620th level, the King brought me into His chambers, just as the Holy One, Blessed be He, has chambers within chambers in His Torah. So too, the diligent students of Torah, each and every one, possess chambers within chambers in their Torah. And if you see that afflictions are serving and coming upon you, run to the chambers of Torah, and immediately the afflictions will flee from you, as it is said, "Come, my people, enter into your chambers..." (Isaiah 26:20). For this reason it is said, "He brought me into His chambers." "Let us rejoice and be glad in You, for You have made us grow and exalted us, and You have bound for us a great crown in the Torah, from one end of the world to the other."

**[6]** And there, in the aforementioned chapter, "And they were going, going and speaking, and nothing but words of Torah, etc. And when an angel was sent, etc. And he came and found them engaged in words of Torah, and he could not gain dominion

over them, etc. From here [we learn] two wise men who are walking on the road and engaged in Torah, no evil thing can gain dominion over them, etc. See there."

**[7]** And in the Zohar, Parashat Vayechi, page 182a, "Issachar is a strong-boned ass" (Genesis 49:14), etc. He opened and said, "To David, O Lord, my Lord, shine upon me" (Psalms 27:1). How beloved are the words of Torah. How beloved are those who engage in Torah before the Holy One, Blessed be He. For whoever engages in Torah is not afraid of the world's afflictions. He is guarded above, he is guarded below. And not only that, but he subdues all the world's afflictions and casts them down into the depths of the great abyss. Come and see, at the time when night falls, etc. When the north wind awakens and the night is divided, a holy awakening awakens in the world, etc. Fortunate is the portion of that person who stands at that time and engages in Torah. For when he opens with Torah, all those evil kinds are cast by him into the female of the great abyss, etc. Therefore, Issachar, whose engagement in Torah subdued the ass and brought it down, etc., for it ascended to harm the world and placed its dwelling among the judges, etc.

**[8]** And so the Sages of blessed memory said in Chapter 3 of Sotah (21a): "The Torah guards and protects from suffering, both when one is occupied with it and when one is not occupied with it," see there. For it has rewarded him only with good and not with evil all the days of his life. This means even when one is not occupied with it. As long as he is attached and has not, G-d forbid, separated himself from its eternal life, and his mind is always upon it, intending to return and study it.

**[9]** Correction: And concerning what is written, "He rewarded it," etc. For "reward" means to repay a good deed to one who previously benefited him. This is why it is said that the Torah repays a good reward to the person who does good with it, meaning when one engages with it for its own sake. And even if one engages with it not for its own sake, but for himself and not to benefit it, it would have been fitting for the Torah to repay him with evil, God forbid. Nevertheless, it does not repay him with evil, God forbid. On the contrary, even with its left hand, meaning to those who engage with it not for its own sake, it grants him wealth and honor in this world. Therefore.

## Gate IV, Chapter 16

**[1]** And they also remove and clear away from themselves all the worries and concerns of the yoke of the Other Side, etc., and all other matters of this world that prevent constant engagement in Torah and its mitzvot. As it is written, "Whoever takes upon himself the yoke of Torah, etc." And they said in Bamidbar Rabbah and in Tanhuma, Parashat Hukkat, that for this reason the Torah was given in the desert. Just as the desert is not sown and not cultivated, so too [are the students of Torah]. And just as the desert does not yield a harvest (meaning, produce), so too the students of Torah are free, etc.

**[2]** And in the Zohar, Vayikra, chapter 2, it states: "Whoever knows how to labor in the Torah and does not labor, is liable for their own soul. Furthermore, the burden of the earth and evil servitude are imposed upon them, as it is written concerning Issachar, 'He bowed his shoulder to bear, etc.' [Genesis 49:15]. Whoever deviates from their path and causes themselves not to bear the burden of the Torah, immediately becomes like a servant." And likewise, the opposite is true, etc.

**[3]** And thus is the law, a decided ruling in the Talmud, as it is written (Nedarim 62b and Bava Batra 8a) that a scholar is forbidden to say, "I will not give tribute," for it is written, "from the tribute and the tax, he has no dominion over them."

**[4]** And there, the head of the matter, in the beginning of the matter, is the plague of the Sages. Rabbi Yochanan said to him, "You have transgressed the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings, as it is written [etc.]." As it is stated by the Sages, the Sages do not require guarding.

**[5]** And in *Tad"ra* (a work by Rabbi Yitzchak Luria), *Sa'ar* (a section), Chapter 4: Any Torah scholar who engages in Torah every day, constantly, for the purpose of increasing the glory of Heaven, does not require a sword, nor a spear, nor anything that would serve as a guard for him. Rather, the Holy One, Blessed be He, guards him Himself, etc. And there, in Chapter 8, it states: If a person possesses only the Oral Law and Scripture, one angel is given to him to guard him, as it is said, etc. If a person

reads Torah, Prophets, and Writings, two angels are given to him, as it is said, "For He will command His angels concerning you, to guard you," etc. But if a person reads Torah, Prophets, and Writings, and studies Mishnah, Midrash, Halakhot, and Aggadot, and serves a holy Torah scholar, the Holy One, Blessed be He, guards him Himself, etc., as it is said, "The Lord is your guardian," etc.

**[6]** And according to the measure of capacity with which one truly takes upon himself the yoke of Torah with all his might, so too, according to this measure, they will remove and pass away from him the worries of the affairs of this world. And the Supernal Protection will encompass him. And he is like a son who pleads with his father, and his father fulfills his will and completes all his desires. As our Sages, of blessed memory, stated (Avodah Zarah 19a): "Whoever is occupied with Torah, the Holy One, Blessed be He, fulfills his desire." And similarly in Midrash Tehillim, Psalm 1. And they also said there that it is written in the Torah, and stated in the Prophets, and tripled in the Writings, that whoever is occupied with Torah, his possessions will prosper.

**[7]** And in the great Proverbs, chapter 27, verse 18, it is written: "Whoever guards a fig tree will eat its fruit, and whoever looks after their master will be honored." Likewise, when the desire is present, I bring forth desire for him, etc. And his sustenance is always prepared for him with minimal toil and effort. As it is written there in the chapter "Woman of Valor," that a scholar sits and engages in Torah, etc. And not only that, but the Holy One, Blessed be He, provides his sustenance for him each and every day, as it is said: "She provides food for her household."

**[8]** And in the merit of the Torah, the Holy One, blessed be He, chose the wise and their disciples, etc. Just as they sit in synagogues and houses of study and in any place that is available to them, and they study and teach for the sake of Heaven with awe in their hearts, and they uphold the words of Torah with their mouths, and the verse is fulfilled concerning them: "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth," so too, as it were, even if they were to ask for the entire world at once, He gives it to them immediately, etc.

**[9]** Furthermore, even if he himself is certainly fleeing from honor and greatness, for without this it is altogether impossible in the world to be engaged

in Torah for its own sake. And it will not be sustained by him at all. As our Sages of blessed memory stated in the chapter "Degrees of Torah": "Do not seek greatness for yourself, nor covet honor." For it is forbidden for a person to turn his mind to this at all.

**[10]** Indeed, the Great Counselor, blessed be He, bestows upon him joy and greatness, even against his will. As it is written in Tanna D'vei Eliyahu, "Blessed is the Place, blessed is He, who chose the wise and their disciples," etc. Just as they sit in synagogues and houses of study every day and study and review for the sake of Heaven with awe of Heaven in their hearts, and they uphold the words of Torah with their mouths and joyfully accept upon themselves the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven, so too, as it were, the Holy One, blessed be He, gives joy to the righteous, even against their will, not for their own benefit, etc. Therefore.

**[11]** And as the verse states, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life" (Psalms 23:6), meaning, even though I flee from them, they will pursue me in the hereafter.

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## Gate IV, Chapter 17

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**[1]** After his departure from this world. Our Sages, of blessed memory, said (Chagigah 27b): "The light of Gehenna has no dominion over the wise scholars." And similarly, they said there: "A scholar who has sinned, his Torah is not despised." And in Mishlei Rabba, in the chapter "To understand a parable and an allegory," etc., this allegory is the Torah itself. And why is it called an allegory? Because it saves its diligent students from the kingdom of Gehenna. And there (Parashat Re'eh 282): "My children, if you take My words..." The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Israel at Mount Sinai: "If you merit to conceal and receive My Torah and to perform it, I will save you from three calamities: from the war of Gog and Magog, from the pangs of the Messiah, and from the kingdom of Gehenna. And My commandments will guard you. If you merit to conceal My Torah, I adjure you by the good that is hidden for the World to Come, as it is said: 'How great is Your goodness, which You have hidden...'"

**[2]** And there, in the aforementioned chapter, there is no charity that saves a person from the judgment of Gehenna except Torah alone, etc. For it possesses the power to save him from the Day of Judgment. And even if a person has become liable for a transgression, it can save him from the Day of Judgment, etc. Behold, from here it is understood for a Talmid Chacham who transgressed a matter of sin, that it [Torah] is what saves him.

**[3]** And in the Midrash Tehillim, Psalm 19, "and its circuit, etc., and there is nothing hidden from its heat, etc." Rabbi Yossi and Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish both say: There is no Gehenna in the future, but rather this sun, which scorches the wicked, as it is said, "Behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, and all the arrogant will be, etc., and it will scorch them, etc." But in the future, who is hidden from its heat? He who is occupied with Torah. What is written after it? "The Torah of the Lord is perfect, etc." And so it says, "There is no darkness and no shadow of death for the workers of iniquity to hide there, and who is hidden? He who is occupied with Torah, etc." See there. And a *kal va'chomer* [a fortiori argument] from Elisha the Other, who said (Chagigah 15b): "They are not judged because they have learned Torah."

**[4]** And so they said in the Jerusalem Talmud there, and in Kohelet Rabbah, Siman 7, concerning the verse, "Better is the end of a thing..." [Ecclesiastes 7:8]. And is it not so that we learn, "One saves the cover of the book along with the book..."? [This is a reference to a halakhic principle regarding the sanctity of holy texts]. And they saved Elisha in the merit of his Torah. And in Zohar Yitro, page 23b, Rabbi Yitzchak said: "Why was the Torah given with fire and darkness..." [Deuteronomy 4:11-12]. For whoever strives in the Torah is saved from the other fire in Gehenna, and from the darkness with which all other nations are darkened, [while Israel is enlightened]... See there.

**[5]** And in the Zohar, Terumah, folio 134b, it is commanded to study Torah every day, for it is the secret of the supernal Faith, to know the ways of the Holy One, blessed be He. For whoever strives in the Torah merits in this world and merits in the world to come, and is saved from all evil accusations. Because the Torah is the secret of Faith, and whoever engages in it engages in the supernal Faith, and the Divine Presence dwells within him, so that it will not depart from him, etc. See there.

**[6]** And as our Sages, of blessed memory, said concerning "Length of days is in her right hand" (Proverbs 3:16), "In her right hand are length of days," and all the more so riches and honor. And this is in both worlds. Riches and honor in this world, and length of days in the world to come. For the principal meaning of length of days refers to the world that is entirely long, as our Sages, of blessed memory, stated in many places, and in the Zohar, Vayeshev, page 190, at the beginning of Ta'amei Ha'Otiyot, see there.

**[7]** And there, in Chapter Chayyei K'lal 1, Section 2, Rabbi Eliezer began: "Open my eyes, and let me behold wonders from Your Torah." How foolish are people who do not know and do not consider striving for the Torah. For the Torah is all life, and all freedom, and all good in this world and in the world to come. It is the freedom of this world and of the world to come. They are life in this world, that they may be granted complete days in this world, as it is said, "and for long days in the world to come." For they are complete lives, they are lives of freedom, lives without sorrow, lives that are truly life. Freedom in this world, freedom from everything. For whoever strives for the Torah, no nations of the world can rule over him, etc. And thus, whoever strives for the Torah has freedom from everything in this world, from the servitude of other nations, and freedom in the world to come, because they will not be judged in that world at all, etc. See there.

**[8]** And in the aforementioned, it is explained in Chapter 18, concerning the verse, "And on the bank of the river, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees of food, etc." What is the meaning of "and shall not be seen"? It comes to tell you that one who is occupied with Torah does not perceive the measure of punishment, neither in this world, nor in the days of the Messiah, nor in the World to Come. And as our Sages, of blessed memory, explained: "When you walk, it [Torah] shall guide you in this world. When you lie down, it shall guard you in the grave. And when you awake, it shall talk with you in the World to Come."

**[9]** And in Zohar, Parashat Vayeshev, page 194b and 195a, Rabbi Yitzchak opened and said, "The Torah of the Lord is perfect..." How much effort must humankind exert in Torah. For whoever exerts himself in Torah shall have life in this world and in the world to come, and merit both worlds. And even whoever exerts himself in Torah but does not exert himself in it for its own sake, as is fitting,

merits a good reward in this world, and is not judged in that world. And behold, it is written, "Length of days is in her right hand..." Length of days is for him who exerts himself in Torah for its own sake, for he has length of days in that world, which is a length of days. "In her left hand are riches and honor." He acquires labor, peace, and tranquility in this world. And whoever exerts himself in Torah for its own sake, when he departs from this world, the Torah goes before him and proclaims before him, and defends him, so that the masters of judgment do not approach him. When the body lies in the grave, it guards him. When the soul goes to ascend to its place, it goes before that soul, and how many gates are broken before the Torah until it enters its place. And it stands by him until he awakens in the time when the dead of the world shall arise, and it is his advocate. This is what is said: "When you walk, it shall lead you; when you lie down, it shall keep you..." "When you walk, it shall lead you," as has been said. "When you lie down, it shall keep you," at the time when the body lies in the grave, for at that time the body is judged in the grave, and at that time the Torah defends him. "And when you awake, it shall talk with you." As has been said, at the time when the dead of the world awaken from the dust, it shall talk with you, to be an advocate for you.

**[10]** And so our Sages, of blessed memory, said in Parashat Hilekh (Sanhedrin 99b) concerning the verse, "The soul of the diligent works for him" (Proverbs 12:24). He toils in this place, and the Torah toils for him in another place. And in Proverbs Rabbah, Chapter 14, it states, "The wise woman builds her house" (Proverbs 14:1). Whoever acquires wisdom in this world can be assured that it has built him a house in the World to Come. And, "but the foolish woman tears it down with her own hands" (Proverbs 14:1). Whoever does not acquire wisdom can be assured that he has acquired Gehenna for the World to Come.

**[11]** And with the help of Heaven, "Go forth, go forth after these words," for these are the sayings of the Torah, etc. As it is said, "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield, your exceeding great reward" (Genesis 15:1). This is because whoever strives in the Torah in this world merits and inherits his inheritance in the World to Come, etc. See there.

**[12]** And in Zohar Vayakhel, Rabbi [Shimon bar Yochai] said: "Because when a person is occupied with the Torah, the Holy One, Blessed be He,

stands there, etc. And a person is saved from three judgments: from the judgment of this world, and from the judgment of the Angel of Death, who cannot rule over him, and from the judgment of Gehenna. And so it is taught in our Sages, of blessed memory, in the chapter on the Excellence of the Torah, and in Bamidbar Rabbah, Chapter 16. And it is seen in the verse, 'Who is this that ascends, etc.' And in Tanchuma, Parashat Ekev, it is said: 'Not *cherut* (engraved) but *cherut* (freedom), for there is no truly free person except one who is occupied with the study of Torah.' And our Sages, of blessed memory, explained *cherut* as freedom from the Angel of Death. And so they said in Makkot, Chapter 4 (10a), that the words of Torah draw away from the Angel of Death. And in Zohar, Parashat Chayei Sarah, in the aforementioned passage, it says: 'Freed in this world, freed from the Angel of Death, who cannot rule over him.' And this is indeed so, for if a person cleaves to the Tree of Life, which is the Torah, death will not befall him or the entire world. And for this reason, when the Holy One, Blessed be He, gave the Torah to Israel, what is written therein? 'Engraved on the tablets, etc.' And the Holy One, Blessed be He, said: 'I said, you are gods, etc.' And in this manner, whoever strives in the Torah, that evil serpent who darkened the world cannot rule over him."

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## Gate IV, Chapter 18

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**[1]** And for this reason, the person who truly accepts upon himself the yoke of the holy Torah for its own sake, as explained above, meaning "for its own sake," is elevated above all the affairs of this world. And he is overseen by Him, blessed be He, with a private providence that is above the influence of all natures and constellations.

**[2]** For he is cleaving to the Torah and to the Holy One, Blessed be He, as it were. And he is sanctified with the supreme holiness of the Torah and the Holy One, which is incomparably higher than all the worlds, and it is that which gives life and existence to all, and to all the forces of nature. Behold, the person engaged in it sustains and upholds all, and is above all. And how is it possible that His governance over him should be by means of the forces of nature?

**[3]** And it is written (Pesachim 50b), "Your kindness reaches unto the heavens." And it is written, "Your kindness is above the heavens." This is not a contradiction; here it refers to those who study for its own sake, and there it refers to those who study not for its own sake.

**[4]** This means that one who engages in Torah study not for its own sake, although he is certainly pleasing before Him, blessed be He, even if his intention is for some ulterior motive whatsoever, provided it is not for mockery, Heaven forbid, and all the more so if he has no ulterior motive at all, but rather because he is accustomed to it. For from it, he will eventually reach the level of "for its own sake," as is known from our Sages, of blessed memory. Nevertheless, he has not yet been sanctified and elevated such that His governance, blessed be He, over him in all his affairs would be above the forces of nature. Therefore, it is written in the verse, "until the heavens," meaning until the fixed forces of nature in the heavens, and not above them.

**[5]** But concerning one who engages in it for its own sake. It is said, "He is above the heavens." This means that all of His (the Blessed One's) dealings with him are only above the dictates of the natural forces.

**[6]** And this is what is stated in the Zohar, Parashat Pinchas, section 2, page 208a: "All creatures in the world, before the Torah was given to Israel, were dependent on mazal (destiny/astrology), etc. But after the Torah was given to Israel, He redeemed them from the obligation of the stars and mazal, etc. And because of this, whoever strives in Torah, the obligation of the stars and mazal is nullified from him, if he learns it in order to fulfill a commandment. And if not, it is as if he did not strive in it, and the obligation of the stars and mazal is not nullified from him."

**[7]** And conversely, the natural forces are surrendered to him as he decrees upon them. And to whomever he desires, he bestows. And his awe is cast upon all of them. As it is written in the Torah portion, "and He gives him kingship and dominion." For the crown of his God, the light of the Torah, shines and gleams upon his head. And he shelters, as it were, in the shadow of the Divine Presence's wings. As it is written in the Zohar, Tetzaveh 35a: Rabbi Elazar opened and said, "And I have put My words in your mouth, and with the shadow of My

hand I have covered you..." We have learned: Any person who exerts himself in the words of the Torah, and his lips murmur Torah, the Holy One, Blessed be He, shelters him, and the Divine Presence spreads its wings over him. This is the verse: "And I have put My words in your mouth, and with the shadow of My hand I have covered you..."

**[8]** And in the introduction of the Zohar, 11a, and it is written in the same language in Parashat Va'etchanan, 201a, "How great is the mighty strength of the Torah. And how it is exalted above all. For whoever engages in Torah is not afraid of the upper realms or the lower realms, nor is he afraid of the evil stirrings of the world. Because he is attached to the Tree of Life and eats from it every day. For the Torah teaches man the path of truth, it teaches him counsel, etc."

**[9]** And in Parashat Beshalach, 46a, R. Yitzchak opened, etc. How beloved is the Torah before the Holy One, Blessed be He. For whoever strives in the Torah, he is beloved above, he is beloved below. The Holy One, Blessed be He, listens to his words; He does not abandon him in this world, nor does He abandon him in the world to come, etc. See there.

**[10]** And in Parashat Metzora, 52b, it is stated: "When one exerts himself in the service of his Master and diligently studies the Torah, how many guardians are appointed to guard him, and the Divine Presence rests upon him. And all proclaim before him, saying, 'Give honor to the likeness of the King! Blessed is his portion in this world and in the world to come.'"

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## Gate IV, Chapter 19

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**[1]** And the Name of God is called upon him. For the entire Torah consists of the Names of the Holy One, Blessed be He. As our Sages, of blessed memory, stated (Berakhot 21a): From where do we know that the blessing of the Torah precedes it, from the Torah? It is said: "For I will call upon the Name of the Lord..." (Deuteronomy 32:3). And so they taught that whoever is occupied with Torah, the Divine Presence dwells with him, as it is written: "In every place where I cause My Name to be

mentioned..." (Exodus 20:24). And in the Zohar, Bamidbar 118a: How beloved is the Torah before the Holy One, Blessed be He! For in every place where words of Torah are uttered, the Holy One, Blessed be He, and all His legions are heard, all attentive to the words, and the Holy One, Blessed be He, comes to dwell with him. This is what is stated: "In every place where I cause My Name to be mentioned..."

**[2]** And in Parashat Mishpatim, 124a, it is stated: "For whoever engages with the paths of the Torah and strives in them is like one who strives in the Holy Name. For we have learned that the entire Torah is the Name. The Holy One, Blessed be He, and whoever strives in it is like one who strives in the Holy Name, because the entire Torah is one Holy Name. The Supreme Name, the Name that encompasses all names. And whoever diminishes even one letter from it is as if they caused a blemish to the Holy Name."

And in Parashat Vayikra, 13b, Rabbi Eliezer opened: "All this we have received and have not forgotten you..." and "we have not forgotten the words of Your Torah." From here we learn that whoever forgets the words of the Torah and does not wish to study them is as if they have forgotten the Holy One, Blessed be He, for the entire Torah is the Name of the Holy One, Blessed be He.

And there, page 19, end of folio 1a: "For whoever engages with the Torah is adorned with the adornments of the Holy Name, for the Torah is the Holy Name. And whoever engages with it is inscribed and adorned with the Holy Name. And thus he will know hidden paths and deep mysteries."

And so it is stated in Parashat Shemini, and in Parashat Acharei, 71b, end of 71a, and 72a, 1; and in Parashat Emor, chapter 9, verse 2; and in Parashat Korach, page 73.

**[3]** And for this reason, they also said that the Holy One, Blessed be He, and the Torah are one. For He and His Name are one. As it is written in the Zohar, Yitro 97b: "And the entire Torah is one Name, it is the very Holy Name of the Holy One, Blessed be He. Fortunate is the portion of one who merits it, one who merits the Torah merits the very Holy Name of the Holy One, Blessed be He. Rabbi Yitzchak said: In the Holy One, Blessed be He, one merits, for He and His Name are one."

**[4]** Therefore, it is stated in the teachings of our Sages, of blessed memory, that whoever quarrels with a Torah scholar is as if quarreling with Him who spoke and the world came into being, as it is said, "they were Datan and Aviram, etc., when they conspired against the Lord." Therefore, when a person comes in the name of the Lord, all are afraid and tremble before him, as it is written, "And all the peoples of the earth shall see that the name of the Lord is called upon you, and they shall fear you." And as it is written, "Because he has desired Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name. Because he has desired Me, it is as if he has desired the Holy One, blessed be He, Himself, as explained above."

**[5]** And in Parshat Balak, 202a, it is written: "How beloved are those who engage in Torah before the Holy One, Blessed be He. For even at a time when judgment is suspended over the world and permission is given to the destroyer to destroy, the Holy One, Blessed be He, entrusts them to Him, to those who engage in Torah. And thus the Holy One, Blessed be He, said to him: 'When you besiege a city because of its many sins... come and I will entrust to you My household.' 'You shall not destroy its trees' (Deuteronomy 20:19). Behold, this is the tree that is in the city, it is the tree of life, the tree that bears fruit. You are that tree that gives counsel to the city... and teaches them the way they should walk therein.' And thus, 'You shall not destroy its trees.' To cast an axe upon it, to cast judgment upon it, and not to wield a sharp sword against it, etc. For man is a tree of the field' (Deuteronomy 20:19) – this is called man who is known above and below, etc. And all this the Holy One, Blessed be He, entrusts to those who engage in Torah, etc. See there at length."

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## Gate IV, Chapter 20

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**[1]** And he is the precious son from the palace of the King, from the sons of the King's palace, to whom alone permission is granted at all times to search the treasures of the Holy King. And all the upper gates are open before him, as our Sages of blessed memory stated (Sotah 49a): "Anyone who occupies himself with Torah out of hardship, etc." Rabbi Acha son of Chanina says, even the curtain

is not locked before him, as it is said: "and your Teacher shall not be hidden from you anymore."

**[2]** And one enters through the gates of Torah and its commandments to attain and behold its inner light, in the depths of its exalted mysteries. As it is written in the portion of the Torah, "and the mysteries of the Torah are revealed to him." And thus they said (Avodah Zarah 35b), "And not only that, but things hidden from people are revealed to him."

**[3]** And in the Midrash Tehillim on Psalm 19, they said concerning Samuel, who said, "I know the streets of the firmament," etc. (and in the Gemara's version, "The paths of the firmament are clear to me," etc.), did Samuel ascend to the firmament? Rather, by means of his diligent study of the wisdom of the Torah, he learned from within it what exists in the heavens.

**[4]** And in the Great Proverbs, Chapter 8, and the Key of the Lips of the Upright are matters that open for you chambers within chambers on high. And in the Teachings of the Sages, Chapter 27, "Blessed is the Place Who chose the words of the Sages and their disciples, etc." Just as they sit in synagogues and houses of study and in any place available to them, and they read and review for the sake of Heaven with awe in their hearts and uphold the words of Torah with their mouths, so too the Holy One, Blessed be He, sits opposite them and reveals to them the secrets of the Torah with their mouths and in their hearts, etc.

**[5]** And His Holy Spirit, blessed be He, will dwell securely upon him always, as it is written in the Zohar, Shemot 6b: "The wise are superior to the prophets, for to the prophets the Holy Spirit would descend at times and at times not, but from the wise, the Holy Spirit is never absent, not even for a tiny moment, for they know what is above and what is below, and they do not need to reveal it."

**[6]** And in the teachings of our Sages, blessed be their memory, in the first chapter of the first section, it is stated: "And when a person has studied Torah, Prophets, and Writings, and has learned Mishnah, Midrash, Halakhot, and Aggadot, and has learned the Gemara, and has learned dialectic for its own sake, immediately the Holy Spirit rests upon him, as it is said, 'The Spirit of the Lord spoke through me' (2 Samuel 23:2)." And generally, they said in the chapter on Torah, "Whoever is occupied with

the study of Torah is elevated.” And it is also said (in the section “HaRo’eh”): “If one debases himself, all who debase themselves for the sake of Torah are elevated.” To the extent that our Sages, blessed be their memory, said that their level is higher than the level of prophets, as it is written, “A wise man is better than a prophet” (Ecclesiastes 4:13), and as is written in the aforementioned Zohar on the portion of Shemot.

**[7]** The matter is further clarified in Parashat Tzav, chapter 35, verse 1, that the difference between those who engage in Torah and the trustworthy prophets is that those who engage in Torah are superior to prophets at all times. Why? Because they stand at a higher level than prophets. Those who engage in Torah stand above in a place called Torah, which is the existence of all truth. And prophets stand below in a place called Nevi'im. Thus, those who engage in Torah are superior to prophets and are higher than them. For these stand above and those stand below, etc. And thus, the righteous are those who engage in Torah, for they are at a higher level than all, etc.

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## Gate IV, Chapter 21

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**[1]** And if the station of those who toil in Torah is so wondrous even while they are still in this dark world, to attain and behold with their holy spirit the Upper Light, then the righteous are infinitely greater in their death than in their life, for their pure soul, having been sated with Torah and commandments, returns to its Father's house, sanctified and purified as it was given, and with the added light of the Holy Torah and its study in its possession. All gates are opened before it, and it ascends and pierces the heavens, and so forth. And it is bound in the bundle of life with the Lord its God, blessed be He.

**[2]** And in the teaching of Rabbi Eliezer the Great, Chapter 4, it is said: “And perhaps you will say, since Moses entered his eternal dwelling, perhaps that crown of the Divine Countenance was nullified from him. The verse teaches, ‘And there arose not a prophet...’ (Deuteronomy 34:10). Face to face. Just as the Divine Countenance above endures forever and for all eternity, so too the light of Moses' countenance entered with him into his

eternal dwelling. And not Moses alone, but every sage who engages in Torah from his youth until his old age and dies. Truly, he has not died, but he is still alive forever and for all eternity, as it is said, ‘And the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the LORD your God’ (1 Samuel 25:29). The verse equates the wise sage, the righteous one, with God. Just as God, may His great name be blessed, is living and enduring, so too the sage who engaged in Torah all his days and dies, behold, he is alive and has not yet died, and he lives forever. And where is his soul? Beneath the Throne of Glory.”

**[3]** And his soul will be sated with the pure brilliance of the hidden Upper Light. As our Sages of blessed memory stated (Sotah 49a): “Any Torah scholar who engages in Torah study out of hardship...” Rabbi Abbahu said, “He is even made to partake of the radiance of the Divine Presence, as it is said, ‘And your eyes shall see your teachers.’” And in the first chapter of the latter (Yoma 10a): “What is meant by ‘I swear by the vision of your form while awake’?” This refers to Torah scholars who banish sleep from their eyes in the evening and night; the Holy One, Blessed be He, makes them partake of the radiance of the Divine Presence in the future. And in Perek Helek (Sanhedrin 101a), Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi expounded: “Whoever darkens his face over Torah study in this world, the Holy One, Blessed be He, will make His radiance shine upon him in the future.”

**[4]** And all is according to the measure of his extensive engagement and the wonders of his cleaving to the Torah and its Mitzvot. As it is written in the Midrash, “What is said concerning the righteous? ‘And they that love Him are as the sun when it goes forth in its might.’” This is not so with those who are merely observant. How beautiful is the strength of the Master of the House, who beautifies the crown of His servants, like His own crown. And if you should say, “He who studied much and repeated much, and he who studied and repeated a little, will their countenances be equal in the countenance of the Master of the House?” It is not so. Blessed is the Place, blessed is He, before whom there is no favoritism. It is stated elsewhere, “One who is more righteous than his fellow...” Rather, each one according to his way.

**[5]** And this is the secret of the Light that was created on the first day, which the Holy One,

Blessed be He, concealed for the righteous. As it is stated in the Zohar, Bereishit 47a: Rabbi Eliezer opened: "How great is Your goodness, which You have hidden..." Understand, the Holy One, Blessed be He, created mankind in the world and prepared for him to be perfected in service and to mend his ways, so that he may merit the supernal Light that the Holy One, Blessed be He, concealed for the righteous, as it is said: "No eye has seen..." He will do for those who wait for Him. And how does a person merit that Light? Through the Torah, etc.

**[6]** And our Rabbis have taught (Chagigah 14a): "Whose brow is furrowed, and not at the time when a river pours forth their foundation." This refers to Torah scholars who furrow their brows, foregoing sleep in the study of the Holy One, Blessed be He. For the Holy One, Blessed be He, reveals to them a hidden secret, as it is said, "a river pours forth their foundation." And these are the hidden meanings of the Torah, which are the hidden Supernal Light.

**[7]** And therefore it is stated in the portion of the Torah, "Whoever engages in Torah for its own sake merits many things." It is stated generally and not specified what those things are. And it is impossible to say that they are the things that were later detailed there, for it is stated later, "and not only that..." which implies that it is a matter in and of itself.

**[8]** Indeed, there is a hint to the delight and purification of the soul in the Hidden Light. For even all the ministering angels, the living creatures, the holy seraphim, and no prophet or seer has grasped its true essence at all. As our Sages said (in *Seder Tefillah Ein Omdin*): "All the prophets, all of them, prophesied only [in a limited way]..." But the Sages themselves, "no eye has seen..." And this is the delight and the wine preserved in its grapes, as they said there, "What is 'no eye has seen'?" etc. And it is all one. It is the secret of the hidden meanings of the Torah that have not yet been revealed. Therefore, it is stated generally for many things, for it is not something that can be grasped to be spoken and explained.

**[9]** And in the Zohar, Parashat Pinchas, Chapter 27, it is said: "Happy is the person who possesses Torah, and he sits and studies and reviews in a modest and hidden place. Beside whom does he lodge? You must say, beside the Holy One, blessed be He, as it is said, 'He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High shall abide in the shadow

of the Almighty.' Just as they make themselves solitary in this world, with no stranger among them, so too in the World to Come, they sit alone with the Holy One, blessed be He, etc."

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## Gate IV, Chapter 22

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**[1]** And if, God forbid, we engage in it [Torah study] with laxity, as it were, the influx of the supernal light diminishes in all the worlds, each according to its measure. And in secret, the Blessed One, as it were, weeps. As our Sages, of blessed memory, taught (Chagigah 5b): Three things cause the Holy One, Blessed be He, to weep, and one of them is counted for one who is able to engage in Torah and does not engage. And similarly, they said there, "What are these three tears for?" and they interpreted one of them as being for the nullification of Torah. And woe to the son who causes his father's tears to flow every day. And the matter of this weeping is the strengthening of the attribute of strict judgment due to the diminution of the supernal light, which is the great mercy in the hidden worlds.

**[2]** And a person who has never in his life seen the light of Torah, nor ever engaged with it, does not merit at all for the Supreme Holiness to dwell upon him. Nor does he merit a pure soul. As it is written in the Introduction to the Zohar (12b): "The fifth commandment, etc. In this verse there are three commandments: one to study Torah, etc. For when a person does not engage with Torah, he does not have a holy soul. The holiness from above does not dwell upon him, etc."

**[3]** And he is also sent away and abandoned, Heaven forbid, to the forces of judgment of the Sitra Achra, so that they may be able to rule over him. As our Sages, of blessed memory, stated in the first chapter of Berachot (5a): "Whoever is able to engage in Torah and does not engage, the Holy One, blessed be He, brings upon him terrible sufferings and troubles him, as it is said, 'I was silent from good, and my pain was stirred up' (Job 3:26)." And he loses much good from himself and from the entire world, for he has tipped himself and the entire world, Heaven forbid, to the side of guilt. As our Sages, of blessed memory, said in Devarim

Rabbah, Chapter 24: "Hear and do not be arrogant; hear the words of the Torah, etc. And do not be arrogant; do not elevate goodness from coming into the world." And thus they said in the first chapter of Bava Batra (8a): "No calamity comes to the world except for the sake of the ignorant masses." And if, Heaven forbid, a calamity comes upon any person or nation, even in some part of the world, it is due to his judgment, Heaven forbid. May the Merciful One, may He be exalted, save us.

[4] And if one has already engaged with it and, God forbid, turned away from it, he thereby, God forbid, weakens the strength of the Upper Divine Retinue, and the orders of the worlds and the Holy Chariot become disordered and confused, and the power of the *Sitra Achra* (the Other Side, i.e., the forces of impurity) prevails, may it be so understood. And as it were, he weakens and darkens the power of the Supreme Holiness, the Divine Presence of our Strength, the faith of Israel which always dwells within us through proper engagement with Torah.

[5] As it is written in the Zohar, Terumah 155b: Rabbi Elazar opened and said, "It is time to act for the Lord; they have made void Your Torah." (Psalms 119:126). "At all times the Torah is sustained in the world, and human beings strive in it. As it were, the Holy One, Blessed be He, rejoices in the work of His hands, and rejoices in all worlds, and the heavens and the earth endure in their endurance, etc. And at the time when Israel is idle from Torah, as it were, His strength wanes. And then, 'It is time to act for the Lord' – these are the righteous men of the world who remain; they must bind themselves with ropes and perform fitting deeds, so that the Holy One, Blessed be He, may be strengthened in them, in the righteous, etc. Why? Because 'they have made void Your Torah' and do not strive in it, the men of the world, as is fitting, etc. And thus, at the time when Israel strives in the Torah, that 'time' is rectified in its rectification and adorned in its perfection, as is fitting. And at the time when Israel is idle from Torah, that 'time' is not in its rectification and is not found in its perfection and not in its light. This is what is written: 'It is time to act for the Lord' (Psalms 119:126). What is 'to act'? etc. Likewise, 'it is time to act' remains without rectification and without perfection. Why? Because 'they have made void Your Torah,' because Israel has become idle below from the words of the Torah. Because that 'time' either ascends or descends because of Israel."

[6] And as it were, he distances himself from the Blessed One, as it is written in the Zohar, Vayikra 21a: "When a person distances himself from the Torah, he is distant from the Holy One, Blessed be He. For the Holy One, Blessed be He, and the Torah are one, as stated above."

[7] And the supreme guarding of holiness departs from him, and he becomes known and recognizable to the forces of judgment, which he has strengthened within himself, so that they may have dominion over him. This is true both in his lifetime, as our Sages of blessed memory taught in the first chapter of Berachot, as brought above, and elsewhere (Siman 3, Aleph), and in Midrash Mishlei Rabbah, Chapter 24, Rabbi Tuvia the son of Rabbi Yishai said: "Whoever is remiss in the study of Torah cannot stand on the day of trouble, as it is said: 'Have you been remiss on the day of trouble? Your strength will be constricted.' And in Parashat Shte HaLechem (check reference), 'Whoever guards the Torah, his soul is guarded, and whoever does not guard the Torah, etc.' And they said in Midrash Tehillim, Psalm 57: 'The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Israel: If you guard the Torah, I will guard you, as it is said: "If you will diligently guard..."'"

[8] And as is also known from the words of our Sages, blessed be their memory, in Bereishit Rabbah, Parashah 63: "When the voice is the voice of Jacob, in the tent and in the study hall, the hands of Esau have no dominion." The voice of Jacob, then, his hands have dominion, meaning.

[9] And they said in Vayikra Rabbah, Perek 35, and Devarim Rabbah, Perek 24: "The sword and the book were given from the throne..." The Holy One, Blessed be He, said: "If you have kept what is written in the book, you will be saved from the sword, and if not..."

[10] And in the opening of Eichah and in the words of the Sages, "When does royalty decree a decree, and its decree succeeds? When Israel casts the words of Torah to the ground." As it is said, "And a host was given over to the transgression against the continual offering because of transgression." As long as Israel casts the words of Torah to the ground, royalty decrees and succeeds, as it is said, "And she cast truth to the ground." There is no truth but Torah. If you cast the words of Torah to the ground, immediately royalty succeeds, as it is said, "And she did and succeeded."

**[11]** And they also said there, "We find that the Holy One, Blessed be He, forgave idolatry, forbidden sexual relations, and murder, but He did not forgive the rejection of the Torah, as it is said, 'For what reason has the land perished? For idolatry, forbidden sexual relations, and murder.' It is not written here, 'And the Lord said, because they have forsaken My Torah.'"

**[12]** And in the aforementioned *Tikkunei Zohar*, it is stated: "Come and see how great is the power of the transgression of the Torah, for Jerusalem was not destroyed, nor was the Temple destroyed, except through the transgression of the Torah, as it is said..."

**[13]** And in Tanchuma, Parshat Beshalach, it states: Just as the Holy One, Blessed be He, cannot exist without the Torah, so too Israel cannot live unless they are occupied with the study of Torah. And because Israel has distanced themselves from the study of Torah, therefore the enemy comes upon them. And likewise, you find that the enemy comes only by reason of weakness of hands from the Torah. See there.

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## Gate IV, Chapter 23

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**[1]** And likewise, after his departure from this world, they said (Bava Batra 79a): "Whoever relaxes his efforts in Torah study falls into Gehenna." And they also said there: "Fire consumes whoever withdraws himself from Torah study and engages in idle talk."

**[2]** And in the Great Proverbs, Chapter 10, it is stated: "And he who forsakes reproof causes himself to err." R. Eliezer said: Any Torah scholar who forsakes the words of Torah is as if he is deceiving Him who spoke and the world came into being. Not only that, but since he has forsaken the words of Torah in this world, the Holy One, Blessed be He, forsakes him in the World to Come, etc.

**[3]** And in Zohar Vayikra 25b, Rabbi Shimon said: Fortunate are those who possess souls, possess the Torah, and serve the Holy King. Woe to the sinners who are not privileged to cleave to their Master, nor are they privileged in the Torah. For whoever is not privileged in the Torah is not

privileged in spirit nor in soul. Their cleaving is to that side of evil spirits, and this one has no portion in holiness. Woe to him when he departs from this world, for he will be known to those evil spirits, masters of fierce audacity, like dogs sent from the fires of Gehenna, who have no mercy upon them, etc.

**[4]** And in the portion *Vayeshev*, page 195, section 1, after he expounded there on the greatness of praise and the high station of one who engages in Torah in this world and the world to come, he then said: "Know, O scholar, that a person who is not privileged to labor in Torah in this world, walks in darkness. When he departs from this world, they will take him and cast him into Gehenna, the lowest place, where there will be no mercy upon him, which is called a pit of roaring mud. As it is said, 'He lifted me out of the pit of roaring mud.' And likewise, one who did not labor in Torah in this world and became defiled with the defilements of the world, what is written? 'They took him and cast him into the pit.' This is Gehenna, the place where those who did not labor in Torah are judged. And the pit was empty, just as he was empty, because he had no water within him. And know how great is the punishment for [neglecting] Torah, for Israel was not exiled from the Holy Land except because they departed from Torah and abandoned it. As it is said, 'Who is the wise man who will understand this?' 'Why has the land perished?' And the Lord said, 'Because they have forsaken My Torah.'"

**[5]** Furthermore, the beginning of a person's judgment when they come to be judged before Him, blessed be He, is concerning the study of Torah. As it is stated in the first chapter of Kiddushin and the first chapter of Sanhedrin (7a): Rabbi Menachem said, "A person's judgment does not begin except concerning the study of Torah, as it is said, 'He who is freed from water is first from judgment,' etc."

**[6]** And it is said that every single day, a heavenly voice emanates from Mount Horeb, proclaiming, "Whoever does not engage in Torah is called rebuked." For such is his judgment: "From the fruit of his labor shall they satisfy him." Because he did not choose life and the true good for himself and for all creatures and all worlds, and to cleave himself to Him, blessed be He, he diminished the flow of light to the worlds and corrupted and confused the order of the Holy Chariot. And he darkened it. And he caused evil to himself, for he shed the garments of holiness and donned in their

place filthy and defiled garments made from the pursuits of this world's desires and its worldly pleasures, and he is defiled and soiled by them. Certainly, they will not allow him, nor will he be able to enter. And all the holy legions guarding it [the gate] distance themselves from him, for they cannot touch his defiled garments. And he goes and wanders in the world, and "Unclean, unclean!" he shall be called, for he cleaves to his kind, to the unclean legions of the forces of impurity which he has amplified over himself.

**[7]** As it is written in the Zohar, Parashat Metzora, Rabbi Eliezer opened, saying: "How much a person must guard his ways and fear the Holy One, Blessed be He, that he not stray from the straight path, nor transgress the words of the Torah, nor forget it. For whoever does not study the Torah and does not engage in it is rebuked by the Holy One, Blessed be He, and is distant from Him. The Divine Presence does not dwell with him. And the angels who accompany him depart from him. Moreover, they proclaim before him and say, 'Depart from the associates of so-and-so, who did not regard the glory of his Master.' Woe unto him, for the upper and lower realms have abandoned him. He has no portion in the path of life." And when he engages, etc., and studies the Torah, how many angels are prepared to receive him to guard him, and the Divine Presence rests upon him. And all of them proclaim before him and say, "Give glory to the image of the King. Give glory to the King's creation. He is guarded in this world and in the world to come; his portion is blessed."

**[8]** And they said in the Mishnah, first chapter of Chagigah (9a): "What is crooked cannot be straightened." Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai says, we only call one "crooked" who was originally straight and then became crooked. And who is this? A Talmid Chacham who has distanced himself from the Torah. And woe to the creatures who see and do not know what they see; woe to us for the dishonor of the Torah.

**[9]** How much a person must always contemplate this, and set his mind and his innermost thoughts to be sharpened. Lest darkness fall, Heaven forbid, all the days of this fleeting world, the number of his days which were decreed for him by His blessed and gracious Will, may His Name be exalted, with his soul departing, sent free from the Torah. For it is in his soul. For the time of his visitation will come, and the dust will return to the earth, and the spirit

will not return to God to be bound in the bundle of the upper life. For his portion will be cursed to be cast out and will not find rest, for he has been rejected. Rebuke from above, rebuke from below. Woe to that shame, etc. May the Merciful, may His Name be exalted, save us.

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## Gate IV, Chapter 24

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**[1]** And so greatly did our Sages of blessed memory emphasize the severity of the punishment for a person who has the ability to engage in Torah study and does not. Or who studies and then abandons it, Heaven forbid. To the extent that they excommunicated him entirely from the World to Come with their holy spirit, meaning. As it is written in Perek Helek (Sanhedrin 99a): "For the word of the LORD has despised this..." R. Natan says: "Anyone who does not pay attention to the Mishnah." R. Nehorai says: "Anyone who is able to engage in Torah and does not." And they concluded this verse, "cutting off shall be cut off, that soul." And our Sages of blessed memory explained there, above this, "cutting off" in this world, "shall be cut off" in the World to Come.

**[2]** The scripture has made known to us that this matter [of *karet*] is not like the other *karet* punishments mentioned in the Torah for other transgressions. For even if its decree is sealed that one is cut off, Heaven forbid, nevertheless, he has not lost his portion in the World to Come. This is because only that small spark of the soul that committed the transgression is cut off from the strong bond and attachment that it had been connected and attached to until now, up to the root of its soul in the Holy One, Blessed be He, as explained at length in Chapter 1. However, here it says, "a soul shall be utterly cut off" (*karet tikaret*), meaning that the entire aspect of its soul has completely lost its portion in the World to Come, Heaven forbid, and has no portion in the World to Come at all.

**[3]** And thus did Rambam, of blessed memory, rule as halakha in Laws of Torah Study, Chapter 3, Halakha 13. And Beit Yosef established it thus in Shulchan Aruch, there, Siman 246, Seif 25, as halakha. And thus did Rabbi Yonah, of blessed

memory, in Sha'arei Teshuvah, enumerate ten levels in the severity of the punishments for sins. And the final level enumerates those about whom the Sages, of blessed memory, said that they have no portion in the World to Come. And he included within this category also one who is able to engage in Torah study and does not engage. And thus did R. Chaim Vital, of blessed memory, in Sha'arei Kedusha, Part 2, Chapter 8, also include him within the category of those who have no portion in the World to Come. And with one sweep he swept them there, for their judgment is equal to those about whom the Sages, of blessed memory, said in Perek 1 of Rosh Hashanah (13a) that Gehennom will be consumed, but they will not be consumed, meaning.

**[4]** And Rambam, may his memory be blessed, and the Ba'al HaTurim, may his memory be blessed, wrote there that one who studies and reviews and expounds for the vanities of the world, and abandons his Torah study and neglects it, his judgment is the same as one who is able to engage in Torah and does not engage.

**[5]** And so it is just. His deeds, which are not good, they will distance him. And his sin prevented good from him. After it was possible for him and he had the capacity to engage in Torah. And with a wicked heart and haughty spirit, he chose and took a bad bargain for himself, and for others, and for all the worlds. And he rejected the eternal life of the Torah and the Holy One, blessed be He, the Life and Light of all worlds, through which he could cleave, as it were, to the Holy One, blessed be He, who gives life to all. And he stretched out his hand to destroy the palace of the King, and diminished, darkened, and extinguished the flow of light of the worlds, and also of his soul. Why should he have true life? For indeed, his eyes will be darkened from seeing and beholding the light of eternal life, and he will not be able to bear the greatness of the supreme light. For he never tested himself in this in this world. And he is banished and cut off by himself from the Eden of God, blessed be He, from being bound in the bundle of life with the Lord his God, blessed be He. And from evil to evil he goes, God forbid. Woe to that shame, etc.

**[6]** And thus they ruled and decreed, may their memory be for a blessing, that his hope is cut off for generations and generations, Heaven forbid. For even unto eternity he shall not see light. He shall no longer live forever at the time of the

Righteous End, when those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awaken to eternal life. As our Sages, may their memory be for a blessing, stated at the end of Ketubot: "For Your dew is like the dew of lights," etc. Whoever utilizes the light of Torah, the light of Torah revives him; and whoever does not utilize the light of Torah, the light of Torah does not revive him.

**[7]** And the Sages of blessed memory did not find a remedy for the one who transgresses [the law] to rise at the time of the resurrection, except by holding fast and supporting, in any case, the Tree of Life, the supporters of the Torah, to benefit Torah scholars from their possessions. As it is written, "Rabbi said, 'I have found for them a remedy from the Torah: "And you who cleave to the Lord your God are alive, every one of you, this day."'" And is it possible to cleave to the Divine Presence, etc.? Rather, whoever marries his daughter to a Torah scholar, and whoever conducts business for Torah scholars, and whoever benefits Torah scholars from his possessions, Scripture attributes it to him as if he cleaves to the Divine Presence.

**[8]** And in the teachings of the Sages, may their memory be a blessing, chapter five: "Awake and sing, you who dwell in the dust." From here David, peace be upon him, said: "May my portion be with those who mortify themselves for the sake of the Torah." "Awake and sing, you who dwell in the dust." From here they said: "Anyone who becomes like dust during his lifetime, his dust will be stirred for the resurrection of the dead. And anyone who does not become like dust during his lifetime, his dust will not be stirred for the Great Judgment." These are the people who cause themselves to dwell in the dust to study Torah; the Holy One, blessed be He, brings upon them the dew of lights of Torah. And He brings them to the life of the World to Come, as it is said: "For your dew is like the dew of lights."

**[9]** And for this reason, the Sages of blessed memory called the verse, "What is crooked cannot be straightened" (Ecclesiastes 1:15), concerning a scholar who departs from the Torah (Mishnah Chaggigah 9:1). For God forbid, he has no remedy in the worlds. May the Merciful, blessed be He, save us from this and all that is similar.

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## Gate IV, Chapter 25

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**[1]** And all this is when there are still people from Israel who cleave to Him, blessed be He, and to His Torah with great contemplation, diligence, and effort for its own sake. And only in the Torah of Hashem is their desire all their days. And then, those people who are completely nullified from the study of Torah due to the evil of their choice, they descend to the grave alive and are banished from attaching themselves to the inheritance of the servants of Hashem who cleave to Him, blessed be He, and to His Torah. And from the land of life they will be cut off, God forbid. And in any case, the world, and even all the worlds, although they have diminished and descended from their holiness and their light, due to these sins in their souls, have almost tilted their foot towards destruction, God forbid. As it is written in Tanna D'vei Eliyahu, Sifrei, Arukh, Chapter 2: "The Sages said: Whenever people are nullified from Torah, the Holy One, blessed be He, seeks to destroy the world," etc.

**[2]** And there, in the aforementioned chapter, it is stated: "For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and He set the world upon them." And there are no pillars except Torah scholars, etc. Every day, angels of destruction emerge from before the Holy One, Blessed be He, to destroy the entire world. And were it not for the houses of the wise and the houses of the learned, where Torah scholars sit and engage in the study of Torah, they would immediately destroy the entire world, etc. See there.

**[3]** Nevertheless, they can still subsist through the remnants whom the Lord calls, those who engage in Torah and its commandments day and night, so that they do not become completely nullified and return to chaos and void, God forbid.

**[4]** But if, Heaven forbid, the world were entirely devoid, even for a single moment, of engagement and contemplation in the Holy Torah for its own sake, immediately, in that instant, all the worlds would be destroyed and utterly nullified from existence, Heaven forbid. And even one individual from Israel alone, his strength is immense, in whose hand it is to sustain and uphold all the worlds and creation as a whole through his engagement and contemplation in the Holy Torah for its own sake. As it is written in [the section] "HaChalak" (99b): "Whoever engages in Torah for its own sake, etc.,

even protects the entire world." And it is also stated in the chapter of the Torah: "Whoever engages in Torah for its own sake, etc." And not only that, but the entire world as a whole is worthy for him.

**[5]** And how can a person's heart not be inflamed when they bring to mind and contemplate this awesome matter? And dread and fear may fall upon him, lest he falter, God forbid, from engaging in Torah and mitzvot always. When he thinks in his heart, perhaps, God forbid, at such a time the entire world, from its one end to its other, is completely devoid of engagement in Torah and mitzvot. And without his engagement and the contemplation of his heart at this present time in Torah, all the worlds would have been destroyed and instantly annihilated, God forbid. This is Torah, and this is its reward, exceedingly abundant, immeasurable. For he is the one who receives the reward of all. For he is the one who, with his great strength, sustains and upholds all the worlds now. And concerning such a matter, the Sages, of blessed memory, said in the Mishnah (Sanhedrin 37a): "Each one of Israel is obligated to say: For my sake the world was created."

**[6]** And although in other transgressions there are thousands of myriads of holy, supernal worlds that the transgressions of the lower realms do not reach at all to defile them, God forbid. And always there is strength and joy in their place of honor, and concerning them it is said, "No evil shall dwell with you." However, the sin of nullifying Torah is that which surpasses all others, for it touches upon the existence of all worlds.

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## Gate IV, Chapter 26

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**[1]** And the reason for the matter is, as stated above, that the supreme, hidden root of the Divine Presence is exceedingly exalted above all worlds, the beginning and holy root of the Blessed One. This is the secret of the supreme raiment, as our Rabbi, the awesome man of God, the holy ARI, of blessed memory, has stated. It is only that it has been successively descended, as it were, down to the earth, which it illuminated with its glory. And the Blessed One has placed and planted within us, so that we become those who hold and support the

Tree of Life.

**[2]** For this is the reason why the life and existence of all the worlds are entirely dependent and stand solely according to the matter and the majority of our engagement and contemplation within it. For if we engage with it and uphold and support it properly, without any slackening whatsoever, we awaken its supreme root source, the source of holiness and blessings, to continue to pour forth and bestow additional blessing, eternal life, and awesome holiness upon all the worlds, each world according to the measure of its holiness that it can receive and sustain.

**[3]** And if, God forbid, we engage with it [the Torah] with laxity, the holiness and the Upper Light of the Torah diminish and shrink from all the worlds. Each according to its worth, it becomes deficient, weakened and slack, God forbid. And if, God forbid, we all were to abandon it and neglect it entirely, ceasing to engage with it altogether, then all the worlds, in an instant, would be utterly nullified, God forbid.

**[4]** However, this is not the case with all commandments, even the commandment of prayer. For even if, God forbid, all of Israel were to cease and abandon praying to Him, blessed be He, the worlds would not return to chaos and void because of it. Therefore, prayer is called in the words of our Sages, "life of an hour" (chayei sha'ah). And the Torah is called "life of eternity" (chayei olam), as our Sages stated in the first chapter of Shabbat (10a): Rava saw Rabbi Yehoshua the son of Levi prolonging his prayer and said, "They abandon the life of eternity and engage in the life of an hour." For the essence of prayer is to add rectification to the worlds by adding holiness and blessing at their appointed time. Therefore, if that time has passed, it will no longer be of any use to add to the worlds that addition of holiness and blessing.

**[5]** Indeed, the matter of engaging in Torah and mitzvot is essential to the very life and sustenance of the existence of the worlds, lest they be utterly destroyed. Therefore, man is obligated to engage in and contemplate them at all times, constantly, in order to sustain and uphold all the worlds every moment.

**[6]** Furthermore, the entire essence of prayer is not dependent solely on the engagement with Torah and its commandments; without it, prayer is not

heard, G-d forbid. As it is written (Proverbs 25:12), "Whoever turns away his ear from hearing the Torah, even his prayer is an abomination." And as our Sages have said (Shabbat, there, and in Midrash Mishlei Rabbah, Chapter 28), and they stated (end of Sukkah), "Whoever engages in Torah out of distress, his prayer is heard, and no barrier is locked before him." And in Zohar, Parashat Miketz, page 202, line 2, and Etz Chaim, Ta'avah Ba'ah, we have taught: "Whoever desires that the Holy One, blessed be He, accept his prayer, let him strive in Torah, for it is the Tree of Life."

**[7]** Therefore, the ruling is stated in the Talmud (Megillah 27a): it is permitted to do so in the synagogue, but not in the study hall. This is because it elevates him to a more severe sanctity. For it is she alone that bestows abundance, life, and sanctity, and light to all the worlds, by virtue of her being above them all.

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## Gate IV, Chapter 27

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**[1]** And furthermore, its tremendous holiness possesses an even greater value and superiority over the worlds. For although the higher realms are exceedingly holy, nevertheless, when they were emanated and descended through immense emanation and gradations, even though in each world all the orders of the world above it were imprinted and sealed within it, in its likeness, as its true image, as is known. And as it is written in the Zohar, Yitro, page 2, line 2: "We learn that just as it is above, so it is below them." And so it is in all the worlds; all are encompassed, one within another, and one within another. And as it is written in Etz Chaim concerning the four worlds, Atzilut, Beriah, Yetzirah, and Assiah, see there in the Gate of the Emanations of Atzilut, Beriah, Yetzirah, and Assiah, chapter 1, and in chapter 4 there, and in the Gate of Names, section 21.

**[2]** Yet, the value of its holiness and its light are not at all equal or comparable to the world above it. So much so that their holiness and light have become abhorrent and diminished through immense descent and gradations, to the point that in this world they have become ordinary, which we treat with ordinary custom.

**[3]** Indeed, the Holy Torah, although it too descended and was transmitted from its supreme root source through countless levels from world to world and from degree to degree, nevertheless, its primordial holiness, as it is in its root source at the beginning of its path in holiness, remains so even in this world. For it is entirely holy, and it is forbidden, G-d forbid, to treat it with commonality. For even the contemplation of words of Torah is forbidden in defiled places. And for this reason, our Sages, of blessed memory, were stringent and exaggerated in its punishment, and said (in Parashat Chukat, 99a) that it too is included in "for he has despised the word of the Lord." And they expounded this verse, "cutting off shall be cut off," and our Sages explained: "cutting off" in this world, "shall be cut off" in the world to come.

**[4]** And they said, one who holds a Torah scroll naked is buried naked from that commandment. They also forbade carrying it from place to place. Even from one synagogue to another, they forbade it in Zohar, Parashat Acharei, page 2, for carrying it, see there. For the reason that it always stands in its original sanctity.

**[5]** And likewise, even a person whose soul's root is from a very high and exalted realm, from the supernal worlds, and who takes for himself through his intellect a correct thought to cleave to the purity of some proper attribute, he is permitted to go with this thought even in impure places. This refers to thoughts of Torah concerning the laws of plagues and tents, or other laws, and any thought of Torah that would be forbidden in impure places.

**[6]** And this is also the matter of their statement, blessed be their memory, in the Zohar: "The Holy One, Blessed be He, and the Torah are one." This means that although the worlds proceed entirely through gradation and emanation, and there are many differences in their relative holiness, all of this is only from our perspective. But from His perspective, may He be exalted, there is no division or change of places at all. As it is written, "I the Lord have not changed" (Malachi 3:6), and holiness has not changed. As was explained at length above in Chapter 3, may you refer to it.

**[7]** Thus, the Holy One, Blessed be He, although He descended and was refracted through many immense gradations, nevertheless, He was not changed at all from His holiness. And in His original holiness, He also stands in this lower world, just as

He was in His essence with the Blessed God in His root source, without any division or change of place whatsoever.

**[8]** Although from His perspective, blessed be He, all places are equal without any change whatsoever, for impure places do not obstruct His unity and His great holiness, blessed be He, and so it is concerning the great holiness of the Holy Name. Nevertheless, we are forbidden to speak or even to contemplate it in impure places. For from our perspective, there is certainly a distinction and change of places, as was explained at length there.

**[9]** But the essence of the Torah and its Commandment did not change by reason of its descent from its holiness and its supreme light. Rather, the surface of our eyes prevents us from seeing its holiness and its inner light. Therefore, David, peace be upon him, said, "Open my eyes, and I will behold wonders from Your Torah." For truly, the holiness and light of the Torah and its Commandment are its inner secrets, which are revealed and manifest and shine with their supreme holiness and light as they are. It is only that our eyes are unable to bear its holiness and light as they are.

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## Gate IV, Chapter 28

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**[1]** And for this reason, its descent and emanation from level to level and from world to world, it contracted itself to be clothed in each world, to speak of the matters of that world, according to the nature and value of that world, so that it could bear its holiness and light. Until, when it descended to come to this world, it was also clothed to speak in the values and matters of this world and the stories of this world, so that this world could bear the holiness of its light. However, even though it speaks with the lower beings, it hints within them at the bodies of Torah and inner matters, and inner matters within inner matters, higher than high without end.

**[2]** And consider in the Zohar, Parashat Beha'alotcha, page 152a, Rashi, etc. And in Parashat Toldot, page 145b, Rabbi Yitzchak says:

"Indeed, all that the Holy One, Blessed be He, does in the world is through the secret of Wisdom, etc." And in Parashat Balak, page 202a, "Then he opened and said, etc., how good are the paths and ways of the Torah, etc." And in Parashat Beshalach, page 55, end of page 72, Rabbi Eliezer opened, etc., "how much we must contemplate the words of the Torah, etc." And in Parashat Toldot, page 134, end of page 72, "In the Torah are all the high secrets sealed, etc." And these are the details of the matters of all the myriads... of the worlds and the levels into which it clothed itself through its descent.

[3] And therefore, it is commonly said in the Zohar that the entire Torah is both hidden and revealed. This is clear to every understanding person, that its meaning is the hidden path of the Holy Torah, which is not written explicitly and explained within it. Rather, these matters are hidden and concealed by way of allusion in its words. And the revealed way is the simple meaning of the verse, which is written explicitly and explained within it.

[4] And not as I saw written in a book by one who investigated the matter, why is the wisdom of Kabbalah called "hidden." Is it not that for one who understands it, it is revealed? And for people who do not know and understand, there are even those who do not know how to interpret the simple meaning of Scripture, and for them, even the simple meaning of Scripture is a hidden path. And he offered there the explanation that he offered.

[5] And examine the Zohar in Parashat Behaalotecha, page 149a and b, how beloved are the words of Torah, for in every single word there are exalted mysteries, etc. See there.

[6] And each one contemplates the hidden depths of his inner being according to the abundance of his wisdom, the purity of his intellect, and the sanctity of his pure heart. And the abundance of his engagement and contemplation therein.

[7] Indeed, the essence of the reasons for the Torah is the secret of soul to its soul, its deepest secrets. These are matters that the Ancient of Days concealed and hid from His creations, and no one yet knows them, except our first father, who attained the level of soul to its soul. In it, he would gaze in the supernal radiance of the soul to its soul of the Holy Torah and the supernal wisdoms, which were revealed before him in their highest root.

[8] And from the moment that he sinned and the higher illumination departed from him, the supernal orders became confused and intermingled. The paths and ways of supernal wisdom, the secret of the soul to its soul, were also sealed off.

[9] And also in the holy standing at the time of receiving the Torah and the Commandments, even though the world was illuminated, to the extent that our Sages, of blessed memory, said concerning Israel who stood at Mount Sinai, "their impurity ceased." Nevertheless, they did not merit to attain more than the inner depth of the soul of the Torah, but not the level of the soul of the soul. Until a spirit is poured from on high, and He, may He be blessed, pours His spirit upon all flesh, then the springs of wisdom will be revealed, the wondrous paths of the supernal wisdom, the soul of its soul.

[10] As it is written in the Zohar, Parshat Behaalotecha, page 152a: "The Torah has a body, and the fools of the world look only at that garment. Those who know more do not look at the garment, but at the body that is beneath that garment. The wise servants of the Supreme King, those who stood at Mount Sinai, look only at the soul, which is the root of all, the very essence of the Torah. And for the World to Come, they are destined to look at the soul of the soul of the Torah. As it is written, 'And your eyes shall see your teachers, and your teachers shall not be hidden from you anymore.'"

[11] And this is the matter of the light of the first day, which was hidden away for the righteous for the future. And as it is stated, "The Holy One, Blessed be He, will bring forth the sun from its sheath" (Nedarim 8b). And this is the secret of Eden, as is known, which is the aspect of the soul of the soul.

[12] And Adam the first, prior to his sin, dwelled in the Garden, and from within it he would gaze upon Eden, as mentioned. And by his sin, this supreme perception was then removed from him. Therefore, he was exiled from the Garden of Eden. And this is the secret of the permutation of its letters, as it is written on high, as explained at the end of Chapter Two.

[13] And concerning this, they said in Midrash Tehillim, at the beginning of Psalm 3: "Man knows not its value..." (Job 28:12). The portions of the Torah were not given in order. Were they given in order, anyone who reads them would immediately

be able to create the world and revive the dead, etc.

**[14]** And we shall return to explain somewhat the matter of the difference and the superiority of the light of holy Torah over the commandments:

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## Gate IV, Chapter 29

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**[1]** Behold, our Sages of blessed memory said (Sotah 21a): Rabbi Yishmael expounded, "For the commandment is a lamp, and the Torah is light." The verse has attached the commandment to a lamp and the Torah to light. This is to tell you that just as a lamp illuminates only for a time, so too a commandment protects only for a time. And just as light illuminates forever, so too the Torah protects forever. And it concludes that the Torah protects when one is engaged in it, but when one is not engaged in it, it does not protect. A commandment, whether when one is engaged in it or when one is not engaged in it, protects but does not save. And similarly, they said there: A transgression extinguishes a commandment, but a transgression does not extinguish the Torah.

**[2]** It is also known in the Zohar that the 613 commandments are directed against the 613 organs and sinews in man. And when a person performs one of God's commandments properly, that organ which is directed against it is sanctified by it and is thereby enlivened. Or, if one encounters one of the negative commandments and refrains and abstains from doing it. Regarding this, the Sages said (in the Jerusalem Talmud, first chapter of Kiddushin): "If a person sits and does not commit a transgression, he is given reward as if he performed a commandment." That specific sinew which is directed against it is also purified and sanctified and enlivened, as it is written: "but the commandments which a person shall do them and live by them," for then he is called a living man.

**[3]** Indeed, when a person engages in Torah, it is written concerning it, "and healing to all his flesh." As it is stated (Eruvin 54a), "If he feels pain in his head, let him engage in Torah," for it is said, "for they are a graceful garland for your head." If he feels pain in his throat, let him engage in Torah, for it

is said, etc. If he feels pain in his intestines, let him engage in Torah, etc. If he feels pain in his entire body, let him engage in Torah, for it is said, "and healing to all his flesh." This is also found in Vayikra Rabbah, Chapter 12, and in Tanchuma, Yitro, and in Midrash Tehillim, Psalm 19. For through engagement with Torah, all his limbs, sinews, and faculties are sanctified and purified. Therefore, they said, "Torah study is equivalent to all of them."

**[4]** And likewise, conversely, God forbid, the sin of neglecting Torah study is also against all of them. For when one transgresses one of God's commandments, only that limb or sinew which is specifically directed against it is damaged. The vital force of holiness and the supernal light, the secret of the Tetragrammaton, blessed be He, which rests upon each limb, is removed from it, God forbid. And the death of the *Sitra Achra* (the Other Side) reigns within him, meaning. And he becomes a cripple, lacking that limb. But with the sin of neglecting Torah study, God forbid, it damages all of his limbs and sinews and all his faculties entirely. And the vital force of holiness of his entire body is removed, and he immediately becomes like one truly dead, who has no life whatsoever, God forbid. As it is written, "For He is your life, etc."

**[5]** And as our Sages, of blessed memory, said (Avodah Zarah 3b): "And you shall make man like the fish of the sea, why are they likened to the fish of the sea? To tell you that just as fish in the sea, when they depart from the water, immediately die, so too a person, when he departs from the Torah, immediately dies." (This is the version in Yalkut Shimoni, Chabbakuk Remez 1002, on the aforementioned verse). And in the commentary of Rabbi Ovadiah of Bertinoro on Parashat Shemini, it states: "What is the life of the fish of the sea? In the water. Likewise, the life of Torah scholars is in the Torah, and if they separate from it, they immediately die."

**[6]** And as it is written (Berakhot 5a): If a person sees afflictions coming upon him, let him examine his deeds. If he examines and finds nothing, let him attribute it to the neglect of Torah study. It is indeed surprising, for if he has the sin of neglecting Torah study, God forbid, is there any greater sin than this? How then did it say, "and finds nothing"? However, Rashi, may his memory be blessed, already guarded against this in his commentary there, explaining that he did not find a sin that would render these afflictions fitting to come upon him.

[7] And this is because His attribute, blessed be He, acts measure for measure. For that limb which a person corrupted and blemished through his sin, upon that very limb He brings suffering. And the ultimate intention of the blessed One in this is so that through the suffering, the person will understand and know for which sin they have come. And he will return to his heart to be thankful, and to abandon [the sin], and to repent, and he will be healed.

[8] It is written that if a person sees suffering coming upon him, he should examine his deeds and understand his path through the suffering. And if he examines and does not find in his hand a transgression that he sinned with that limb and in that manner, such that these sufferings are fitting to come upon him measure for measure, he should attribute it to the nullification of Torah. For with the sin of the nullification of Torah, measure for measure is not applicable. Because its nullification, God forbid, touches his entire body, whichever place and whichever limb it may be, as stated above.

[9] And the reason for this matter is as stated above in Chapter 1, Section 6, that the supreme root source of the commandments is dependent and bound to the secret of the *Shi'ur Koma* and the parts of the *Merkavah*, the secret of the "Upper Man," so to speak. For every individual commandment, its supreme root is bound and grasped in a world and a force of the *Shi'ur Koma*. And so it is with the entire person, who is also perfected and ordered in all his limbs, sinews, and joints, and all the particulars of his faculties, in the form and likeness of the *Merkavah* and the *Shi'ur Koma*. And for this reason, every commandment is directed against a specific limb or sinew in man. However, the Holy Torah encompasses the worlds, as stated above. Therefore, it is equivalent to all the commandments. And therefore, it is also a healing for all his flesh.

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## Gate IV, Chapter 30

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[1] And furthermore, the study of Torah and its commandments possesses an even greater advantage in light and added holiness, surpassing

even all the commandments combined. For even if a person fulfills all six hundred and thirteen commandments in true perfection, as is proper, in all their details and minutiae, with intention, purity, and holiness, whereby the person becomes entirely, with all their limbs, joints, and all their faculties, a complete chariot upon which the supreme holiness of all the commandments can rest—even so, there is no comparison or likeness whatsoever between the holiness and light of the commandments and the immense greatness of the holiness and light of the study of Torah and its commandments, which shines forth upon the person who engages in and contemplates it properly.

[2] For its beginning in holiness is an elevation upwards, above the root of holiness and the supernal light of all the commandments together, as was previously stated. And this is what is said in the section "The Torah": "And You exalt and magnify and raise it above all deeds," meaning above all the deeds of all the commandments. And so they said in the Jerusalem Talmud, Chapter 1 of Pe'ah, that all the commandments are equal to one word of the Torah.

[3] And also, the holiness and light of the commandment, which will cause its radiance to dwell upon that thing and object through which you perform the commandment, do not abide upon them except for the moment when the commandment is performed with them. But after their holy commandment has been fulfilled in them, the light immediately ascends and withdraws from them, leaving them as they were at first.

[4] But the Holy One, Blessed be He, wherever His light and holiness shine and appear, once, its holiness will be eternal, and it will always remain in its holiness. As we learned in a Baraita (Megillah 26b) that the utensils of a commandment are discarded after their commandment has been fulfilled, while the utensils of holiness are interred. Therefore, they included the utensils of phylacteries and mezuzot among the utensils of holiness. This is because the passages of the Torah were once placed within them.

[5] And there is nothing in their words, of blessed memory, that is not hinted at in Scripture. And one should intend the verse, "For a commandment is a lamp, and Torah is light," also concerning the aforementioned matter, according to their interpretation, of blessed memory, in Sukkah there,

[explaining] why a lamp only illuminates for a time, and why light illuminates forever. And they, of blessed memory, made this distinction between them concerning protection and salvation for man. And it is possible to interpret it also that the verse hints also at the matter of the distinction and difference between the Holy Torah and the commandments, as explained in the Baraisa of Megillah, mentioned above.

**[6]** Furthermore, even the sanctity, vitality, and light of the commandments, which sanctify and give life to the person who fulfills them, are drawn and flow only from the sanctity and light of the Holy Torah. For a commandment possesses no vitality, sanctity, or light in and of itself; its essence derives solely from the sanctity of the letters of the Torah written concerning that commandment. One should also intend this matter in the verse, "For a commandment is a lamp, and Torah is light." This is analogous to a lamp, which has no light in itself whatsoever, but only from the light that illuminates it.

**[7]** Indeed, engaging in Torah study alone, without the observance of commandments whatsoever, is also nothing, as our Sages, of blessed memory, stated (Yevamot 109b): "Whoever says he has only Torah, even Torah he does not have." And in the second chapter of Berachot (17a), it is a common saying of the great ones: "The ultimate purpose of wisdom is repentance and good deeds, so that a person does not read and study and then strike his father and his teacher, etc." It is not said for those who learn them, but for those who do them.

**[8]** And in Midrash Rabbah, Parashat Pinchas, section 13: "Whoever knows Torah and does not act [according to it], it would have been better for him never to have come into the world, but rather that his afterbirth be turned upon his face." And so it is in Vayikra Rabbah, Parashah 35. And in Tanchuma, Parashat Eikev.

**[9]** And in the Zohar, Parshat Shemot, page 12b, it is stated by the Ari: "Whoever engages in Torah in this world and accumulates good deeds inherits the complete world. And whoever engages in Torah in this world but does not perform good deeds, inherits neither this nor that." The Ari said: "We do not learn [from this] except for one who has no good deeds at all."

**[10]** Until they said in the first chapter of Avodah

Zarah (17b): "One who engages in Torah alone is like one who has no God." For without the observance of the commandments, God forbid, there is nothing to grasp onto and connect with for the light of Torah to dwell upon and be sustained within. This is like light without a wick. However, the essence of the light receives the commandment from the letters of the Torah written concerning its matter.

**[11]** And this is what is stated in the Torah portion: "Great is the Torah, for it gives life to its doers." It does not say "to its learners" or "to its engrossed ones," but rather "to its doers." This means that the Torah is what grants eternal life and holiness even to those who perform the commandments written within it. Therefore, it is said in Tanchuma, in the portion of Chukat, that even if one is righteous and does not engage in Torah study, they possess nothing, G-d forbid.

**[12]** The reason for this is also as explained above. The commandments, in their original root, are bound and dependent on the arrangement of the chapters of the Chariot, the worlds, and the higher powers. And the ultimate, highest root of the Holy Name is exceedingly exalted above all the worlds and all the powers, and it is that which spreads within the innermost being of all of them, and they receive from it the very essence of their vitality and the abundance of their holiness. Therefore, it is that which gives and bestows vitality, holiness, and light to all the commandments.

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## Gate IV, Chapter 31

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**[1]** And for this reason also, the study of Torah atones for all the transgressions of the sinful soul. As our Sages, of blessed memory, stated (end of Makkot): "This is the Torah for a burnt offering, for a meal offering, for a sin offering, etc." And they conclude that whoever engages in Torah study needs neither a burnt offering, nor a meal offering, nor a sin offering, nor a guilt offering. And so it is in Tanhuma, Parashat Tzav. And in Shemot Rabbah, Chapter 28: "Take with you words and return to the Lord." For Israel says, etc. "We are poor and have no means to bring sacrifices." The Holy One, Blessed be He, said: "Words I desire, etc. And I will

forgive you for all your transgressions.” And “words” refers only to words of Torah, etc. And in Tanhuma, Parashat Vayakhel, concerning the Ark, they said it bears the transgressions of Israel, for the Torah within it bears the transgressions of Israel.

**[2]** And in the teachings of our Rabbis, may their memory be a blessing, it is stated in the chapter “Adam who committed many transgressions and was decreed death, etc. And he returned and repented, and studied Torah, Prophets, and Writings, and learned Mishnah, Midrash, Halakhot, and Aggadot, and served the Sages, even if a hundred decrees were decreed upon him, the Holy One, blessed be He, nullifies them from him, etc.”

**[3]** And in the Zohar, Parashat Pinchas, 215a, it begins thus: “How much ought men to contemplate the service of the Holy One, blessed be He. How much ought they to contemplate the words of the Torah. For whoever engages in Torah is as if he were offering all the sacrifices in the world before the Holy One, blessed be He. And not only so, but the Holy One, blessed be He, atones for all his transgressions and prepares for him many thrones for the World to Come.”

**[4]** And also for those severe transgressions for which sacrifices do not atone, the study of Torah atones. As it is stated in (the Mishnah in) *Rosh Hashanah* (18a): “For a sacrifice and for a meal-offering, indeed, it does not atone, but it atones through the study of Torah.” And similarly they said (in *Megillah* 3b): “Great is the study of Torah more than the offering of the daily sacrifices.”

**[5]** And in Zohar, Tzav 135a, it is written: “And concerning one who studies in the Torah, he does not need sacrifices or burnt offerings, for the Torah is superior to all, and the bond of faith of all.” And concerning this it is written: “Her ways are ways of pleasantness, etc.” And it is written: “Great peace have they who love Your Torah, and nothing shall cause them to stumble.”

**[6]** And in Parashat Kedoshim, page 72, regarding the sacrifice and the meal-offering, etc., it is stated that one is atoned for through Torah study. Why? Because Torah study ascends above all sacrifices in the world, as they established, for it is written, “This is the Torah for the burnt offering, for the meal-offering, and for the sin-offering, etc.” (Leviticus 7:37). The Torah encompasses all

sacrifices in the world. It is said, “This is indeed so, for whoever engages in Torah study, even if punishment has been decreed upon him from above, it is more pleasing to Him than all sacrifices and offerings, and that punishment is torn apart.” And behold, man is not purified for eternity except through the words of Torah, etc. And Torah is called “holy,” as it is written, “For I the Lord am holy” (Leviticus 19:2). And this is the Torah, which is the exalted Holy Name. And thus, whoever engages in it is purified, and afterward becomes sanctified, etc. We have learned that the holiness of Torah is a holiness that ascends above all holies, etc. See there.

**[7]** And in the Midrash, “Vayera,” Chapter 1, page 71a, they said: “The sacrifices were annulled, but the Torah was not annulled. For if one is not occupied with sacrifices, let him be occupied with Torah, and he will derive greater benefit from it.” For Rabbi Yitzchak said, “Let them be occupied with Torah, and I will forgive them for its sake more than all the sacrifices in the world.” As it is said, “This is the Torah for a burnt-offering, for a meal-offering...” (Leviticus 6:7). This means, “This is the Torah for the sake of a burnt-offering, for the sake of a meal-offering...” Rabbi Krospedai said: “Whoever recalls in his mouth, in the synagogue and in the study hall, the matter of sacrifices, behold, a covenant is cut for him. For they are angels who recall his sins to diminish them, so that they are unable to do anything to him but good.”

**[8]** And they also said in Chapter 2 of Berachot (16a): “And in Torat Ha’adam, Siman 102, Chapter 25: Why are tents juxtaposed with streams? For it is written, ‘As streams they spread forth...’ [Genesis 27:29] and ‘As tents the Lord planted...’ [Numbers 24:6]. This is to tell you that just as streams elevate a person from impurity to purity, so too do tents elevate a person from the scale of guilt to the scale of merit. And in Chapter 18 there: ‘Pour out your heart like water...’ [Lamentations 2:19]. Just as these waters are a mikveh of purity for Israel and for all that is created in the world, so too is the study of Torah a mikveh of purity for Israel in all their dwelling places. Come and see how great is the power of Torah, which purifies the transgressors of Israel when they repent, even from idolatry that is in their hands, as it is said, ‘And I will sprinkle upon you pure water, and you shall be purified...’ [Ezekiel 36:25]. See there.”

**[9]** For the essence of true and complete

repentance, which stems from love, is only achieved through diligent engagement with Torah, as stated in "The Degrees of Torah": "He who loves the Place [God]." And as it is written, "Our Father, return us to Your Torah, etc., and return us in complete repentance before You."

**[10]** And in Zohar Vayikra 21a, it is stated: "Whoever distances himself from the Torah distances himself from the Holy One, Blessed be He. And whoever draws near to the Torah draws near to the Holy One, Blessed be He, with Him." For "love of the Torah covers all transgressions," as it is written in the Midrash, Sifrei, Parashat Eikev, Chapter 3, on the verse. And so they said (in the opening of Eichah): "The light within it [the Torah] returns him to repentance." And in Parashat HaChailil (Sukkah 52b): "If this scoundrel encounters you, draw him to the House of Study. If he is a stone, he will melt." And similar to this they said in Tanchuma, Parashat Ha'azinu, there. And in Bereshit Rabbah, Chapter 22: "If your inclination comes to make you bitter, gladden it with words of Torah." And in Midrash Tehillim, at the end of Psalm 34: "If the evil inclination stands against you, feed it the bread of Torah," etc.

**[11]** And in Zohar Vayeshev 97a, Rabbi Isaac (ARI) said: When a person sees evil thoughts coming to him, let him engage in Torah, and then they will pass from him. Rabbi Eliezer said: When that evil inclination comes to tempt a person, let him draw himself towards the Torah, and he will separate himself from it.

**[12]** And this is what is written in the Torah portion: "and it becomes like a spring that surges and continues." This can also be interpreted in relation to the aforementioned matter. Just as a flowing spring, even if at times it becomes muddied and defiled with much mire and silt, nevertheless it flows and bursts forth and continues to surge little by little, until in the fullness of time it will completely overcome and be revealed and spread out as it was before. So too, one who is occupied with Torah, even if he was initially stained with immense transgressions and sins, and deeply submerged in the mire and silt of the depths of evil, may it not be so, nevertheless, through his engagement with Torah, his heart is rightly assured that surely the light within it will return him to repentance. And the good overcomes and continues to prevail over the evil within him, little by little, until in the end, the good will necessarily prevail and spread throughout

him entirely. And he is sanctified from his impurity, and purity blossoms within him entirely.

**[13]** And so it is said there, "and its preparation to be a righteous and pious person, etc." The language of preparation (הכשר) and immersion (הגעה) and purification by fire (ליבון) dispels the impurity of evil that was initially within it. As it is written (Jeremiah 23:29), "Is not My word like fire, etc.," which purifies and prepares it, etc. And it is also said in Tanchuma, Vayakhel, that the Torah purifies the hearts and kidneys of Torah scholars.

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## Gate IV, Chapter 32

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**[1]** And all this is for the aforementioned reason, that the supreme root of the Torah and its commandments is above all the worlds.

**[2]** The matter is as stated above (in Gate 1, Chapter 20): the reason for the statement of our Sages, of blessed memory, that "whoever answers 'Amen Yehei Shem' with all his strength, all his transgressions are forgiven," may peace be upon him. The same applies to the matter that through diligent engagement with Torah, one awakens its supernal root to bestow and emanate an abundance of supernal light and holiness upon all the worlds. And its sparks are sparks of fire, a fearsome flame, to banish and consume all the impurities and defilements that one has caused through his actions in all the worlds, so that they may be sanctified and shine further with supernal holiness, to be united one with another. And all flaws are filled, and all corruptions are rectified, and all ruins are rebuilt. And joy, and abundant gladness, and supernal light increase in all the worlds.

**[3]** And it is also known that every thing is only rectified in its supernal root. And the supernal root of the soul of each Israelite is from one of the letters of the Holy Torah. Therefore, all the blemishes of the sinning soul are rectified and sweetened in their root in the Holy Torah, by engaging with it appropriately.

**[4]** And as it is written, "The Torah of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul." For even if the soul has

already been severed from its root, Heaven forbid, and has descended wondrously into the depths of the abyss of evil, Heaven forbid, the Torah and its Mitzvot, with which one occupies himself, raise it up and bring it forth from its confinement, and restore it to its original connection, and with the added light of the Torah and its Mitzvot. And this is what is stated in the first chapter of Ta'anit (7a): "It is taught: Rabbi Bana'ah says, 'Whoever occupies himself with Torah for its own sake, his Torah becomes for him a source of life, as it is said, "It is a tree of life..." and it says, 'For whoever finds me finds life..." And they said in the Mekhilta: "What is the meaning of 'For I am the LORD, your healer'?" The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to Moses: "Tell Israel, 'The Torah that I have given you is a healing for you, it is life for you, as it is said, "For they are life to those who find them."'"

**[5]** And therefore the Sages of blessed memory established the wording of the confession according to the order of the twenty-two letters. In order to awaken the upper root of his soul, which is bound and attached to the Holy Name for purification and sanctification.

**[6]** And as long as a person is bound and cleaves to the Blessed Creator's Torah and is constantly engrossed in its love, it too will illuminate for him and guard him in all his ways and affairs, so that he will not fall into the snare of the evil inclination, God forbid. As it is written in Shemot Rabbah, Perek 56, there.

**[7]** And in the Midrash Tehillim, concerning the psalm "Eightfold are the chambers of my heart, I have hidden Your word within my heart, lest I sin against You," it is said: "The evil inclination has no dominion over the Torah, and whoever has the Torah in his heart, the evil inclination has no dominion over him and does not touch him."

**[8]** And in the teachings of Rabbi Isaac Luria, may his memory be a blessing, and in the Sayings of Rabbi Nathan, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai said: Whoever sets the words of Torah upon his heart, ten difficult things are removed from him: thoughts of transgression, thoughts of the sword, thoughts of folly, thoughts of the evil inclination, thoughts of promiscuity, thoughts of a wicked woman, thoughts of idolatry, thoughts of the burdens of flesh and blood, thoughts of vain matters.

**[9]** And He clothed him with humility and the fear of

Heaven upon his countenance, and every righteous attribute. He is not afraid of the temptations of his evil inclination concerning the pleasures and delights of this world. For his inclination is surrendered into his hand; it obeys him in all that he desires. And by its counsel, it guides him and establishes him in a corner of light, and upon all his ways shines the light of the Torah, so that even all matters of this world are, in his estimation, good, in measure and in weight, as is fitting. As our Sages, of blessed memory, said (Kiddushin 30b): "And you shall place a perfect plaster" – the Torah is likened to a plaster of life. It is like a man who struck his son a great blow and placed a plaster upon his wound, and said to him, "My son, as long as this plaster is upon your wound, eat what brings you pleasure and drink what brings you pleasure, and you need not fear. But if you remove it, behold, it will fester." Thus said the Holy One, blessed be He: "I created the evil inclination; I created the Torah as a spice for it. If you are occupied with the Torah, you will not be delivered into its hand, as it is said, 'Surely if you do well, there is upliftment' (Genesis 4:7). But if you are not occupied with the Torah, you will be delivered into its hand, as it is said, 'At the entrance, sin crouches' (Genesis 4:7)."

**[10]** A gloss: It can be explained according to the homiletical interpretation of the verse, "And the tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, engraved, etc." and they expounded, "It is taught, etc." The matter is akin to what the pious Rabbi Luzzatto, of blessed memory, wrote in his book *Mesillat Yesharim* regarding the aforementioned saying of our Sages, "I created the evil inclination; I created the Torah as its antidote." Just as in the matter of healing the body, the physician gives the patient a balanced antidote composed of various herbs and substances, all in precise measure and weight with immense meticulousness, according to what is needed for the known ailment, which the physician understands. Would it occur to the patient that he himself should prepare an antidote for his illness from other herbs and substances, as he sees fit, with the simplicity of one who is foolish and does not understand? Surely, the physician is the one who knows the nature of his illness and knows the properties of the herbs and substances. He knows which herbs and substances are needed for the nature of his illness, and their measured proportions and weights.

**[11]** Thus says He, blessed be He. Do not imagine

in your souls that you can escape the temptations of the evil inclination and its affairs through stratagems and matters that you choose for yourselves. As you imagine, am I not He who created the evil inclination and knows its nature? And I created against this the Torah, a spice and a balm of life to heal the sickness of its affairs. And you shall know that apart from engagement in the study of Torah, there is no other stratagem for this.

**[12]** And it is written, "And the tablets are the work of God." They are the tablets of the heart that desires. (As in, "Write them upon the tablet of your heart.") He, blessed be He, made them. And He is the One who knows the matter of your inclination planted in your heart, and it is a divine inscription. For against this, He gives you the matter of engaging with Torah to write and engrave them upon the tablet of your heart, so that through it you may escape the matters of the inclination. And by this, you will know that you have no freedom from the matters of the inclination, except for one who engages in Torah study, and no other stratagem besides it.

**[13]** And as the Sages of blessed memory explained in "When you walk, it shall lead you" (Proverbs 6:22), in the great Proverbs it is stated, "Happy is the man who acquires Torah," for it guards him from the evil path, as it is written, "When you walk..." And so it is in Vayikra Rabbah, Perek 35. For it straightens and directs his heart until his heart is whole with his God, and faithful to the God of his spirit to serve Him, blessed be He, with all his heart, in his two inclinations. As it is written in the first chapter of Chagigah (3b), "The words of the Sages are like goads." Why are the words of Torah likened to a goad? Just as this goad directs the ox to its furrows to bring life to the world, so too the words of Torah direct the hearts of their learners from paths of death to paths of life. And so they said in Bamidbar Rabbah, Perek 14, and in Tanchuma, Parashat Behaalotecha, and in the beginning of Parashat Vayelech, there.

**[14]** For there is no other remedy or cure in the world at all to be saved from the snare of his inclination, which he always spreads at his feet to trap him and cast him down to the lowest depths to cause his eternal death, God forbid. Rather, it is only by engaging in Torah and mitzvot. For then he is called a living man, who is attached by its means to his portion in the true eternal life, as it is written, "For it is your life, etc."

**[15]** And our Sages, of blessed memory, said (Yoma 85b): "And You made man like the fish of the sea, etc." Just as fish in the sea, when they separate from the water, immediately die, so too a person, when they separate from the Torah, immediately dies. And thus Rabbi Akiva answered Pappus: "And what in the place of our life, etc." (Berachot 61a). And in the commentary of Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman, in the portion of Shemini, it is stated: "Just as the fish of the sea have their life in the water, so too Torah scholars have their life in the Torah, and if they separate from it, they immediately die." And in Tanchuma, portion Eikev: "For they are life to those who find them." Whoever finds the words of Torah finds life, etc. Therefore it is said, "For they are life to those who find them."

**[16]** And in the Zohar, Lech-Lecha, page 92a, it is stated: "Fortunate is the portion of Israel, for the Torah teaches them the ways of the Holy One, Blessed be He, etc. Indeed, it is written, 'The law of the Lord is perfect' (Psalm 19:8), etc. Fortunate is the portion of one who engages in Torah and does not separate himself from it. For whoever separates himself from the Torah, even for one moment, it is as if he separates himself from the life of this world, as it is written, 'for they are your life' (Deuteronomy 30:20), etc. And it is written, 'Length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you' (Proverbs 3:2)."

**[17]** And in the portion of Behaalotecha, the portion of Israel is righteous, for the Holy One, Blessed be He, desired them and gave them the Torah of truth, the Tree of Life, by which a person cleaves and inherits life in this world and life in the world to come. For whoever engages in Torah and cleaves to it has life and cleaves to life. And whoever abandons the words of Torah and separates himself from Torah is as if he separates himself from life, because it is life, and all its words are life. As it is said, "For they are life to those who find them" (Proverbs 4:22). And it is written, "It shall be healing to your navel" (Proverbs 3:8).

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## Gate IV, Chapter 33

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**[1]** And for this reason, we are commanded with a terrible warning from His blessed essence: "This

Book of the Torah shall not depart from your mouth, and you shall meditate on it day and night." As it is written in the introduction to the Zohar (Tikkunei Zohar), "How great is the mighty strength of the Torah, and how exalted it is above all, etc."

Therefore, a person needs to strive in the Torah day and night, and not distance himself from it. As it is said, "and you shall meditate on it day and night." And if one distances himself or separates from it, it is as if he has separated from the Tree of Life.

**[2]** And in the book *Tad'a* (Torah De'ah), chapter 13, it is said: "And a person should strive within himself in Torah and Mitzvot. Torah and Mitzvot are likened to bread and water, etc. This is to teach you that just as it is impossible for a person to subsist without bread and without water, etc., it is impossible for a person to subsist without Torah, as it is said, 'This book of the Torah shall not depart from your mouth, etc.' And so they said in *Tanchuma*, Parashat Ki Tavo, in the section *V'Haya Im Shamo*, and in Parashat Ha'azinu, and in *Midrash Tehillim* on Psalm 1."

**[3]** And the verse states, "It is a tree of life to those who grasp it" (Proverbs 3:18). For a person must establish in his heart and imagine in his mind. If he were drowning in a rushing stream and saw before him in the river a strong tree, surely he would gather his strength to grasp and cleave himself to it with all his might, and would not let go of it even for a moment. Since his very life now depends solely on this, who is so foolish as not to understand that if he were to be remiss, Heaven forbid, even for a moment, and let go of grasping it, he would immediately drown.

**[4]** Thus, the Holy Torah is called the Tree of Life, the "Ilana d'Chayyei." Only at the time when a person is seized by its love and constantly engages and contemplates it, is he truly alive with the true, elevated life, bound and cleaved, as it were, to the Life of the Worlds, blessed be His Name, the Holy One, blessed be He, for the Torah and He are One. And if, God forbid, he neglects his study and withdraws from constant engagement with it to occupy himself with the vanities of the world and its pleasures, he is severed and cut off from the elevated life and drowns himself in the malicious waters, meaning.

**[5]** And in Zohar, Vayetzei, page 152a, it is stated: "Blessed are Israel, to whom the Torah of truth was given, to engage in it day and night. For whoever

engages in the Torah has freedom from all. Freedom from death, which cannot rule over him, etc. Because whoever engages in the Torah and cleaves to it, cleaves to the Tree of Life. And if he turns away from the Tree of Life, then the Tree of Death rests upon him and he cleaves to it. As it is said, 'You have turned away,' etc. (See there)."

**[6]** How much a person needs to implant and establish this awesome matter in the thoughts of his heart, so that it may not waver. For the entirety of a person and his life is only that moment when he is cleaved to the Holy One, Blessed be He. And when he removes himself and separates himself from Him to engage in the vanities of this dark world, he is delivered into the hand of his evil inclination. And why should he have life? For he has already been submerged in the treacherous waters, meaning, and sunk into the depths of the abyss of evil, and is considered truly dead, even while he is in this world. He goes from one downfall to another, into darkness, without order and without knowledge, for it is his soul that is at stake. And for this reason, the Torah itself says, "and the sinner who destroys his soul" (Proverbs 11:30), and as it is written, "Take heed to yourself, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things..." (Deuteronomy 4:9). And as our Sages, of blessed memory, said concerning this (Menaḥot 99b): It is like a person who entrusted a dove to his servant and said to him, "Do you think that if you lose it, I will only take a fine from you? I will take your soul from you." And as is known, our Sages, of blessed memory, said concerning this in Devarim Rabbah, Chapter 24, that the Holy One, Blessed be He, said to man: "My lamp is in your hand, and your lamp is in My hand. If you guard My lamp, I will guard your lamp, and if you do not guard My lamp..." (refer to there). And so it is in Tanhuma, Parashat Terumah, and in Midrash Tehillim, Psalm 7 (refer to there).

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## Gate IV, Chapter 34

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**[1]** And from the time of the destruction of our Holy Temple, and the children were exiled from their Father's table, His Divine Presence, blessed be He, departs and is diminished, as it were, and finds no rest. And there is no remnant save this Torah, when the people of Israel, the holy nation, chirp and

meditate upon it as is fitting. Indeed, these are for them a miniature sanctuary, to prepare it and to sustain it, and it dwells with them and spreads its wings over them, as it were. And in the meantime, there is a little rest, etc. As our Sages, of blessed memory, stated in the first chapter of Berachot (8a): "From the day the Holy Temple was destroyed, the Holy One, blessed be He, has in His world only four cubits of Halakha alone."

**[2]** And they also said there, from what source [do we know] that even one who sits and engages in Torah, the Divine Presence rests with him, as it is stated, "In every place where I cause My name to be mentioned..." (Exodus 20:24). And in the latter part of Proverbs, chapter 8, it is said, "Whoever finds Me finds life" (Proverbs 8:35). The Holy One, Blessed be He, said: Whoever is found in the words of Torah, I too am found for him in every place. Therefore it is said, "Whoever finds Me finds life."

**[3]** And in Zohar Balak, page 181, it opens and says: "You shall not destroy its trees, for this is the Tree of Life, for from it you shall eat." And is it that one who corrupts eats from it? No, but rather "from it you shall eat" – that is the mighty, strong substance from which all mighty, holy spirits emerge. For there is no delight or desire for the Holy Spirit in this world except the Torah, for it is righteous. As it were, it sustains it and gives it sustenance in this world, more than all the offerings of the world. And from the day the Temple was destroyed and the offerings ceased, the Holy One, Blessed be He, has nothing but the words of the Torah, and the Torah that is renewed in His mouth. Therefore, "from it you shall eat," and there is no sustenance in this world except from it and those like it. For "man is a tree of the field" – this is what is called man, who is known above and below. "A tree of the field" – a great and mighty tree, for that is the field which the Lord has blessed, which is connected to Him. A tree that is known to that field always.

**[4]** And this is also the inner intention in their statement, of blessed memory, in the first chapter of Ta'anit (7a), "For man is a tree of the field, etc., for from it you shall eat, etc. If he is a worthy Torah scholar, from him you shall eat, etc., and if not, etc."

**[5]** And in Zohar Vayishlach 174b: "And how is a person strengthened in God? He is strengthened by the Torah. For whoever is strengthened by the Torah is strengthened by the Tree of Life. And as it were, He gives strength to the Holy One, Blessed be He, to be strengthened. And if he is weakened, what is written? 'You are weakened.' If he is weakened from the Torah, on the day of trouble, he is like a snare in the day of his distress. As it were, he presses upon the Shekhinah, for she is the strength of the world."

**[6]** And in the engagement with Torah, one, as it were, makes a dwelling for the Blessed One among the lower realms, so that His glory may dwell in the land of Israel. As our Sages of blessed memory stated in Shemot Rabbah, Chapter 23: "Eden was not given to Israel, and Moses ascended to God. Once the Torah was given, the Holy One, blessed be He, said: 'And they shall make for Me a sanctuary, and I will dwell among them.'"

**[7]** Sufficient are these words for the intelligent one, from which he will see and understand his path in holiness. And the righteous one shall grasp his path to stand guard over the engagement with Torah and its commandments all the days of his life, and to be disgusted with evil and choose good for himself and for all creatures and all worlds, to bring pleasure to his Creator and Maker, blessed be He.

**[8]** And may it be His will, blessed be He, that He open our hearts to His Torah and place within our hearts His love and His awe. And may His intention in the creation of His world be fulfilled, that the world be perfected under the sovereignty of the Almighty. And may every created being know, and may they all accept the yoke of His sovereignty, blessed be He, according to the supreme will, blessed be He. And may Hashem be One and His Name be One. Amen, may it be His will.

**[9]** Finished and complete.

**[10]** Teach me Your statutes in the land of Israel.

**[11]** Open my eyes, that I may behold wonders from Your Torah.

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