

The Essential Rabbi Nachman

*A treasury of sayings, teachings, parables and stories
by the outstanding Chassidic sage, mystic and visionary,
Rabbi Nachman of Breslov (1772-1810),
whose message of faith, hope, courage, simplicity and joy
is essential to each one of us
and essential to the whole world.*

Translated by
Avraham Greenbaum

INTRODUCTION

"Deep waters are the words of the mouth of a man, a flowing stream, the source of wisdom"
(Proverbs 18:4) .

The initial letters of the last four Hebrew words in the verse, *N achal N ove'a M ekor Ch ochmah* , "a flowing stream, source of wisdom" - form an acrostic of the name *NaChMaN* .

Amidst the confusing choices, contradictions and extremes confronting us on every side in today's world, never has the "flowing stream, the source of wisdom" - Rabbi Nachman's voice of honest truth, sanity, kindness and sound guidance for life - been more essential and necessary for each one of us and for the entire world!

THE ESSENTIAL RABBI NACHMAN is a rich treasury of his inspiring sayings and profound teachings on all aspects of life with a wide selection of his artlessly beautiful, witty and profoundly deep tales and parables. These are among the most priceless jewels of the Jewish heritage and have universal application to people of all backgrounds and beliefs. The selections included here have been newly translated from the original sources into the simplest possible language of today in order for Rabbi Nachman to speak to each one of us softly, clearly and directly, heart to heart.

Rabbi Nachman is "a tree with sustenance, shade and shelter for all" (cf. Daniel 4:9) . Everyone who knows his works has his or her own favorite passages. At certain junctures in life what may once have seemed opaque begins to radiate with meaning. Any selection is bound to be personal - I am sorry if due to lack of space or for some other reason I have omitted what others would have included. I have aimed to provide a wide selection of Rabbi Nachman's most fundamental teachings on faith, hope, courage, simplicity, and joy, spiritual growth, prayer from the heart, desire and longing, purity of thought and purity of heart, Israel and Mashiach.

After reading from the Torah in the Temple on the Day of Atonement, the High Priest would say: "More than I have read to you is written in this Torah scroll" (*Yoma* 68b) . Likewise, in addition to the tremendous spiritual wealth in the selections of Rabbi Nachman included in the present volume, there are also many more abundant riches for further exploration in the original collections of Rabbi Nachman's sayings, teachings and stories, almost all of which are today available in authoritative English translations with extensive commentary.

Yet the very availability of so many volumes may itself be daunting to those who are not sure where to begin.

THE ESSENTIAL RABBI NACHMAN is for those who seek one book that covers the entire span of Rabbi Nachman's ideas, teachings and tales. Those with access to the Hebrew originals will readily see that many of the intricacies of the Rebbe's dazzling hermeneutics based on multiple Biblical, Talmudic, Midrashic, Halachic and Kabbalistic sources have been omitted, while in some cases lengthy passages have been briefly summarized. The purpose has been to provide a clear thread of meaning for those whose primary concern is to discover Rabbi Nachman's actual message and how to apply it.

I am deeply grateful to all those who have given their generous support to the writing and printing of this book, and in particular to Elyahu & Esther Bortnick, Bill Bron, Shemaia Mathe, Eliyahu Reiter, Fonda Roth, Tzvi & Dafna Small and Jack & Elka Soussana as well as to those who wish to remain anonymous. With God's help, may this work contribute to spreading the words of Rabbi Nachman far and wide throughout the entire world, inspiring men and women, young and old everywhere to search in their hearts and join together, turning to God to serve Him with one accord until "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11:9) .

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THE LIFE OF RABBI NACHMAN

He was the true "live man," the like of whom there has never been. At all times he was truly alive. His life was always *new* life. There are countless gradations in the life and vitality found in the world. Real life is the life of true wisdom, and the essence of wisdom is to labor and endeavor to know and acknowledge God, Who is the Life of life. The closer one comes to God, the more one's life is genuine life. The righteous are constantly attached to true life. But the life which the Rebbe himself achieved was on an altogether higher, more exalted plane, the like of which no man has ever tasted. Because the Rebbe had *long* life, the truly good life.

Chayey Moharan, Introduction

Rabbi Nachman was born on 1 Nissan 5532 (4 April 1772) in the Ukrainian town of Medzeboz, where his great-grandfather, Rabbi Israel, the Baal Shem Tov, founder of the Chassidic movement, had lived and was buried.

Rabbi Nachman's father, Reb Simchah, was the son of Reb Nachman Horodenker, who had been one of the Baal Shem Tov's closest disciples and a member of his household. Rabbi Nachman's mother was Feiga, daughter of the Baal Shem Tov's daughter, Odel. Rabbi Nachman asked that when invoking his merit people should refer to him as Nachman ben (son of) Feiga.

As a young boy he hid his devotions from everyone, performing long ablutions in the cold mikveh pool even in the heart of winter and secluding himself in the forests for lengthy periods of prayer and meditation in addition to prodigious study.

Marriage

In accordance with the custom of his time, he was married at the age of 13 soon after becoming Bar Mitzvah. His wife was Sashia, daughter of Rabbi Ephraim of Ossatin, a village near the town of Medvedevka . In their 22 years of marriage they had eight children, but four - including two sons - died in childhood. Four daughters survived, with known descendants until today.

From the time of his marriage Rabbi Nachman lived in Ossatin with his father-in-law, continuing his studies and devotions until he attained unique levels of sanctity and holy spirit as well as being fully conversant with the entire array of Biblical, Talmudic, Halachic, Midrashic and Kabbalistic literature. At first he was unknown to all except one disciple five years his senior, Reb Shimon ben Baer, who attached himself to him shortly after his marriage and became his lifelong follower.

At the age of 18 Rabbi Nachman left his father-in-law's home to live in Medvedevka, where he spent the next ten years. It was there that his greatness first became revealed, and he rapidly gained an ardent following including some distinguished scholars and Kabbalists and the octogenarian Rabbi Yekusiel, the Magid of Terhovitz, one of the senior leaders of the Chassidic movement. Rabbi Nachman emphasized faith, prayer and ever-renewed spiritual growth. Because of his practice of hearing the personal confessions of his adherents, they were originally known as the Viduynikers - Confessors.

Pilgrimage to Israel

It was from Medvedevka that Rabbi Nachman set forth on his pilgrimage to the land of Israel in the early summer of 1798 despite its being at the center of a major land and sea war between Britain and Turkey against the French. Rabbi Nachman's 14-month trip was fraught with every possible obstacle and he was repeatedly in mortal danger, but he accomplished his goal of walking in the Holy Land . He visited the holy sites in the north, but apparently not Jerusalem . Despite his capture by pirates on his homeward journey, Rabbi Nachman returned safely to Medvedevka in summer 1799.

Soon afterwards he moved to the town of Zlatipolia , where he spent two years. It was then that the opposition he suffered for most of the rest of his life began in earnest under the leadership of Rabbi Leib, the Zeidah (Grandfather) of Shpola.

Breslov

In 1802 at the age of 30 Rabbi Nachman left Zlatipolia to settle in the town of Breslov , where he spent most of the remaining eight years of his life. On entering the town he said that his followers would always be known as the Breslover Chassidim, pointing out that the name BReSLoV has the same letters as LeV BaSaR, a "heart of flesh" (Ezekiel 36:26) .

Very soon after his arrival Rabbi Nachman was joined by the 22-year-old Nathan - Nosson - Sternhartz from the nearby town of Nemirov . Reb Nosson became Rabbi Nachman's closest follower and transcribed almost all his teachings. After Rabbi Nachman left the world, Reb Nosson established what has become the worldwide Breslov Chassidic movement. Rebbe Nachman said of Reb Nosson: "Were it not for Reb Nosson, not a single page of my teachings would have remained".

In the eight years that followed this fateful encounter Rabbi Nachman radiated fresh Torah with his every word and gesture - a Torah in which the sublime spiritual heights he attained were interwoven with events in the lives of his family and followers against the wider backdrop of the Russian Pale of Settlement and the growing plight of its Jewish population. Rabbi Nachman's Torah discourses, conversations, stories and parables and accompanying episodes in his life were faithfully recorded by Reb Nosson.

Rabbi Nachman had great hopes for his baby son Shlomo Ephraim born in spring 1805, but a year later in summer 1806 the baby died and Rabbi Nachman mourned him deeply. His loss prompted Rabbi Nachman to venture on a new path which found expression in the stories he now began to tell, later printed as Sipurey Maasiot.

Rabbi Nachman's wife Sashia died in summer 1807. Not long afterwards he remarried but had no children with his second wife. During this period Rabbi Nachman contracted tuberculosis, and when he started coughing he predicted that this illness would eventually take his life.

In autumn 1807 he journeyed across war-torn Europe to Lemberg (Lvov), where he received medical treatment while pursuing other purposes known to him alone. Lemberg was becoming a center of the incipient assimilationist movement.

Returning from Lemberg to Breslov in 1808, Rabbi Nachman defied the growing waves of doubt, skepticism and rationalism to give ever greater emphasis to faith, simplicity, personal prayer, devotion and happiness.

Uman

In summer 1810 Rabbi Nachman made his final journey to the town of Uman , through which he had passed eight years earlier on his way to Breslov, and whose old Jewish cemetery he had chosen

as his place of burial. This was the burial site of the martyrs who sanctified God's Name in Uman in 1768 - less than four years before Rabbi Nachman's birth - when tens of thousands of Jews who refused to betray their faith were slaughtered in the space of three days. Forty years later Uman had become a leading center of the assimilationist movement.

Rabbi Nachman spent five months in Uman, during which he had lengthy discussions with three leading proponents of assimilation, who held him in the highest regard. Despite his illness he celebrated Rosh Hashanah of 5571 / 1810 with several hundred followers. During the first day of the festival his situation deteriorated seriously and he coughed up large quantities of blood. Nevertheless, despite his great weakness, he gave his customary teaching on the second evening, speaking for many hours. This was his last lesson.

Eighteen days later on 18 Tishri 5571 / 16 October 1810 - fourth day of the festival of Succot - Rabbi Nachman departed this life and was buried in the old cemetery of Uman amidst the martyrs of the 1768 massacre.

Rabbi Nachman lives on until today in the fire of his teachings and the zeal of his followers to print and spread them. It was Reb Nosson who took the initiative to print Rabbi Nachman's discourses (Likutey Moharan), stories (Sipurey Maasiot) and conversations (Sichot Haran and Chayey Moharan) as well as his own discourses and commentaries.

Reb Nosson initiated visits to Rabbi Nachman's gravesite and the annual Rosh Hashanah gathering of his followers, the Breslover Chassidim, in Uman, where he built a synagogue. Uman remained the main center of the Breslover Chassidim until after the First World War, when it shifted to Israel, and from there the movement has spread to become worldwide.

SOURCES

The original source of each of the teachings, sayings, tales and parables contained in this collection is cited with the text. The great majority were heard directly from the mouth of Rabbi Nachman and recorded, often immediately, by his closest disciple and scribe, Rabbi Nathan - Nosson - Sternhartz (1780-1844). "Were it not for Reb Nosson," said Rabbi Nachman, "not a single page of my teachings would have remained!" Other sayings and stories are drawn from oral traditions handed down from generation to generation by Rabbi Nachman's followers, the Breslover Chassidim, and printed as referenced below.

Alim LiTerufah Collected letters of Reb Nosson.

Avaneha Barzel Stories and teachings of Rabbi Nachman and his disciples collected by Rabbi Shmuel Horowitz (1903-1973).

Chayey Moharan "The Life of Rabbi Nachman", translated by Avraham Greenbaum as "Tzaddik" (Breslov Research Institute): Intimate biographical portrait of Rabbi Nachman by Reb Nosson including numerous conversations, information relating to the Rebbe's lessons, and many of his sayings, stories, dreams and visions.

Kochvey Ohr Stories and teachings of Rabbi Nachman and his disciples compiled by Reb Avraham Chazan (1849-1917), the son of Reb Nachman of Tulchin, who was Reb Nossan's leading disciple.

Likutey Halachot By Reb Nossan. 8-volume exploration of the laws of Shulchan Aruch (the code of Torah law) in the light of Rabbi Nachman's teachings, illumining all areas of Torah with the insights of Chassidut.

Likutey Moharan lit. "Gleanings of our Master, Rabbi Nachman": the primary collection of Rabbi Nachman's major Torah discourses with many shorter teachings. Extensive portions are now available in English translation with commentary from Breslov Research Institute. Some of the extracts from Likutey Moharan included in the present volume contain explanatory glosses added by Reb Nossan in his abbreviated version, *Kitzur Likutey Moharan*, or his *Likutey Eitzot*, translated by Avraham Greenbaum as "Rabbi Nachman's Advice" (Breslov Research Institute), a compendium of practical teachings from Likutey Moharan arranged by subject.

Netiv Tzaddik Letters of Reb Nossan b'Reb Yehuda, a student of Reb Nossan, who settled in Tiberias.

R. Yitzchak Breiter (1886-1943) An ardent, highly charismatic Breslover chassid who spread Breslover teachings in his native Poland prior to the holocaust, in which he lost his life.

Sefer HaMiddot lit. "The Book of Attributes", translated as "The Aleph-Bet Book" (Breslov Research Institute): A collection of striking aphorisms by Rabbi Nachman arranged by subject and containing the distilled wisdom of the Torah on all aspects of life.

Siach Sarfey Kodesh Anecdotes and teachings of Rabbi Nachman, Reb Nossan and the Breslover Chassidim with previously unpublished stories and sayings from the Breslover oral tradition. Transcribed by Reb Avraham Weitzhandler based on conversations with Reb Levi Yitzchok Bender (1897-1989).

Sichot Haran "Conversations of Rabbi Nachman", translated as "Rabbi Nachman's Wisdom" (Breslov Research Institute). Collected insights and practical guidance on all subjects, transcribed by Rabbi Nossan.

Sipurey Maasiot lit. "Tales of Deeds", translated as "Rabbi Nachman's Stories" (Breslov Research Institute). Thirteen major tales and some additional parables about kings, princesses, ogres, pirates, magical stones, singing animals and other amazing wonders conveying profoundest mystical secrets.

Sipurim Niflaim Anecdotes, teachings and previously unpublished stories of Rabbi Nachman collected by Reb Shmuel Horowitz (1903-1973).

Tovot Zichronot Breslover traditions compiled by Reb Avraham Sternhartz (1862-1955).

RABBI NACHMAN'S SONG OF DELIGHT

In praise of the Torah of Moses

No other beliefs and customs compare with our faith.

Their wise men invented customs using human reason.

Moses ascended on high garbed in a cloud.

The Necessary Existent spoke with him each time, so he distanced himself from woman.

Despised, sickly and oppressed though we are,

We received a good teaching from him - God's wisdom, which comes forth from nothingness.

Moses - king in Yeshurun - and our faith are like two inseparable brothers.

Neither his soul nor his pure body deviated from one another.

Israel and the nations

As numerous as their souls, so are their many opinions and diverse arguments.

Their forms of worship are new, having arisen only recently.

Their thoughts are not our thoughts, and our ways are not their ways.

Our souls are one: we do not turn aside to their many images.

The power of the soul

My strong, wise soul: Why have you not taken pity on yourself? Why have you forgotten the Craftsman who raised you, Who has fed you sweet dainties and clothed you in purple?

Now you are trampled by the flock and under the feet of gross worldly desires. You are bare and naked. Your festive wine has turned into a cup of tears.

Be strong! Renew your strength. Don't be like a great elephant or camel that even when pulled along by the nose by a mouse will still not kick free, only through folly since he doesn't know his own strength.

But you, my wise, strong soul: What will you do on the day of reckoning and what will you answer the One Who sent you on your mission? Don't look for fleeting pleasures, for your body is frail and lowly, while time roars ahead, and this could be your body's last day.

Pierce your heart of stone and shine from there to me with a little glimpse of your face, which is bright as the sun, beautiful as the moon. Don't be still and silent! Raise your sweet voice in songs and thanks.

Open your mouth and bring forth your pleasant words before the Holy One blessed be He. Raise your eyes on high and remember your ancient love.

God's glory in nature

Rivers, streams, channels of abundant waters, and seas great and small,

Wondrous, diverse in colors, tastes and characters,

Swarming with creatures small and great - each one contains species without number.

All laud and praise God with all their limbs.

They constantly utter words and never deny their Ruler.

Precious jewels and pearls glint in their depths:

Hidden within them are the lights of their vessels.

Destiny of the soul

The souls hewn from beneath the Throne of Glory

Pine constantly to become one with their Source.

The soul draws life and kindness from the kindnesses of David.

She has not lost the grace of the spirit dripping from Eden 's garden.

Palatial dwellings and tents of peace are marked out for each and every soul with signs of majesty.

"What has God done?" the angels will ask, racing on their missions like shooting stars.

Far remote from all delights will be those whose paths are corrupted.

They will be left hungry and disgraced with only the hollow of the sling as their lot.

Let us not be lost! Let us return to God!

Let us accept bad and good with love and bedeck ourselves in honor of our eternal Father.

The holy land

The earth was created surrounded by spheres, with many lands and states around it.

The children of man all have their languages and beliefs.

The buds, flowers and fruits of the earth

And even the collapse of states are through her winds.

The earth alone endures, with the spheres encompassing around her.

Torah protects from impurity

Demons and spirits fly through the air,

Hearing God's decree and holding sway over the four root kinds of damage: the ox, the pit, the tooth and fire.

In three ways like angels, in three like men,

They flee in the face of the holy Covenant, of which it is said, "He shall surely be circumcised".

Striking as if with rods in their weird forms,

Spell-weavers and magicians compel them by adjuring them with names.

But the holy Torah protects us from all impurities;

Charity saves from terrible deaths.

The suffering of exile

Prophecy we do not have.

With the teeth of the nations gnashing against the unique people, we are bereft of understanding.

They discuss how to administer the bitter cup of sorrows.

We shall bear their yoke until the Poor One arrives.

Mashiach

The son shall explore his father's treasures.

With a crown of glory the beloved son is crowned.

Then we shall sing a new song.

Our King! Each and every one will point with a finger of flesh.

The Torah will be unforgettably sealed in each one's heart.

Death will be consumed for ever like the fading scent of incense.

Spiritual healing

Let us acquire a heart of wisdom to understand the design of our body, the proportions of its joints and the structure of its limbs.

This necessary understanding helps us to know the Creator Who formed all these creations,

Who heals all sickness and each one's pains - the blind and the lame, the leprous and afflicted, he who worries and he who is in pain.

Let us eat only to sustain our souls, restraining our natural cravings.

Chazak!!! Be strong!!!

THE UNIQUE CHARM OF RABBI NACHMAN

The world needs me very much indeed. Without me, the world cannot exist at all.

You yourself know how much you need me. All the Tzaddikim also need me, because they too need to improve. Even the nations of the world need me. I could draw the gentiles to God and

bring them closer to the faith of Israel. However: "Enough for the servant to be like his Master" (*Berachot* 58b) .

Chayey Moharan #248, 250-1

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I am a river that cleanses from all stains.

I am a most beautiful, most amazing tree with most amazing branches. And down below, I am literally under the ground.

I am a wonder, and my soul is very wondrous.

I am the elder of elders.

I am the holy elder, who reveals things which the Ancient of Days concealed.

Chayey Moharan #245, 256, 272, 289, 332

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I will lead you on a new path which no man has ever traveled before. It is really a very old path, and yet it is completely new.

Tovot Zichronot p. 107

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In time to come, I will sing a song which will be the world to come of all the Tzaddikim and Chassidim.

Chayey Moharan #267

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My teachings and conversations are not only for you, but for "those who are here.... and for those who are not here" - the future generations (Deuteronomy 29:14; Rashi ad loc.) . You must also teach your children all the lessons and ideas and stories that I have revealed to you. "And you shall make them known to your children and your children's children!" (ibid. 4:9) .

Sichot Haran #209

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I can turn a person into a good Jew and make him just like me! Literally!!!

Chayey Moharan #230

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My mission is a secret. It is such a secret that even when I reveal the secret, it still remains a secret.

Siach Sarfey Kodesh 1-54

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Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, author of the *Zohar*, was unique, as everyone knows. From the time of Rabbi Shimon until the ARI (Rabbi Yitzchak Luria 1534-72), there were no new revelations like Rabbi Shimon's. Only the ARI revealed entirely new and original teachings which no-one could reveal until his time. After the Ari, no new teachings were revealed until the coming of the Baal Shem Tov (1698-1760), who was also totally unique and who revealed completely new teachings.

From the time of the Baal Shem Tov until today there have been no new revelations on such a level. Until now, the world has been sustained only by the revelations of the Baal Shem Tov.

Then I came along!!! And now I am starting to reveal totally awesome, exalted, original teachings.

Chayey Moharan #279

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I know wisdom that cannot be revealed. If I were to begin to reveal this wisdom, people would be nourished by the sheer delight of understanding it. They would no longer eat or drink. Every soul would long to hear this wisdom and the whole world would grind to a halt. People would leave their present lives in search of the sweet beauty of this wisdom. But I cannot reveal this wisdom to mankind.

Sichot Haran #181

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The song and dance of my Torahs

As yet the world has not had the least taste of me. Were they only to hear one of my lessons with its true melody and dance, they would pass into a state of complete surrender. I mean the whole world - even the animals and plants! Everything in existence would be nullified. Their very souls would expire from overwhelming delight.

Think of the power of music and dance. Someone who truly understands music can play melodies that spring from its very essence and have the power to draw the very soul of the listener after their every nuance. The listener becomes totally subordinate to the melody, surrendering himself to its drawing power. The melody penetrates and arouses him, drawing him along with it.

This is even more so with dance. A real dancer can dance in such a way that his body expresses every subtle shade of the music he is dancing to. Every limb of his body moves in perfect unison with the music. Sometimes the music calls for a movement of the head, the legs or the arms. It may call for the dancer to bend down or swing around. The movements of the body must be in perfect harmony with the music.

Now think of a melody with words. In a perfect song, the words are connected to the melody in every detail. The song expresses in words exactly what the music expresses through the beauty of the melody. Now add the element of dance: the dance expresses in terms of bodily movement what the words and music express in *their* terms. Everything works in complete harmony.

When the words, melody and dance are all interrelated and interwoven in perfect unity, anyone who experiences them will be so overwhelmed with delight that his soul will literally expire and he will fall into a state of complete surrender. This is the greatest of all pleasures. Anyone who hasn't tasted this knows nothing of pleasure.

Those present when such a player sings and dances are powerless: they simply expire with yearning and delight. The closer a person is to the melody and dance and the deeper his understanding, the more the movements of the music and dance will come naturally because of the drawing power of the delight they cause. His pleasure at the music and dance draws him in and takes over. He quite spontaneously starts moving, singing and dancing.

Likewise, the closer someone is to my teachings, the more natural and easy will the movements of their holy song and dance become.

Happy is the eye that sees this, for even in the next world, not everyone will be worthy of hearing and seeing this. "Only those who labor on the eve of Shabbat will eat on Shabbat."

Chayey Moharan #340

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It occurred to me that I ought to take my wife and go off to some remote place where I could live in secrecy out of everyone's sight. From time to time I would step out into the street and take a look at the world and laugh at everyone and everything.

Chayey Moharan #259

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When somebody thinks of me they become like a newborn babe.

Siach Sarfey Kodesh 1-17

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Nobody ever loses out on my account.

Siach Sarfey Kodesh 1-28

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God has granted me that whenever people speak of me , their thoughts will turn to repentance.

Siach Sarfey Kodesh 1-47

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I encounter great opposition and people ask many questions about me. And with one silence I answer all the questions.

Siach Sarfey Kodesh 1-59

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Maybe one drop will enter

Why have I revealed so many amazing teachings and stories and shared so many of my thoughts with you? Let me explain it with a parable.

There was once a king whose only son became so ill that all the doctors despaired of curing him. Meanwhile, a doctor of outstanding wisdom came and the king begged him to try his best to cure the prince. The doctor told him truthfully that the chances of the prince being cured were very remote, but if they tried one last thing , there was a very faint possibility that the prince would be cured .

"But I don't know if I should tell you what this method is," said the doctor, "because it will be very hard indeed to apply it."

When the king pressed him to reveal the method , the doctor said: "You must understand that your son's illness is so desperate that it is now quite impossible to put even a single drop of medicine in his mouth. However, there are certain remedies which are so priceless that a single small bottle costs thousands and thousands of gold pieces. Now you must fill barrels and barrels full of these precious remedies and pour them in bucketfuls over your son. Obviously these precious remedies will almost all go to waste, but the prince will become slightly stronger. And it may be that as they are poured all over him, one tiny drop will enter his mouth and he might be healed."

The king immediately agreed and gave instructions to do what the doctor had suggested , and this was how the prince was healed.

Precisely because we are so crushed by the sickness of our souls, the Tzaddik, the faithful doctor, is forced to pour priceless remedies over us, even though it would seem that virtually all of them will

go to waste. Nevertheless, the sweet scent is absorbed. And in the fullness of time, maybe we will allow one drop to enter into our mouths and our inner being, and then there will be some hope for us to be healed spiritually and physically.

Chayey Moharan #391

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Sometimes I tell a person something but it has no effect until my words are passed from this person to the next and from one friend to another. Eventually they reach a particular individual and penetrate deep inside his heart. Then they carry out their mission to perfection, stirring and arousing him.

Sichot Haran #208

If you saw a great treasure you would surely rush to dig it up , even if it meant getting very muddy and dirty.

Am I not the treasury of fear of Heaven? Then why don't people run after me to get it? The way to attain it is with your lips and heart. You must be bold enough to ask for it. It is "in your mouth and in your heart that you may do it" (Deuteronomy 30:14) .

Chayey Moharan #295

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The Good Wine

I am a "new container full of old wine" (*Avot* 4:7) .

Chayey Moharan #289

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Once, an important trader was traveling with a consignment of fine Hungarian wine. During the journey his assistant and the carriage driver said to him, "Here we are, traveling with all this wine. It's a very hard journey - give us a little taste of the wine." He agreed to let them have a small taste.

A few days later, the assistant happened to be in a small town with some people who were drinking wine and praising it extravagantly. They said it was Hungarian.

"Let me have a taste," said the assistant. They gave him some, and he said, "This isn't fine Hungarian wine at all!" They were most offended and told him to leave, but he insisted: "I know very well that this wine isn't Hungarian, because I was with a wine merchant who had genuine Hungarian wine and he gave me some to try. I know what it really tastes like." But they ignored him.

But when the Mashiach comes, then they'll know. The time will come for the fine old wine stored up for the righteous to be served. Others will be fooled into believing that inferior Romanian, Wallachsian and Strovitsarian wines are fine old vintage wines. But none of my followers will be fooled, because they've already tasted the good wine!

Chayey Moharan #260

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In time to come the whole world will be Breslover Chassidim.

"I will give you a heart of flesh, LeV BaSaR" (Ezekiel 36:26) . Read the word not as BaSaR but as BoSeR, "glad" (Midrash) . Everyone will be glad at their friends' good fortune.

The letters of the words LeV BoSeR, a glad heart, spell out the word BReSLoV.

Chayey Moharan #339

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TEACHINGS

FAITH

The world regards faith as something minor, but I consider faith as being of the greatest importance.

The way to faith is through simplicity, without sophistry or philosophy.

Sichot Haran #33

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Believe in something

It is better to be a fool who believes in everything than to be so clever that you do not believe in anything.

If you believe in everything, some of your beliefs may be foolish but you will also believe in the truth. However, when a person is too clever and does not want to believe in anything, he may begin by ridiculing falsehood and folly but can easily end up so skeptical of everything that he even denies the truth.

Sichot Haran #103

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There must be questions

There are many searching questions about God. But it is only fitting and proper that this should be so. Indeed, such questions enhance the greatness of God and show His exaltedness. God is so great and exalted that He is beyond our ability to understand Him. It is obviously impossible for us, with our limited human intelligence, to understand His ways. Inevitably there are things that baffle us, and this is only fitting. If God's ways were in accordance with the limits of our meager understanding, there would be no difference between His understanding and ours, and this is inconceivable.

Likutey Moharan II, 52

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Believing is seeing

If you ask a believer to explain why he has faith, he will certainly not be able to give you a reason, because faith is applicable only where one does not understand the reason. Yet, because of his complete faith, whatever the believer himself believes in is perfectly clear and self-evident as if he sees it with his own eyes.

Likutey Moharan, I, 62

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Rely on God

It is very good to rely on God completely. As each day begins, entrust your every movement and those of all who depend on you into God's hands, asking that everything should go according to His will.

You will then not need to worry about whether or not things are going as they should, because you are relying on God. If He wants things to go differently from the way you may wish, you will be willing to accept everything the way He wants it.

Sichot Haran #2

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If you have faith, you are truly alive

When you have faith, every day is filled with good. When things go well, it is certainly good. But even if things go wrong and you suffer, this is also good. For you trust that God will have mercy and will eventually send good. Everything must be good, because everything comes from God.

A person who lacks faith is not truly alive, because as soon as something bad happens he gives up all hope. He has no way to comfort himself because, having no faith, he has placed himself outside God's providence and therefore, for him, there is no good at all.

If you have faith, you will have a good and beautiful life.

Sichot Haran #53

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Faith in yourself

You must have faith in yourself!

You must have enough faith in God's goodness to believe that you are important to Him. Have faith that you too are precious in God's eyes. So great is God's goodness that each and every person is great and important in His eyes.

Being humble does not mean you must put yourself in a state of constricted consciousness. Constantly ask God to bring you to true humility and to have faith in yourself. Some Tzaddikim suffer opposition only because they do not have faith in themselves!

Sichot Haran #140

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Speak out your faith

Faith depends on a person's mouth. We must *say* that we believe - say it out loud! "I will make Your faithfulness known *with my mouth*" (Psalms 89: 2) .

When a person is experiencing a crisis of faith, or even passing doubts, it is very beneficial to say aloud: "I believe!" Simply giving expression to your faith in words is itself an act of faith, and this can bring you to true faith.

Likewise you should also be very careful never to say anything which implies even the slightest lack of faith, let alone total disbelief. Even if you are a believer in your heart, never express disbelief even as a joke - not even if you are merely quoting someone else to ridicule their opinion. To do this is very wrong and can be very damaging to your faith. Even as a joke it is forbidden say anything which implies disrespect of God.

Likutey Moharan II, 44

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The cry of the heart

The word **K a ShYA** - a "difficulty" or "question" - consists of the initial letters of the verse " **Sh** 'ma **Y** -K-V-K **K** oli **E** kra: Hear, God, my voice - I cry...." (Psalms 27:7) .

When you cry out in your heart, this itself is an aspect of faith. You may have many doubts and questions, but when you cry out in your heart it shows that you still have a spark of true faith.

Without this spark you would not cry out at all. Your very cry is therefore an aspect of faith. Understand this.

This cry can also bring you to faith. The cry itself is an aspect of faith , but it is still very weak. Yet this very cry can elevate and strengthen your faith until all your questions disappear.

Even if you have not yet attained this, the cry itself is very beneficial.

Sichot Haran #146

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Faith in every limb

There are various kinds of faith. There is faith that is only in the heart. But a person must have so much faith that it spreads to all his limbs. Thus the Kabbalistic writings mention that when washing one's hands to eat bread, one should raise them towards the head in order to receive holiness. Your faith must extend into your hands in order to believe that by raising them towards your head you receive holiness. Without faith, it is a meaningless gesture, for "All your commandments are faith" (Psalms 119:86) .

If you are strong in your faith, you will eventually come to understand what you believe in. The stronger your faith, the greater your understanding will become. At the outset you have no option but to have faith, because you cannot understand the matter, but through faith you will come to understand it.

There will then be new, more exalted levels that will still be hidden from you and beyond your ability to understand. Here again you will have to make the effort to believe. You must always start with faith regarding the levels that are as yet hidden from you, but eventually you will understand them as well. This is an ongoing process. Your faith must be so strong that it spreads to every one of your limbs. This faith will bring you to true wisdom.

Likutey Moharan I, 91

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Faith in God, not in the means

Many people make the mistake of turning the means through which something comes about into an intermediary between themselves and God. They do believe in God, but they also believe in the intermediary, saying that we have no option but to depend upon a particular means in order to bring about a certain result. For example, they put their faith in their business activities as the cause of their livelihood, placing all the emphasis on their own endeavors as if God would somehow not be able to provide their livelihood without them. Likewise people put all the emphasis on the means through which a cure comes about - the medicine - as if without medicine God does not have the power to heal. That is not so. The Holy One, blessed be He, is the Cause of all causes, and there is absolutely no need for any one particular means. **Even while resorting to a given means to try to bring something about, we must believe only in God, and not put our faith in the means.**

Likutey Moharan I, 62

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Know it in your heart

"Know this day and consider it in your heart that HaShem is God in heaven above and on earth below; there is no other" (Deuteronomy 4:39) .

The only way to know God is through complete faith. Only faith can bring you to true knowledge and perception of God's greatness: "And I will betroth you to Me with *faith* , and you shall know God ! " (Hosea 2:22) .

Many passages tell us to know God: "Know this day and consider it in your heart ... " (Deuteronomy 4:39) . "Know the God of your father" (I Chronicles 28:9) . "Know that HaShem is God" (Psalms 100:3) . These verses teach us to know and be mindful of God's presence at all times and not to forget Him for a moment.

Great kings constantly remind their subjects that they have a ruler. Soldiers in particular are trained to know who their king and master is - "In order that His fear should be on their faces" (Exodus 20:17) - so that they should serve their master unconditionally . Subordinates are constantly told, "Know that you have a lord and master." The intention is that they should keep this in mind and never forget it, in order not to do anything against his will.

The same is true of the Kingdom of Heaven . We are told: "Know the God of your father!" Know it and don't ever forget it! "Know this day and consider it in your heart, that HaShem is God!" "Know that HaShem is God!"

We need to be reminded time and time again. Everyone knows in general terms that "HaShem is God" . However, the distractions and temptations of this vain world cause many to forget it much of the time. This is why the Torah reminds us: "Know that HaShem is God!" "Know the God of your father!" That is to say: Bring this knowledge deep within yourself until it is bound tightly in

your mind and heart at all times. This is the meaning of "Know this day and consider it in your heart that HaShem is God."

Perfect knowledge is when you bind your mind to your heart so that you know in your heart that "HaShem is God." When you bring this knowledge into your heart, you will be filled with deep awe, fear and reverence of God and you will not sin.

Each person's knowledge and awareness of God are unique to himself according to the horizons of his heart. Our basic knowledge of God derives from what we have been taught by our holy forefathers, who struggled all their lives to divest themselves of all material attachments. They conquered all their negative traits and desires, releasing themselves from the root of evil. This was how they came to true recognition and understanding of their Creator.

They have left this good heritage to us and our duty is to accept it with the utmost joy. "Happy are we! How good is our portion! How pleasant is our lot! How beautiful is our heritage!" (Morning Prayers) .

When the Torah tells us to "know" God, it is teaching us to bring this holy knowledge into our minds and thoughts and bind it in our hearts constantly at all times in order that "His fear will be upon our faces so that we will not sin" (Exodus 20:17) .

Sichot Haran #217

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The good life

The non-believers have no life even in this world. As soon as things go against them, and certainly when trouble strikes, they simply have nowhere to turn. Since they attribute everything to nature, they are left with nothing to fortify them.

But one who has faith and believes in God has a very good life. Even when trouble strikes, he can still fortify himself with his trust in God, because he knows that everything is for the best. Either this suffering will cleanse him of his sins or eventually bring him some great benefit. For God's intention is certainly for good. Therefore the man of faith always has a good life both in this world and the next.

The non-believers, however, have no life either in this world or the next. Those who really know them see that they are always racked with suffering. They endure constant pain and anxiety because things never go exactly as they want. All their days are filled with pain and anger.

In this world it is impossible for everything to go the way one wants it. Those who ignore the true, enduring purpose of life, satisfying only their material desires, are doomed to a life of constant pain and suffering without having any way to console themselves.

But if you have true faith, your main hope is in the world to come and you therefore have a very good life. Whatever happens to you, you have faith that everything is for good - whether it comes to remind you to repent or to atone for your sins so that you may be worthy of the everlasting good of the world to come.

Your sins and wrongdoing may cause you great anguish. You may suffer the worst agonies of regret. Yet your very contrition over your sins actually increases your days and adds to your life, for "The fear of God increases one's days" (Proverbs 10:27) .

You may experience great pain when you regret your sins. You may feel deeply ashamed when contemplating God's exalted greatness. You may cringe in fear of punishment. Whatever form it takes , this suffering is caused by your very fear of God, and "The fear of God increases one's days." Your very pain and anxiety add to your days.

If you are a person of faith, you will find it easier to repent. True repentance must balance the sin. You have to endure pain and suffering in equal measure to the enjoyment derived from the sin.

Since you believe in God, you will never be able to have complete enjoyment from any sin because any wrong you do will be with mixed feelings and in the full knowledge that it will end bitterly . You know the bitter punishment for each sin, so that if you succumb to temptation you are filled with regrets even as you sin. It is therefore much easier for you to repent because you do not have to endure unbearable pangs of repentance since the pleasure from your sin was never very great.

For the non-believers, however, repentance is more of a burden. Having suffered little pain or remorse at the time of the sin, they are obliged to suffer when they repent in order to balance the pleasure of the sin.

Sichot Haran #102

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The main thing is faith!

The main thing is faith! Every person must search within himself and strengthen himself in faith. For there are people who suffer the worst illnesses and afflictions only because of fallen faith, because, "God will send you *wondrous* plagues, great and *faithful* plagues and great and *faithful* sicknesses" (Deuteronomy 28:59) . The plagues and sicknesses are "faithful" because they come on account of a lack of faith. Fallen faith causes "wondrous" plagues, for which no medicine, prayer or ancestral merit is of any avail...

The remedy is to dig down until we find the waters that nurture faith. These are the waters of counsel - the spiritual pathways that enable us to deepen our faith, as it is written, "I will acknowledge Your Name, for You have done wonders, [sending] counsels from afar, nurturing faith" (Isaiah 25:1) . True spiritual counsel nurtures faith, enabling it to grow.

The cry from the heart

True counsel springs from the depths of the heart. When the crisis of faith is so great that even wordless cries cannot help, one has to cry from the heart alone: "Their *heart* cried out to God" (Lamentations 2:18) . The heart alone cries without our letting out a sound. "From the depths I call out to God" (Psalms 130:1) - from the depths of the heart. And from the depths of the heart comes guidance, for "like deep waters, so is counsel in the heart of man" (Proverbs 20:5) . When shouts and screams no longer help because faith has collapsed, one must cry from the depths of the heart without letting out a sound. This is how true counsel is revealed, for "like deep waters, so is counsel in the heart of man."

And through the true guidance and counsel that are revealed in the world (with each person knowing in his own heart what he must do) faith is able to grow, as it is written, "Counsels from afar, nurturing faith." Then everything can be rectified. For true counsel is a "wonder" - "I will acknowledge Your Name, for You have done *wonders* , *counsels* from afar...." This makes it possible to heal the "*wondrous* plagues" sent by God. Prayer also brings about "wonders", as it is written, "Awesome in praises [i.e. prayer], performing *wonders* " (Exodus 15:11) . The same is true of ancestral merit: "In front of their fathers He performed *wonders* " (Psalms 78:12) .

Likutey Moharan II, 5

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The Future Song

The destined future renewal of the world will come about through faith.

When the world is renewed in the future, it will be governed through wonders and providence alone in a way that transcends nature. For the future renewal of the world will come about through the land of Israel , which in its very essence depends on "the power of His works" (Psalms 111:6; see Rashi on Genesis 1:1) - namely, knowing that God created the world.

And in the future the Holy One, blessed be He, will renew the entire world through the land of Israel , for then it will be revealed that God created everything. The essential holiness of the land of Israel lies in the fact that His providence is there all the time: "Constantly the eyes of HaShem your God are upon it from the beginning of the year until the end of the year" (Deuteronomy 11:12) . And in time to come, when He renews the entire world through the land of Israel , the entire world will be governed through providence alone, just like the land of Israel . Nature will then be totally nullified and the world will be governed through providence and wonders alone, not according to nature.

A new song will then be aroused: "Sing to God a new song, for He has performed wonders" (Psalms 98:1) . This is the song of the future - the song of providence and wonders. For then the world will be governed through providence and wonders. There is a song of nature: " The heavens tell the glory of God and the firmament relates the work of His hands" (Psalms 19: 2) . This is the song and melody of nature praising the span of the heavens. These are the songs and praises we

offer to God over the present order, whereby He governs the world through nature. In the future, however, a new song of providence and wonders will be aroused, for the world will then be governed through providence alone.

This new song of the future is the Single, Double, Triple and Quadruple song of Kindness through which the future renewal of the world will come about, as it is written: "The world shall be built with kindness" (Psalms 89:3) .

Likutey Moharan II, 8

SIMPLICITY

No sophistication is needed in serving God - only simplicity, sincerity and faith.

Simplicity is higher than all else. For God is certainly higher than everything else, and God is ultimately simple!

Sichot Haran #101

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The greatest wisdom is not to be wise

Even after all the wisdom and sophistication - even if you possess true wisdom - you must cast aside all wisdom and sophistication and serve God with complete innocence and simplicity, with no sophistication whatever.

The greatest wisdom of all is not to be wise at all. The truth is that no- one in the world is wise, for "there is no wisdom and no understanding . before God" (Proverbs 21:30) . The main thing God wants is the heart.

Likutey Moharan II, 44

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The King's beloved child

Throw aside all wisdom and clever ideas and serve God with simplicity. Make sure that your deeds are greater than your wisdom, because the main thing is not study but its practical application. This obviously applies to most ordinary people's clever ideas, which are mere folly, but it even applies to genuine wisdom. When it comes to serving God, even a person whose head is filled with genuine wisdom should set it all aside and serve God simply and innocently.

Sometimes it may even be necessary to behave in a way that seems foolish in order to serve God and carry out His will. We may have to roll around in mud and mire for the sake of serving God and keeping His commandments. This applies not only to explicit mitzvot. Anything that God wants us to do is also called a mitzvah. Sometimes one has to throw oneself into the very mud and mire to perform a certain deed that will be pleasing to God.

One whose love of God is sufficiently strong becomes His dearly beloved child. God will show him abundant love and kindness, permitting him to explore the King's hidden store-chambers and even to understand what is beyond wisdom, including the deepest of all secrets, such as why the righteous suffer and the wicked prosper.

Likutey Moharan II, 5

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The essence of Judaism

When a person follows his own mind and clever ideas, he can fall into many pitfalls and errors and come to great evil. Tremendous damage has been caused by such people, like the infamous great villains who, through their intelligence and cunning, have led the entire world astray.

The essence of Judaism is to conduct oneself in pure innocence and simplicity, with no sophistication whatever. Make sure that whatever you do, God is there. Don't heed your own honor. If it enhances God's glory, do it. If not, then don't. This way, you can be certain you will never stumble.

Be careful to act with true innocence and simplicity but not foolishly. Sophistication, however, is quite unnecessary. Simplicity, innocence and faith can bring you to the highest level of joy.

Likutey Moharan II, 12

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Don't be too stringent

Don't follow excessive stringencies in your practice of the Torah. "God does not rule over His creatures with tyranny" (*Avodah Zarah* 3a) - "The Torah was not given to ministering angels" (*Berachot* 25b).

Our rabbis have taught that it is proper for each person to choose for himself one mitzvah to observe with particular care in all its fine details (*Shabbat* 118b). Yet even with your chosen mitzvah, you should not be excessively strict to the point of folly. Don't let it make you depressed. Simply try to keep the mitzvah carefully in all its finer points, but without excessive punctiliousness.

As for the other mitzvot, simply follow the essential laws without adding extra stringencies. If only we could keep all the mitzvot of the Torah according to the simple interpretation of the law without seeking to go beyond it!

There is no need to look for extra stringencies: this is foolish and confusing. The essence of serving God is simplicity and sincerity. Pray much, study much Torah and carry out many good deeds without seeking out or inventing unnecessary restrictions. Simply follow the path of our forefathers. "The Torah was not given to ministering angels."

There is nothing that you absolutely must do or else. If you can, you can. But if you cannot: "God exempts a person under duress" (*Bava Kama* 28b) .

Sichot Haran #235

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JOY

It is a great mitzvah to be happy always!

Make every effort to maintain a happy, positive outlook at all times. It is a natural human tendency to become discouraged and depressed because of the hardships of life: everyone has their full share of suffering. That is why you must force yourself to be happy at all times. Use every possible way to bring yourself to joy, even by joking or acting a little crazy!

Likutey Moharan II, 24

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If you are happy, the whole world benefits .

Netiv Tzaddik 71

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A happy front

Even if you are upset and unhappy, you can at least put on a happy front. At first you may not feel genuinely happy in your heart. Even so, if you *act* happy you will eventually attain true happiness and joy.

Sichot Haran #74

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Good humor

Having a sense of humor is good on three conditions:

1. You do not insult others. 2. You are not vulgar. 3. You do not present yourself in a good light to the detriment of others.

Siach Sarfey Kodesh 1-13

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Finding the good points

You must search for the good in yourself.

When you start looking deep within yourself, you may think there is no good in you at all. You may feel you are full of evil: a negative voice inside you may try to drive you into depression. But you must not allow yourself to fall into depression. Search until you find some little good in you. For how could it be that you never did anything good in your whole life?

When you start to examine the good you have done, you may see many flaws. Maybe you did what you did for the wrong reasons and with the wrong attitude. Even so, how could it be that your mitzvah or good deed contains no good at all? It *must* contain some element of good.

You must search and search until you find some good point within you to give you new life and happiness. When you discover the good that is still inside you, you literally swing the scales from guilt to merit. This will enable you to return to God. The good you find inside you will give you new life and bring joy to your soul.

Having found one good point, you must continue searching until you find another. Even if you think this good point is also full of flaws, you must still search for some good in it. In the same way, you must continue finding more and more good points.

This is how songs are made! In essence, music is made by sifting the good from the bad. The musician has to find the "good spirit" - the good air - and reject the bad. A musical instrument is a vessel containing air. The musician produces the sounds by causing the air to vibrate. His task is to move his hands on the instrument in such a way as to produce good spirit, "good vibrations", while avoiding the "bad vibrations" - the dissonant winds of gloom and depression.

When a person refuses to allow himself to fall into despair but instead vitalizes himself by seeking out and gathering together his positive points, this produces melodies, and he can then pray, sing and give thanks to God.

When a person recognizes the wrong he has done and how grossly materialistic and impure he is, he can become so depressed that he is completely incapable of praying. He simply cannot open his mouth to God. This is because of the deep sorrow and heaviness that overcome him when he sees his overwhelming distance from God.

But finding your good points can give you new life. Even if you know you have done wrong and caused damage and that you are far from God, you must search until you find the good that is still inside you. This will give you new life and make you truly happy. You are certainly entitled to feel the greatest joy over every good point you find in yourself, because each good point comes from the holy soul within you. The new life and joy you will gain from this path will enable you to pray, sing and give thanks to God.

Likutey Moharan I, 282

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True humility

A person should never let his own smallness insignificance and humility cover up his true greatness. For sometimes a person downgrades himself to excess and forgets that he still has many amazing attributes.

Siach Sarfey Kodesh 1-34

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A settled mind

The main reason why people are far from God is because their minds are not settled and they do not pause to consider the purpose of their existence. But when a person is happy, his mind becomes settled and he is able to understand things clearly.

Someone who is anxious and depressed finds it impossible to direct his thoughts where he wants. It is hard for him to calm and settle his mind. Only when a person is happy can he direct his thoughts wherever he wants and settle his mind.

Joy is the world of freedom - "for you shall go out with *joy* " (Isaiah 55:12) . Through joy we become free and leave our exile. When a person maintains a happy, joyous attitude, his mind and thoughts become free and he is no longer in exile. He can then direct his thoughts as he wants and settle his mind so as to focus on his goal and draw close to God.

Likutey Moharan II, 10

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Join the dance

Sometimes a group of people happily dancing together take hold of someone who is standing miserable and depressed on the outside. They pull him into the dance circle despite himself, forcing him to rejoice with them.

Similarly, when a person is happy, his pain and sadness may move to the sidelines . But a higher level is to pursue the sadness itself and "pull it into the dance circle," turning it into joy.

If you truly set your mind to it, you will find that even amidst your worst troubles and suffering there is always a way you can turn all your sadness into joy. True joy is when you forcibly transform your very sadness and depression into happiness.

Likutey Moharan II, 23

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The difference between brokenheartedness and depression

Having a broken heart and being depressed are two quite different things.

Depression is rooted in the unholy "other side" and God hates it. But being brokenhearted and contrite over one's sins and shortcomings is very dear and precious to God.

It would be very good to be brokenhearted all day. But this could easily throw most people into gloom and depression. You should therefore set aside some time each day for heartbreak. Seclude yourself with God for a given time and break your heart with regret over your sins. Then be happy for the rest of the day.

Sichot Haran #41

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Being gloomy and depressed is like being angry with God for not satisfying one's desires. But someone with a broken heart is like a small child pleading with his father or crying out and complaining to him for being distant.

Sichot Haran #42

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After heartbreak comes joy. Being happy later on is a true sign of having a broken heart.

Sichot Haran #45

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Hold onto the good times

You should always try to be happy and serve God with joy, and even if you sometimes fall short of your level, you can still encourage yourself by thinking of earlier times when you did have a taste of the light.

A number of blind people can all take hold of one sighted person and follow him trustingly. A blind man trusts his stick and follows it even though he sees nothing. How much more should you follow your own self - because the light did shine on you previously, arousing and inspiring you to serve God.

Maybe you feel you have fallen and that your eyes and heart are closed. Even so, you should still hold onto those earlier days. Just as you were aroused and encouraged to serve God then, strengthen yourself now by following the sense of arousal you felt then. God will soon help you and His light will shine on you again.

Likutey Moharan I, 222

THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

If a person doesn't focus on the purpose, what is the point of his life?

Likutey Moharan I, 268

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Make a profit from this world

The profit you can gain from this world is indescribable. You don't even need to lay out money to make a profit from this world. All you need to do is reach out and take advantage of the many opportunities God constantly provides for you to make a very great profit.

Likutey Moharan II, 55

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Each mitzvah creates a lamp

Each mitzvah that a person does in this world creates a lamp with which he can explore the treasure house of the King after he dies. This is the ultimate bliss of the life to come.

Likutey Moharan I, 275

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Reward of the world to come

We call the reward in the world to come "good" because there is simply no other term to describe it. Yet even the word "good" is quite inadequate, because this reward is far beyond good. Still, the

only way to explain it to people is by calling it good, although in truth, "no eye has seen it, other than God" (Isaiah 64:3) .

Sichot Haran #55

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Israel 's destiny

The Israelite man was created to have dominion over the angels, and this is Israel 's ultimate destiny. Each one must make certain that he attains his destiny and rules over the angels.

But you must guard yourself carefully to ensure that you have the strength to stand firm in this dominion and not let the ministering angels cast you down out of jealousy. The way to stand firm is by binding yourself to the souls of Israel . This is accomplished by binding yourself to the true leaders of Israel , the Tzaddikim.

Likutey Moharan II, 1

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From level to level

A person must long to attain the highest possible level. And he must not allow himself to fall from even the smallest level.

Siach Sarfey Kodesh 1-70

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When a person rises from level to level in this world, never ceasing to make fresh advances in serving God, so too in the world to come he will continue rising from level to level.

Siach Sarfey Kodesh 1-85

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In this world it is completely impossible for a person to know where he is holding . Not knowing where one stands is one of the main tests in life.

Likutey Halachot, Yoreh Deah, Shevuos 2:17

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Free will

Everything you see in the world - everything that exists - is there for the sake of free will, in order to test people. The entire world and all that it contains were created to give man free will.

Sichot Haran #300; Chayey Moharan #519

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For the sake of one small pleasure lasting a mere quarter of an hour, a person can lose the whole of this world together with the world to come!

Likutey Moharan II, 108

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What is free will? If you want, you do it , and if you don't want, you don't do it.

Likutey Moharan II, 110

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Man is unique in his greatness. When a person does like this with his hands, a movement like this takes place in all the worlds! And when he does like that with his hands, a movement like that takes place in all the worlds!

If you could turn a person inside out, you would see that thousands upon thousands of worlds depend on every single sinew of his body.

Chayey Moharan #504-5

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The hard part of anything one has to do for God is the part left to one's own free will. These are the things that one has to decide for oneself without being explicitly commanded or asked to do them. It is then entirely up to oneself to do as one chooses.

In all acts of devotion, something is always left for the individual to decide for himself without being instructed one way or the other. He must make his own choice. It is in the area where free will comes into play that the main work lies. There is always room for doubt about what God really wants, since He has given no instructions as to what to do.

Chayey Moharan #197

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Different kinds of life

Even if a person dies at the age of eighty, he may still have had a short life if he failed to improve himself and spent all his years on vain pursuits.

We only need to live a little - as long as we live right!

Chayey Moharan #576

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In this world many people of little substance are considered great while genuine merit is unrecognized. There are many different kinds of life. Some lead very troubled lives though this may not always be outwardly apparent. There are different degrees of troubled lives. One person's suffering is never quite like another's. Even the life of a person who does not endure actual suffering may not necessarily be comparable to that of somebody else in a similar category, because the various forms of life differ markedly from one another.

You cannot compare the life of a horse to that of a man. Just as there are enormous differences between life forms on the physical plane, so there are great differences in the quality of people's spiritual lives.

True life is to delight in God. Some people achieve this even in this world; others not at all. Spiritual life contains the same multiplicity of gradations that exist on the level of physical life.

Chayey Moharan #400

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Have you looked up at the sky today?

When you look outside, what do you see? The market, wagons, horses, people running in all directions.? Fifty years from now the market will be completely different, with different horses and wagons, different merchandise and different people. I won't be here and you won't be here.

Then let me ask you now: How come you are so busy and preoccupied that you don't even have time to look up at the sky?

Kochvey Ohr

* * *

What?

You do speak with people? You should ask them: What?

WHAT???

It is right to put this question to people who don't think about their purpose in life:

"What?"

Life is full of needless friction and arguments, distractions, obstacles, complaints, claims and counterclaims... You have many reasons and excuses as to why you are far from God.

Even so, after all this, at the end of everything - what is going to be with you? What will you do at the very end?

What will you answer the One Who sent you?

You surely understand that you are but a stranger on this earth. All the days of the years of our empty vanity are "like a passing shadow and a scattered cloud".

All this a man knows very well. If so, what do you think? WHAT???

Heed these words carefully and bring them deep inside your heart. Don't throw them behind your back. "Turn them and turn them over and over again" - so that you may gain your soul as your prize.

Sichot Haran #286

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Cry out

Imagine yourself in the middle of the sea, with a storm raging to the very heart of the heavens. You are hanging by a hairsbreadth. You have no idea what to do. You don't even have time to cry out. You can only raise your eyes and lift up your heart to God.

You should constantly lift up your heart to God in exactly the same way. Go aside and cry out to God. For everyone is in great danger in this world - as you know very well deep inside your soul. Understand these words very carefully.

Sichot Haran #117

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The Prankster

The Evil Urge is like a prankster running through a crowd waving his tightly closed hand. No- one knows what's in it. He goes up to each person asking, "What do you think I have in my hand?"

Each person imagines the closed hand contains exactly what he most desires, and that is why everyone runs after this prankster, believing the hand contains exactly what they want. But afterwards he opens his hand - and it's completely empty!

The same is true of the Evil Urge. He tricks the whole world into following him. Everyone thinks his hand contains what they desire. But in the end he opens his hand - and it's empty! No desire is ever fulfilled!

Sichot Haran #6

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Sunbeams

All the pleasures of this world are like sunbeams in a dark room. They may seem solid, but when a person tries to grasp hold of a sunbeam, he finds nothing in his hand. The same is true of all worldly desires.

Sichot Haran #6

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Something else inside you

Most of the things a person fears cannot harm him at all. But this only becomes clear to him when he is dead, lying on the ground with his feet to the door. He will then have true clarity of mind, and he will look at himself and understand the truth. He will see that his fear of the various people standing in his way was vain and foolish. All that fear was for nothing - for what could a mere mortal do to him?

The same goes for his desires and temptations. Lying there dead, he will realize that he wasted his days. He will know that his strongest desires were mere foolishness. For who really forced him? Only then will he clearly see the truth.

There is a very deep point in all this. There is something inside a person that makes him afraid of various things. The person may fully understand that the things he fears cannot harm him at all, yet he cannot help being terrified. This is because of that something within him that causes him to be afraid.

Many people have ridiculous phobias which they themselves know to be ungrounded, yet they cannot control them. For example, when a person is taken by surprise by a group of people coming at him from behind with fearful shouts, he instantly feels fear even before he is consciously aware of what it is behind him. Since the object of his fear has not yet entered his conscious mind, why should he be afraid if not because of this innate something that causes him to fear?

The same is true of desire. Even when a person knows that his desire is vain and foolish, something inside him continues to feel the desire. Here again, it is not the person who desires, but something else within him.

If you learn to understand yourself, you can easily rid yourself of all fears and desires. Once you realize that they are baseless and that only this something inside you causes the fear or desire, you will be able to overcome everything.

You have free will, and you can easily train your mind to avoid the thing inside you that causes these fears and desires.

Sichot Haran #83

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You don't need to be crazy

Even if you think you are crazy, if you want, you need not be crazy.

Likutey Halachot, Netilat Yadayim 6:37

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To taste the hidden light

One who wants to taste the taste of the hidden light - the secrets of the Torah that will be revealed in time to come - must elevate the attribute of fear to its root.

This is done through Judgment. Examine yourself and your life and carefully weigh all your various activities and interests . This will enable you to dispel all your fears of people and forces other than God. These are called "fallen fears". You will then be able to elevate your fear and attain true awe of Heaven.

When a person fails to examine and judge himself, he is examined and judged from on high. God can use any means He desires to execute His judgments: He has the power to clothe them in anything in the world. All things are His messengers

This is visible in practice. When something bad happens to a person, the precipitating cause often seems quite insignificant. One would never have expected such a tiny thing to cause such a train of illness, suffering and other dire consequences. What has happened is that the Divine decree against the person has been clothed in these mundane circumstances in order to send him what he deserves.

However, when a person takes the initiative to examine and judge himself, the heavenly decree is removed and there is no need to fear anything. Worldly objects and occurrences will no longer veil and cloak God's decree. Taking stock of oneself dispels the heavenly judgment, because the person

is already sufficiently aroused and spiritually awake not to need things of this world to shake him. He has elevated fear to its root: he is not afraid of anyone or anything except God. This will enable him to attain God's hidden light.

Likutey Moharan I, 15

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Wisdom for life

This world exists only to bring about God's eternal purpose.

There is no need to be upset about whether or not you have money. Even with money, you could waste away your days. The world deceives us completely. It makes us think we are constantly gaining but we end up with nothing. People spend years working to make money, but in the end, when they come to the final reckoning, they are left with nothing in their hands. Even when someone becomes rich, in the end he is taken from his money.

Man and wealth cannot remain together. Either the money is taken from the man or the man from his money. No- one has ever stayed with his money. Where is all the money people have been making since the beginning of time? People have always been busy making money - so where is all the money? It has all become absolutely nothing!

Who can say that he serves God according to God's true greatness? Someone who has even the faintest conception of God's greatness cannot understand how anyone could claim to serve Him. Even the highest angel cannot boast that he is able to serve God.

The main thing is desire. Always *long* and *yearn* to come closer to God.

Many people would like to serve God but not all have the same desire. There are many different levels of desire. Even in one and the same person, the intensity of his desire may change from moment to moment. The main thing is to yearn constantly for God - and in between, to pray, study and keep His commandments.

Nor is there any need for sophistication. Just be sincere and simple. Even in your sincerity, you must not be foolish. But sophistication is totally unnecessary.

It is no good to be old. Whether it's an old Chassid or an old Tzaddik, being old is no good. Be new each day. Always make a fresh start. The only thing that improves with age is a pig, which becomes stronger as it grows older (*Shabbat 77b*) .

Nor is there any need to be extreme. Serving God is not fanaticism. The real fanatics are those who pursue the material world without serving God. People consider it fanatical when a person completely abandons the material world to immerse himself wholly in devotion. Yet even this is unnecessary. You can serve God without going to extremes.

Take my advice and don't let the world fool you. No- one ever came to a good end by pursuing worldliness. Even those who hold the entire world in their hands end up badly, losing out both in themselves and for generations to come.

If the world is nothing, what can you do? To know what to do in this world you need help from Heaven. But as the people of Israel , we need no further help. We already know what we must do, because the Torah teaches us what to do.

People say you should not seek greatness, but I say you should seek *only* greatness. Look for the greatest possible Tzaddik. Choose only the greatest Tzaddik as your teacher.

The passions that wear man down do not really exist. We have to eat and drink and do what is necessary to sustain the body. Likewise, we must have children. All this is necessary, and can be accomplished in holiness and purity.

Man's mind has the power to withstand all temptations. Every person has the potential of wisdom. You must bring out this potential wisdom and make it actual. With this potential wisdom alone you can overcome all temptations.

You may have succumbed to the desires of this world and sinned in many ways. You may have damaged your mind, leaving it weak and confused. But you still have some intelligence. With this alone you can overcome all desires. **One grain of intelligence can stand against the whole world and all its temptations.** Wherever you are, you can be close to God. You can approach God and serve Him even in the lowest pit of hell.

It needs tremendous effort, or help from God - or both - in order to subdue the impurities in the mind until you want nothing in this world and everything is the same to you. Then, "When you walk it will lead you, when you lie down it will watch over you, and when you wake up, it will comfort you" (Proverbs 6:22) .

When you have purified your mind, there is no difference between this world, the grave, and the next world. When you only desire God and His Torah, all are the same. In all three you can be attached to God and his Torah.

However, if you are attached to this world, there is an agonizing difference. This world is spread before you while the grave is tight and narrow. But when you purify your mind, all will be the same.

Sichot Haran #51

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The grave

Don't say that "the pit and the grave will be your refuge" (*Avot* 4:22) . In this world you have the burden of making a living and many other worries. You might get bitten by a flea, but you won't feel it because your thoughts are preoccupied with your livelihood and other concerns.

In the grave, however, there are no other distractions. You can then hear even the sound of the maggots crawling towards you and feel the pain of their every bite, with nothing to distract your mind from this terrible suffering. God help us!

Sichot Haran #84

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Doorway to life

For a Tzaddik, death is just like going from one room to another.

Sichot Haran #156

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What is there for you to be afraid of about dying? The world there is far more beautiful than here.

Chayey Moharan #445

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Pray and study and pray.

What should a man do in this world? He must only pray and study and pray.

Sichot Haran #287

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SERVING GOD

Be very eager to serve God. Do as much as you can every day and every moment. The main thing is practical action. Study as much as you can. Carry out many mitzvot. Spend a lot of time praying and pouring out your heart to God. Do as much as you possibly can.

Even so, do not allow yourself to be rushed on account of the many devotions you may encounter in Torah literature. Maybe you wonder, "When will I be able to practice even one of these devotions, let alone all of them?"

Don't allow such thoughts to frustrate you. It is no good to rush and try to achieve everything at once. Go forward steadily, step by step.

If you are overhasty, trying to grasp everything at once, you may become totally confused, like when a house burns down and people snatch the most worthless items in their panic.

Go forward steadily, one step at a time. If you are unable to do everything, that is not your fault. God exempts those under duress.

There may be many things that you cannot do. Even so, you should long and *yearn* to fulfill them. The longing itself is a great thing - for God desires the heart.

Sichot Haran #27

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People are often very confused as to the best way to serve God. Sometimes it seems necessary to follow one practice, but later this appears to have been wrong and another way seems better. This can cause a person to become very confused and disturbed.

But why do you need to confuse yourself? Whatever you do, you do! As long as you don't do anything bad, heaven forbid.

Sichot Haran #269

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Everything depends on a person's work and effort, nothing else. With work and effort, everyone can reach great levels.

Chayey Moharan #230

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A little is also good.

Avaneha Barzel

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Stocking up on credits

A storekeeper will sell on credit, allowing the buyer to pay later.

Why not do the same with spiritual goods? Say a few Psalms, learn some Torah or carry out some other mitzvot so that they are put aside ready for some time of need.

The time will indeed come when you will need them. You will then be able to make use of your reward without having to ask the storekeeper for credit.

Sichot Haran #271

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Abraham was one!

"Abraham was one, and he inherited the land" (Ezekiel 33:24) .

Why does Ezekiel stress that Abraham was one? Because Abraham based his whole service of God on the fact that he was alone. He looked on himself as the only person in the world - as if everything was up to him - and paid no attention whatever to all the other people who had turned away from God and who were putting obstacles in his way. Abraham paid no attention to his father or any of the other people who tried to stop him. He carried on as if he was alone in the world. That is the meaning of Ezekiel's statement: "Abraham was one."

In the same way, anyone who wants to begin serving God can do so only if he thinks of himself as being alone in the world so that everything is up to him. He must pay no attention whatever to anyone who tries to hold him back - not even if it is his own father and mother or in-laws, wife and children. He should pay no attention to any others who try to mock him or entice him to give up or otherwise stand in his way. Just as "Abraham was one", so too he must look on himself as if he is alone in the world and everything depends on him.

Likutey Moharan II, beginning

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One who wants to turn aside from evil but sees that there is no truth in the world must act as if he is crazy.

Sefer HaMiddot, Emet #31

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For the sake of the mitzvah

A person should be so honest that when he performs the mitzvot in all their fine points, he does it for God's sake and not merely to impress others. Even if he is completely alone with no- one watching, he should still carry them all out with the same care.

Likutey Moharan I, 251

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Making a start

The key to everything is the way you start. All beginnings are hard, because you need to swing things around from one direction to the very opposite. But once you have made a start, you will soon become accustomed to your new direction and it will no longer be so difficult.

Therefore you must marshal all your strength and steel yourself to make an energetic start. You must begin each time with ever-renewed fire and passion for God. Start as if you had never begun before at all.

Likutey Moharan I, 62

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Lengthen your days

See that you make your days very long. With every new day and moment, make sure that your time is longer, fuller and richer with added holiness. You must continually extend your days, filling them with greater holiness and purity. This is the secret of long life.

When you start each new day, at first the day is very short. What you need to accomplish spiritually today may weigh heavily upon you. It takes great determination not to be discouraged as you feel the weight of the devotions you have to undertake today.

Be courageous! Don't lose heart. Make a start even if at first things seem heavy, forced and difficult. If you are determined enough, you will find that they will become easier and that you can accomplish what you must in God's service.

Every hour of the day, see that you extend and enrich that hour by filling it with extra holiness. Do the same every day of your life. Let each day be filled with more holiness than the day before. You will then be blessed with length of days.

Likutey Moharan I, 60

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Removing the shadow to reveal the light

Strive to nullify every one of your negative traits until you become absolute ly nothing before God.

Start with one trait until you nullify it completely. Then work on your other traits, one by one, until they are totally non-existent.

The more you nullify your negative traits, the more God's glory will shine and be revealed in you, until "The earth radiates with His glory" (Ezekiel 43:2) .

God's glory is like light. The larger an object standing in front of a source of light, the greater the shadow it casts. When you set up a thin rod in front of the sun, it throws only a small shadow. A larger object throws a bigger shadow, while a great structure throws an even larger shadow. The shadow is caused by the obstruction of the light.

The same is true of God's glory. When something material stands in front of something spiritual, it casts a shadow. The denser the material, the more shadow it casts.

The deeper you are sunk in some negative trait or worldly desire, the greater the shadow it casts over God's glory, causing His light to be hidden from you. But as you nullify these traits and desires, you also remove this shadow and the light of God's glory is revealed.

When you succeed in nullifying the shadow completely, turning everything into absolute nothingness, then God's glory is revealed in all the world . There is nothing to hide the light and cause a shadow. And then, "The whole earth is filled with His glory" (Isaiah 6:3) .

Sichot Haran #136

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For His glory

Every person must minimize his own honor and maximize God's honor. One who pursues worldly honor will not be worthy of experiencing God's glory. Even if he attains some worldly status, people will constantly look at him askance and want to know who he is that he should be accorded such respect. But one who flees from honor - minimizing his own honor and maximizing that of God - will attain God's glory.

The test of true repentance is when a person remains silent in the face of ridicule and abuse, patiently accepting all the insults thrown at him. This is how he slaughters his evil inclination, and then he will be worthy of God's glory.

Likutey Moharan I, 6

KNOWING GOD

It is impossible to explain to someone else how you personally perceive God's greatness. You can't even explain it to yourself from one day to the next. Tomorrow you will not be able to recapture completely the understanding you had today.

It is impossible to describe one's perceptions of God. They are so lofty - higher than high! They cannot be put into words.

Sichot Haran #1

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**The goal of knowledge:
to know that we know nothing**

The ultimate goal of all knowledge of God is to realize that one knows nothing. Yet even this is unattainable. A person may come to realize his own ignorance, but only in a certain area on a particular level. There is still the next level, which he has not even touched. He does not know enough about the next level to begin to realize his ignorance. No matter how high he climbs, there is always the next step. A person therefore knows nothing: he cannot even understand his own ignorance. For there will always be a level of ignorance beyond his present level of perception.

Sichot Haran #3

The more you draw yourself to God, the more you must realize how far you are from Him. When a person believes that he has succeeded in achieving closeness to God and understanding of Him, it is a sign that he does not know anything at all. If he did, he would understand that he is very far from God and knows absolutely nothing, because God's greatness is without limits.

Likutey Moharan I, 63

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Hints, messages and guidance

You should reflect on the different situations and occurrences that God sends your way day by day. Each day has its own thoughts, words and deeds. They are all completely unique to that day. God "contracts" His infinite, endless Godliness in such a way that Godliness is present even in the innermost point of the finite material world in which man finds himself. Thus God sends to each individual the thoughts, words and deeds appropriate for the day, the person and the place. Within them are hints intended to draw the person closer to God's service.

This is why you should pay attention to what happens to you and consider what it may signify. Think about the thoughts, words and deeds that God sends you each day in order to understand His hints to you to draw closer to Him at every moment. This applies to everyone, no matter who and in what circumstances .

But be cautious when thinking about these things: you must stay within certain limits and not delve to excess, because otherwise it is possible to stray beyond the bounds of holiness. Flying off into speculation can be dangerous. Stay within the limits of human understanding and steadily expand your horizons without trying to step beyond your level, because "you may not investigate that which is too wondrous for you" (*Chagigah* 13a) .

Likutey Moharan I, 54

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The seven lamps of the head

To gain spiritual understanding and awareness, you must sanctify the seven "lamps" of your head: your mouth, nostrils, ears and eyes.

Guard your mouth from speaking any falsehood.

Sanctify your nostrils with the fear of Heaven, as it is written: "...he will *scent* the fear of God" (Isaiah 11:3) . The way to sanctify the nostrils is through meekness and humility. You must be patient and not let anger burn inside you, even if people treat you badly.

Use your ears to listen to the words of the Sages: believe in what they say. The way to sanctify your ears is through discretion and loyalty. If people tell you secrets, be sure to keep them and not reveal them to anyone.

Lower your eyes and avert them from evil.

Sanctifying the seven "lamps" of the head can bring you to complete spiritual understanding and awareness. Your heart will then burn with passion for God, because the activity of the mind generates heat and fervor in the heart. The more you occupy your mind with thoughts of Torah and devotion, the more your heart will burn for God. The deeper your understanding, the greater your fervor will become. This fervor purifies the heart, protecting it from becoming inflamed with evil desires, which merely pollute it. When a person's heart is pure, he will never be at a loss for words when he speaks to God. He will always find new words and new approaches.

One who sanctifies the seven "lamps of the head" can attain awesome levels of perception of God. These heights of understanding are a blessing from God which is bestowed from above without any preliminaries and introductions. This is the gift of *ruach hakodesh* : holy spirit.

Likutey Moharan I, 21

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Eternal life

God alone has eternal life because He lives to eternity. Yet a person who is merged with his root - namely with God - also lives to eternity. Being merged in God's oneness he lives eternally, like God. Likewise, only God has perfection, and besides Him all are lacking. Yet one who is merged with God has complete perfection.

In essence, the way to merge with God is through knowing Him, as the sage said: "If I knew Him, I would be Him". For man's essence is his mind. **Wherever a person's mind and thoughts are , that is where the entire person is.** Thus one who attains knowledge and understanding of God is literally in that place. The greater one's knowledge, the more one becomes absorbed in the root: God.

No matter what a person lacks, be it livelihood, children, health or anything else, it is only because of a lack of Godly knowledge and awareness. Some people lack all knowledge of God yet appear to enjoy the best of everything. But in truth everything they have is nothing. Conversely, when one who possesses complete knowledge lacks something, this lack is truly nothing, for "If you have acquired knowledge, what do you lack, and if you lack knowledge, what have you acquired?" (*Nedarim* 41a) . All completeness or lack of completeness depends on one's depth of Godly knowledge and awareness.

Anger and cruelty result from a lack of Godly knowledge and awareness, for "anger rests in the lap of fools" (Ecclesiastes 7:9) . This is why a sick person is prone to anger, being subject to stern judgments, which take the form of constricted consciousness, making him angry.

However, in time to come Godly knowledge and awareness will be revealed and all will know God, "for the earth will be full of the knowledge of God . " (Isaiah 11:9) . Accordingly anger will then no longer exist, "and the wolf shall dwell with the lamb and the leopard with the kid. and the cow and the bear shall feed. they shall not do evil and they shall not destroy, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of God . " (*ibid.* 6-9) . At present it is impossible for them to live together because of anger. But in time to come they will be able to live together because the anger will no longer exist on account of the knowledge which will then be revealed.

Likutey Moharan I, 21

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Unanswerable questions

There are certain questions that trouble many people, such as how we can have free will if God knows the future. You must accept that it is beyond the capacity of the human mind to understand such things, because the answers lie on a level of wisdom so transcendent that the human mind is unable to fathom it. This wisdom can never enter the human mind, but it encompasses the mind from the outside. If a person could grasp this wisdom, he would no longer be human but an angel.

The very fact that we cannot understand the mystery of free will is precisely what gives us our freedom. In time to come, men's minds will expand and the secrets of free will and providence will be revealed. Free will as such will then disappear. Man's mind will emerge from its limitations and he will become like an angel having no free will.

Likutey Moharan I, 21

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God is in everything

The whole earth is full of God's glory. No place is devoid of God, Who fills all the worlds and transcends all the worlds.

Therefore even one whose occupation involves contact with non-believers cannot excuse himself from serving God on account of being constantly surrounded by gross materialism. Godliness can be found everywhere, in all material things and even in the languages of the nations. Without Godliness they could not exist or endure at all. It is just that as the levels descend, Godliness becomes increasingly "contracted" and veiled in many garments.

Accordingly, even if you are sunk in the very lair of evil on the lowest of all levels, even if you believe you are so far from God that it is impossible for you to draw closer, you can still find Godliness in the very place to which you have sunk. There too you can attach yourself to Him and repent with all your heart. Even there, God is not far away. It is just that the veils are thicker.

Likutey Moharan I, 33

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God's glory cries out from all things, for "The whole earth is filled with His glory" (Isaiah 6:3) . Even the stories of the nations cry out with God's glory: "Let the nations tell of His glory!" (Psalms 96:3) . His glory is reflected even in their tales and stories.

God's glory cries out, calling and signaling you to draw closer. For God wants you with all His love and kindness.

Sometimes your prayers become like flames and the words flow from your lips with burning fervor and desire. This is God's own light within you, calling you to draw near. Your fervent passion is a spark of God's own essence - for "He is your praise, He is your God" (Deuteronomy 10:21) . God Himself is your praise and prayer. Sometimes you can literally pray before God Himself.

And even when God withdraws and seems far away, you must still pray to Him. You must actually cast your prayers, throwing them towards God from afar, as it says: " *Cast your burden upon God*" (Psalms 55:23) . "Happy is the man who knows how to *cast arrows*" (*Tikkuney Zohar*) . These "arrows" are the prayers that must be thrown towards God.

Sichot Haran #52

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The concealment within the concealment

There is nothing in the world that does not contain Godliness, however hidden it may be. There are two levels of concealment. The first is simple concealment; the second is the "concealment within the concealment".

When God is hidden with only one degree of concealment, it can certainly be hard to find Him. Yet with great effort and searching it is possible, because at least you know that God is hidden from you. However in the "concealment within the concealment", the very fact that God is hidden is

itself concealed. The person has no idea that God is hidden from him. It is then very hard indeed to find Him.

Godliness becomes concealed as a result of sin. When a person commits a sin and then repeats it, the sin becomes permissible in his eyes, and this is what causes the first concealment. The more the person sins, the deeper he falls into the "concealment within the concealment". Yet even in the "concealment within the concealment" Godliness is present, because without His life-force nothing in the world could exist.

Through devotion to the Torah you can strip away all the veils and reveal God's presence even when the "concealment within the concealment" is most intense. At last the unremitting cry of the Torah is heard: "How long, thoughtless people, will you continue loving thoughtlessness?" (Proverbs 1:22) . In the end you will be able to return to God regardless of where you have fallen.

Likutey Moharan I, 56

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A taste of the world to come

When a person knows that everything that happens to him is for his own good, this is a foretaste of the world to come. To be serene and patient regardless of what you encounter in life is the highest level of knowledge and understanding of God. Have faith that everything is for your ultimate good.

Likutey Moharan I, 4

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The world to come that we can experience even in this world, when God helps us at certain moments, is quite indescribable!

Chayey Moharan #486

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HITBODEDUT MEDITATION AND PERSONAL PRAYER

Set aside time each day to meditate and pray alone in a room or some meadow and express your innermost thoughts and feelings and personal prayers to God. Use every kind of appeal and argument. Use words that will endear you to God and win His favor. Plead with God to draw you closer and let you truly serve Him. This is Hitbodedut.

You should hold these conversations in whatever language you speak best. Our set prayers are said in Hebrew, but if this is not one's native language, it is difficult to use it to give expression to all

one's innermost thoughts and feelings and the heart is less drawn after the words. It is easier to pour out your heart and say everything you need in your own language.

You should tell God everything you feel, be it contrition and longing to repent over the past or requests and supplications to come truly close to God from now on, each person according to his level.

Be very careful to get into the habit of spending time every day on your personal prayers and meditation. Fix a regular time for this and then be happy for the rest of the day!

Hitbodedut is of the greatest value. It is *the* way to come closer to God, because it includes everything else. No matter what you lack in your service of God, even if you feel totally remote from His service, tell God everything and ask Him for all that you need.

If at times you find yourself unable to speak to God or even open your mouth, the very fact that you are there before Him wanting and yearning to speak is itself very good. You can even turn your very inability to speak into a prayer. Tell God that you feel so far away that you cannot even speak to Him! Ask Him to have mercy on you and open your mouth to tell Him what you need.

Many great and famous Tzaddikim have said that all their achievements came only through Hitbodedut. Anyone with understanding can recognize the supreme value of this practice, which ascends to the most sublime heights. This advice applies to everyone equally, from the very least to the very greatest. Everyone is capable of practicing it and can attain great levels. Happy are all who persist in it.

It is also good to turn Torah teachings into prayers. When you study or hear a teaching of a true Tzaddik, make a prayer out of it. Ask God when you too will be able to fulfill this teaching. Tell Him how far from it you are and beg Him to help you attain everything contained in the lesson.

A person of understanding who wants the truth will be led by God in the path of truth, and he will learn how to practice Hitbodedut and offer words of grace and sound arguments to persuade God to bring him to true service.

Hitbodedut rises to a very high place. This applies especially to turning Torah teachings into prayers, which creates the greatest delight above.

Hitbodedut is the highest level: it is greater than everything.

Likutey Moharan II, 25

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Like a person talking to his friend

When God helps with Hitbodedut, it is like a person talking to his friend.

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The origins of prayer

Prayer originally began with each person pouring out his heart before God in his own words and language. This is explained by Rambam (Maimonides) in his Code of Torah Law (Prayer 1:4) , where he states that personal prayer was the main form of prayer prior to the institution of the set prayers by the Men of the Great Assembly.

According to the law, even today the original form of prayer remains primary. Besides following the order of prayers established by the Men of the Great Assembly, it is extremely beneficial to make a regular practice of offering your own prayers and requests from the depths of your heart in the language you understand best, asking God to help you serve Him truly. This is the essence of prayer, and this is the way all the Tzaddikim attained their high levels.

Sichot Haran #229

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Bypassing the bandits

There is another advantage in expressing yourself to God in your own words. One can recite existing prayers and supplications, but these are already known to the destroyers and maligning forces that lie in wait along the paths of these prayers. They know these paths only too well.

It is like on a public highway. Murderers and robbers lurk there all the time waiting for the unwary, because they know the road. But when a person goes on a new path that is as yet unknown, they are not there to ambush him.

Similarly, when you talk to God in your own words, this is a new pathway, an original prayer that springs directly from your heart. Accordingly the maligning forces are not lying there in wait. Even so, you should also recite Psalms and other supplications as well as your personal prayers.

Likutey Moharan II, 97

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Hitbodedut is for everyone

From the smallest to the greatest, it is impossible to be a truly good person without Hitbodedut.

Likutey Moharan I, 100

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Pray for everything

You must pray for everything. Even if your garment is torn and you need another, you should pray to God to give you something to wear.

Do this for everything: make it a habit to pray for all your needs, great or small. Your main prayers should be for fundamentals: that God should help you to serve Him and draw closer. Even so, you should also pray for minor things.

God may give you food and clothing and everything else you need in life even without your asking for them. However, you are then like an animal. God provides all living creatures with their food. But if you do not draw your needs through prayer, your livelihood is like that of an animal. A *man* must draw his vitality and all his needs from God only through prayer.

Is it beneath your dignity to pray even for something minor? You must pray for everything, even the most minor things.

Sichot Haran #233

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Start with thanks

When a person wants to pray to God and ask for what he needs, he should first thank God for all of His past kindnesses and only then ask for what he needs. Because if he starts by asking only for what he needs, God says, "Have you nothing to thank Me for then?"

Siach Sarfey Kodesh 1-2

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Talk to God a lot

Talk to God a lot! Think carefully about your purpose in this world and what you are doing with your life. Take yourself in hand. Plead with God to have mercy on you and help you serve Him. Make up your own pleas and arguments in your own words, using whatever language you speak best.

Anyone who follows this practice for a period of time each day will certainly succeed in finding God. Even if you think you have been doing this for days and years without achieving what you want, keep firm and persist, because in the end you will reach your goal.

This was how King David composed the Book of Psalms. King David's main time for his private prayers to God was when he lay on his bed at night. He would hide under the covers and pour out his heart to God. King David said: "Every night I converse from my bed in tears." (Psalms 6:7) . Happy is the person who makes this a regular practice, because it is supremely exalted.

* * *

Like a child pleading with his father

It is very good to pour out your heart to God like a child pleading with his father.

Doesn't God call us His children? "You are children to the Lord your God" (Deuteronomy 14:1) . Therefore it is good to express your thoughts and feelings and all your troubles to God, like a child nagging and complaining to his father.

Even if you think you have done so much wrong that you are no longer one of God's children, remember that God still calls you His child. As the Rabbis taught: "For better or worse, you are always called His children" (*Kiddushin* 36a) .

Even if you think God has rejected you and told you that you are no longer His child, you must still say: "Let Him do His will - but I must do *my* part and continue acting as His child."

How good it is when you can arouse your heart and plead with God until tears stream from your eyes and you stand like a little child crying before his Father.

Confusing thoughts may enter your mind, but if you stand firm, God will send you another thought to encourage you. You may think you are no longer one of God's children. But if you do your part, God will eventually send you thoughts of encouragement.

Sichot Haran #7

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Conquering God

"Sing to the One who rejoices when conquered" (*Pesachim* 119a) .

Sometimes you must conquer even God! You may think that God has rejected you because of your sins and that you are still not doing His will. Even so, you must remain very firm and throw yourself before Him. Stretch out your hands and plead with God to have mercy on you and draw you to His service. Cry out: "No matter what, I want to be a Jew!"

This is how you overcome God. God has great joy when you conquer Him in this way.

Sichot Haran #69

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Wanting to cry

It is good to talk to God and pray with so much feeling that you shed tears like a child crying to his father. But if you pray with the constant thought that you want to cry, this can be highly distracting and may prevent you saying the prayers with all your heart.

When you say your prayers, separate yourself from all other thoughts and focus only on the words you are saying to God, just as a person speaks to his friend. Your heart will then be naturally aroused and you will come to genuine tears.

Likutey Moharan II, 95

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Even one word

If you cannot speak at all in your Hitbodedut, even saying a single word is also very beneficial .

If you can only say one word, keep strong and repeat that word over and over again, countless times. Even if you spend day after day meditating with that word, this in itself is very good. If you are persistent and repeat that word countless times, God will have mercy and open your mouth, and you will be able to express yourself.

Likutey Moharan II, 96

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Ribono Shel Olam

Even if the only thing you can say in your Hitbodedut is *Ribono Shel Olam!* "Master of the World!" this is also very good.

Chayey Moharan #440

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The difference between depression and a broken heart is that when you have a broken heart, you can be standing in a crowd of people and still turn around and say, "Master of the World!"

Sichot Haran #231

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The silent scream

You can shout and scream with a "still, small voice" without anybody hearing you. Everybody can do this. Imagine the sound of such a scream in your mind. Imagine the shout exactly as it would sound. Concentrate on hearing the scream in your mind until you are literally screaming with this soundless "still, small voice" - and nobody else will hear anything.

This is actually a scream and not mere imagination. Just as there are channels that bring the sound from your lungs to your lips, so there are nerves that bring the sound to the brain. You can draw the sound through these nerves, literally bringing it into your head. When you do this, you are actually shouting inside your brain.

When you imagine this scream in your mind, the sound actually rings inside your brain. You can stand in a crowd of people screaming this way and no- one hears you.

It could be that when you do this, a faint sound may escape your mouth. This is because the sound traveling through the nerves to the brain can also activate the vocal organs, and they may then produce some sound. But it will be very faint.

It is much easier to shout in this way without words. When you wish to express yourself in words, it is harder to hold the voice in the mind without letting a sound escape your lips. Without words, it is much easier.

Sichot Haran #16

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Today I am starting

During your Hitbodedut, it is good to say: "Today I am starting to attach myself to You!"

Make a new start each time, because everything that comes later is always in accordance with the beginning.

No matter what happens, it is always good to make a new start each time and say, "Today I am beginning..." If things were already good, now they will be even better! And if they were not good before, then you certainly need to start anew.

Chayey Moharan #437

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Every heartbeat a flame of yearning

A Jewish heart should be so strongly drawn to God that every heartbeat is a flame yearning for God.

Even when you are sitting with other people, you can lift your hands and your heart to God and cry out to Him with soulful longing.

Sichot Haran #230

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The power of desire

When you speak to God, make it a habit to express your longing and yearning to extricate yourself from evil and attain true good. Putting your longing into words is the way to draw your spiritual power from the realm of the potential and possible to the realm of the real and actual.

Longing and yearning alone create *potential* spiritual power, but the words of your prayers and conversations with God bring this spiritual power into the realm of the *actual* so that it becomes realized in actual fact. This is the way to accomplish what you yearn for.

Letters of Torah are present throughout the Creation. By expressing and articulating your yearning and desire in words, you invest these letters with new vitality and power for good. This brings you new life and strength and draws goodness and blessing into all the worlds. Numberless souls are stirred to make their own return to God, all through your words of prayer to your Maker.

How precious are the longing and yearning that you express before God. The main thing is actually to articulate the words. Make this your regular practice and devote time to it every day. This will benefit the entire world.

Likutey Moharan I, 31

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A settled mind

It is a great achievement to be able to settle your mind for a period of time each day and regret what you must. Not everyone is able to attain mental calm and tranquility for a time every day. The day flies past and is gone, and a person finds that not once in all his life did he have time to settle his mind.

Make every effort to set aside time to review your life calmly. Think about all your different activities and interests and how you behave. Consider carefully if this is how you should spend your days.

Someone who does not meditate cannot attain wisdom. He may occasionally be able to think clearly, but not for any length of time. His power of concentration remains weak and unsustainable. He will never realize the folly of this world.

But one who has a clear, settled mind can understand that everything is madness and vanity.

* * *

The spider's web

You want to speak to God but find it hard? You are like a warrior who girds his loins to overcome a mighty wall but when he comes to the gate, he finds it blocked with a spider's web. Could anything be more foolish than to run away from the battle because the gate is covered with a spider's web?

The main thing is speech. With speech you can win every battle. It is possible to meditate in thought, but the most important thing is to express yourself in words.

You may find it difficult to speak to God. You may also find it difficult to speak to a true Tzaddik. This is only because you are shy and lethargic and lack sufficient boldness.

This is silly! Here you are, ready to use your speech to overcome the great battle against the evil urge inside you. You are on the verge of victory: you are ready to break down the walls and open the gates with your words.

Should you hold back because of a minor barrier caused by a lack of confidence? This is nothing but a spider's web covering the walls you want to break down with your words.

Sichot Haran #232

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Out in the meadows

Hitbodedut is best done outside the town in a place where grass grows, because the grass will awaken your heart.

How good it is to pray to God and meditate in the meadows amidst the grass and the trees. When a man goes out to the meadows to pray, every blade of grass, every plant and flower all enter his prayers and help him, putting power and strength into his words.

Likutey Moharan II, 11; Sichot Haran #227

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Your own place

It is very good to have your own room where you can be alone and engage in Torah study, prayer, meditation and private conversation with God. Even just to sit in such a room is also highly beneficial .

If you do not have your own room, you can still seclude yourself and talk to God. You can make your own room under your Tallit. Just drape your Tallit over your eyes and speak to God as much as you desire.

You can also seclude yourself with God when you lie in bed under the covers. This was King David's custom, as it is written: "Each night I converse from my bed" (Psalms 6:7) .

You can also sit down with some book and let others imagine you are studying when in fact you are speaking to God. There are many other methods you can use if you truly want to practice Hitbodedut . Nothing is loftier than Hitbodedut, which is the root and foundation of holiness, purity and repentance.

Sichot Haran #274-5

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It is good to choose somewhere to sit day and night engaged in Torah, prayer and devotion. When you need to eat, run to some house and quickly grab a piece of bread or the like to appease your hunger and then go back to serving God.

Sichot Haran #248

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Hitbodedut at night

The best time for Hitbodedut is at night , when everyone is asleep. Ideally you should go to a place outside the city and follow a solitary path where people don't even go during the day.

Empty your heart and mind of all your mundane preoccupations and then work to nullify all your negative traits, one after the other, until in the end you nullify all sense of self completely. First work on one character trait, then another and another, until you reach the point where you are free of any self-centeredness and any sense of independent existence.

You must be as nothing in your own eyes. Then you will be worthy of attaining true self-nullification and your soul will be merged with its root. The whole universe will be merged with you in your Source. You and everything with you will be merged in the Unity of God.

Likutey Moharan I, 52

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The main time for Hitbodedut is at night. Seclude yourself and express yourself to God. Speak with all your heart and search out the goodness in your soul. Find the good points that are inside you and cleanse them of all evil until you pour out your heart like water before God. This is the way to subdue all lust and desire and attain true happiness. You will develop a good memory, and thus you

will constantly remember the world to come, never losing sight of the end goal and purpose of this life. This is the way to repent and return to God.

Likutey Moharan I, 54

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Water wears away stone

Even if many days and years pass and it seems as if you have accomplished nothing with your prayers and conversations with God, don't give up! Every single word makes an impression.

"Water wears away stone" (Job 14: 19) . It may seem that water dripping on hard stone could not make any impression, yet when water drips on stone continuously for many years, it can literally wear a hole in the stone. We actually see this.

Even if your heart is like stone and it seems that your words of prayer are making no impression at all, still, as the days and years pass, your heart of stone will also be softened. For: "Water wears away stone".

Sichot Haran #234

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When Mashiach comes

There are certainly worthy people who do not practice Hitbodedut. But I call them confused. When Mashiach suddenly comes and calls them, they will be disoriented and confused.

But those who practice Hitbodedut will be like a person who wakes up from a restful sleep with a calm, settled mind. This is how we will be when Mashiach comes: our minds will be calm and settled, without panic or confusion.

Sichot Haran #228

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THE POWER OF SPEECH

Prayer must be spoken out in actual words - literally. It is not enough to think the prayers. It is true that God knows what we are thinking. But the words have to be spoken, because speech is the vessel with which we receive the flow of blessings. According to our words, so is the blessing we receive .

One who perfects his speech can receive abundant blessings through the vessels he forms with his words. This is why we must actually articulate our prayers with our mouths.

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Guard your tongue

Never let a word of wickedness leave your mouth. Don't ever say you will be wicked or commit a sin, even if you mean it as a joke and have no intention of carrying out your words.

The words themselves can be very damaging. They can compel you to fulfill them even though you did not mean them seriously.

This was what caused King Jehu's downfall, because he said, "Ahab served Baal a little, but Jehu will serve him very much" (II Kings 10:18) . When King Jehu said these words, he had no intention of committing idolatry. He said them only to trick the Baal worshipers, as explained in the following verse. Yet these words were his downfall, because he later came to commit idolatry.

From this the Talmud learns that "a covenant is made with the lips" (*Sanhedrin* 102a) . You should therefore be very careful about what you say.

Sichot Haran #237

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Speaking derogatorily about other people reinforces the hold of fantasy and illusion over us. When people use bad language and speak derogatorily about others, their spiritual awareness and understanding are withdrawn from them and they fall from the love of God and descend into animalistic passions and desires. The source of these passions and desires is man's faculty of imagination, which is part of his animal nature. Imagination feeds on falsehood and slander and is directly opposed to the faculty of memory with which we keep our true situation in this life and our eternal destiny in the forefront of our minds.

Those who abuse language fall into forgetfulness, which is the death of the heart. Their heart dies within them and they never remember that the true goal of our life in this world is the eternal life of the world to come. Such people are dead even in their lifetime, because they have no conception of their true goal and purpose.

Likutey Moharan I, 54

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Speech is the breath of the lips of the Holy One, blessed be He. To abuse it is to turn it into a "raging storm wind" (Psalms 148:8) . This raging storm wind is the great accuser - the source of all man's trials and challenges. This wild spirit erodes man's very flesh. It is the root of all the slander, falsehood and evil that people speak about each other. It is called the "end of all flesh" (Genesis

6:13) because it wastes and destroys man's flesh and his very life. All this is the result of abusing speech.

Likutey Moharan I, 38

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The hammer

A certain king sent his son far away to study. The son eventually returned to the king's palace fully versed in all the arts and sciences. One day the king told his son to take a particular stone that was as big as a millstone and bring it up to the top floor of the palace. But the stone was so heavy that the prince could not even lift it up. He was very upset that he could not fulfill his father's wish.

Eventually the king said to his son, "Did you really imagine that I meant you to do the impossible and carry the stone just as it is up there? Even with all your wisdom, how were you supposed to do such a thing? That was not what I meant. I wanted you to take a big hammer and smash the stone into little pieces. This is how you will be able to bring it up to the top floor."

In the same way, God commands us to "lift our heart with our hands up to God in the heavens" (Lamentations 3:41) . Our heart is a "heart of stone" (Ezekiel 36:26) , a very heavy stone. There is no possible way to raise it to God except by taking a hammer and breaking and smashing the heart of stone.

The "hammer" is speech!

Chayey Moharan #441

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Mother of children

Speech is a "mother of children" (Psalms 113:9) . Just as a mother always stays with her child and never forgets him even if he goes to the filthiest of places, so the power of speech never leaves a person even if he finds himself in the filthiest of places.

Even one who has sunk to the lowest level can always remind himself of God's presence if he speaks words of holiness: Torah and prayer. Regardless of his situation, he should try to speak words of Torah and prayer, meditate and speak to God, and he should discuss matters of faith with his teacher and friends. This way he will always be able to remind himself of God's presence regardless of how far he is from God, even if he falls to the "filthy places". His faculty of speech will not desert him, and he will never be able to forget God.

Understand the tremendous power of speech. It can save you from destruction.

Likutey Moharan I, 78

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If you know how

Speech has tremendous power. If you know how, you can even whisper to a gun so that it cannot shoot.

Likutey Moharan II, 96

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PRAYER

Prayer is the root of all attachment and devotion to God. Prayer is the gate through which we approach God, and through prayer we may come to know Him.

Likutey Moharan II, 84

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Prayer helps for everything

Prayer helps for everything. Even if a person is unable to study Torah, he will be able to do so if he prays for it. Everything good can be attained through prayer: Torah, devotion, holiness... everything good in all the worlds! Amen.

Likutey Moharan II, 111

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"The world was created for me"

"Every person must say: The whole world was created for me" (*Sanhedrin* 37a) .

If the world was created for me, it is therefore my constant obligation to examine and consider what is needed to repair the world and provide everyone's needs, and to pray for them.

Likutey Moharan 1, 5

Be bold

The secret of prayer is to be bold. We must have the audacity to ask God for everything we need - even if we need to ask Him to work miracles for us. Only with boldness and daring can we stand up and pray to God.

When we consider God's utter greatness - if we can form any conception of it at all - and think of our own smallness and worthlessness, how can we stand up and pray before Him? Even so, when we pray, we must cast our timidity aside and boldly ask God for everything we need. Only with bold assertiveness can we overcome the obstacles and barriers that stand in the way of our service of God.

Likutey Moharan I, 30

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Never insist

Never insist on anything in your prayers. Ask for what you want as a request. If God grants it, He will grant it. And if not, then not!

Regardless of what you need - livelihood, children or anything else - it is forbidden to insist stubbornly that God should fulfil exactly what you are asking for, because this is like taking something by force: it is a kind of robbery. Just pray and entreat God for kindness and mercy.

Likutey Moharan I, 20 & 196

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God's kindness

God does us a great kindness by allowing us to use human terms when addressing Him in prayer and by answering our requests. If it were not for His kindness, it would be completely inappropriate to address Him with names, descriptions and praises consisting of mere words and letters. The fact that we are able to do so is all due to God's kindness.

The realization that, although God is exalted beyond all human titles and praises, He permits us to address Him in human terms in order to bind ourselves to Him, should be sufficient to inspire us to pray with fervor and passion. This is a sign of His great love and tender mercy. We should therefore at least be sincere when we address Him this way, since it is only through His love and mercy that we are able to do so at all.

Likutey Moharan I, 15

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You must force yourself to pray

Pray with great strength, putting all your power into the words of your prayers.

You must force yourself to pray. Some people say that a person should not force himself to pray, but the opposite is true. You must force yourself to put all your strength into your prayers.

True devotion is to bind the thought to the word, focusing your mind on the words of the prayers by listening and paying careful attention to what you are saying. This way your inner power will enter your prayers automatically.

All your inner power waits for the moment when it is drawn into words of holiness. When you focus your thoughts on what you are saying, this power rushes forth into the words. Simply pay attention to the words and your inner power will enter your prayers without your having to force it.

Sichot Haran #66

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Working yourself up

Sometimes you may feel no enthusiasm during your prayers. You should then *act* as if you feel enthusiasm, making your heart burn with the words of the prayers. This is similar to the way a person can work himself up into such a temper that he actually becomes angry. People then say, "He's making himself angry . "

Sometimes when you pray, you must likewise work yourself up into a passion. You must force yourself to put fire and emotion into the words. Eventually the enthusiasm will become real: your heart will burn for God and you will pray with genuine fervor.

Sichot Haran #74

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Leaping into Gan Eden

People say one should pray quietly as if standing before a king. But I say, pray with cries and hand-clapping. This is the way to leap into Gan Eden with joy!

Tovot Zichronot p. 107

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Pray early

It is best to pray early in the morning. Prayer is of supreme importance - who knows if you will be able to pray later? Make every effort to pray as early as you possibly can.

Sichot Haran #31

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Nusach : Styles of prayer

Chassidus is not associated with any specific style of prayer. One can be a Chassid and pray in Nusach Ashkenaz.

Siach Sarfey Kodesh 1-90

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Finding yourself in the words

When reciting Psalms and prayers, make sure you find yourself in everything you say. It is simple and easy to find yourself in all your prayers: you don't need to be clever.

The Psalms in particular were written for the entire community of Israel and for each and every individual. All of a person's internal wars and struggles and everything else he endures are all expressed in the Psalms , which mainly relate to the war against the evil urge and its forces. These are the main enemies seeking to keep a person from the path of life and drag him down to the deepest hell if he is not on guard against them. The entire Book of Psalms is about this war.

The foundation of all the different pathways to God lies in reciting Psalms and other supplications and offering our own personal prayers from the heart, entreating Him to draw us closer to His service. This is the only way to win the war. Happy is the man who persistently prays and entreats God at all times and in all situations, because he will certainly win the war.

Much good advice exists about different ways of coming closer to God, but in most cases it is very hard to carry out the actual advice. Therefore the main thing is prayer and supplication. Regardless of who you are or the circumstances in which you find yourself, always try to offer some prayer and request to God to take you from darkness to light and bring you to complete repentance. Give Him no quiet until He answers you. Even if you cry to God for a very long time and He still seems very far away, if you are persistent in your prayers, He will certainly answer you eventually and draw you to His service.

Likutey Moharan II, 101

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The galbanum

Even if you consider yourself a sinner, you must still keep firm and make every effort to pray.

Tell yourself: Maybe I am far from God because of all my sins. Yet if so, there can be no perfect prayer without me. Didn't the Rabbis teach that "every prayer that does not include the sinners of Israel is not a true prayer" (*Keritot* 6a) . This is because prayer is like an incense offering, and the Torah requires that the incense must contain galbanum even though , by itself, it has a foul smell .

Therefore even though I consider myself a sinner, I am an essential ingredient in the prayers and the service cannot be complete without me. If I am a sinner, I must strengthen myself all the more to pray to God. I must have trust that in His mercy He will accept my prayer, since the perfection of the prayer depends on me - the the galbanum in the incense.

Just as the foul-smelling galbanum is a vital ingredient in the incense, so too my tainted prayer is a vital ingredient in the prayers of all Israel . Without it, they will not be complete.

Sichot Haran #295

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The difference between spiritual and physical work

The greatest of all religious devotions is still easier than making a living and trying to acquire worldly possessions!

How much effort a merchant devotes to getting to the market on time! The moment Shabbat is over, he starts getting busy. First he has to find a wagon. Next he must hurry and load up his wares. Then he has to travel through the night, driving sleep from his eyes and breaking his whole body as he sits on top of the loaded wagon. After all this, he has to stand on his feet for the whole day in the freezing cold...

The merchant has to endure all this hardship and discomfort for the sake of a mere possibility: *perhaps* he will make a profit! He might equally well lose everything including his expenses, which is what usually happens. To make a living in this world, people go to the greatest lengths, enduring extreme hardship - all because of the slender hope that they might make a small profit.

The greatest possible religious devotion is prayer. And yet, when we stand up to pray, we pray and we manage to complete the prayer!!!

Chayey Moharan #558

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Gathering flowers

When a person stands in prayer, reciting the words of the prayers, he is gathering beautiful flowers and blossoms, like someone walking in a meadow picking lovely flowers and blossoms one by one until they make a bunch. Then he picks more, one by one, until they make another bunch, and he puts them together. So he goes on, picking and gathering more and more lovely bouquets.

So it is in prayer: one goes from letter to letter, until several letters are joined together to make a syllable. One does the same to make whole words. Then one joins together two words, and goes on, picking and gathering, until one completes a whole blessing. Then one goes on picking more

and more, and passes from the first blessing of the Amidah prayer - the blessing of the fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob - to the second, which speaks of God's might . One then proceeds to the third blessing, which speaks of His holiness, and so on. Who can adequately praise the great splendor of the gleanings and gatherings one makes with the words of the prayer?

When speech comes forth, it comes from the soul. The utterance comes forth and is heard by the ears, for "you must let your ears hear what you bring forth from your mouth" (*Berachot* 15) . The utterance then begs and pleads with the soul not to leave it behind. As soon as the first letter comes forth - the *Beit* of the word *Baruch* , "Blessed" (opening word of the Amidah prayer) - the letter begs and pleads with the soul not to part from it.

The letter says to the soul: "How could you allow yourself to become separated from me, considering the great bond of love between us? See my precious beauty, my radiance, my splendor and glory! How could you tear yourself away from me and leave me? True, you have to continue with the prayer and gather more precious treasures and delights. But how can you separate yourself from me and forget me? At least see to it that, wherever you go afterwards, you never forget me or become cut off from me."

All the more so when one finishes a whole word: the word pleads and entreats in the same manner, caressing and embracing the soul, refusing to let the soul move on. Yet the truth is that one must go on: there are many more words to be said and many more blessings and prayers to be recited before the conclusion of the service.

The solution is to make the whole prayer into one - to make it into a single unity, so that each individual utterance contains all the utterances making up the whole prayer. From the beginning of the prayer to the end it should all be one, so that when you reach the very last word of the prayer you will still be standing at the very first word of the prayer. This way you can pray the entire prayer and never be separated from even the first letter of the prayer.

Likutey Moharan I, 65

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Shining truth into the darkness

"The wicked walk on every side" (Psalms 12 :9) . This means that the unholy surrounds the holy, because "God made the one corresponding to the other" (Ecclesiastes 7:14) . This applies especially to someone who has already succumbed to the temptation to sin and is so attracted to the unholy that this is where his place is, God forbid. "The wicked" - in the form of strange thoughts, feelings and temptations - have this person surrounded "on every side."

When such a person experiences a spiritual arousal and wants to return to God, he finds it very difficult to pray and express himself to God because of all the strange thoughts and feelings surrounding him on every side. Each person experiences this in his own way. One finds it impossible to bring out the words before God with the proper reverence, love and vitality. None of

one's words and prayers are able to penetrate the screens and barriers separating one from God, and they remain down below.

Only when a person repents with genuine honesty and sincerity will he be able to express himself acceptably with words of reverence and love springing from the depths of a heart truly aroused. Then his radiant words will break through all the barriers and coverings. And with them all the words and prayers that remained below until now will also ascend.

How does one achieve this? The key is through truth, and everything else depends on this. You must follow the path of truth - on your own level. For, "The seal of the Holy One, blessed be He, is truth!" (*Shabbat* 55a, *Yoma* 69b) . Truth is the foundation of everything from beginning to end. Truth is the head, the middle and end of the entire creation.

When a person attains truth, it is as if God's own light is clothed in him, since truth is God's seal. Someone like this can rightly say, "God is my light and my salvation" (Psalms 27:1) . Because God shines to him, he can find plenty of openings to escape the darkness and exile in which he is imprisoned.

In reality many openings exist there. The Rabbis said, "If a person comes to defile himself, there are many openings for him" (*Yoma* 38b, *Menachot* 29b) . If there are many openings through which a person can fall, it follows that there are also many openings through which he can escape. It is just that "the fool goes in darkness" (Ecclesiastes 2:14) : he simply does not see the exits, and he remains tied and bound, unable to escape. That is, until he succeeds in speaking to God truthfully. When he does this, the words radiate with light and God shines to him.

It is only then that "the opening of Your words shines light; it gives understanding to the simple" (Psalms 119:130) . For the shining words themselves - words of truth - show the person the opening. "It gives understanding to the simple" - because those simple people who are caught in darkness and cannot see how to get out will thereby understand and see the opening and then they can escape the darkness. "Saying to the prisoners, 'Go forth!' and to those who are in darkness, 'Be revealed!'" (Isaiah 49:9) .

But the truth has to be the complete truth: clean, clear and without blemish.

Anyone with sense and understanding should pray all his days to be able to say one true word to God the way he should, even just once in his life.

If you are trying to pray but cannot say a single word because you feel you have sunk in to confusion and darkness, try to say what you say with truth, even on the most elementary level. For example, say the words "God help me!" truthfully, even if you cannot say them with any real enthusiasm. Just say the words honestly in whatever way you can. With a true word you will be able to see the openings in the darkness and escape into the light so as to pray properly.

Likutey Moharan I, 112

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Praying to impress

One who is dependent on other people finds it easier to pray alone, because as soon as he prays with others he becomes subject to all kinds of false motives. His prayer becomes a lie because he feels he must put on an act in order to impress others. This is because he needs them for something. Some depend on others for their livelihood. Even a person of independent means may still depend on others for his own self-esteem, because he needs their approval or adulation. Such needs can easily cause a person to put on a false act for others as he prays.

Someone else may be more honest. Being somewhat in awe of God, he would feel ashamed to act out a cheap lie in his prayers merely to impress. He would like to pray truthfully - but his truth is excessive. And therefore it is not really the truth, because there is no such thing as excess truth: there is only one truth.

Such a person would be ashamed to think of himself as lying outright in his prayers, so he tries to cover over the lie with truth. For example, he may want to make a gesture of piety - perhaps a clap of the hands - to impress someone. Only he is ashamed to do it merely to impress. Accordingly he deceives himself: his evil urge leads him on a trail of thought which persuades him that he really does need to make such a gesture as part of his prayer. He finds a rationalization for his gesture or handclap, a veneer of truth to cover up the lie.

But he has much too much truth. For the fact is that there is only one truth: to pray truthfully to God and God alone. But this person has multiple truths. He uses many different truths to cover the underlying falsehood. This is all because he depends on others, and this is why he is filled with false motives. He produces a truth to persuade himself that his intention is really this or that... Yet in reality there is only one truth.

Likutey Moharan I, 66

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Irrelevant thoughts

Many irrelevant thoughts may come into your mind while you pray. Don't pay any attention to them at all. Simply do your part: say your prayers in the proper order, ignoring all disturbing thoughts.

These extraneous thoughts are actually of great benefit. Without them prayer would be impossible. Tremendous maligning powers seek to denounce our prayers, but these irrelevant thoughts disguise our prayers so that unholy forces disregard them, enabling our prayers to enter on high.

God knows our innermost thoughts. We may have distracting thoughts, yet God knows that in the depths of our hearts, our thoughts are focused only on God. When you pray, your innermost thoughts are always directed toward God. God searches all hearts and He sees this innermost desire. He sees through the disguise and accepts the prayer in love.

"Many thoughts are in man's heart, but God's counsel is what stands" (Proverbs 19:21) .

"Many thoughts are in man's heart" - these are the many extraneous thoughts a person has when he prays. Yet "God's counsel is what stands". This means that there is an innermost point in your heart where your thoughts are directed to God alone. This innermost point is called "God's counsel." Within this point, your intent is to God alone. This can never fail, for "God's counsel is what stands."

You therefore need pay no attention to irrelevant thoughts and distractions. Simply ignore them and continue with your prayers.

Sichot Haran #72

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Distractions

Some people say that if you pray with true inner intention and are wholly focused on your prayers, you should not hear any outside disturbance because your devotion will be strong enough to block out everything else.

This is not true. Even the greatest Tzaddik would be distracted and distressed if, while praying with outstanding intensity and devotion, someone approached him and disturbed or ridiculed him.

Sichot Haran #284

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Where to direct your thoughts

You should force yourselves to pray with great devotion, powerfully binding your thoughts to each word. True devotion means listening attentively to the words you are saying.

It is not advisable to try to pray using the mystical intentions of the prayers as found in the Kabalistic writings - and this applies even to people who are fit to study such works.

Perfect prayer is when you say the words of the prayers with complete simplicity: *Baruch Atah*. "Blessed are You." Listen carefully to what you are saying: concentrate on the meaning of the words.

It is ridiculous to say that one should not force oneself to pray. Quite the contrary: you should pray with all your might and put all your strength into each letter of the words of the prayers.

As to the disturbing thoughts that occur during prayer: ignore them completely. Keep doing your part, going systematically through the service in order, paying no attention to any distractions. Turn your mind away from all such thoughts completely.

The prayer service and limbs of the body

It is impossible to pray the entire service with complete devotion, but each person can say a certain portion of the service with genuine feeling. One person may recite the passages dealing with the Temple incense offering with great feeling. Someone else may pray best during the Psalms of *Pesukey DeZimra*, the "Verses of Song".

This is because the physical human body has a spiritual counterpart, each of whose limbs corresponds to a portion of the prayer service. Each person is associated with a particular limb of the transcendental form. When he reaches the section of the service relating to his limb, he is aroused to great devotion.

Sometimes you may pray a section of the service with great devotion but suddenly the feeling vanishes and you find it impossible to pray properly. Don't be discouraged, because this is inevitable: it means you have left your part of the spiritual form. For the rest of the service, just try to say each word with perfect simplicity.

Like a child learning to read

Sometimes you may make great efforts but find that you still cannot pray. No matter what, do not allow yourself to become discouraged. This is the most important rule of all. Force yourself to say each word of the service with complete simplicity, like a child who is just learning to read. Keep saying the words. In most cases God will then touch your heart with a flame and you will pray with great feeling.

However, you should not make a test of this. Deep inside yourself you well know that you are very remote from true prayer, which is supremely exalted. Prayer is even above the study of Torah. How can you be worthy to serve God in such a lofty way?

Do your part. Simply begin the words of the service - *Adon Olam Asher Malach*, "Lord of the world, Who ruled."

Listen carefully to every word you say. Concentrate on the meaning of the words without letting your thoughts stray. Keep your mind focused entirely on the words of the service. Follow the order of the service, even if you feel no inspiration. Continue word by word, page by page, until God sends you true arousal. And even if you complete the entire service without any feeling, you can still say an extra Psalm or prayer with devotion.

Be sure to offer your prayers in a state of joy and with a happy tune. Put yourself in a cheerful mood before you start your prayers. Seek out your good points, using them to bring joy to your prayers.

The main thing is truth. You may encounter all kinds of distractions when you want to pray, but hold on to truth. No matter what your level, you can speak the simple truth in your prayers. Take this advice to heart and you will certainly be worthy of true prayer.

Sichot Haran #75

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If trouble strikes

What people do at the end, I want you to do at the very outset. People usually pray when they see that all other means have failed. But you should pray at the very outset, when trouble first strikes.

Siach Sarfey Kodesh 1-293

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If a dead man could come back

If a dead person were allowed back into this world to pray, he would definitely pray most beautifully, with all his strength.

Likutey Moharan II, 111

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MUSIC, SONG AND DANCE

In this material world, especially if we have sinned and are very far from God, the main way to attach ourselves to God is through melody and song.

Likutey Halachot, Nesiat Kapayim 5:6

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It is good to get into the habit of livening yourself up with a tune.

Holy melodies are very exalted, having great power to stir the heart and draw it to God.

Even if you cannot sing well, you can still inspire yourself with a tune. Sing it as best as you can, in privacy if you wish. The loftiness of melody is beyond all measure.

Sichot Haran #273

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Music and prophetic spirit

A holy melody can bring you to the level of prophecy. Music is the foundation of true attachment to God.

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It was through music that prophetic spirit rested upon the prophets (see II Kings 3:15) . A musical instrument is a vessel containing air (*ruach* , spirit). The air in the instrument is a mixture of good and bad. On the one hand there is the anxious, depressed spirit - a bad spirit, as we find in the case of King Saul: "and an evil spirit terrified him" (I Samuel 16:14) . On the other hand, there is a good spirit, as it is written: "Let Your good spirit lead me in an even land" (Psalms 143:10) . This good spirit is the spirit of prophecy: holy spirit. But when good and bad are mixed up, it is impossible to receive true prophecy.

The musician playing the instrument must gather the good spirit - the spirit of prophecy - and separate it from the sad, depressed spirit. He must understand music in order to know how to sift out and gather up the parts of the spirit and put them together in order to construct the melody, namely the joy, in order to build the good, prophetic spirit, which is the opposite of the depressed spirit. He must move his hand up and down the instrument in order to channel the joy and bring it to perfection.

And when the prophet hears a melody from an expert musician, he receives a spirit of prophecy, the very spirit that the musician gathered with his hand and separated from the depressed spirit. Thus the attendants of the depressed King Saul said to him of the young David: "And he will play with his hand and it will be good for you" (I Samuel 16:16) .

Accordingly, by playing the musical instrument with one's hand, one sifts, purifies and elevates the good spirit and separates it from the bad. This is the way to overcome the evil spirit of folly that seeks to spoil and upset the good, prophetic spirit. The bad spirit is dissipated through the joy that comes through the hand of the player.

For the root of the power of the spirit of folly lies in sadness and depression. Therefore the only way to receive a holy spirit of prophecy is through joy - the joy created by the hand of the player. Thus, "It was when the musician played that the hand of God was upon him" (II Kings 3:15) ; "and he will play with his hand and it will be good for you". The player who has the power of the hand can sift out the good spirit from the bad and thereby subdue the evil spirit.

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Melody, health and healing

The life and workings of the body are governed by ten basic pulses. These in turn are vitalized by ten kinds of melody emanating from the soul. Negativity, anxiety and depression weaken the pulses, and this can cause illness. But when the melody of the soul is joyous, it strengthens the vitality of the pulses and brings health to the body.

Likutey Moharan I, 24

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Sweetening decrees

Melody sweetens the harsh judgments. When you sing the words of your prayers in a clear, bright voice, the Indwelling Presence is robed in radiant garments, and this is how the harsh judgments are sweetened

Likutey Moharan I, 42

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When harsh decrees threaten Israel , they can be sweetened through dancing and hand- clapping.

Likutey Moharan I, 10

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Joy of the mitzvah

Dancing for joy over a mitzvah is a wonderful thing. There are times when it is a mitzvah to drink wine, as on Shabbat and festivals, or at weddings and other religious celebrations. If you drink on such occasions, do not drink to excess but in moderation. Your intention should be for the sake of Heaven, to experience the true joy of Israel , which is to rejoice in God, who chose us from all the nations.

As the joy begins to radiate within you, it will spread to your legs until you literally start to dance for joy. This will banish the forces of impurity, which take hold of the legs, mitigating harsh judgments and enabling you to receive blessings.

The fervor with which you dance is "a fire offering, a sweet savor to the Lord" (Numbers 28:8) . However, when a person dances with the heat of the evil inclination, this is a "strange fire" (Leviticus 10:1) , while the wine he drinks is the "wine of drunkenness", which allows the forces of impurity to take hold .

Holy dance has the same power to sweeten harsh judgments as a redemption performed by a Tzaddik.

Likutey Moharan I, 41

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MEMORY

You must be very careful to cultivate a good memory and not fall into forgetfulness.

What is a good memory? It means keeping the world to come constantly in the forefront of your mind, never forgetting it.

It would be very proper for every Jew to make it a daily habit, as soon as he opens his eyes in the morning, before doing anything else, to recall that the world to come is the only true goal. He should do this as soon as he wakes up.

Likutey Moharan I, 54

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The benefits of forgetting

Most people see forgetting as a problem, but I see it as a great benefit.

If you never forgot anything, it would be impossible to serve God because remembering everything from the past, you would never be able to lift yourself up to God. Whatever you tried to do, you would constantly be disturbed by your memories of the past. But having the power to forget, you do not need to be disturbed by the past.

This is very important when trying to serve God. Most people are troubled by the past, especially when trying to pray. Precisely then their minds become filled with all kinds of distracting thoughts about their business, household and other affairs. They worry that maybe they did something wrong or should have acted differently. When a person tries to pray or study, he can easily become troubled by thoughts about past wrongdoings and personal failings. This is a universal problem, as we all know.

The best advice is simply to forget! As soon as something is over and done with, regret whatever you must and then push it out of your mind and pay it no further attention. Don't even start rehashing things that are over and done with. Understand this well, because it is a very important principle.

In Torah study too, God gave us the power to forget so that we should always appreciate the Torah as we did the first time we learned it. Since you forget, relearning or reviewing a lesson is like learning it anew, and you appreciate it as much as the first time.

Imagine a group of men who have been hired to fill up barrels that are full of holes. Everything they pour into the barrels leaks out. The fools ask what purpose there is in trying so hard to fill the barrels if everything poured in leaks out.

But the wise man says, "What do I care? I get paid for each day of work. Even if the barrels leak, my wages won't be reduced!" Similarly, even if you forget what you learn, your reward will not be reduced.

In the future God will make you remember everything you ever learned, even if you forgot it during your lifetime. The same applies to those teachings of the true Tzaddik that you do not understand. In the world to come you will be able to understand them.

In the life to come, your soul will remember and understand all the Torah you heard and learned in this world. Happy is the man who spends his days in Torah and devotion.

Sichot Haran #26

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WILL AND DESIRE

When a person is content to want only what God wants, this makes God the King. But when a person desires something other than what God desires, this gives strength to unholy forces. A person must nullify his own will to the point where he has no will and desire for anything except what God desires, whether it be that he should have wealth and children or not, God forbid. It should be the same with everything else he wants. He should desire only what God desires. This makes God alone the King

Likutey Moharan I, 177

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Yearning

The Hebrew letters are consonants: without vowels, they cannot be pronounced but remain like a body without a soul. Without the soul, the body is unable to move or do anything.

The vowels - the soul that animate s the letters - are formed through yearning and desire, whether for good or bad. The yearning for evil creates bad vowels, which make the letters join together and interact to produce bad effects. But if a person yearns to repent, good vowels - good souls - are created and the letters join and interact to produce good results.

It is not sufficient for a person to feel longing and yearning in his heart alone. He must express his longing and yearning on his lips. This is the basis of our prayer service. The yearning in the person's heart creates soul and letters *in potential* , but it is when the person expresses his desire with his mouth that the soul is produced *in actuality* . For the soul comes forth from the mouth, as it says, "My soul came forth through his *speaking* " (Song of Songs 5:6) .

In order to bring forth your soul from potential to actual existence, you must express your yearning and longing in words. This is how you turn your desire into a reality and accomplish what you want, and this is why it is so important to speak to God every day and articulate your desires and good intentions with your lips.

Likutey Moharan I, 31

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The power of one sigh

How precious when you sigh out of longing for something holy. The sigh you emit because you are far from holiness breaks the bond of impurity that was trapping you. Now you can bind yourself with the cord of holiness. But the opposite is true when you sigh with desire for something wrongful, God forbid.

One sigh of regret over your sins and great distance from God is worth more than many fasts and other forms of self-mortification. The sighs you emit when you desire something holy can actually break the force of your bodily urges, enabling your soul to draw nearer to your body and communicate to it something of her own perception of God.

Likutey Moharan I, 109

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Thirsty for God

Thirst is a very great desire. It is wonderful to long, yearn and thirst for God.

The greater your thirst for water , the greater your pleasure when you reach water and drink. Therefore the pleasure is caused by the thirst!

The same is true of holy longing and yearning for God and for true devotion.

This will be the main delight of the world to come, which will be a time of desire and longing. This is the "desire of all desires", the level to which Moses ascended when he left the world. Likewise Abraham paid "four hundred silver shekels" for his final resting place (Genesis 23:16) . The holy *Zohar* says these are the four hundred worlds of yearning that the Tzaddikim will inherit in the future.

They are worlds of yearning because then we will be worthy of true thirst and yearning for God. Quenching this thirst will be the main delight of the future world.

Sichot Haran #259

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The power of thought

Human thought has tremendous power. Thought alone can bring about many things. Even prices in the market rise because of people's thoughts and expectations.

When thought is concentrated intensely, it can exert great influence. All the faculties of the mind, conscious and unconscious, down to the innermost point, must be focused without distraction on the intended result.

When many people do this together, their thoughts can actually force what they are thinking to come about.

The concentrated thought must spell out every step of the desired result in detail. It is not enough for the thought to be merely overall, because this is an "incomplete vessel" and may even be deceptive.

Keeping your mind intently focused on your goal can also help you in studying the Torah. For example, you could focus intently on the thought that you want to complete all four sections of the *Shulchan Aruch*. You could calculate that if you study five pages every day you could complete all four sections in a single year. Picture in your mind exactly how you will go about this course of study. Concentrate so strongly that you are literally obsessed with the thought.

The same approach can also be applied to other studies, such as the Bible or the Talmud and its commentaries. If your desire is strong and your concentration sufficiently intense, your plans will be accomplished.

Sichot Haran #62

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PATIENCE

Sometimes when people don't want to suffer a little, they end up suffering a lot!

Siach Sarfey Kodesh I, 6

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When to push, when to wait

When you just can't fall asleep, it's no use trying to force yourself to sleep. The more you try to force yourself, the more sleep will elude you. The same applies to many other things: it is not good to force yourself too much, because the more you try to force yourself, the stronger the opposing forces will become.

At times this applies even to prayer and devotion. You should certainly make every possible effort to sanctify yourself and attain true devotion. When something can be done today, don't leave it for tomorrow - because the world never stops for a moment. Man's world consists only of the present. Whatever you can do to serve God, do immediately and determinedly without delay. Who knows what obstacles you may face from the outside and from within if you leave it until later?

But at times you may see that, despite all your efforts and determination, you simply cannot achieve what you want. Sometimes you must simply wait. Don't be discouraged because you are not achieving what you want. Don't let this push you off course. You must wait a little until the time is ripe.

The most important thing of all is to look to God at all times with longing and yearning, even when things are not going as well as you would like in your prayers and devotions. Never despair, no matter what. And as soon as God gives you the opportunity to do something holy, do it at once.

Chayey Moharan #431

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The problem contains its own solution

"In my distress you relieved me." (Psalms 4:2)

Even in times of trouble, whatever God sends, He sends in such a way that the trouble itself contains the salvation. Keep your eyes open for God's love and mercy! If you look carefully you will see that even when God sends you trouble, He is still helping you. He actually helps you by means of the very trouble itself, treating you with tremendous kindness all along.

Thus King David said: "In my distress you relieved me" (Psalms 4:2). You have helped me by means of the very trouble itself!

Of course we want our troubles to be over and we hope and trust that God will quickly save us from all of them and bring us great good. Yet even now, while our troubles are still tormenting us, God is helping us.

Likutey Moharan I, 195

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Accepting the bad things

"Love your friend like yourself, I am God." (Leviticus 19:18)

You must accept all your troubles and suffering in life with love. You must understand that, considering all the wrong you have done, God is actually treating you very mercifully and sending you less suffering than you really deserve. If God were to mete out the full punishment for your transgressions, you would have to suffer much more, God forbid.

In the verse, "Love your friend like yourself" (Leviticus 19:18), the Hebrew word for "your friend", *RE-acha*, can also be read as *RA-acha*, "your bad". In other words, you must lovingly accept your suffering and all the bad things that happen to you. Because "...like yourself!" -

considering the way you are and considering all your bad deeds, nevertheless, "I am God" - "I am full of compassion and I am treating you with great mercy."

Likutey Moharan I, 165

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Show us a love that we understand

When the sons of Jacob were about to journey to Egypt with Benjamin, Jacob said to them, " May the eternal God give you love " (Genesis 43:14) . This expresses the very essence of Godly love, when He " gives *you* the love " - namely, when God puts His love in our hands.

For God, it can be that even serious illness and other forms of suffering are expressions of His love, because certainly God sends everything He sends to a person out of love, even when He sends them severe pain and suffering. However, we ask that He should entrust His love to us and put it in our hands, because we do not understand His love and we are unable to bear it.

May God put His love in our hands and give us love in our terms, because we understand love in the simple sense where it means healing from illness and the like.

Likutey Moharan II, 62

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Bitter medicine

All physical medicines are bitter, and the same is true in healing the soul: the soul is healed through bitterness. You may have to overcome many obstacles and endure much suffering in order for your soul to be healed.

With physical illnesses there are times when the body becomes so weak that the invalid cannot bear the bitterness of the medicines. The doctors despair of ever curing him and simply abandon him. Similarly, when a person falls under the influence of sin, which is the sickness of the soul, he may be unable to bear the bitterness of the remedy. There may seem to be no hope for him at all.

However, God is filled with love. When He sees that a person wants to return to Him but lacks sufficient strength to bear the bitter remedies necessitated by his sins, He takes pity and casts all the person's sins aside in order to save him excessive suffering. God sends him only as much as he can bear.

Many find that as soon as they try to return to God and follow the paths of the Tzaddikim, they suddenly encounter difficulties and obstacles on every side. At times it is impossible to bear the bitterness and overcome the obstacles. There have been cases of people who became so discouraged that they went back to their old ways, God forbid.

One who truly desires to draw closer to God should have faith that regardless of how much bitterness or suffering he may endure, everything is being sent to him out of love. If the suffering were really in proportion to the magnitude of his sins it would have been far greater. He would have been much too weak to bear it and he would have been totally lost. But God in His love only sends as much bitterness and suffering as a person can bear. This much he must bear, and it is certainly within his power to endure it

Likutey Moharan I, 27

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The cry of the heart

When words and cries don't help, cry deep in your heart without letting out a sound.

Likutey Moharan II, 5

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Self-nullification

When things are very bad, make yourself into nothing.

How do you make yourself into nothing? You close your mouth and your eyes, and you are like nothing!

Sometimes you may feel overwhelmed by the evil urge. You are racked with confusion and negative thoughts, finding it impossible to overcome them.

You must then make yourself like nothing. Anyone can do this. Close your mouth and your eyes and don't think about anything - as if you have no mind and no thoughts. You are completely nullified before God.

Sichot Haran #279

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Suffering and consolation

The ultimate goal of the entire creation is Unity: "On that day God will be One and His name One" (Zechariah 14:9) . The prophet speaks of "that day" - a future time, when the goal of the creation will have been attained: God will be One.

This ultimate goal is entirely good. For oneness - unity - is entirely good, as we learn from the comment of the Rabbis on this verse in Zechariah: "On that day HaShem will be One and His name One." - "Is this meant to imply," asked the Rabbis, "that right now He is not One? Of course not!

What it means is that in our present state, we make a distinction between the different kinds of experiences God sends us in life. When bad things happen, we bless God as 'the true Judge', while when good things happen, we bless Him as 'the good and beneficent'. But in time to come we will bless Him for everything as 'the good and beneficent'" (*Pesachim* 50a) . Thus we see that unity is the ultimate goal and this goal is entirely good.

Since the ultimate goal is entirely good, in the end everything will turn out to have been for the good. Even when bad things happen and you are beset with troubles and suffering, God forbid, by looking at the ultimate purpose, you will see that these things are not bad at all; they are actually of very great benefit. All suffering is sent from God intentionally for your own ultimate good, whether to remind you to return to God or to cleanse and scour you of your sins. If so, the suffering is really very beneficial, because God's intention is certainly only for good.

Whatever evil and suffering you endure, God forbid, if you just look at the ultimate goal - God's purpose - you will not experience it as suffering at all. On the contrary, by realizing the purpose of this suffering, you will be filled with joy at so much good. For the ultimate purpose is entirely good, all unity! And the deep truth is that there is no evil at all in the world: everything is good.

Then why do we feel pain when we suffer? The pain that people endure when they suffer is only because their spiritual understanding is withheld from them and they cannot focus on the ultimate purpose, which is entirely good. It is then that they feel the pain and sorrow of their suffering. But when understanding is present and one keeps one's attention on the ultimate goal, one feels no pain and suffering at all.

The pain response

This will help you understand a deep mystery: why it is a natural reflex response when a person suffers great pain, heaven forbid, as for example when having a limb amputated, that he screws up his eyes and shuts them tight.

When we want to look at a distant object, we narrow our eyes and screw them up in order to focus our vision on the object. Vision is the agent sent forth by the mind to bring the object into the brain. When an object passes by at high speed, we may not know what it is even if we actually see it with our own eyes, because there is not enough time for the brain to register it. Likewise when something is very far away, our power of vision may not reach there to bring it back into the brain. We are distracted by what we see at the edges of our field of vision, and in addition our vision becomes diffused over such a great distance and lacks sufficient power to bring the object into our brain.

This is why we have to narrow our eyes to see a distant object. We have to limit our vision so that other things don't interfere, and we must focus on the desired object in order to strengthen our vision and avoid its being diffused. Then it is possible to see the far-off object.

So it is when we want to look at the ultimate goal of creation, which is all good, all unity. We must close our (physical) eyes and focus our vision - the inner vision of the soul - on the goal. For the light of this ultimate goal is very far away. The only way to see it is by closing one's eyes. One has

to close them completely and keep them firmly shut. One may even have to press on them with one's finger to keep them tightly closed. Then one can gaze on this ultimate goal.

In other words, you must turn your eyes away from this world and close them to it completely. You must keep them tightly shut and not even glance at the vanity of this world and its mundane temptations. Then you will be able to see and apprehend the light of the ultimate goal, which is all good. And then the suffering will disappear. For the main reason why one suffers is because one is far from this goal.

This is why it is a natural response to screw up one's eyes when suffering pain - in order to escape the suffering and nullify the pain through gazing at the ultimate goal, which is entirely good. The only way to focus on this goal is by closing one's eyes. And even though the individual may be totally unaware of what he is doing, the soul knows everything. That is why it is a natural reflex to close our eyes when suffering pain.

Glimpsing the unity

At the actual moment of self-transcendence when one is nullified in the ultimate goal, which is all good and all unity, the pain and suffering are nullified and actually disappear. However it is not possible to remain permanently in this state of self-transcendence as that would be beyond the limitations of our human existence. In this lifetime self-transcendence can only be experienced for brief moments, just as the angels in Ezekiel's prophecy of the Chariot are described as "running and returning" (Ezekiel 1:14) . They "run forth", momentarily transcending their limitations and rising towards God, but then they "return" again to their separate selves.

When a person returns from the state of self-transcendence to normal consciousness, the conscious mind returns to the brain, which is the seat of the mind, the "vessel" of consciousness. But the limited human brain, the vessel, is unable to maintain the state of self-transcendence, because this is *Ein Sof*, limitless Infinity, which is the ultimate goal: all one, all good. As a result, the brain now feels the pain of the suffering, because it is in the brain that all sensations of pain and suffering are felt. Nerve passages extend from the brain to all the limbs in the body, and through them the brain is aware of pain in whatever limb is affected .

Indeed, after one returns from self-transcendence to normal consciousness, the pain and suffering may attack even more strongly. It is like two fighters wrestling with one another: when one sees that the other is getting the upper hand, he fights back even harder. Similarly, when the forces of judgment gripping the person see that he wants to overcome his suffering and nullify it through self-transcendence and absorption in the ultimate goal, they attack even more strongly. This is why afterwards, when one returns from the state of self-transcendence, the suffering is felt even more intensely, because the forces of judgment fight back against him since he wanted to escape them.

Consolation

Afterwards, however, the suffering is lightened and we can derive a measure of consolation from the new spiritual insights achieved through the suffering. The reason suffering leads to spiritual insight is that suffering brings one to self-transcendence. Subsequently , even though one returns

from self-transcendence to normal consciousness, a trace of it still remains, and from this trace comes Torah insight. This is because in the state of self-transcendence, nullified in the ultimate goal, one realizes that one's pain and suffering are actually of very great benefit. This fills one with joy, which is the "vessel" for receiving new Torah insights.

It is the deeper Torah insights resulting from the remaining joyous trace of self-transcendence that later cool the intensity of one's suffering. For Torah quenches the thirst of the soul, namely the pain and suffering.

"Happy is the man whom God chastises and from Your Torah you teach him" (Psalms 94:12) . The chastisement and suffering are what bring one to greater Torah insight. And indeed, if out of suffering you come to enhanced understanding, this is a sign that you dealt with the suffering in the proper way. Your deepened spiritual awareness is a sign that you were able to use the suffering to attain the state of self-transcendence, nullification in the ultimate goal .

Likutey Moharan I, 65

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What is this world?

Everyone in the world is in pain and full of suffering: there is not a single person who really possesses this world. Even the highest and wealthiest have none of this world. All their days are pain and anger, and they endure constant worry, anxiety and sorrow, sighing and groaning... Each has his own private suffering. Not one of the very wealthy and privileged has everything exactly as he wants it at all times. They too are constantly full of pain and suffering, as everyone who knows them is fully aware.

It may sometimes look as if a certain person has this world to perfection, enjoying all the pleasures of wealth, possessions, esteem, magnificent palaces, utensils, ornaments and royal treasures. Yet if you look carefully, you will find that he too constantly suffers all kinds of pain and vexation.

Everyone speaks of "this world" and the "world to come" . As for the "world to come" , we believe in it. Maybe "this world" also does exist somewhere! But the world in which we find ourselves here would appear to be Gehinnom , because everyone is constantly in great pain and we find no "this world" at all!

Likutey Moharan II, 119

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Sweetening pain with divine awareness

Know that the only reason we experience pain and suffering is because of a lack of *Da'at* , Godly knowledge and awareness. One who possesses this knows that everything is sent by God and therefore he feels no pain or suffering, because "God gave and God took" (Job 1:21) . It is true

that there is a certain kind of suffering that is inevitable. This is the pain felt when the soul leaves the body, the pain of illness that comes when the soul begins to separate itself from the body. The soul is so tightly bound to the body in this life that one inevitably feels pain at the moment of separation.

Nevertheless this suffering is easy to bear if one knows clearly that everything is under God's providence. All the more does this apply to other kinds of pain and suffering, which a person who possesses Godly awareness does not feel at all. The main reason a person feels pain and suffering is that his Godly awareness is taken from him .

Exile and the law of nature

The main reason for the suffering of the Jewish People in exile is that they have fallen from Godly awareness, attributing everything to nature, chance and fate. This is why they experience pain and suffering. It has come upon them because they have learned from the nations among whom they live. They see the gentiles in their hour of ascendancy, while the Jews are lowly and despised. As a result the Jews have fallen under the influence of the nations and attribute everything to nature or chance.

This is the only reason for their suffering, because if they had the Godly awareness to understand that everything is under God's providence, they would feel no pain at all. The truth is that the Jewish People are beyond nature. It is only when they sin that they become subject to the laws of nature just like the nations of the world, who are governed by nature and the stellar influences. The Jews then experience exile and suffering. The main reason for their exile and pain is that they lack Godly awareness and attribute everything to nature.

Providence and prayer

In time to come, at the end of history in its present form, "nature" as we understand it will disappear and the world will be governed only by providence. "For the heavens will vanish away like smoke and the earth will be worn out like a garment" (Isaiah 51:6) . This means that the natural order as governed by the system of stars and planets will no longer operate as such. The expression "vanish away" in the verse signifies that all the constellations will be thrown into confusion and become mixed up. Stellar influences and "fate" will no longer dominate; everything will be governed only by God's providence. The Jewish People will then be in the ascendant.

Through prayer we have the power to channel God's providence in a way that goes beyond nature. Nature may dictate one thing but prayer has the power to change nature. This is "greatness" - "For what great nation is there that has God so near to them as HaShem our God whenever we call on Him?" (Deuteronomy 4:7) . Our greatness is that God hears our prayers and alters the course of nature through His providence. Thus Yehoram, king of Israel , said to Gehazi, "Please tell me the *great* things that Elisha did" (II Kings 8:4) , for "Whatever Elisha did, he accomplished through prayer" (*Megilah 27a*) . Thus prayer, which gives us access to the realm of miracles and providence, the very opposite of nature, is "great."

Why do we cry when in pain?

Why do people shed tears when in pain? Tears draw down God's providence. This we learn from the rabbinic interpretation of the verse, "And the clouds return after the rain" (Ecclesiastes 12:2) - "This refers to a person's vision, which becomes weaker through tears" (*Shabbat* 151a) . From this we learn that tears take away part of one's vision.

The fact that tears weaken a person's eyesight and take part of it away means that the vision is drawn into the tears. And this is why people shed tears when in pain. When a person feels pain and suffering, it means he needs God's providence to be saved. This is why people cry, so as to bring down and reveal God's watchful providence. For the providence and vision are drawn into the tears. This is why "Hezekiah wept *greatly* " (Isaiah 38:3) when he fell sick. Through his tears he drew down God's watchful providence, which is the concept of "greatness" and prayer.

Likutey Moharan I, 250

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Patience and faith

If a person had complete faith in God and fully believed that He stands over him listening to his prayers, hearing every word that comes from his mouth, he would certainly pray properly without a trace of apathy or despondence . The main thing that prevents us from praying with enthusiasm is a lack of faith, which makes people despondent and apathetic.

If a grain of wheat is planted in good soil, it will sprout and grow beautifully without being harmed by winds and storms. This is because there is a power that makes it grow and flourish. But if the same seed is planted in poor soil, it literally rots in the earth because there is no power making it grow.

In the same way, when a person has faith, which is the growth-generating power, nothing can harm him. He is not afraid of anyone or anything in the world; he puts energy into his prayers and visits the Tzaddik. But if a person lacks faith, he lacks the growth-generating power, and then he literally rots, like a grain of wheat planted in poor soil. This is what makes him ponderous and depressed and he literally rots!

When a person is patient and slow to anger, he fears nothing and lets nothing distract or deter him from his devotions. No matter what happens, he continues as best as he can, doing his part to serve God without worrying about anything or letting anything disturb him.

Patience depends upon faith, for "as long as there is idolatry in the world, there is anger in the world" (*Sifri* , *Re'eh*) . Faith is the opposite of idolatry and therefore dispels anger, bringing the person to patience, which is the opposite of anger.

Whenever you encounter distractions and barriers in your prayers and devotions, you must take a deep breath of patience and bear everything patiently. Do not allow yourself to become

discouraged, depressed and apathetic. Breathe deeply and don't take it to heart. Continue doing what you have to do and try your best to ignore all the distractions and obstacles. This is the mark of true patience, which comes through faith, the growth-generating power.

Faith will make you grow, flourish and succeed in your devotions, because no obstacle will have the power to disturb you or throw you into depression and apathy. Regardless of what happens, you will continue doing what you have to do joyfully and with enthusiasm, paying no attention whatever to any disturbances and distractions.

COURAGE

When a person realizes that he is on a very low level and far from God, this itself is a reason to feel encouraged. Before this, he was so far from God that he did not even know it. Now at least he knows it, and this itself is a sign that he is drawing closer.

Likutey Moharan II, 68

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Each one is precious

God takes pride in every individual Jew, even the most minor, even the sinners of Israel, as long as they go by the name of Israel. There is a unique pride that God takes in every single Jew and even in each of his limbs and every single movement he makes. Sometimes a lowly Jew makes a slight movement with his side-curl and God takes great pride in this too!

One should therefore never despair of God's help regardless of any wrong he may have done, because God's love for him will never cease and he can always return to God.

Likutey Moharan I, 17

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God hides in the obstacle

When a person has spent all his days immersed in materialism and suddenly feels a strong desire to walk in the ways of God, the attribute of Judgment rises up to accuse him. It will not allow him to walk in the ways of God and creates an obstacle. But God loves kindness and hides Himself in the obstacle itself. Someone with understanding looks carefully and discovers God in the very obstacle itself!

Likutey Moharan I, 115

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Illusory walls

When someone wants to serve God or travel to the true Tzaddik, he is bound to face obstacles. Each person imagines that the obstacles he faces are greater than those facing others and finds it hard to withstand them. But no-one is ever confronted with obstacles that are beyond his ability to overcome if he really wants. The truth is that there is no obstacle at all, because God is present, albeit veiled, in the very obstacle itself.

The greatest of all barriers are those in the mind - when the person is divided from God or from the Tzaddik in his own mind and heart. A person may have come to the Tzaddik despite all the physical obstacles. But if some small doubt about the Tzaddik then arises in his mind, causing his heart to falter, this is the greatest obstacle of all. Similarly, a person encounters many obstacles when he wants to pray. However, if after overcoming them all he is ready to pray but his heart is contorted and turned away from God, this is the greatest obstacle of all.

The Baal Shem Tov told a parable about a king who left a great treasure in a certain place, surrounding it with all kinds of illusory walls. When people came to these walls, they thought they were real and that it would be very hard to break through. Some retreated immediately; others broke through one wall but could not break through the second. A few broke through more walls, but no- one could break through them all. Until the king's son came and said: "I know that all these walls are pure illusions and the truth is that there is no wall at all!" He went forward confidently until he overcame them all.

All the obstacles and temptations standing in the way of true fear of heaven are illusory walls. Be courageous and strong-hearted! All the apparent obstacles, such as financial and other material constraints or opposition from others, will disappear if you are determined and courageous in your quest for God.

Likutey Moharan II, 46

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The obstacle is sent to create desire

It is impossible to do anything unless you have desire. Even merely to say something, you must first have a desire to speak. Likewise, in order to do something, you must first have the desire to do it.

Therefore when a person needs to perform some holy task, whether it is to visit the Tzaddik or any other holy mission, he is first given the desire to accomplish it.

The strength of the person's desire is created through being confronted with an obstacle. When an Israelite needs to do something in connection with his Judaism, especially when it is something important on which his whole Judaism depends, such as going to the true Tzaddik - he is sent an obstacle. The purpose of the obstacle is to increase his desire to accomplish his task.

This is like showing a small child something he wants and then immediately snatching it from him and hiding it. The child runs after the person, pleading and wanting the thing even more. The child's desire for the object is increased by having it snatched away and hidden. Similarly, we are held back from what we want by obstacles whose only purpose is to increase our desire.

The greater the object of desire, the greater the obstacle! There are three factors involved : the desire itself, the person who has it and the object of his desire. The desire must be strong in proportion to the greatness of its object. When the object of desire is very great, the person needs very strong desire to attain it. He is then confronted with a very great obstacle in order to make his desire all the stronger, because the greater the obstacle, the stronger the desire that is needed to overcome it.

Know therefore that whenever you encounter very great obstacles in any holy pursuit, you should infer from this just how great and precious is the object of your desire. This is why the obstacle is so great.

If your desire is very strong, you will certainly be able to accomplish what you want and bring it from potential to actual. For the main purpose of the obstacle is to strengthen the desire. When the strength of your desire matches the strength of the obstacle, the obstacle becomes surmountable.

Likutey Moharan I, 66

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No effort is ever wasted

Not a single effort, thought, word or deed or even the slightest gesture is ever wasted when trying to accomplish a holy goal .

When you want to do something holy, at first you are uncertain and confused. You weigh up all the factors, deciding whether or not to do it. Obstacles seem to spring up on every side.

At last you succeed in accomplishing the task. Your every movement, every thought and even the confusion you suffered are registered for good. They are raised on high to be transformed into something very holy and exalted.

Happy is the person who leaps over all the barriers to accomplish a holy task!

Sichot Haran #11

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When a person finally attains a holy goal, all his earlier obstacles become transformed into the most exalted things.

Likutey Halachot, Choshen Mishpat, Nizkey Shchenim 3:8

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The boiling pot

When a person starts to serve God and draw close to a true Tzaddik, he is often filled with negative thoughts and inner turmoil.

This is like a pot of water which initially seems quite clear, but as soon as it is placed on the fire and starts to boil, all the impurities begin to surface. Someone has to stand there constantly removing the scum and impurities.

At first the water appears perfectly clear, but as it heats up, more and more impurity surfaces. At last, however, when all the impurity is removed, the water is truly pure and clear.

The same is true of a person. Before he starts serving God, good and evil are totally mixed up in him - so much so that the evil and impurity are not even discernible. But when he starts trying to serve God and draw close to a true Tzaddik, he begins the process of cleansing and purification. Each time, more evil and impurities rise to the surface.

Here too one must stand by constantly removing the dirt and impurities as they appear, until in the end the person is truly pure and clear.

Initially a person is totally immersed in the material. When he starts to draw closer to God, it might seem as if it should be possible to remove all this filth and impurity at once. But his mind is so totally mixed up with this mire that if it were to be removed all at once, he could lose his mind with it as well.

One must be very patient until little by little one becomes completely pure.

Sichot Haran #79

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Opposition is a good sign

Opposition raises and elevates a person. If you face opposition, it is a sign that you want to be a good person. But if things are quiet, it's a sign that your service of God has quietened down!

Netiv Tzaddik 70

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Efforts are counted as sacrifices

When people seek to purify themselves and keep the Torah, they often feel overwhelmed with confusion and frustration. They encounter great obstacles in their path and they are uncertain what to do. The more they want to serve God, the harder it seems.

Know that all your efforts to do the right thing are very precious in God's eyes even if you do not achieve your goal. All your efforts are counted as sacrifices.

Trying to pray is like offering a sacrifice. "For Your sake we are killed every day, we are counted like sheep for the slaughter" (Psalms 44:23) . This verse speaks of prayer as a sacrifice. When a person wants to pray, he encounters many distractions. Even so, he gives himself over completely to his prayers, making every effort to focus all his thoughts on the words he is saying and their meaning. Even if his prayers are not perfect, his very efforts are a sacrifice, as it says: "For Your sake we are killed every day."

The same applies to all acts of service of God. You may desire to perfect yourself but find you cannot do so completely. Even so, all your pain and efforts are not wasted. They all count as offerings to God: "For Your sake we are killed every day, we are counted like sheep for the slaughter."

You should therefore always do your part and make every effort to serve God as best as you can. What is up to you, do with all your might. Keep trying even if all your efforts seem to be frustrated and all your attempts seem to be in vain. Do everything in your power and God will do what is good in His eyes.

Sichot Haran #12

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The ways of Teshuvah: Two skills

"The living creatures were *running* and *returning* " (Ezekiel 1:14) .

If you want to follow the ways of Teshuvah and return to God, you need to acquire two different skills: the first is the ability to "run forward" at times of spiritual ascent; the second is the knowledge of how to "return" when you encounter a setback . These two skills correspond to how the angels in the prophetic vision were " *running* and *returning* " (Ezekiel 1:14) .

Whether you feel you are advancing or not, or even if you feel you are sliding backwards, always stay strong and follow King David's teaching: "If I ascend to heaven , You are there, and if I make hell my bed, behold You are there!" (Psalms 139:8) .

"If I ascend to heaven." If you succeed in rising to some high level, don't stay there and content yourself with what you have achieved. You must have the skill to understand and believe that you

are obliged to advance even further. This is the skill of "running forward": "If I ascend to heaven, You are there!"

Conversely, even if you fall in some way, never give up hope. Seek out and entreat God constantly and strengthen yourself as best you can in the place where you find yourself. God is present even in the depths of hell. Even there you can attach yourself to God: ".and if I make hell my bed, behold You are there!" This is the skill of "returning".

Only through the acquisition of these two skills can you go in the ways of Teshuvah.

Likutey Moharan I, 6

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The purpose of falling - to go higher

When the time comes for a person to rise from one level to the next, he must first experience a fall. The whole purpose of the fall is to prepare for the ascent. Try to understand this and you will realize how determined you must be in order to serve God. No matter how far you fall, never allow yourself to be discouraged. Remain firm and resolute and pay no attention to the fall at all, because in the end it will be transformed into a great ascent. This is its whole purpose.

This applies to all the different ways one can fall. Each person always thinks that his own situation is so bad that this does not apply to him. People imagine it applies only to those on very exalted levels who are continually advancing from level to level. But you should realize that it holds true even for those on the lowest of levels, because God is good to all.

Likutey Moharan I, 22

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Each time a person emerges from one level in order to rise to the next, the unholy forces attack him again in the form of desires and fantasies, strange thoughts, mental confusion, distractions and all kinds of other obstacles. They stand in array against him, refusing to let him enter the gates of holiness.

Many sincere people become highly discouraged when they find themselves suddenly confronted by all these desires and obstacles. They start to think that they must have fallen from their previous level because for some time they have not experienced them with the same intensity - since they were dormant.

When this happens, you must understand that what you are experiencing is not a fall. The time has come for you to advance from one level to the next. This is why these same old desires and obstacles have reared their heads again. Whenever this happens, it takes great strength and courage not to lose hope but to overcome all the desires and obstacles again.

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Starting again

When a person falls from his level he should know that this is sent from Heaven.

The purpose of the apparent rejection is to draw him closer. The reason for the fall is to spur the person to make even greater efforts to draw closer to God.

The thing to do is to make an entirely new start. Start serving God as if you had never started in your whole life. This is one of the most basic principles of serving God. We must literally begin all over again every day.

Likutey Moharan I, 261

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One of the great rules in serving God is: Never allow yourself to fall completely.

Even if you feel you have failed in some devotion or prayed without proper attention or fallen in some other way, you must still try to keep as strong as you can and make a whole new start. Act as if today you are only beginning to serve God. No matter how many times you fall, pick yourself up and start again. Do this over and over again. Otherwise you will never come close to God.

Pull yourself to God with all your strength, regardless of whether you go up or down. No matter how low you fall, make a determined effort to *yearn* and *long* to draw closer to God. Cry out, pray and plead with God! Keep trying to do whatever you can to serve God with joy. Without this inner determination, you will never be able truly to approach God.

Keep on trying and trying until you are unable to do anything but serve God at all times every day of your life, even without any guarantee of a reward. Sometimes you may think you are so far from God that you will have no reward in the world to come. Even so, you must be willing to serve Him as best as you can even without a reward.

Even if you think you are bound to go to hell, you must still do your part in serving God as best as you can. Grab a mitzvah! Learn some Torah! Say a prayer. and God will do what is good in His eyes.

It is impossible to come to true service of God without facing all these trials. Every time you fall, you must make a determined effort to pick yourself up and start all over again - even many times each day - until eventually you will advance steadily in God's ways. Amen.

Sichot Haran #48

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Hope and courage

"Be strong and courageous, all who *hope* in God" (Psalms 31:25) .

Even if you feel you have failed to reach true holiness or devotion, you can still *hope* . And this way you can be "strong and courageous". No matter what happens, don't let anything discourage you.

Be sure also to encourage your friends not to become disheartened, no matter what happens. You may be all too aware of your own failings, but this should not prevent you from encouraging others. It is easier to inspire others than to strengthen yourself, for "A prisoner cannot free himself" (*Berachot* 5b) .

Nothing is worse than giving in to discouragement. In time of war, the Torah says: "Do not be afraid and do not be terrified" (Deuteronomy 20:3) . The rabbis explained: "Do not be afraid." - "of the hordes of troops," ".and do not be terrified" - "of the sound of the war horns" (*Sotah* 42a) .

Whoever wants to enter the service of God must endure all this, for he will face a multitude of fearsome struggles - "the hordes of troops and the sound of the war horns". You must stand firm. Never surrender your ground. Trust that God will help you and don't turn aside from Him.

"Retreat is the beginning of defeat" (Sotah 44b) . In any case, where can you go to escape from God? "Where can I flee from You? If I rise to heaven, You are there; if I descend to Hell - You are there too!" (Psalms 139: 6- 7) . For God is everywhere.

You must be very stubborn in serving God.

And even if you feel that you yourself are far from God, be sure not to discourage others. Do the very opposite: strengthen them in every way possible. Speak to them with words that restore the soul. By doing so, you too will eventually come back to serving God.

Sichot Haran #120

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Even a little is precious

There are people who draw close to God but later fall away. Even so, the short time they serve God is very precious in His eyes no matter what happens later.

"You have heartened Me with one of your eyes" (Song of Songs 4:9) .

In this verse, God addresses the Jewish people, recalling their acceptance of the Torah. The Midrash asks: "Why does the verse say, 'with *one* of your eyes'? The answer is because the other eye was already looking at the Golden Calf!"

At the very time when they accepted the Torah, they already had ideas of going astray! Yet even the short time they were close to God was still very dear to Him, and this is why He says, "You have *heartened* Me with *one* of your eyes."

Sichot Haran #123

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Torah secrets

The places that seem lowest of all and furthest from God actually contain the most exalted life force of all, albeit concealed: namely the "secrets of Torah". One who has fallen very far should therefore understand that in the very place in which he finds himself he can still draw close to God because of the exalted life force that is concealed there. When he succeeds in returning to God, exalted levels of Torah will be revealed through him. These are the "secrets of Torah".

Likutey Moharan I, 56

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Where is the place of His glory?

There are people who sink very low indeed and fall into all kinds of doubts and even have questions about God Himself. Nevertheless, the whole purpose of their falling is for them to rise up afterwards. The fall is for the sake of the ascent.

For the root of the entire creation is glory. Whatever God has created, He has done so only for His glory. "Everything that is called by My Name. I have created for My glory..." (Isaiah 43:7) . It follows that His glory is the root of the entire creation . And although everything is a unity, there are nevertheless gradations within creation. Each individual portion of creation contains its own unique glory, which is the root of that portion. Each of the ten utterances with which the world was created has its own unique glory, which is its root, because glory is the root of everything. Each utterance is a garment expressing God's glory, for "the whole earth is full of His glory!" (Isaiah 6:3).

What about sin and evil? God's glory is not present there, for "I will not give My glory to another" (Isaiah 42:8) . There is a limit that prevents the glory from spreading there. Although "the whole earth is full of His glory", there is nevertheless a limit that prevents it from spreading to the "outside places", which are beyond the bounds of holiness - for "I will not give My glory to another".

But know that in spite of this, even the "filthy places" and even idolatrous temples necessarily derive their life-force from God. But know that they receive it from the Hidden Utterance of *Bereishit* , "In the beginning" (Genesis 1:1) . This utterance includes all the others, and all of them derive their vitality from it. The glory of the Hidden Utterance is concealed to the ultimate degree. It is from there that they derive their life-force. For it is impossible for the "filthy places" to receive

their vitality from the revealed utterances, because "I will not give My glory to another". Only from the Hidden Utterance, which is concealed to the ultimate degree, can they receive vitality. It is impossible to understand this with human reason, and we are not permitted to delve into it.

When a person sinks to these "filthy places", he is filled with doubts, questions and confusion. But when he starts examining himself and sees how far he is from God's glory and begins asking and searching, *Ayeh?* - "Where is the place of God's glory?" - this is the essence of the solution. He sees for himself that, having sunk to such places, he is far from God's glory. When he asks *Ayeh?* - "Where?" - this is his way to rise up and transform his fall into a great ascent. For the purpose of the descent is to lead to an ascent.

Ayeh? - "Where is the place of His glory?" This alludes to the exalted glory of the highest utterance, *Bereishit*, which is the source of the life-force of these places. Therefore when a person searches in earnest, *Ayeh?* - "Where is the place of His glory?" - this itself brings him back and he rises to the highest glory, *Ayeh*, which because of its great concealment gives life to these places. Having fallen there, by then searching *Ayeh?* - "Where is the place of His glory?" - he returns and connects himself to this exalted place, injecting new vitality into his very fall, and he can then rise to the most exalted heights.

The essence of Teshuvah is an earnest search for God's glory. When a person sees that he is far from God's glory, he yearns for it. He asks, labors and toils: *Ayeh?* - "Where is the place of His glory?" This itself is his answer, his repentance and his remedy. Understand this well.

"If someone asks you, 'Where is your God?' tell him, 'In the great city of Rome'" (*Yerushalmi Taanit* 1). For even in places filled with idols and cults, God is present, albeit hidden. If you sink to such places, God forbid, as soon as you begin to search *Ayeh?* - "Where is the place of His glory?" - you draw life for yourself from the life-force of holiness. The vitality of the unholy forces, the "husks", derives only from the concealment, from the fact that God is so totally hidden that there is no awareness of Him at all. But as soon as you begin to search, "Where is the place of His glory?" this is an indication that you know that God exists, even though He is hidden, and this is why you are searching *Ayeh?* - "Where is the place of His glory?"

This is how you can give yourself new life in the place to which you have sunk. This is because *Ayeh* is the Hidden Utterance from which all things derive their vitality. The unholy "husks" are nourished by the concealment, but you now vitalize yourself with the life-force of holiness in the very place to which you have sunk - by earnestly searching *Ayeh?* - "Where is the place of His glory?" Afterwards you can lift yourself from there completely and reach holiness itself in a place where God's glory is revealed. For the essence of holiness is that God's glory should be revealed. Blessed be God forever. Amen. Amen.

Likutey Moharan II, 12

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The narrow bridge

When a person makes a start and tries to bring himself closer to God, he usually experiences a feeling of rejection. It is as if forces beyond his control are trying to prevent him from entering God's service. Yet in actual fact this apparent rejection is nothing but a way of bringing him closer. But it takes tremendous determination not to become discouraged when you see that the days and years are passing and in spite of all your efforts to draw closer, you are still far away.

You may feel you have not even begun to enter the gates of holiness. You may see yourself as still being coarsely materialistic and feel that your mind is confused. No matter what you try to do to serve God, it seems as if the evil forces will not allow you to succeed. You may start thinking that God is paying no attention whatever, as if He has no interest in your devotions. You keep calling out to Him, pleading with Him to help you. Yet you feel as far away as ever.

It takes tremendous determination to overcome all this. The key is to ignore all the discouragement. The truth is that all this apparent rejection has no other purpose than to bring you closer. All the Tzaddikim have had to endure this, as we know from their personal testimony. They too felt that God had no interest in them, because they saw how long they had been searching, putting in hard work and effort, yet they were still far away. If they had not determinedly ignored these feelings, they would have remained where they were in the first place and would never have achieved what they did.

My dear friend and brother: the basic rule is to keep firm and be strong. Try with all your strength to be persistent in your devotions. Pay no attention to all these discouraging thoughts. And if you are very far from God and you feel that your every movement must be a blemish in God's eyes, you should know that on the contrary, if someone is all that coarse and materialistic, even the slightest motion he makes to try to detach himself from his physicality and turn towards God is very great and precious. If he moves no more than a hairsbreadth in his efforts to purify himself and come closer, that hairsbreadth makes him run thousands and thousands of miles in the worlds above. (See below, p. 354, "The Sad Tzaddik", for further explanation.) If you think about this, it will make you very happy. Indeed you should make a great effort always to be happy, because depression can cause tremendous damage. You should know that as soon as a person wants to start serving God, it is a very grave sin for him to be depressed. Depression comes from the Other Side, which God hates.

In order to serve God, you must be obstinate. On no account should you give up and abandon the practices you have begun. Don't give up in any way, no matter what happens. Remember this well, because you will be in great need of it when you start serving God. You must be very obstinate indeed, holding yourself strong and firm in your place each time the evil forces try to throw you down. This will happen very often. Your task is to continue as best as you can without allowing yourself to fall completely, God forbid.

Inevitably you must encounter all kinds of difficulties and setbacks. You will fall down many times before you can enter the gates of holiness. Even the greatest Tzaddikim have gone through all this. There are cases when a person is already at the gate of holiness, only to slide back because of these difficulties. When a person is close to the gate, the forces of evil try to prevent him from entering.

This pushes some people into retreat. That is the way of the Evil One: when he sees a person literally at the gates, he attacks more powerfully than ever. That is why you need to be so strong.

If you want to enter God's service, remember all this very well. Strengthen yourself in every possible way and do what you can to continue with your devotions. Eventually, with God's help, you will surely succeed in entering through the gate. God is overflowing with love and very much wants your devotions. Know that every single effort you make is important. All your attempts to detach yourself even slightly from the material world and draw closer to the spiritual are added together. They will all come to your aid when you really need it, when you are under pressure or in trouble, God forbid.

And know that in life a person has to pass over a very narrow bridge. The main thing is not to be afraid.

Likutey Moharan II, 48

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Never give up !

Gevalt!!! Never give up hope! There is no despair.

Likutey Moharan II, 78

Recovering stolen goods

Once there was a wealthy man who had a shop where he lived and kept his stock of merchandise. Thieves came and robbed him of his wealth and possessions, and he lost a large part of what he had. But he collected together the remains and was able to put himself back on his feet again. He purchased some more stock and once again became a shopkeeper.

Then more thieves came and robbed him of whatever was left of his previous wealth. Still, he once again gathered together what little he could from the remnants of what was left to him and his wife's jewelry, and he was able to get back on his feet again. He set up a store to provide himself and his household with their livelihood.

Again thieves came and robbed him of whatever was left, and he became so impoverished that his house was completely empty. He went and collected together a miserable sum, bought a few bits and pieces, and went around the villages like the poor tinkers who travel about with bundles of goods, needles, pipes and similar small items. He went from village to village trading needles for chickens and eggs among the gentiles, and this was how he earned the family bread.

One day he was on his way from the villages carrying his small stock and a few items of food when he was set upon by a bandit. The bandit was riding a horse and carrying two enormous bundles. He wanted to rob him and the man began to weep and plead with the bandit. However, he paid no attention and robbed him of the little he had. The man was left with nothing at all, and he wept

bitterly. As if his previous troubles had not been enough when he had been stripped of his great wealth! Now they had torn from him even his meager remaining livelihood!

Meanwhile, he noticed that the bandit had fallen from his horse. He was trying to get up, but the horse was standing at his side trampling his head with its hooves. The bandit fell back and died. The man went over to look and saw that the robber had fallen to the ground dead. He opened the robber's bundles, and there he found all the merchandise, wealth and possessions that the bandit had ever stolen from him. He returned to his house in peace with his wealth restored.

One should never despair. A person may be robbed and plundered time and time again, yet he should never despair of God's mercy and kindness. In the end the robber will suffer a fall from which he will never rise again, while the one who was robbed will recover all the holiness, goodness and devotion that were stolen from him and return to his wealth and eternal goodness.

Chayey Moharan #97

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TORAH STUDY

The Misnagdim (opponents of the Chassidim) say that the main thing is to study Torah. The Chassidim say the main thing is prayer. But I say: Pray and study and pray.

Siach Sarfey Kodesh 1-87

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Daily study

Everyone should set himself a daily program of Torah study.

This applies even to people who are far from holiness and sin regularly. So great is the power of the Torah that it can free them from their sins. If even the worst sinner would take on himself to study a fixed amount every day, he would be able to escape the evil trap. The power of the Torah is so great that it can accomplish everything.

Sichot Haran #19

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Halachah

It is very important to study Halachah - the practical laws of the Torah. If you can, study all four sections of the *Shulchan Aruch* (the classic code of Torah law as it applies in our times) in order from beginning to end. Otherwise, study one of the concise guides that explain the laws of daily life.

The study of Halachah is a great spiritual remedy. When a person sins, good and evil become mixed up. Each individual Halachah is a legal decision that makes a clear separation between what is permitted and what is forbidden, what is clean and what is unclean. When you study Halachah, good is once again separated from evil, thereby rectifying the sin.

Every Jew should study Halachah every day.

If you are under pressure and have no time, study at least one paragraph of Halachah on any subject, even if it is outside your regular study schedule. Learn at least one law every day of your life.

Sichot Haran #29

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Chassidut

My book *Likutey Moharan* is the beginning of the Redemption. Now that it has come out, I very much want people to study it. They should study it until they know it by heart, because it is filled with guidance and has the power to arouse men to God in a way nothing else can compare with. Those who study it carefully have no need for any other work on ethics and moral guidance.

Learning my works is the beginning of the Redemption - may it come speedily in our days. The best way to study them is with two separate routines. The first should be one of brisk study in order to become thoroughly conversant with them. The second should be one of in-depth study, because these works contain the profoundest depths.

Chayey Moharan #346

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As soon as the most exalted and wonderful Torah teachings are put into a book, they become concealed behind covers. The boards of the binding of the book are the covers.

Likutey Moharan II, 36

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You can crease and wrinkle my book any way you like when it comes to your own interpretations - as long as you don't violate a single paragraph of the *Shulchan Aruch* .

Siach Sarfey Kodesh 1-131

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Travel everywhere

Try to go through all our holy books in the course of your lifetime, so that you will have visited every place in the Torah.

Wealthy people constantly travel from place to place, spending enormous sums in order to be able to boast about where they have been. In the same way, in this life you should visit all the holy places in the Torah. Then in your future life you will be able to take pride in having visited every place in our holy literature. For in the world to come you will remember everything you have ever learned.

Sichot Haran #28

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How to study Torah

The best way to learn Torah is by studying fairly rapidly without analyzing every single detail. Study briskly and simply: seek to understand each thing in its own context without confusing yourself about how it relates to other subjects.

If there is something you do not understand, it is usually best not to dwell on it for too long. Keep going. In most cases you will eventually come to understand it in the light of what follows.

When you study, the main thing is to read the words aloud and in order. Understanding will then come of itself. Do not confuse yourself by trying to comprehend everything at once. You will have much difficulty and end up understanding nothing.

Simply focus your mind on what you are studying, reading the words in their correct order and with enthusiasm. Understanding will come of itself. What you do not understand at first, you will comprehend later. Even if there are things you cannot fully understand, this is unimportant because broad knowledge outweighs everything else.

By studying rapidly you will absorb a great quantity and you will be able to review each work many times. What you did not understand at first you will grasp the second or third time round, and eventually you will understand everything that it is possible to understand.

By following this path you will complete many volumes and have a better comprehension than one who is overly precise. Such a person can become very confused and may even come to abandon his studies completely, ending up with nothing.

Accustom yourself to learn quickly without too much attention to detail. This way you will truly acquire the Torah and cover enormous ground. You will be able to complete the Talmud, Codes, Bible, Midrash, *Zohar* and other Kabbalistic texts and all the other sacred works.

It is unnecessary to review everything immediately. It is better to complete each volume as rapidly as possible from beginning to end and then to review the entire work as a whole.

Don't be anxious if you are unable to complete everything. One can be a faithful Jew even without being able to learn at all. One can be a Tzaddik even without being a scholar. It is true that deep perception cannot be attained without Talmudic scholarship, yet even the simplest Jew can be a Tzaddik. "You are not obliged to complete the work, but neither are you at liberty to desist from it" (*Avot* 2:16) .

Sichot Haran #76

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Chidushim New ideas

When you want to develop new Torah ideas, you must concentrate on one subject. Turn it over and over in your mind, knocking and beating on the gate until it opens.

Sometimes a thought may fly into your mind in a flash - but then it flies away. You must be a man of valor, pursuing it until it is recaptured.

Sichot Haran #58

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Someone who wants to develop original Torah insights may expound and innovate as much as he wants according to his level of mental attainment. The only condition is that he may not deduce any new law from insights based on expository interpretation (*Drash*) or mystical teachings (*Sod*).

Sichot Haran #267

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Finding yourself in Torah

When a person draws personal lessons and sees his own smallness and lowliness everywhere that he studies in any Torah work , this is a sign that he wants to do God's will.

Likutey Moharan 1, 121

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When the bride is beautiful, love is perfect

If you want to be a diligent student of the Torah, be careful never to speak against any fellow Jew.

When the bride is beautiful, love is perfect. But when the bride has some flaw or blemish, love cannot be complete.

The Torah is called a bride: "Moses commanded us the Torah, a heritage (*morashah*) for the congregation of Jacob" (Deuteronomy 33:4) . The Talmud says: Read this not as *morashah* , "a heritage", but *me-urasah* - "the betrothed" (*Berachot* 57a; *Pesachim* 49b) . "Moses commanded us the Torah, the *betrothed* of the congregation of Jacob . "

Every Jew has his letter in the Torah. The 600,000 letters of the Torah correspond to the 600,000 souls of Israel . If there is a defect in a single Jew, it is also a blemish in the Torah, the root of all Jewish souls , and perfect love of the Torah becomes impossible.

But if you are careful not to speak against or find a flaw in any other Jew, the Torah will have no flaw or blemish. You will then be filled with great love of the Torah. Your love will be so great that you will want to study the Torah constantly.

"God's Torah is perfect - it restores the soul" (Psalms 19:8) . When people are careful not to speak against their fellow Jews or seek out their flaws, the Torah is perfect, with neither flaw nor blemish. And when "God's Torah is perfect , " then "it restores the soul . "

Since the Torah then has no flaw, one is filled with love of the Torah and feels its sweetness, which makes one want to study constantly.

Sichot Haran #91

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PURITY OF THOUGHT

Man's mind is his very essence. Wherever your thoughts are, that is where you are - all of you.

This is why it is so important to avoid all evil thoughts, because otherwise that is where your place will be.

You must force yourself to think good thoughts in order to be worthy of knowing God. Then your place will be with Him and you will be merged with Him. The greater your perception of God, the more fully merged with Him you will become, and then you will attain eternal life.

Likutey Moharan I, 21

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Guard your thoughts

Guard your thoughts very carefully, because thought can literally create a living thing.

The higher a faculty, the further it can reach. You can kick something with your foot, but you can throw it even higher with your hand. With your voice you can reach even further, calling to

someone far away. Hearing reaches further still - you can hear sounds like gunfire from a very great distance. Vision reaches even further: you can see things high in the sky.

The higher the faculty, the further it can reach. Highest of all is the mind, which can ascend to the loftiest heights. You must therefore guard your mind and thoughts to the utmost.

Sichot Haran #46

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Wisdom is the root of everything

Wisdom is the root of all things: "You made them all in wisdom" (Psalms 104:24) . Every person must therefore guard his mind against alien ideas. Fulfillment in life can come only through the pursuit of true wisdom - the wisdom of Godliness, the Torah. Compared to this, all other systems of wisdom are sheer emptiness; they are not wisdom at all.

When a person is born, his understanding is in a state of contraction. It only begins to develop when he starts using it to think about how to serve God. But when a person admits alien thoughts and ideas into his mind, the holiness of his mind and soul is diminished in direct proportion to the space they occupy. All kinds of negative character traits develop from this alien mentality and cluster around it.

This is why one must be so careful to protect one's mind and not admit alien thoughts and ideas. To achieve true repentance and make amends for all your sins, make a determined effort to expel all alien thoughts from your mind. The conscious mind is a manifestation of the soul, and thus when a person sanctifies his mind and thereby his soul, everything is elevated and returns to its source. This is the essence of repentance.

It is not sufficient merely to guard yourself against alien ideas. Constantly try to bring new vitality into your mind as this will revive and refresh your soul. For the mind is a manifestation of the soul.

Likutey Moharan I, 35

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Truth and the need to win

A person who always wants to win the argument is very intolerant of truth. The truth may be staring him in the face, but because he is determined to win at all costs, he ignores it completely.

If you want to find the real truth, you must rid yourself of the urge to win. Then you will be able to see the truth if you wish.

Likutey Moharan I, 122

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Each one has his limits

Our sages teach that "It is forbidden to gaze at what is above and below, what is before and what is after" (*Chagigah* 11b) .

Each and every person has his own unique "above" and "below" where he may not gaze, depending on his level.

Some people's intellect stops at the stars and the limits of the physical world, and they are therefore forbidden to delve any further. The mind of those engaged in philosophy and science reaches only as far as the stars. Beyond the stars they know nothing. Even concerning what is under the stars, they are often wrong and have major disagreements among themselves about everything.

Each person has a point where his intellect ends. He is not allowed to go beyond this, because for him anything beyond this is "what is above and below" . Here he must depend on faith alone.

Sichot Haran #224

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The faith of our fathers

Believe in God with pure, simple faith without trying to understand things philosophically. Most ordinary people may appear to be far from philosophy yet almost everyone is sunk in it to some degree. Even young children often have confusing theories.

Cleanse your mind and heart of philosophy. Cast it aside and pay no attention to doubts or questions: all you need is pure faith in God and the true Tzaddikim.

We received the holy Torah from Moses our Teacher. It has been handed down to us by outstanding Tzaddikim in every generation. We can rely on them without resorting to philosophical theories. Our task is to follow in their footsteps and believe in God with pure, simple faith, observing the Torah and its commandments as taught by our ancestors.

When a person is sincere and unquestioning, he can attain holy desire, which is even higher than wisdom. It is true that wisdom is higher than faith, but one must avoid sophistry and speculation, relying on faith alone. Faith has the greatest power. When you follow the path of faith, you can attain desire, which is even higher than wisdom.

One who attains desire experiences tremendous longing and yearning for God. The feeling becomes so intense that he does not know what to do, and he cries out...!!!

But there is a philosopher in man's heart. This is the Evil One, who puts doubts and questions into the heart. We must overcome this philosopher and drive him out, strengthening ourselves in faith alone.

Sichot Haran #32

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Questions and answers

Within the bounds God has set for man's intelligence it is a great mitzvah, a positive duty, to sharpen the mind and understand as clearly as possible whatever the human mind is capable of grasping. However, there are certain questions (such as the paradox of man's free will and God's foreknowledge) the answers to which are beyond the capacity of the human mind to understand. Only in time to come will the answers be revealed. On no account should one delve into these questions.

It is said of those who speculate on such questions, relying on their own intelligence: "None who go to her return" (Proverbs 2:19) . It is impossible to solve these questions through reason. We must have pure faith. Even when it comes to the questions which do have a solution , there are times when the paths of the mind become blocked and one is unsure how to answer the non-believer who casts doubts in one's heart. The remedy then is to study the codes of Torah law. If one still finds oneself confused and unable to answer these questions, one should rely on faith alone. The main thing is to have faith.

Likutey Moharan I, 62

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We believe in God with faith alone, not because of philosophical analysis .

We believe that He created the whole universe, that He sustains His universe and that in time to come He will renew it.

Philosophical works pose what appear to be extremely difficult questions while providing very weak answers. On further enquiry anyone can challenge the answers, which will be of no avail, merely generating more questions.

But the truth is that all their questions are nothing. They are mere vanity and striving after the wind. It is best to avoid such works completely.

Sichot Haran #40

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Fear and awe vs. philosophy and science

The only way to start serving God is through fear of His retribution for wrongdoing. Without this fear it is impossible even to take the first step. Very few people are able to devote themselves wholly to God out of love alone.

One can also serve God through a sense of awe at His supreme greatness and power. This is a higher level of fear, but it is also very hard to attain. For most people the pathway to serving God starts with simple fear of His retribution.

The study of philosophy can never bring a person to God. On the contrary, it fills his mind with doubts and questions that simply reinforce his innate evil impulse.

Man is naturally drawn after worldly temptations. Only through fear of punishment can he control his material desires and walk in the ways of God. Philosophy raises doubts and questions, strengthening man's natural inclination to turn away from God. This is why a person can never become Godly through the study of philosophy. Certain philosophical works may contain some good thoughts but they provide no benefit. The usual end result is great confusion, with the person losing much more than he gains.

We are fortunate that Moses our Teacher showed us the right way. The Torah begins without any philosophical proof: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1) . We must believe in God through faith alone without demanding philosophical proof. Fear of retribution is the main gateway to true devotion.

All new ideas and inventions come from above

All scientific discoveries and inventions come from above. Without inspiration from above, they could never be discovered.

When the time comes for an idea to be revealed to the world, the necessary inspiration is granted from above to some thinker or scientist. A thought enters his mind and is thus revealed. Many people may previously have sought this idea but it eluded them. Only when the time comes for the idea to be revealed does the inspiration come to the discoverer.

The same is true when a person sees new ideas and interpretations in his Torah studies. They would never have occurred to him if the ideas were not granted from above.

The place from which a person's inspiration derives depends upon that person. One who pursues secular wisdom draws his inspiration not from the holy side but rather from the unholy "other side". All wisdom comes from on high, each concept emanating from its proper place. Each idea has its own place. There are thousands and thousands of different levels. All discoveries, sacred or profane, have a root above, each in its own particular place.

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Kabalah begins where philosophy and science end

The true wisdom of the Kabalah begins where philosophy and science end. Philosophers and scientists can speculate only within the limits of the physical world. Their knowledge may reach as far as the stars and galaxies, but beyond that they know absolutely nothing. Even their theories about the physical world end in great confusion, as they themselves admit.

The wisdom of the Kabalah begins where their wisdom ends - beyond the physical world. The Kabalah includes the entire physical world as part of the World of Action (*Asiyah*), the lowest world. But the Kabalah then goes beyond the World of Action to the Worlds of Formation (*Yetzirah*), Creation (*Beriyah*) and Emanation (*Atzilut*).

Even the World of Action has its own interior spiritual level, of which the scientists and philosophers have no knowledge at all. The Kabalah is concerned with the spiritual root of the World of Action and beyond. Thus the Kabalah begins where scientific knowledge ends.

The philosophers and scientists think that all knowledge ends with the stars, but the entire system of the Kabalah deals with worlds and levels that are beyond the stars.

Yet even one who gains some understanding of the Kabalah, the true wisdom, must recognize that in the transcendental worlds there are likewise levels beyond levels, high above high, without end or limit, for "His greatness is unfathomable" (Psalms 145:3) .

Sichot Haran #225

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One dead soul

If one dead soul were permitted to visit the philosophers and scientists as they sit theorizing, it would be the end of all their theories.

Sichot Haran #226

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The song of the Tzaddik

God created the world out of love - in order to reveal His love - for without the creation, to whom would He show His love? Accordingly He brought about the entire creation from the beginning of the highest spiritual world of *Atzilut* down to the end of the center point of the material world, all in order to manifest His love.

When God wanted to create the world, there was no place to create it because everything was infinite. He therefore "contracted" the infinite light to the sides. As a result of this contraction, an empty void was formed within which time and space - the finite world - were created, as explained at the beginning of the *Eitz Chaim* of the ARI.

The empty void

This empty void was essential for the creation of the world, because without it there would have been no place to create the world. However, it is impossible to grasp or understand the "contraction" that brought about the empty void. This will only be possible in the future. For we have to postulate two opposites: existence and nothingness.

This is because the empty void came about through the contraction of His Godliness from there, with the result that Godliness is not present there, as it were. For if this were not the case, the void would not be empty; everything would have been infinite and there would have been no room to create the finite world at all. Yet the real truth is that even so, Godliness is most certainly present there because nothing at all exists without His vitality. Due to this contradiction it is impossible to grasp the concept of the empty void. This will be possible only in time to come.

And know that there are two kinds of atheism. There is the kind of unbelief that arises out of alien systems of wisdom, of which it says, "Know what to answer the non-believer" (*Avot* 2:14) . For there is an answer to this kind of unbelief since it derives from alien wisdoms that arose out of the superfluities caused by the breaking of the vessels. A person who has fallen to this kind of unbelief should certainly flee and make every effort to escape, and indeed if he does seek out God he will find a way to be saved. For since these wisdoms derive from the breaking of the vessels, various holy sparks and letters broke and fell there, and he may therefore find Godly intelligence there in order to resolve the challenges posed by the kind of unbelief that derives from alien wisdoms.

However there is another kind of atheism based on wisdoms that are not wisdoms at all. It is only because they are so deep and hard to grasp that they have the appearance of deep wisdom. For example, a person might posit a false Talmudic argument which he imagines is exceptionally deep but, lacking the necessary scholarship, he fails to realize that his line of argument is untenable. Similarly, the philosophers pose various problems and questions that are in truth devoid of all wisdom. The problems are intrinsically non-existent, but because it is not within the bounds of the human mind to unravel them, they appear genuine.

The truth is that it is impossible to resolve these problems because the questions posed by this brand of atheism derive from the empty void, where Godliness is not present, as it were. This is why the questions that derive from the empty void cannot be answered in any way, because it is impossible to find God there. For if one could find God there it would not be empty and all would be infinite. For this reason it is said of this atheism, "None who go to her return" (*Proverbs* 2:19) .

Why Israel are called the Hebrews

Israel alone transcends all wisdoms including even the atheism that derives from the empty void, because we *believe* in God without speculation or sophistry but only with complete faith. For God

fills all the worlds and encompasses all the worlds. Thus He is present within all the worlds and at the same time He encompasses all the worlds... Therefore even the empty void came about through His wisdom. The ultimate truth is that His Godliness must be present there, but it is impossible to grasp this or find God there.

Thus the people of Israel transcend all the philosophical problems and atheistic ideas that derive from the empty void, because they know that it is impossible to solve them. This is why the people of Israel are called the Hebrews, from the Hebrew root *OVeiR*, to pass over and transcend.

But know that certain outstanding Tzaddikim who are in the category of Moses have been obliged to investigate these philosophies in order to extricate and elevate the fallen souls that have become sunk in them. Through their great sanctity these Tzaddikim had the power to release these trapped souls.

The melody of faith

And know that it is through his melody that the Tzaddik who is in the category of Moses elevates the souls which have fallen into the atheism that derives from the empty void. Every wisdom in the world has its own unique melody and song; even atheism has its own special song. And faith too has its own unique melody and song. The faith in the light of the Infinite is supreme above all other wisdoms and beliefs in the world, and the song of this faith is beyond all other melodies and songs in the world.

And in time to come, when God "will turn to all the nations a pure language so that all will call on the name of HaShem" (Zephaniah 3:9) and all will believe in God, the verse, "Come, sing from the summit of Amana" (Song of Songs 4:8) will be fulfilled. The "summit of Amana" is the supreme faith (*Emunah*) in the Infinite One, which is the summit of all faith. Only the Tzaddik of the generation - Moses - attains this supreme faith and its melody. Thus it is through the melody of the Tzaddik who is in the category of Moses that all the souls that have fallen into the atheism deriving from the empty void are able to ascend and emerge, for his melody is the "summit of faith", which is supreme.

Likutey Moharan I, 64

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PURITY OF MIND AND HEART

When a person repeats a lie twice, it becomes the truth for him. Having repeated it twice, he believes it is the truth. Not only does he deceive himself; he even has the power to deceive others and to cause such intense concealment that it seems as if even God agrees with him.

Chayey Moharan #550;
Likutey Halachot, Choshen Mishpat, Genevah 5:11

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Under a shadow

You may think you are far from certain major desires, such as the lust for wealth. Yet you may be in a worse position than someone else who is sunk in that desire, because you may be deeply sunk in some other craving that wholly overshadows even the lust for wealth. If you are so deeply immersed in some craving that is powerful enough to overshadow another strong desire such as the lust for wealth, you are surely worse off.

It makes no difference that the desire in which you are sunk is less than the one from which you are far, because you are so deeply immersed in it that it overshadows another strong desire.

This is like a stubborn child, who can literally bang his head against the wall just to spite his mother. Similarly certain people are capable of throwing away everything, including all other desires, for the sake of one stubborn overpowering desire.

Sichot Haran #56

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Overcoming your weak point

When I was a boy I was very afraid of death. Exactly when I was most frightened of dying, I would ask God that I should die sanctifying His name. This lasted a long time - I don't remember how long - but I know it was a long time, maybe a year. I would constantly make the same request. There was not a prayer or conversation with God in which I did not ask to leave this world sanctifying His name. I was so afraid of death that it was like a self-sacrifice for me just to pray for what I was so afraid of.

In order to serve God, you must overcome precisely the thing that preoccupies you the most.

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might" (Deuteronomy 6:5) . The Talmud (*Berachot* 61b) says that "with all your *soul* " teaches that one should give one 's very life for God. "With all your *might* " means that the same applies to one's money - because some people value their wealth more than their lives!

Sichot Haran #57

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Negative thoughts and desires

The main cause of attacks of lustful cravings is depression. You should therefore make every effort to be happy at all times.

Even if you fall into thick mud and find it extremely hard to escape, just scream and scream and scream.

Some people also worry over the very fact that they have such thoughts. But "Trouble is bad enough when it comes" (*Berachot* 9b) . There is no need to let the fact that you have such thoughts disturb you, whether because you have had an attack of them in the past or because you fear they may strike again in the future.

Sichot Haran #129

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You cannot always prevent bad thoughts from entering your mind. However, you do have the power to reject them once you become aware of them. This is very important, because this is how you can make amends for sins you may have committed earlier on in your life. Perfect repentance has to balance the original sins exactly, and this is literally what happens here. Before, when you sinned, it was because the desire entered your mind and you succumbed to it. Now the same thought is in your mind , but this time you reject it.

Do not let yourself become discouraged if you constantly find all kinds of desires and fantasies pressing in on your mind. They actually provide you with the opportunity to repent and make amends for damage done in the past. Today you have the power to master your thoughts and temptations. When you do so, the sparks of holiness that fell because of your earlier transgressions are released and you can purify yourself. Your mind and your voice will be purified and you will find harmony and peace.

Likutey Moharan I, 27

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Someone who fills his mind with lustful thoughts is a fool.

Even a simple, ordinary person would not want to be caught doing this. Even if he has no fear of sin, he would still not want the shame of being caught with a strange woman.

Why engage in lustful thoughts? Why trouble your soul for nothing? Man has the power to control and direct his thoughts as he wants.

Sichot Haran #303

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When a person falls and is sinking in the mud and mire, he must not allow himself to stay there. He must have one leg outside even while one leg is inside. One leg outside, one leg inside. until the other leg is also outside!

Siach Sarfey Kodesh 1-1

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Your thoughts are in your power

Your thoughts are completely in your power. You can turn them in any direction you want. Sometimes your thoughts may run wild and fly to areas from which you should keep away. Nevertheless, it is within your power to take your thoughts in hand, even against their will, and direct them to the true path.

Thought is like a horse that gallops off the road and tries to go in the wrong direction. The rider controls the horse with the bridle, forcing it to go in the right direction. As soon as you see your thoughts pulling in the wrong direction, take them in hand and bring them back in the right direction.

Likutey Moharan II, 50

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Man against beast

When a person is attacked by negative thoughts and doubts but fights and struggles to overcome them, this is very precious in God's eyes and gives Him the greatest delight.

Royal celebrations sometimes include spectacles of wild beasts fighting each other, with the delighted onlookers watching the strongest beast win. Similarly, our thoughts derive from the Chayot - the "beasts" of the divine Chariot (Ezekiel 1) . Holy thoughts are pure species of animals while evil thoughts are impure beasts. Through God's design , they are pitched against one another, and He has the greatest delight when man succeeds in his struggle to overcome the impure beasts.

It is a basic principle that two thoughts cannot be present in the mind at one and the same time. You can therefore easily banish negative thoughts by sitting doing nothing - by *not* pursuing the bad thought but concentrating instead on a different thought, be it one of Torah, devotion or even business. For it is impossible to think two thoughts at one and the same time.

There is no need to make a war and shake your head from side to side in order to banish bad thoughts. This does not help at all; quite the contrary, it makes them attack even more strongly. Simply pay no attention: do your part and think instead about Torah, prayer or business. Don't glance back at the bad thought at all. This way it will go away by itself.

Likutey Moharan I, 233

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The comprehensive evil

Immoral lust is the comprehensive evil. It is the root of all the different kinds of evil found in the seventy nations of the world. Each of the seventy nations and languages is associated with its own particular form of evil - a negative trait or desire with which that nation is especially identified .

However, immoral lust is the sum of all evil: all the different desires found in the seventy nations are, as it were, gathered together and included in this. They all burn together, and the effect is a flaming furnace that fires men with lust.

But God has separated us from the nations and exalted us above all languages. We are therefore obliged to distance ourselves from all the different kinds of evil found among them. More than anything we must guard ourselves against immoral lust, which is the sum of all evil. Separating ourselves from this is the foundation of the holiness of Israel. For man has the power to uproot this impulse completely from within himself, and herein lies our sanctity.

The key to subduing and breaking your appetites, especially immoral lust, which is the main challenge, is to strive to gain mastery of the holy language. This means sanctifying your tongue with words of Torah and prayer - both the set prayers and your own personal prayers. Even when you speak in your own native language, your words are considered to be the holy language. The point is to sanctify your tongue by always speaking in a way that is holy. This is what is meant by gaining mastery of the holy language. Through sanctifying your speech you will have the power to subdue immoral lust, which is the comprehensive evil.

Moral purity and mastery of the holy language are interconnected. The more words of holiness you speak, the more you will succeed in purifying yourself, and in this way you will make amends for any immorality in the past. By the same token, the purer you become, the more your mastery of the holy language will grow. Conversely, immoral lust is bound up with the abuse of language: each feeds the other.

One who guards the Covenant in purity will come to perceive the source of all the blessings that flow into the world, spiritual and material. This root is pure, radiant light. When one attains this perception, all gross material desires simply disappear.

Likutey Moharan I, 19

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The main test

Sexual temptation is man's main test in this world.

Sichot Haran #115

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The remedy for lust

Lustful desires are man's main test in life: they are sent as a challenge to refine us. When you are subjected to this test it puts you in a kind of "exile". You should cry out to God: scream and cry out to Him over and over again, like a woman in labor who cries out from the pain of her contractions. Seventy times she cries out (*Zohar* III, 249b) . You must do likewise and cry out to

God again and again until He takes pity and helps you to strengthen yourself and break your desire. New ideas and new perceptions will be born within you. Previously guarded secrets of Torah will now be unveiled for you. The greater your determination to withstand the trial, the greater the revelation you will receive in Torah and devotion to God. You will be able to see the seventy faces of the Torah.

The remedy for lustful desires is to say the words of the Shema, "Hear O Israel, HaShem our God, HaShem is One", together with the verse, "Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom for ever and ever". The six Hebrew words of each of these two verses add up to twelve, corresponding to the twelve tribes of God. By saying these words you attach your soul to the twelve tribes and separate it from the "mixed multitude" that went up with the Children of Israel from Egypt (*Tikkuney Zohar* , Introduction) . The mixed multitude derives from the "harlot woman", the "evil maid" . This is the source of lustful desire, which is the root of all bad character traits.

When a person merely has one stray thought of lust or desire, it is sufficient to recite these two verses. However, some people are constantly plagued with lustful desires and find they cannot get rid of them. They must then bring themselves to tears when they take on the yoke of heaven: they should literally weep as they say the words "Hear O Israel" and "Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom " .

As soon as a person conquers his lustful desires he can easily control all his desires. This is why the remedy for sexual impurity is called the general remedy. The more a person distances himself from lust, the closer he comes to the radiance of Torah. The converse is also true. This explains why, before a person can receive a new revelation of Torah, he is first tested in the crucible of this craving. If he withstands the test and breaks his desire, it is like breaking the shell before partaking of the fruit, and he will be worthy to receive the revelation.

Likutey Moharan I, 36

WEALTH AND LIVELIHOOD

When a person conducts his working activities with faith and honesty, he fulfills the commandment to "love HaShem your God" (Deuteronomy 6:5) , which is the root of all the commandments, and his livelihood will be sent to him without struggle and toil.

The commandment to love God "with all your *might* " (*ibid.*) is fulfilled by one who overcomes his desire for wealth and does not embark on ventures beyond his means but conducts his affairs fairly and honestly, investing his own money without borrowing from others. This commandment is also fulfilled by a person who gives one fifth of his net income to charity.

Likutey Moharan I, 93; 210; Sichot Haran #289

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Torah law and business

All the Torah laws about property and business are relevant to practical business activity. Only one who is conversant with these laws can conduct his business with faith and honesty without stumbling.

Likutey Moharan I, 35

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Guard your money

Be very careful to safeguard your money and take good care of your possessions. It is ridiculous to be the unlucky type who loses his money through laziness and irresponsibility.

A person takes time from Torah and prayer to struggle to earn money in order to support his family. After earning the money, should he become a luckless *shlim mazelnik* and not take care of it?

Money gained honestly must be guarded like the eyes in your head.

Sichot Haran #281

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Contentment

Be content with what you have and take only what you need from this world. When you are content, you can enjoy the full light of God. But "the belly of the wicked shall be wanting" (Proverbs 13:25) - because they are not content with what they have and constantly feel the need for more.

Even out of the little that you take from this world, you must contribute a portion to charity. The act of charity whereby the giver benefits the receiver brings about the union of Tzaddik and Kneset Israel in the upper world, sending a flow of blessing and abundance into this world.

Likutey Moharan I, 54

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Have faith - and live within your means

Have faith that God will help you and provide you with what you need. Those supporting a family frequently lack sufficient income, clothing and other needs. One person may lack a simple garment; someone else may feel that he needs fine clothing and mansions.

Wait for God's help! Don't press the hour, insisting that all your needs must be satisfied immediately. Wait until God shows mercy.

If I were impatient when I need something, insisting on having it at once, I would have to borrow money and go into debt. Then I would have to wander around and travel in order to earn enough to repay my debts. I would be just like the many others who have to travel for this reason.

Understand this well: Learn to live within your means. Everyone is constantly in need of all kinds of things: this applies even to the very wealthy. It is best to be satisfied with a minimum and to run your household according to your means at the time.

You may imagine that your wife and children need clothing. Indeed they may need it very badly. Even so, don't press the hour and take loans or buy on credit. Wait until the time is ripe, when you are able to pay for what you need.

It is better to endure privation than to fall into debt. This applies to food, and all the more so to clothing and housing. It is better to be in debt to yourself and your family - to owe them the clothing - than to be in debt to the storekeeper.

In everything connected with making a living you must wait until the time is ripe. For "The eyes of all are to You, and You give them their food *in its time* " (Psalms 145:15) .

Sichot Haran #122

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Why worry?

Why worry about making a living? The only thing to worry about is that you may die of hunger if you have nothing to eat. And if you die, what will be so terrible? You have to die anyway.

Sichot Haran #250

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Work and livelihood

God gives livelihood and people eat for nothing. They work only because of their sins.

Siach Sarfey Kodesh 1-274

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The folly of envy

Sometimes a person is given great wealth. The whole world envies him and everyone goes chasing after wealth and possessions. They spend days and years on this - all because of envy. But in the end they are left with nothing in their hands.

All this is the work of the evil one. He works hard to make one man very wealthy in order that many, many others should waste away their days and years because of envy. Heaven save us from such folly!

Sichot Haran #284

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The bitterness of debt and its remedy

Those sunk in craving for wealth are constantly in debt. When people are dissatisfied with what they have, they take risks and borrow from others in the hope of making large profits from the investment. This way they become saddled with a mighty burden of debt and end up dying as debtors. Even if they are not literally in debt when they die, they are always effectively in debt to their own appetites.

Many people have more than enough to cover their needs yet waste away all their days in pursuit of profit. They will submit to every kind of effort, risk and inconvenience for the sake of money. They behave exactly like one with actual debts strung around his neck - but they are driven only by the obligation they feel to their own desires. These are so demanding that it is as if they really did owe an enormous sum. In effect they are debtors all their lives and they die in debt to their desires.

Their entire lifetime is not long enough for them to pay off their debts to their desires, which have no limit, for " No- one in this world achieves even half of what he wants before he dies" (*Kohelet Rabbah* 1) . They are worried, bitter and depressed all their days because of their craving for wealth. The greater people's wealth, the greater is their worry and sadness - because they are trapped in the net of idolatry, which is the very source of depression, darkness and death. Their entire lives are consumed with the problems and worries of wealth.

When people make dishonest profits or refuse to give money to charity, this is nothing but a fool's game. The money plays with them in the same way that you can amuse a little child with coins, but in the end the very money kills them. "Who is the fool? It is the 'other god', the choking child-killer cough. It smiles at them with the allure of wealth in this world and ends up killing them. Why is it called a 'child'? Because those trapped in it do not have the sense to escape from it" (*Tikkuney Zohar* 140a) .

The way to escape the allure of wealth is through the purity that comes through guarding the Covenant and drawing closer to the Tzaddik, who is the very embodiment of purity and of whom it is written, "He who is good and walks before God will be saved" (Ecclesiastes 7:26) . The Tzaddik possesses true wisdom and understanding, and knows how to escape this trap. Even the greatest of

men need deep wisdom and understanding if they are to escape the pain and toil of earning a living. Most ordinary people suffer terrible bitterness all their lives because of this. They lose both worlds: this world and the world to come.

There is no limit to the bitterness of this world. "Were it not for salt, the world could not endure the bitterness" (*Zohar* I, 241b) . [Salt neutralizes bitterness.] Were it not for the strength of the Tzaddikim, who observe the Covenant with absolute purity and who are called the "eternal covenant of salt" (Numbers 18:19) , the world would be unable to endure at all because of the terrible bitterness caused by the desire for wealth. The closer a person comes to the Tzaddik, the more he can sweeten this bitterness. But those who are far from the Tzaddikim and from personal purity, and especially those who are actually opposed to the Tzaddikim, will be the victims of the full force of this bitterness. How many are sunk in this! Pay heed to these words and perhaps you will escape.

Likutey Moharan I, 23

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Debts and repentance

If the Torah were written in order, we would know the reward and punishment for every positive and negative commandment.

There are sins for which the punishment is to be perpetually in debt. The sinner may try every possible ploy, but he still remains in debt. He can even cause others to fall into debt too . When these sins are rampant, there are many debtors in the world.

The remedy for this is to repent in general for all your sins and to beg God to save you from this particular sin. The time for such repentance is when you are in a state of expanded consciousness. This is the time to regret such sins, praying to God with complete repentance.

For the debtor's mentality is one of constricted consciousness, as the Talmud teaches: "Ten measures of sleep came down into the world and nine were taken by slaves" (*Kiddushin* 49b) . "Sleep" is constricted consciousness, while the "slave" is the debtor, because "The borrower is slave to the lender" (Proverbs 22:7) . The "nine measures of sleep" taken by slaves are the constricted consciousness of the debtor.

This is why the time to repent these sins is when you are in a state of expanded consciousness, because this counteracts the debtor's state of constricted consciousness.

Sichot Haran #112

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Don't lose out because of anger

It would be proper for all Israel to have wealth, but there is one trait that interferes and causes them to lose it. The trait in question is a very bad and lowly trait from which it is very difficult to escape. Sometimes a person wants to escape this trait out of a desire for wealth itself, so as not to lose money, but even so this evil trait attacks him from childhood, causing him to lose the money he should have had.

The evil trait that causes a person to lose the money he should have had is anger. The reason for this is that at its very root and spiritual source, wealth is in the same category as anger. Thus when the evil one sees a flow of influence descending to bring wealth to a person, he turns it into anger, because, at their root, anger and wealth are in the same category: they both descend from God's mighty powers, deriving from the same place. "From the *north* comes forth gold" (Job 37:22) and "The evil will start from the *north*" (Jeremiah 1:14).

Wealth is a "wall" (*ch O mah*), while anger (*ch EY mah*) ruins the wall. Thus when the evil one sees that a flow of wealth - *chomah*, a "wall" - is being sent to a person - he turns this flow into anger, sending something to make the person angry. Thus the "wall", *chomah*, is ruined because of the anger, *cheymah*. Since anger and wealth are at root one category, the evil one can easily turn the flow of wealth into anger.

And know that even if the descending influence has already reached a person and turned into actual wealth, a "wall", the evil one can still sometimes tempt the person to become so enraged that he loses even his existing money and wealth. One might have thought that after the blessing has already reached him and turned into wealth, it would be impossible for the evil one to turn it back into anger. The wealth should have been a "wall" protecting him from the evil one and preventing him from succumbing to anger, which is the opposite of a "wall". Yet the evil one has the power to attack a person with such great anger that he loses even the money he already has.

May God guard and save us from this despicable trait! Amen.

Likutey Moharan I, 68

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Bind your thoughts to the Torah

All business dealings are really Torah. For example, the law relating to a person who exchanges a cow for a donkey is Torah, and when a person actually performs such a transaction this is certainly Torah. Accordingly, when engaged in any business transaction, you must bind your thoughts only to the Torah teachings and laws contained within the transaction in question.

When a person uproots his business dealings from the Torah, relating only to the externality of the business transaction itself without binding his thoughts to the Torah within it, he is later punished by having to go to a Torah court of law. He must then review all his thoughts and deeds from the

start of the transaction to the end and bring them back to the Torah. He must tell everything to the judges, who then determine the Torah ruling in the case.

This way everything relating to the business transaction is turned back into Torah. This is the Torah's vengeance against the person for having separated the transaction from the Torah laws contained within it and falling to the level of the business deal itself as if no Torah were present within it. By having to come before the court and tell the judges everything related to the matter, turning them into Torah, he comes to see that all business activity is Torah. Everything is relevant to the case, even the person's thoughts - for if he omits a single word or thought, the Torah ruling will be defective. Everything must be put before the judges, who turn it into Torah.

Everything depends on the extent of the flaw. There are cases where the person's only punishment is that he has to go to court but , although he wins his case, he is shown that he failed to attach his thoughts to the Torah in the proper way. However there are cases where a person uproots his business activities from the Torah to a far greater degree, and his punishment is greater because he does not win the case.

In truth, when engaged in business you should focus only your external mind on the transaction in itself, while your inner thoughts should be bound to the Torah contained within it.

Likutey Moharan I, 280

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"The good old days"

People are always saying that things are not as good today as they were in the past.

They say that in the "good old days" everything was much less expensive than today, even though people did not have as much money as they have now. Even ordinary people, even those who live off charity, spend more today than wealthy people did in the past.

But the truth is the opposite of what people say. **God now runs the world better than ever!**

Sichot Haran #307

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SELF CARE AND EATING

Care for your physical body in order to give the body a share of the spiritual light attained by the soul.

Likutey Moharan I, 22

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Dignity

If the food a person eats is pure in accordance with the dietary laws and he eats it in a dignified manner without swallowing it hurriedly, his mental powers will be enhanced and grow while his innate folly will be subdued. However, one who eats like a glutton will be overcome with folly and lose his intelligence. The light of the Tzaddik will be concealed from him and he will be unable to learn from him how to love and fear God.

Likutey Moharan I, 17

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Be careful not to swallow your food in a hurry. Eat at a moderate pace, calmly and with the same table manners that you would show if an important guest were present. You should always eat in this manner, even when you are alone.

Chayey Moharan #515

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The power of the shochet's blessing

When the slaughterer - the *shochet* - makes the blessing prior to the slaughter of an animal, he should have in mind to elevate the soul incarnated in the blood of the animal. The blessing of the shochet has an effect on the livelihood of the entire Jewish people.

Some shochtim fail to concentrate properly on the meaning of the blessing, harboring improper thoughts. Such a shochet standing with his knife raised ready to slaughter the animal is no better than a murderer. What pain this living soul experiences at that moment. She cries with a bitter wail because this shochet's blessing will do nothing to elevate her from her incarnation. On the contrary, she will be thrown even lower than before with "no rest for the sole of her foot" (Genesis 8:9) .

Woe to such a shochet! Woe to the soul he has killed and betrayed into the hands of her enemies. This adversely affects people's livelihood, and the little that is available can only be acquired with great toil and effort. Such shochtim cause the soul to become enslaved by the physicality of the body, strengthening material cravings and desires.

But when the shochtim are worthy, the soul is elevated and the grossness of the body is humbled and subdued. The body is the seat of animality, folly, darkness and death, forgetfulness, harsh justice and alien wisdom. In their place, soul and form are elevated. These are the roots of all that is truly noble in man - understanding, light, life, memory, loving kindness and Torah wisdom. Through them the world is blessed with abundance and prosperity.

Likutey Moharan I, 37

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Wake up!

There are people who sleep away all their days. Some have fallen into their sleep on account of lust and wrongdoing. There are other cases where truly good people of beautiful character fall because of food. A person may sometimes consume food that is insufficiently pure to be fit for human consumption, and his mind then falls into a kind of "sleep".

When a person eats in holiness and purity, his physical face and the inner "face" that is his soul become radiant as a result. But if he eats without holiness, the food harms his heart causing him to lose this inner face, so that he falls into a "sleep". He may still imagine he is serving God, occupied as he is with Torah and prayer. But he is "asleep" in the sense that his devotions remain in the lower worlds and God has no delight in them.

It is vital to rouse such people from their sleep, but this is only possible if they first begin to stir on their own. The tales and stories told by the Tzaddikim have the power to rouse those who are asleep so that their days will not be wasted. It is a great privilege to find a Tzaddik who has the power to rouse you from your sleep. Otherwise you could sleep away all your days, God forbid.

Likutey Moharan I, 60

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CLOTHES

Be very particular about your clothes. Never treat them carelessly and make sure they are not stained or dirty. A person's clothes become his judges if he does not show them the respect they deserve. The greater the individual, the better care he should take of his clothes, because the higher one's level the more scrupulously he is judged.

Likutey Moharan I, 29

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Clothes allude to the *chashmal* (Ezekiel 1:27) , a concept of protection. See that your clothes are always in good condition and not torn, because torn clothing indicates inadequate protection. A person's clothes turn into his accusers if he does not take proper care of them, show them respect and keep them clean.

FAMILY

You must respect and honor your wives.

How much pain and anguish women suffer through their children. They suffer in pregnancy and childbirth, after which they must endure the pain of raising their children. This is in addition to many other areas in which women suffer very great pain and hardship. You must take this into account and give honor and respect to your wives.

Our Rabbis taught: "Honor your wives in order to be wealthy" (*Bava Metzia* 59a) , and they also said, "It is sufficient that they raise our children" (*Yevamot* 63a) .

Sichot Haran #264

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Why don't you turn your wives into Chassidim?

Siach Sarfey Kodesh 1-14

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Discipline

The usual way is that when a child is stubborn they hit him and afterwards they give in to him. But I say: Don't hit and don't give in.

Siach Sarfey Kodesh 1-91

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CHARITY

Charity is the remedy for all wounds.

Likutey Moharan II, 4

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The benefits of giving charity

Charity saves from sin.

Likutey Moharan I, 116

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Giving the charity tithes saves a person from his enemies. God shields him with His hand and saves him.

Likutey Moharan I, 221

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To draw God's providence upon ourselves completely, it is necessary to break the appetite for wealth. This is achieved through giving charity. When a person gives money to charity, it cools his urge to acquire. He conducts his business affairs truthfully and honestly and is satisfied with his portion in life, having pleasure and contentment from what God has blessed him with. Since he is not desperate to become rich, he is free from the constant struggle to make extra profit. The burden of this struggle is the fulfillment of the curse: "By the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread" (Genesis 3:19) . When a person gives charity he is freed from this, and it is accounted to him as if he has brought an offering of incense to God.

Likutey Moharan I, 13

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Paying for faith

As long as a person is reluctant to spend money on the mitzvot he performs, his mitzvot are deficient because they have not yet entered the category of true faith, which gives them their perfection. But when a mitzvah is so precious in a person's eyes that he does not mind parting with his money and is willing to spend liberally for the sake of the mitzvah, this is called faith. For a person's faith is evident in the way he relates to money. When a person breaks his appetite for wealth, he becomes attached to the inner face of holiness.

Likutey Moharan I, 23

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For the sake of charity

With every step a person takes and every single word he speaks as he goes about his business, he should bear in mind that his goal is to make a profit in order to give charity. This is the comprehensive remedy for wealth. Giving charity expands and elevates the mind, which brings blessing and livelihood.

Likutey Moharan I, 29

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Charity for the land of Israel

Charity given for the needy in Israel is greater than charity for causes outside the land. When you give charity for the land of Israel you are included in the air of the land of Israel , which is holy breath without the taint of sin.

Likutey Moharan I, 37

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Torah scholars

When you give charity to Torah scholars, the money becomes actual Torah. No sin can extinguish the merit of giving money to Torah scholars. For no sin can extinguish the Torah, and the money given to Torah scholars is actual Torah.

Likutey Moharan I, 204

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One who shows love to others is himself shown love

When a person is in special need of God's love, God sends him an opportunity to show love to someone else. This is what makes it possible for God's love to be channeled to the person himself, because "Everyone who shows love for God's creatures is himself shown love" (*Shabbat* 151b) . Thus it is written: "And He will give you love [i.e. He will give you the opportunity to show love to someone else] and [then] He will show you compassion" (Deuteronomy 13:18) .

A person's ability to show love depends on his level of Godly awareness. One who has Godly awareness will have compassion. For anger, the opposite of compassion, is rooted in foolishness: "Anger rests in the bosom of fools" (*Ecclesiastes* 7:9) . Accordingly our Rabbis said, "It is forbidden to show compassion to anyone who lacks understanding" (*Berachot* 33a) . This is because a person who lacks understanding is necessarily lacking in compassion (since "anger rests in the bosom of fools"). This is why it is forbidden to have compassion on him, because "Everyone who shows love for God's creatures is himself shown love", but if a person lacks compassion, it is impossible to have compassion on him.

Thus one who is in need of God's compassion must show compassion for others, and this depends on deepening his Godly understanding.

Likutey Moharan I, 119

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Opening the gate

When we give charity, our main task is to break our innate cruelty, turning it into kindness in order to give generously. This is the main service involved in the act of charity. When one who is kind by nature gives charity purely out of instinct, this cannot be called an act of service because even certain animals are kind by nature. The main task is to break one's innate cruelty and turn it into kindness in order to give charity.

Starting to give charity is very difficult and onerous. For all acts of true repentance and service of God require many cries and groans and strenuous contortions before one can succeed. The hardest part is starting, because "all beginnings are difficult" (*Mechilta* , *Yitro*) . Many cries and groans are

needed before one can begin. Even after beginning, devotion never comes easily. It takes many strenuous efforts before one can achieve something of true worth. But starting is the hardest part of all.

For the main offspring of the Tzaddikim are their good deeds, and thus all mitzvot, good deeds and acts of devotion are like giving birth. How many shrieks and cries a woman emits when giving birth! How many pangs she endures before the baby is born, especially when it is her firstborn, which is particularly hard.

And charity is always a beginning, as it is written, "Open! Open up your hand!" (Deuteronomy 15:8) . Even when there is already an entrance and a beginning, giving charity opens and widens the entrance even further. Whenever a person wants to enter any pathway of devotion and service of God, it is necessary to make an opening in order to enter that pathway. "All beginnings are difficult" because it is first necessary to break through and open up the entrance all over again, which is very difficult. However, charity has the unique power of being able to open and widen the entrance further.

When you make an opening in some pathway of service and with it give some charity, this charity opens and widens the entrance even further. For charity is the beginning of all beginnings and opens and widens all the gates.

SHABBAT AND FESTIVALS

The joy of Shabbat is the gateway to true freedom.

Likutey Moharan II, 17

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Shabbat joy

Be very careful to feel only joy on Shabbat. There is nothing to compare with the greatness and holiness of Shabbat. The key to honoring the Shabbat is joy. Don't show even a hint of depression or anxiety on Shabbat.

Treat yourself to all kinds of delights in the food you eat, what you drink, your clothes... whatever you can afford. The food of Shabbat is completely holy. It is purely spiritual and filled with Godliness. It rises to a totally different place from that of the food of the six working days.

Make an effort to feel the joy of Shabbat and you will find true happiness.

Likutey Moharan II, 17

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Only through the joy of Shabbat can we elevate fear of God to the level of awe. You may be stringent in what you practice, but this is elevated only through Shabbat joy.

Do everything you can to bring yourself to joy on Shabbat. All of a person's income is decreed from the beginning of the year, but what he spends on Shabbat and festivals is not included in the decree (*Beitzah* 16a) . Even a simple family man can make himself happy with tasty food such as fish and good soup.

Sing many songs at the Shabbat table. Pay no attention to any obstacles. Others at the table may show little desire to sing, but you should still do your part. Make a determined effort to sing happily. Conduct the Shabbat table in a happy mood, because the main thing is the joy of Shabbat.

Sichot Haran #155

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The Shabbat food

And Moses said, "Eat it *today* , for *today* it is Shabbat for HaShem." (Exodus 16:25) .

One should eat the Shabbat meals only for the sake of *today* - the Shabbat day itself. People sometimes eat because they are hungry from yesterday, and sometimes in order not to be hungry tomorrow. But at each of the three Shabbat meals you should only eat for the sake of today - this meal - and not because of before or afterwards. Eating on Shabbat is very precious indeed. On Shabbat one should eat and drink plentifully, because the food of Shabbat is all Godliness and all holy.

Likutey Moharan I, 125

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We eat on Shabbat not to gratify our physical appetites, but in order to open the channels of blessing for the other six days of the week.

Likutey Moharan I, 276

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Thirsting for God

On Shabbat night the world experiences a great thirst for God.

Siach Sarfey Kodesh 1-80

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Foundation of faith

Keeping Shabbat is the foundation of true faith. All our acts of charity and other good deeds radiate to perfection only through Shabbat, which is the very essence of faith. Charity can bring many blessings and good influences into the world but they are only actually revealed through Shabbat. As the essence of faith, Shabbat is the fountain of blessings, bringing everything in the world to its ultimate perfection. Without Shabbat and the faith it brings, everything is lacking, including our Godly understanding and knowledge of the Torah. Genuine wisdom and Torah understanding can thrive only through the influence of Shabbat and faith.

To experience the essential holiness of the Shabbat, which is the foundation of true faith, it is necessary to observe the purity of the Holy Covenant. Shabbat is deeply bound up with the Covenant, and this is why it is customary to spend Shabbat with Tzaddikim, whose holiness derives from their observance of the Covenant in purity in every way. Spending Shabbat with a Tzaddik enables us to experience the true holiness of Shabbat and deepen our faith.

Likutey Moharan I, 31

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Loving others

On Shabbat everyone experiences a certain enhancement of their Godly understanding and awareness, and this increases their ability to show love to others.

For a person's capacity to give love is related to his level of Godly knowledge and awareness. And one who offers love to others receives a flow of heavenly love.

Likutey Moharan I, 119

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Joy of the Festivals

The joy of the three major festivals, Pesach, Shavuot and Succot, gives us a share in the Inner Light of God, bringing new life to the mind and soul and enhancing our perception of God.

On the festivals we should return to God out of joy. On each of the festivals the world is judged (*Rosh Hashanah* 16a) . A time of judgment is a time to return to God. Through repentance, the forces of holiness are released from the hold of the evil husks, speeding the final redemption.

Likutey Moharan I, 30

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Honoring the festivals

There are many different ways of honoring the festivals - with fine food and drink, beautiful clothes, pure and holy thoughts, joy and open-heartedness.

Honoring the festivals can bring you to the knowledge of God, enabling you to draw this knowledge down into the heart, the seat of passion and desire.

Three main desires are the root of all others: the desire for wealth, the sexual appetite and the impulse to eat. Each of the three festivals has the power to rectify one of these desires. Pesach rectifies the appetite for wealth, Shavuot sexual lust, and Succot the impulse to eat to excess.

It is because the festivals have these special powers that one should be so careful to celebrate them with the proper respect in order to be freed from these desires. Each Jew has the task of subduing and refining these aspects of his character, and when he succeeds, he becomes receptive to the spirit of prophecy and can attain true prayer and healing and see the sparks of Mashiach. In the end he will come to rule over the angels, which is the very purpose for which the people of Israel were created and their ultimate destiny.

Likutey Moharan II, 1

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FRIENDSHIP

It's not hard to push a person away. The real work is to draw him close and uplift him.

Netiv Tzaddik 31

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Smile

With happiness you can give another person life!

There are people who suffer terrible pain but cannot express what is in their heart. They would like to speak about their suffering but they have no- one to whom they can explain what is really in their heart. This leaves them full of pain and anguish.

When you come to such a person with a smiling face, you can literally give that person life. To give a person life is not an empty gesture. It is something very great.

Sichot Haran #43

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Feeling others' pain

You should be able to feel another person's pain in your heart - all the more so when many people are suffering. It is possible to know another person's pain and suffering yet still not feel them in your heart.

When many people are suffering, you should certainly feel their pain in your heart.

And if you do not feel it, you should knock your head against the wall: you should strike your head - your mind and intelligence - against the walls of your heart!

This is the meaning of the words: "Know this day and realize it in your *heart* ." (Deuteronomy 4:39) . You must bring the realization from your mind into your heart. Understand this well.

Sichot Haran #39

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How are you?

When someone asks his friend how he is and the friend says, "Not good", this can be an opening for trouble. Because God says: "You call this not good? I'll show you what not good is!"

But if when his friend asks how he is, he answers brightly, "Good, thank God!" even though things really are not so good, God says: "This you call good? I'll show you what good is!"

Siach Sarfey Kodesh 1-32

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Receiving from one another

Talk over spiritual matters with your friends. Each Jew has his own unique good point. Thus when two friends have a discussion, each can benefit from the other's good point. Sometimes your friend's good point may shine to you during a conversation that is outwardly about mundane topics - because at times even mundane conversations may give rise to new ideas and inspire you spiritually. At times a person's good point may be veiled - and the words of the conversation become a kind of clothing for it.

By discussing spiritual matters regularly with your friends you will all be able to benefit from each other's good points. This will enable you to break the "foreskin of the heart" - the lusts and desires that break a person's heart - so that you are filled with holy desire for God.

Likutey Moharan I, 34

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Working for a civilized world

People should make it their business to talk to others about the purpose of life. For "He did not create (the world) to be desolate, He formed it to be inhabited" (Isaiah 45:18) . We all have an obligation to try to make this world a civilized place - a world filled with people who are true humans, Children of Adam, as the Torah says: "And fill the earth" (Genesis 1:28) . The world is a civilized place only when filled with true Children of Adam, people who possess awareness and knowledge of God. A world without people who know God is a world of desolation and emptiness. Those who do not have this awareness cannot be called Children of Adam.

Just as it is a commandment to have children in order for the world to survive, so it is a commandment to instill awareness and knowledge of God in our children and anyone else whom we are in a position to influence. Teaching our children to know God is the essence of the commandment to have children. It is vital to ensure that future generations will be true Children of Adam and not wild animals who merely look human on the outside. Those who have no knowledge of God and do not feel His power cannot be called Children of Adam, because the ability to know God is the defining feature of the Children of Adam.

Everyone should make an effort to bring his friends to greater knowledge of God and fear of heaven, thereby making his friends his "students" . This way, when his days are complete and his time comes to leave the world, he will be clothed in the words he spoke to his friends, and it will be as if he himself is literally still in this world.

Likutey Moharan II, 7

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Direct and Returning Light

When a person discusses devotion with a friend, it creates "direct light" and "returning light" .

Sometimes the "returning light" comes before the "direct light" , as when the recipient has certain mental limits that prevent him from accepting his friend's words. Even before the recipient receives the "direct light" from his friend, the friend already receives "returning light" .

Even if the intended recipient cannot accept his friend's words, the friend can be inspired by what he himself is saying. When his words come forth from his mouth and strike the other, the light is reflected back to the speaker just as when something thrown against a wall bounces back to the thrower. In the same way, when you speak to a friend, you can be inspired by the words that bounce off him even though he himself is unable to accept them.

Had you told yourself exactly the same thing, it may be that you would not have been aroused in the least. But by addressing them to your friend, you yourself are inspired even if he is not, because your words are reflected back to you from your friend.

Likutey Moharan I, 184

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Paying back our debts

There was once a very rich man who possessed countless wealth. He announced that anyone who needed to borrow money should come to him and he would give him a loan. Needless to say , large numbers of people were only too eager to take up his offer, and they came and borrowed money. The rich man had a notebook in which he kept a record of all the loans he gave.

One day , glancing through his notebook , he noticed that he had given out enormous sums of money in loans yet not a single person had bothered to pay back their debts. Naturally, he was very upset.

Among the people who had taken a loan was a certain man who had lost his money in an unsuccessful business venture. He had nothing with which to repay his debt. It troubled him greatly that he was unable to pay, and he decided that the least he could do would be to go in person to the rich man and explain the whole problem and say that it was not his fault. The debtor came to the rich man and started explaining how he had received a loan from him but when the time came to repay the debt he was unable to do so because he had lost his money, and he had no idea what to do.

"What do I care about the money you owe me?" replied the rich man. "Of what significance is the tiny sum you owe me, whether you pay it or not, compared with the total sum of all the loans, which runs into tens of thousands? What I want you to do is to go to all the people who borrowed from me and ask them for the money. Remind them how much they owe me and ask them why they don't settle with me. Even if they don't pay everything, if each one would just pay back a small part of his debt, that alone would come to thousands of times more than the entire sum you yourself owe."

It is clear from this story why, having received so much kindness from God, we all have an obligation to encourage others to turn to Him too.

Chayey Moharan #447

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Wanting the best for my friend

I still want and long for my friend to be a pure Jew and a Tzaddik even if I myself feel unable to achieve the same. Even when I find myself unable to serve God, I am happy when another Jew serves Him.

I want, long and yearn for all Jews to be pure, true Tzaddikim. Perhaps I feel unworthy in myself, but still, I am happy when my dear friends and associates and all other Jews are true Tzaddikim. Our greatest expression of love and kindness to our friends and all other Jews is to want them to attain their true purpose as ordained by God's good will, because this is the true good for Israel .

People can easily cease serving God, especially if they become trapped in some evil craving or sin. Many such people hate those who are still trying to serve God and want to see them give up . They discourage and disparage them, telling them that they too will give up .

There are numerous people who were once highly devoted but have since lapsed in various ways. On the other hand, many of today's younger generation have a great longing for God and have started praying with earnest intensity and studying zealously. When those fallen Chassidim see these young people, they ridicule and abuse them. They do everything they can to discourage them, telling them that their service is not genuine. All this is out of jealousy - because they themselves have fallen and want everyone else to be like them.

However, the truth is that one should want the opposite. Even when a person feels unable to serve God, he should be happy when others are making an effort.

Sichot Haran #119

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Bad Influences

Other people have tremendous power to influence a person and deter him from serving God and from drawing close to the true Tzaddik. The power of other people is greater even than the power of a person's own evil urge.

The power of a particular individual's evil urge reaches only as far as the specific world in which it is rooted. Man, however, includes all the worlds. For this reason the obstacles caused by other people can be greater than those of the evil urge itself.

If you were all alone with nobody else to stand in your way, you would always direct yourself to the path of life. You might still suffer inner turmoil, anxiety and other obstacles, but you would eventually reach the right path. Even if you were to commit a sin, you would certainly come to regret it and remain on the true path.

The worst of all obstacles is the confusion caused by other people. You yourself may personally know certain individuals who act as self-appointed experts in philosophy or use science to mock at everything holy. Such sophistry can be extremely confusing to others as it teaches that all values are relative and therefore everything is permitted. Such ideas deter people from the path of life.

There are others who may appear to be observant yet display a certain sophisticated cynicism that can be quite as harmful as philosophy , if not worse. Most Jews are aware of the dangers of philosophy and avoid it, knowing that it can pull them down into the deepest pit. However there are many who are not on their guard against the kind of sophisticated cynicism that emanates from the mouths of people who seem to be observant and disguise their message in the language of truth, as if they are in possession of the absolute truth. These are the ones who can cause the most harm, confusing a person and holding him back from true service of God.

Happy is the man who walks the path of truth without any kind of sophistication - a person who is "simple and upright, fears God and shuns evil" (Job 1:1) .

Sichot Haran #80-81

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False love

The seeming love and friendship that exist among the non-observant and the common mass of people are really empty: this is not true love. Each one is interested only in himself. Any expressions of love and friendship are purely in order to impress for some ulterior purpose, but in reality everyone is jealous of everyone else.

However, the love amongst those who are honest, sincere and God-fearing, and particularly the love between the Tzaddik and his followers, is priceless. This is true love, the very essence of love. The love of the Tzaddik for his followers is very, very great: he desires their true good.

If he could, he would give them all the good of all the worlds. He would like them to have even the good of this world, despite the fact that the good of this world is really not necessary since the main good is the enduring good of the world to come. Even so, the Tzaddik seeks the good of his followers even in this world, and wants them to have all the good things of this world - beautifully decorated homes, gardens and the like, if only to vex the wicked, who have all these things. How much more does the Tzaddik desire his followers' spiritual good! If he knew that they recited their prayers with the proper devotion and that God had joy from them he would certainly be very gratified.

And the love which his followers have for the Tzaddik is also very great. Their love for him is strong and intense, and it too is true love.

Amongst the rest of the world - the common masses, the wicked and the gentiles - it may be that love and friendship are perceived as being more important than anything else. Yet the truth is that they never experience genuine love. Only those who are honest and God-fearing and privileged to be close to the true Tzaddik know the meaning of true love.

Chayey Moharan #471

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Why we should pray for our friends

We should pray for our friends when they are in trouble. Why our prayers for friends are effective can be understood from the story of a certain king who was angry with his son and sent him away. The prince came and placated his father, who agreed to have him back, but afterwards the prince again offended his father, who sent him away again. The prince again placated his father and the same thing happened several times.

Once the prince did something that made his father extremely angry. The king thought to himself: "What point is there in sending him away if later on, when my anger subsides, he comes and placates me again? This time when I send him away, I will so arrange things that he will not even have access to me so as not to be able to placate me."

The king appointed one of his ministers as an intermediary between himself and the prince, instructing the minister that when the prince came seeking to placate him, he was not to allow him entry. The prince came several times asking to be admitted to his father in order to placate him. However, the minister would not let him enter, for those were the instructions the king had given him. This happened again and again.

Eventually the minister saw the prince's great longing for his father and saw how much he was suffering because of not being able to gain entry to his father in order to placate him. The minister thought to himself: "If this is how much the prince misses his father, presumably the king is also suffering a great deal because his son cannot come to him. For the greater the desire of he who desires, the greater the desire aroused in the object of his desire." The minister felt extremely sorry for both the king and his son, and he himself also suffered, because he said to himself: "Surely I am the cause of all this, since I am the barrier that keeps them apart: I am the one causing both the king and the prince to suffer."

The minister thought to himself: "There must be some way to bring about a reconciliation. Surely the king does not want his son to suffer forever without being able to reach him, and the king himself must be suffering as a result." The minister realized that it was all up to him. "I myself will go to the king to plead for the prince. I will ask the king to forgive him and allow him back."

This is exactly what the minister did. He went to the king and told him how much the prince was longing for him, begging the king to forgive him. The king immediately agreed and restored the prince to his place.

The meaning of the story is obvious. Whenever one of our friends is suffering, physically, mentally or spiritually, we should say, "Without doubt I am the cause of this. Because of my sins, I myself am the barrier between the King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, and the world. For the Holy One, blessed be He, constantly desires to bestow blessings of goodness upon His children. But because of my sins, I am the barrier that is holding all this back. The solution is for me myself to plead with the King on behalf of my friend."

When a person does this, he will certainly not succumb to arrogance. The root of arrogance is when a person prides himself on having qualities which his friend lacks. But when a person believes that the only cause of his friend's deficiency, spiritual or material, is the barrier that he himself has erected between his friend and the Holy One, blessed be He, Who wants to bestow blessings at all times, he will certainly not become arrogant. On the contrary, his pride will be broken and he will achieve genuine humility.

Chayey Moharan #447

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ATTACHMENT TO THE TZADDIK

It is very good to attach yourself to a true Tzaddik. In the upheavals at the time of the coming of the Mashiach, God will "grasp the ends of the earth and shake the wicked from it" (Job 38:13) . But one who is attached to a true Tzaddik will be able to cling to him so as not to be cast off with the wicked. By holding onto the Tzaddik he will remain firm.

Sichot Haran #22

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Those who draw close to a true Tzaddik have a taste of the Garden of Eden. For "the Tzaddik is the gardener of the garden" (*Zohar* II, 166b) .

Sichot Haran #252

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Heed the wise

One who ignores the words of the wise can go mad. The main reason people are mad is because they refuse to follow good advice.

If a madman were to listen to sane people, he would definitely not behave like a madman. His madness might convince him that he needs to go about in torn clothing and roll in the dirt. But if he were to follow the advice of one of greater intelligence who tell s him that this is unnecessary, his madness would disappear .

The root of madness lies in not wanting to listen to the words of the wise. Understand this well.

Sichot Haran #67

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Anyone who listens to me and carries out everything I say will certainly become a great Tzaddik , come what may. The main thing is to throw aside your own ideas completely and do only as I say: fulfill everything to the letter. Obviously, the more you study, the more successful you will be.

Chayey Moharan #320

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The true teacher

Everyone must search very hard in order to find a true teacher who can help him attain great wisdom and Godly perception. This requires an outstandingly great teacher who has the power to explain this deep wisdom in terms comprehensible to the simplest people.

The lower a person's level and the further away he is from God, the greater the teacher he needs. Thus when the Jewish people were on the lowest of levels in Egypt, sunk in the forty-nine gates of impurity, they needed the greatest rabbi and teacher of all: Moshe Rabbenu. For the lower down and further away from God a person is, the greater the teacher he needs. He needs a master craftsman who has the ability to bring the supreme wisdom of Godly perception within the grasp of one as lowly and far away from God as himself. The sicker the patient, the greater the doctor he needs.

One should therefore never say, "It is enough for me if I attach myself to someone respectable and God-fearing, even though he may not be on an outstanding level. First let me simply be like him!" This is a mistake. On the contrary, the more a person recognizes his own lowliness and great distance from God, the more he should search out the greatest and most outstanding doctor for his soul and strive to draw close to the greatest possible teacher. For the lowlier the person, the greater the teacher he needs.

Likutey Moharan I, 30

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Benefit of the Tzaddik after death

The true Tzaddik can greatly benefit even a person who has died and gone to the next world, as long as that person is sufficiently worthy to come to the Tzaddik to rectify his soul.

Be aware that the main obstacle encountered there by one who is undeserving is that he is not permitted to come to the true Tzaddik to be purified. He is simply pushed aside and led on the wrong track by all kinds of confusing doubts, as if the Tzaddik has no power at all. Even there, just as in this world, there is great opposition to the Tzaddik among the destroying angels and evil forces.

The most important thing is to be constantly aware of this so as not to let yourself be deceived there. Stay firm in wanting to go to the true Tzaddik and nowhere else, and then you will certainly be permitted to do so.

Chayey Moharan #309

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Seeing as I am going before you, what do you have to fear?

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Pity in the world to come

Nobody likes to be pitied. In this world we see how people feel pity for those who are hungry, thirsty or suffering in some other way. People react with pity when a person lacks clothes or shoes. No-one wants to be the object of others' pity. In order to avoid it, people chase after worldly success.

Someone with clear spiritual vision can also understand the pitiful state of certain souls in the world to come. Some souls there are literally naked, but it is impossible to show them any pity. For in this world when a person lacks clothing, other people can collect money and buy him a coat. But in the world to come when someone lacks "clothing", there is no way to help him - because the clothes needed there are Torah and good deeds, which cannot be given as charity. However, one who is attached to the true Tzaddik can run to him to get a spiritual garment with which to clothe himself.

In the world to come, many people will be left outside. They will cry out bitterly, "Give us something to eat!" People will offer them food and drink saying, "Eat! Drink!" But those outside will say, "No! No! We cannot use such food. What we need is the food and drink of Torah and devotion!" Others will be left outside naked. They too will cry: "Give us some clothes to cover ourselves." People will come to them saying, "Here are clothes." But they too will answer: "No! Such clothes are completely useless to us. We need mitzvot and good deeds in order to cover ourselves."

Happy is the person who eats many chapters of Mishnah, drinks many Psalms and clothes himself in good deeds in this world!

Sichot Haran #23

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The gravitational pull of the Tzaddik

All things and all creatures stand on the earth all the time. The only way anything can leave the earth is if some countervailing force overcomes the pull of gravity, distancing the object from the earth in accordance with the strength of the countervailing force. As soon as the countervailing force ceases, the object returns to earth.

Thus when a person throws an object upwards, the force that he applies distances it from the earth: the greater his strength, the higher he can throw it. Afterwards, however, when the countervailing force is spent, the object falls back down to the ground because of the gravitational pull of the earth, which draws everything to it. Were it not for this, nothing would stay on earth, because the earth is a round ball and everyone in the world stands on its surface. It is because of the earth's

gravitational pull that a thrown object falls back down to earth as soon as the countervailing force ceases.

The Tzaddik is the "earth", for "the Tzaddik is the foundation of the world" (Proverbs 10:25) and everything rests upon him. The Tzaddik has a gravitational power of attraction that draws everything to him, for the true Tzaddik is the foundation of the world and everything derives from him. All the other Tzaddikim are only branches of the true Tzaddik, each according to his level: one may be a branch while another may be a branch of a branch. For this unique Tzaddik is humble and lowly and makes himself like dust: for "I am dust and ashes" (Genesis 18: 27) . He is the foundation of the world precisely because he is "dust" and thus he supports everything.

And it would be fitting for all humanity to be drawn to this Tzaddik who is the "dust" and has this "drawing power". However , people are separated and distanced from the Tzaddik by a countervailing force, because of the words and deeds of certain individuals who forcibly distance people from the Tzaddik in accordance with the strength of the countervailing force. However, when this countervailing force ceases, the person is once again drawn to the Tzaddik, who is the "dust" and possesses a gravitational force of attraction.

Some people remain very far from the Tzaddik as long as they are still under the influence of the countervailing force. But as soon as this force is interrupted, they draw close again. And when traveling to the Tzaddik, the nearer he comes to the place of the Tzaddik , the greater his desire becomes, because he is approaching the source of attraction.

Likutey Moharan I, 70

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The coin in front of the eye

The sun shines constantly with the same intensity at the beginning and middle of the day. What blocks the light of the sun is only the earth, which intervenes between man and the sun. Owing to the position of the earth, the light spreads only gradually as the day begins but steadily increases until it spreads over the earth.

Similarly, the light of the Tzaddik shines constantly while the barrier is on the side of the receivers. The cause of the barrier is the intervening "earth" - this material world. People are so deeply sunk in the material world that they are unable to receive the light of the Tzaddik.

The Torah is enormously great and broad, but a tiny handbreadth - this world - stands before people's eyes, preventing them from seeing the light of the Torah despite the fact that this entire world is merely a tiny handbreadth in comparison.

How could something so tiny block something thousands of times greater?

To understand this, consider how a small coin held in front of your eyes can prevent you from seeing a great mountain, even though the mountain is countless thousands of times larger than the

tiny coin. However, because the coin is directly in front of your eyes, it blocks your entire field of vision.

In the same way, when a person enters this physical world, he remains sunk in the vanities of the world and imagines that there is nothing better. This tiny insignificant world stands in his way, preventing him from seeing the amazing light of the Torah, which is thousands of times greater in comparison. This is exactly parallel to the way the great light of the sun is blocked by the intervening earth even though the sun is many times greater than the earth.

"The path of the Tzaddikim is like a radiant light" (Proverbs 4:18) - a radiant light like the sun, which shines constantly. The only obstacle is the earth, which blocks out the light even though the earth is tiny compared to the sun. In the same way, the Tzaddikim radiate constantly, except that the earth - this-worldliness - intervenes and prevents people from seeing their great light. Despite the greatness of the light of the Tzaddikim and the insignificance of this entire tiny world in comparison, the world nevertheless intervenes, preventing one from seeing their light, as in the example of the coin.

However, if one remove s this tiny barrier from before one's eyes - averting one's eyes from this world and instead raising one's head and lifting one's eyes beyond the intervening world - one attains a view of the great and amazing light of the Torah and the Tzaddikim. For in truth their light is countless thousands of times greater than all of this world and its vanities. It is just that this world stands before people's eyes and does not permit them to lift their eyes upwards to see the light of the Torah and the Tzaddikim. It is like the small coin in front of the eyes that prevents one from seeing a great mountain.

But it is easy to remove the coin from before your eyes - and as soon as you do so you will see the mountain, which is so much larger. Similarly, with a simple movement you can remove this world from before your eyes. You will then be able to see the great light of the Torah and the Tzaddikim, which radiates in all the worlds.

Likutey Moharan I, 133

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Faith and understanding

If you believe in the Tzaddik without any understanding, you may lose your faith, because from faith alone one can fall. But if you also have some understanding, you cannot lose your faith .

Likutey Moharan I, 255

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The writing on the seal

It is impossible to understand the Tzaddik himself since his intrinsic essence is beyond our grasp. Only through the followers of the Tzaddik is it possible to understand the Tzaddik's greatness. People are nearer to the Tzaddik's followers than they are to the Tzaddik himself and thus can understand them somewhat when they see them to be mature , hard-working , God-fearing people. One who sees the truth can thus know the greatness of the Tzaddik from his followers.

This is similar to a seal. The writing on the seal is unreadable because the letters are back to front. Only when one takes the seal and stamps it on wax can one understand the letters and designs inscribed on the seal, and one then sees what is written on the seal. Similarly, through the Tzaddik's followers one can come to understand something of the Tzaddik himself.

Likutey Moharan I, 140

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The beauty, pride and charm of the entire world

There is a true Tzaddik who is the beauty, pride and charm of the entire world . And when this beauty and splendor is revealed - when this Tzaddik who is the beauty of the world becomes known and magnified in the world - the eyes of all who draw close to him and are included in this true grace are opened and able to see.

The main thing is to look at oneself. In drawing close to the true Tzaddik, it is proper to examine all one's personal traits and attributes in comparison with his . When this Tzaddik who is the grace and beauty of the world is revealed, the eyes of all who are close to and merged in this true grace are opened and they see and examine themselves. They can also see and contemplate the greatness of God and look upon the world since their eyes have been opened by the revelation of the splendor of the true Tzaddik.

When this Tzaddik is revealed and known throughout the world, he has a name in the world. And attached to and clothed within the name of the true Tzaddik is the Name of God, for "His Name is attached to our name". Thus when the name of the Tzaddik is magnified, the Name of God is greatly magnified, for "His Name is attached to our name" (*Yerushalmi Taanit* ch. 2) . Through the magnification of God's Name that comes through the revelation of the true Tzaddik's glory and beauty and the fame of his name, people's consciousness and power of vision are expanded and their eyes are opened.

The world then has a Master of the House who watches over the world - a Head of the House, who repairs and strengthens the House. For the repair of the Temple comes about through this.

However, at times the opposite happens when one who does not come in the Name of God attains fame and his name is magnified, causing the concealment of God's Name. Famed masters of occult wizardry then proliferate - the very opposite of God's Name. When the light of holiness is

concealed, flames rage in the world causing outbreaks of fire - all because of the fame of these false leaders who cause the Name of God to become hidden. The radiance of the true light is subdued and the flames rage - "from on high He sent fire" (Lamentations 1:13) - causing the burning of the Temple .

What is past is no more, for the Temple has already been burned. Now, however, God is waiting to return to us and rebuild our Temple . It is only fitting that we should not obstruct the building of the Temple . On the contrary, we should make every effort to build it. This is why it is so important to rise for the Midnight Prayer in mourning over the destruction of the Temple . For perhaps you or I caused the destruction of the Temple in a previous incarnation, and even if not, perhaps you or I are obstructing the building of the Temple now, which would also be considered as if we had destroyed it.

Likutey Moharan II, 67

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Death's helpers

It is a hard and onerous task for the Angel of Death to kill everyone in the world physically and spiritually all on his own. That is why he has helpers everywhere: the doctors to kill physically and the false leaders to kill spiritually.

Avaneha Barzel

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Walking tongues

"They have set their mouth against heaven and their tongue walks about the earth" (Psalms 73:9) .

Now that atheism has spread, people have thrown off all restraint and openly revile every Tzaddik and God-fearing man. The true target of their unbelief is God Himself, but they are ashamed to speak openly against God and therefore loosen their tongues against people.

This explains the meaning of the verse: "They have set their mouth against heaven" - for they are really speaking against God. However, they are ashamed to speak out against God directly so "their tongue walks about the earth": they loosen their tongue against God's followers in the world. But the truth is, "They have set their mouths against heaven."

Sichot Haran #38

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Bang! Bang!

Certain popular leaders lack genuine credentials but sometimes imagine they have the power to work miracles. People come to them asking for children, and if later they are granted children, these leaders take all the credit.

It is like the case of a certain man who was walking along the road when all of a sudden he saw a wolf. He was very frightened and stuck out his stick as if aiming a rifle. He pretended he was about to open fire on the wolf in order to frighten it away. At that exact moment, someone who really did have a rifle shot and killed the wolf. The man holding out his stick thought that he himself had killed the wolf, not realizing that the wolf had really been killed by the gunshot, because you obviously cannot kill a wolf with a stick.

Similarly, in each generation there are certain true Tzaddikim who accomplish everything through their prayers. All the changes in men's fortunes and everything else in the world come about at their hands. However, there are popular leaders who think that they themselves work the miracles. They are like the man who thought he killed the wolf with his stick, but in fact, everything is in the hands of the true Tzaddikim.

Chayey Moharan #455

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Marks of the Breslover Chassidim

God has granted me three things:

1. I have broken your pride - no matter how you pray, they will say, "He's a Breslover Chassid!"
2. Sin will never cling to you. Even if you commit a sin, it will be without hands and legs.
3. You will never be able to look in the face of false leaders because you have already tasted the Hungarian wine.

Avaneha Barzel

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Three sets of followers

I have three sets of followers. The first come to grab *shirayim* (foods from the Tzaddik's platter). The second come to hear my Torah teachings. But the third are baked and inscribed in my heart.

I want you to be among those who are baked in my heart. And for that, I must be baked in your heart!

Siach Sarfey Kodesh 1-102

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My real intention

You may be good, pious people, but that was not my intention. My intention was that you should be the kind of people who roar out to God for entire nights, like animals in the forest.

Siach Sarfey Kodesh 1-120

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Pray to find the Tzaddik

You must ask God persistently to be able to draw close to the true Tzaddik. Happy is the one who succeeds in drawing close to the true Tzaddik in his lifetime - happy is his lot! For after one dies it is very hard indeed to draw close. One must pray over and over again to come close to the true Tzaddik in one's lifetime. For the Evil One has made it his mission to confuse the world. Israel is very close to redemption now and people have tremendous longing for God, the like of which did not exist in earlier times. Everyone is longing for God. This is why the Evil One has craftily sown dissension among the Tzaddikim and established many false popular leaders. Even among the true Tzaddikim there are divisions, to the point that nobody knows where the truth is. This is why one must beg God to succeed in drawing close to the true Tzaddik.

Likutey Moharan II, 78

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**TESHUVAH
RETURNING TO GOD**

There is a way that everything can be turned into good.

Alim LiTerufah 113

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God's greatness is unfathomable: that is why Teshuvah has such power. No matter how far you may have fallen - be it to the lowest depths - never despair, because you can always return to God. With just a little effort you can turn even your worst sins into merits. No matter where in the world you fall, you can easily come back to God. This is because of His unfathomable greatness. Nothing is beyond His power. Just never give up! Keep crying out, praying and pleading to God at all times.

Sichot Haran #3

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Sometimes a sin can make a person so bitter that he repents completely.

Likutey Halachot, Birkat HaReiach 4:2

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Stop then and there!

You may be in some place when suddenly you have a thought of Teshuvah and a deep longing for God. Stop then and there in that very place and take a moment to focus on the thought and the feeling of longing. Turn them into a prayer. Put your longing into words straight from your heart. Don't wait or move on, even if you are not in your usual place of prayer and study - even if you are going on your way - because if you move on, it could interrupt your train of thought.

Likutey Moharan II, 124

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The Path of Teshuvah

Every person must minimize his own glory and maximize God's glory. For one who pursues glory attains not God's glory but only the glory of kings, of which it is said: "The glory of kings is subject to investigation" (Proverbs 25:2) . For then everyone investigates who he really is, asking: "Who is he and what is he to be given such honor?" People challenge him, saying he is not fit for this honor.

But when a person flees from honor, minimizing his own honor and maximizing the glory of God, he attains the glory of God. No-one then investigates to see if he deserves it, for "The glory of God is to hide the matter" (*ibid.*) - it is forbidden to question his honor.

The only way to attain God's glory is through repentance. And the true sign of a person who has returned to God is the ability to hear himself insulted and remain silent. He endures even the most murderous abuse with patience, thereby reducing the blood in the left side of his heart (seat of the animal soul) and annihilating his evil inclination. Such a person is worthy of a share in God's glory.

Before a person returns to God, he has no being. It is as if he has not yet been created, because it would have been better for him not to have been created at all. But when he purifies himself in order to return to God, he puts himself in order and prepares to become a being. This element of preparation for becoming - coming into being, as it were - explains why the Divine Name associated with repentance is *Ehyeh* , "I shall be".

When a person wants to purify himself and return to God, they tell him "Wait!" (*Yoma* 38b-39a) . It is true that he should hurry to free his soul and escape the darkness. But he should not allow himself to become discouraged and dejected if he sees that he is far from true prayer and other holy

devotions. Waiting patiently is a necessary part of the process. In the end he will be worthy of making amends completely and everything will be rectified.

Repentance never comes to an end: it must be continuous. Even at the very moment that a person is confessing, it is impossible for him to say the words, "I have sinned, I have transgressed, I have rebelled." with perfect sincerity free of all extraneous motives. Thus he must repent for his earlier repentance and for the flaw in his previous confession.

Even when a person knows that he has repented completely, he must still make amends for his earlier repentance. For what he achieved then was good only in proportion to his perception of Godliness at the time. Now, after his repentance, his perception has undoubtedly been heightened. Compared with his present perception, his earlier perception turns out to have been grossly materialistic. He must therefore repent for his earlier levels - because he degraded the true exaltedness of the Creator to the level of the material. Happy is the man who achieves true Teshuvah.

Teshuvah has three aspects: seeing with the eyes, hearing with the ears and understanding in the heart (cf. Isaiah 6:10). A person must use his eyes to look towards the ultimate goal and purpose of this world. He must concentrate on this goal with all his heart, resolving to travel there and nowhere else. And he must use his ears to listen carefully to everything that our holy sages said. Then he will be able to return to God.

Teshuvah essentially depends on humility. One must make oneself into nothing, like a wasteland over which people trample: one must pay no attention whatsoever to opposition or abuse from others. One should train oneself to be silent and hear oneself insulted without answering back. Such a person is worthy of the name "wise" and will attain perfect Teshuvah, the "Crown" and summit of the Sefirot. This is the way to true and enduring glory - the glory of God.

Likutey Moharan I, 6

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Humility

Be totally honest when you speak to God. Accustom yourself to talking so honestly that your heart is aroused and the words start pouring forth with fire and passion.

As you draw closer to God you will see your own smallness and insignificance in comparison with His greatness, and you will be filled with humility. Until now you cast your sins behind your back and ignored them. But as you start to acknowledge them frankly, you will feel deep shame at having rebelled against the Master and Ruler of the Universe, Source of all the worlds.

At first this humility will not actually be discernible on your face, because sin weakens a person's mental powers, preventing them from radiating on the face. Before repenting, his mind is so weakened that he has no conception of the true gravity of sin and the greatness of the One he

sinned against. But as he returns to God and puts aside his folly, gaining wisdom and understanding, his shame becomes increasingly visible on his face.

The Tefilin are the sign of humility and attachment to God. The light of the Tefilin is a ray of the light of God's inner countenance. When a person achieves this humility, all his sins are forgiven and he becomes attached to the Tree of Life.

Likutey Moharan I, 38

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The Power of Psalms

Everybody wants to revere God's Name but not everyone is able to repent. Sometimes a person feels no arousal whatever. Even one who is aroused to repent may not reach his unique gate of Teshuvah, and even if he does, it could be that the gate is closed. This is why not everyone attains repentance.

But through reciting Psalms, even one who feels no arousal can be inspired to repent. The Psalms can take him to his unique gate and open it up, thereby bringing him to Teshuvah.

For this reason King David called himself "the man who raised the yoke... the sweet singer of Israel" (II Samuel 23:1) . Our sages explain that David called himself "the man who raised the yoke" because he elevated the yoke of repentance through his own Teshuvah. David was a great Tzaddik and should not have sinned, but God caused him to sin in order to teach everyone the way of Teshuvah. King David was the prime exemplar of Teshuvah and his pathway is set forth in the Psalms, which he wrote with such a spirit of holiness that everyone can find himself in them and thereby return to God.

Likutey Moharan II, 73

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God hides in the obstacle

When after a life devoted to worldliness a person feels an arousal to God, the attribute of Judgment rises to accuse him and does not permit him to follow God's ways. It does this by confronting him with an obstacle. But God loves kindness and hides Himself within the very obstacle itself. One who lacks good sense sees the obstacle and retreats at once. But one who possesses good sense examines the obstacle and discovers God within it.

Likutey Moharan I, 115

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Revisiting the past

To come to complete Teshuvah you must pass through all the places where you were prior to your Teshuvah. When you encounter exactly the same temptations as you experienced before, you must avert your eyes and control your impulses in order not to repeat what you did earlier. This is the essence of perfect Teshuvah: there is no other way.

Likutey Moharan II, 49

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Be a new creation

If you want to return to God you must make yourself into a new creation. You can do this with a sigh!

Man never stops breathing - releasing the stale air and drawing in fresh air. Our very lives depend on this. The physical air we breathe has its root above. There is the good air of the Tzaddik and the evil air of the sinner. The Tzaddik constantly draws air from the holy, the sinner draws air from impurity.

Therefore, when a person wants to repent, he must make sure to stop the bad air from coming into him. The way to do this is with a sigh, which is a long, deep breath in and out. The sigh begins when you draw in extra air. This is similar to what happens just before a person dies: he draws in extra air and then the spirit leaves him. Every exhalation is the death of the moment that has passed, in preparation for the birth of the new moment. Thus when you take a deep sigh, you release yourself from the bad air of the sinner and bind yourself to the pure air of the Tzaddik in order to receive new vitality.

This is Teshuvah, returning from impurity to holiness in order to gain new life. The very body is renewed, because "Sighing breaks a person's whole body" (*Berachot* 58b) , and therefore the body is remade.

Chayey Moharan #37

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How precious is a sigh!

How precious is the sigh of a Jew! The very sigh brings fulfillment of his needs.

For the world was created through the breath, which is the life spirit: " . and through the breath of His mouth all their hosts" (Psalms 33:6) . The renewal of the world will also be through the breath: "You send Your spirit, they are created, and You renew the face of the earth" (Psalms 104:30) . The breath is also man's vitality since his life depends on breathing. "And He breathed in his nostrils the spirit of life" (Genesis 2:7) .

The essential vitality of all things thus depends on the breath. Whenever something is lacking, the main lack is in that thing's vitality, which is the life-spirit keeping it alive. A sigh is a long breath - the long breath of patience. Therefore when a person is patient and sighs over what he lacks, he draws life spirit to that which is lacking, because the main lack is the absence of the life spirit.

But from where does one receive the life spirit? Know that we receive the essential life spirit from the Tzaddik and leader of the generation. This is because the main life spirit is in the Torah, for "the spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters" (Genesis 1:2) and the "waters" are the Torah. Since the Tzaddikim are attached to the Torah, therefore the main life spirit is with them.

When one who is attached to the Tzaddik and leader of the generation takes a long, deep sigh, he draws life spirit from the Tzaddik, who is attached to the Torah, where the spirit resides. Thus the Tzaddik is called "the man who has the spirit in him" (Numbers 27:18) - because he knows how to relate to each and everyone according to his spirit.

Likutey Moharan I, 8

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Providence and nature

God shows us great kindness by governing the world with individual providence and through the laws of nature. When people are good, God deals with them providentially, in a way that goes beyond nature. However if God were to oversee the life of an undeserving person in accordance with His providence, no good could ever reach him. Nevertheless out of kindness, God leaves this person to the laws of nature, and as a result , through the law of averages, things may then go well for him.

If God's only way of running the world were through providence, rewarding good deeds and punishing sin, this could lead to a total breakdown of providence. For if God were to see someone acting improperly and dealt with him in anger, He might cast him out completely. Instead, God abandons him to nature, and when he improves his ways, He deals with him providentially.

But in actual fact we are quite unable to understand what is "nature" and what is "providence", because the truth is that even the laws of nature are really God's providence. However, the human mind is unable to grasp the paradox that what appears to be the law of nature is really God's providence.

Likutey Moharan II, 17

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I have strayed like a lost sheep

"I have strayed like a lost sheep: seek out Your servant" (Psalms 119:176) .

When a person sins, it makes a big difference if he comes to his senses at once and repents, in which case it is easy for him to return to his place because he has not yet strayed too far from the good path. For when a person sins, he turns from the straight path and enters a different, twisting pathway. A multitude of wrong turns branch off into ever deeper error and corruption. The person may stray so far and become so entangled that it is very hard for him to turn back and get off the wrong track.

God's way is to call a person the moment He sees him straying from the path of good sense, asking him to turn back. He calls each person in the way most suited to him. To some He beckons with a hint. To others the summons is literally a cry. Some people kick, and He must strike them in order to call them. For "the Torah cries out before them: 'Fools! How long will you love foolishness?'" (Proverbs 1:22, *Zohar Shemini* 36a) . The Torah is God's voice calling and begging those who sin to return to Him.

As long as a person has not strayed too far from the right path, it is easy for him to return because he still recognizes the voice. This is because only a short time has passed since he was close to God and heeded His voice, the voice of the Torah. He has not yet forgotten it or strayed too far along those other devious paths. Similarly, when a sheep strays from the path and the shepherd immediately calls it, as long as the sheep has not yet strayed too far, it still recognizes the shepherd's voice and immediately responds.

But once the sheep strays far from the path, it forgets the shepherd's voice and no longer recognizes his call. The shepherd also gives up searching because the sheep has been lost for such a long time . Similarly, when a person has been going in the wrong direction for a long time , having strayed far from the true path into all those corrupt, devious and confusing pathways, it is hard for him to repent.

But know that sometimes a person journeys so far along those corrupt and devious paths that his very wandering brings him close to his original place and it only needs an easy test to bring him back to his starting point . But when God calls him and arranges the test, the person does not recognize the voice and feels no need to return. That is the difference between young and old people. One who is still young and has not grown old in his sins can return more easily, because he is still closer and has not forgotten the voice that calls.

This is the meaning of the verse, "I have strayed like a lost sheep: seek out Your servant" (Psalms 119, 176) . "I have strayed like a lost sheep": I have strayed from the good path like a lost sheep that has strayed from the road. This is why I beg of You: ".seek out Your servant, because I have not forgotten Your commandments". Hurry and search for me as long as I still remember the voice of the Torah and mitzvot. Hurry and search for me immediately, because I have not yet forgotten Your mitzvot: I still recognize the call of the mitzvot of the Torah. That is why I beg You to take pity on me and search me out quickly, as long as "I have not forgotten Your mitzvot" and still recognize the voice of the call of the Torah and the mitzvot.

For when a person grows old in his sins, it is very hard to seek him out as he has already forgotten and no longer recognizes the voice of the Torah and the mitzvot. We must therefore beg God to hurry and bring us back to Him before we completely forget the call of the Torah and mitzvot. This was King David's prayer: "Search out Your servant, for I have not forgotten Your mitzvot."

Likutey Moharan I, 206

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THE LAND OF ISRAEL

Wherever I go, I am always only going to the land of Israel . I am only here in Breslov temporarily.

Chayey Moharan #156

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From level to level

A true Israelite is one who constantly advances from level to level. Each advance to greater holiness can be accomplished only through the holiness of the land of Israel . Likewise our prayers ascend only through the land of Israel .

When a person reaches the level of the land of Israel , he is worthy to be called "a man of strength and valor". Before one attains this level, "Let not he that girds his armor boast like he that removes it" (I Kings 20:11) . However after winning the battle, he does indeed deserve to be called "a man of war".

Likutey Moharan I, 20

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Houses and apartments.

What do I mean by the land of Israel ? I mean the actual country of Israel with its houses and apartments!

Chayey Moharan #15

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Why go to Israel ?

The only motive for going to the land of Israel should be spiritual: to draw closer to God. One who goes there with this intention will certainly benefit. Merely by setting foot in the land, he will become absorbed in and transformed by its holiness. For this reason even one who walks four cubits in the land of Israel is assured that he will inherit the world to come (*Ketubot* 111a) . But if a person's motive has no connection with devotion to God and purification from evil, how will the land of Israel help him? It will vomit him out "as it vomited out the nation that was before you" (Leviticus 18:28) .

Likutey Moharan I, 155

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Longing

Pray that God should give you longing and desire for the land of Israel , and then you will succeed in getting there. Pray also that He should plant yearning for the land in the hearts of all the Tzaddikim.

Likutey Moharan I, 155

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Charity for Israel

Charity given for the land of Israel is greater than charity for causes elsewhere. When you give charity for the land of Israel you become included in the air of the land of Israel , which is "holy breath without the taint of sin" (*Shabbat* 119b) . Through this breath the forces of severity and darkness are banished from the world. One can also thereby escape alien thoughts and distractions during prayer, and one's mind and thoughts become clear and refined. This is the repair of the holy Covenant.

Likutey Moharan I, 37

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To distinguish between light and darkness

The land of Israel is the very summit of holiness, encompassing all other levels of holiness. It is there that we can completely free ourselves of the notion that the world is governed through nature and come to know and believe that everything happens only through the hand of God. When man knows this he becomes like God, acquiring the ability to distinguish between light and darkness. "Light" refers to the deeds of the Tzaddikim while "darkness" refers to those of the wicked (*Bereishith Rabbah* 2) .

Telling stories about the Tzaddikim help s cleanse and purify the mind. But for every story about a Tzaddik we find a parallel story about a wicked person , because the realm of evil is a reflection of that of holiness. Thus we are told that Pinchas flew in the air, and the same is said of the wicked Bilaam, except that in his case it was through witchcraft. The ability to distinguish between light and darkness enables us to distinguish between stories about true Tzaddikim and those that are not.

To separate the light from the darkness requires the ultimate level of faith. This can be attained only in the land of Israel .

Likutey Moharan I, 234

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MASHIACH

Mashiach will conquer the entire world without firing a single bullet.

Siach Sarfey Kodesh 1-67

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Mashiach's main weapon is prayer!

Likutey Moharan I, 2

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Mashiach will have a great task just to bring people to pray a Shmoneh Esrey clean of outside thoughts.

Siach Sarfey Kodesh 1-20

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On the threshold of Mashiach , God runs the world with the utmost delicacy, like filigree work.

Siach Sarfey Kodesh 1-99

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The simple people

Mashiach will conquer the world only through simple people who recite the Psalms simply and sincerely.

You may understand this through a parable about a certain king who went hunting dressed in ordinary clothing for greater comfort. A sudden cloud-burst, a literal flood of water, sent all the ministers scattering in search of shelter. The king was in great danger but finally found the house of a villager, who invited him inside with great honor, dressed him in warm clothes and gave him simple peasant food, lighting a fire and leaving him there to sleep and warm up. The king was so exhausted that the food and rest in the home of the peasant were the sweetest delight, the like of which he felt he had never tasted.

The ministers searched for the king until they came to the peasant's house and found the king asleep. They waited until he awoke. They wanted him to return home with them, but the king said to them: "None of you came to save me: you all scattered in different directions to save yourselves!

Only this peasant saved me. Since I have tasted the sweetest delight with him, he will bring me home in his wagon and I will sit on my royal throne in the very clothes in which he dressed me!

Likewise, just before Mashiach comes, there will be a flood of atheism - not a literal flood of water but one of strange thoughts that will cover all the "high mountains" even in the land of Israel, which was not affected by Noah's flood. The rains will teem down with such force that even the "mountains of Israel " will be drenched - even the hearts of the pure will be affected.

Wisdom and sophistication will be of no avail. The only ones who will hold firm are the simple Jews who recite Psalms simply and sincerely. That is why, when the Mashiach comes, they will be the ones who place the royal crown on his head.

Sipurim Niflaim

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The coming test

Great atheism is coming to the world as a test from on high. The world's many sins are causing a terrible lack of faith. Happy is the person who stays firm in his faith in these times.

The fact that I am predicting this will not prevent the increase of Godlessness and confusion. Long ago Daniel and others made it known that this would happen in the days before the Mashiach. "Many will purify themselves and be refined, and make themselves shining white. But the wicked will do evil. and only the wise shall understand" (Daniel 12:10) .

Knowing that this has already been foreseen, it would seem that it should not be such a great trial for people to remain strong and firm in their faith. But the truth is that even though the prophets made this known long ago, it will still be a great trial. Many will fall by the way , and that is why it is written: "the wicked will do evil."

I am revealing this for the sake of the few pure souls who will remain firm in their faith. They will certainly face great battles even in their own minds. But when they see that this has already been predicted, it will give them greater strength and encouragement.

Sichot Haran #35

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The folly of war

Many of the misguided follies of primitive times such as child-sacrifice to Molech (Leviticus 20:2) have now disappeared. But the folly of war has still not been abolished. What kind of wisdom must the scientists possess in order to invent a wonderful weapon that can kill thousands of people at once! Is there anything more foolish than to kill so many people for nothing!

* * *

Strife

The world is full of strife. There are wars between the nations of the world and conflicts in every city. There are feuds in every household, discord between neighbors, friction within the family, between man and wife, parents and children...

Every day man dies - for the day that has passed will never return. Death comes closer every day, yet nobody remembers the purpose of life.

Friction in the home directly parallels the wars between nations. Each member of the household is the counterpart of one of the nations: their quarrels correspond to the wars between the nations. Even the traits of the different nations can be discerned in the individual members of the household. Each nation has its own particular trait, such as anger, blood-thirstiness and so on. The counterparts of these traits are found in the different members of each household.

You may have no desire for strife: you may only want to live quietly and peaceably with everyone. Even so, you may find yourself forced into conflicts and disputes.

The same happens between nations. One nation may want peace and is willing to make many concessions in order to achieve it. Yet it finds itself dragged into other nations' disputes, with each of the opposing sides demanding its allegiance until it is drawn into war against its will.

The same is true in household wars. Man is a miniature world containing the entire world and everything in it. A man and his family contain the nations of the world and all their wars and strife.

For this reason someone living alone in a forest can go out of his mind. This is because all the warring nations are contained within him. Each one attacks the other, and his personality keeps changing depending on which of the nations within him prevails. Swinging from one extreme to another can drive him insane. But when a person lives with others, these battles are played out among the different members of the household, or between neighbors and friends and so on.

However, when Mashiach comes, all wars and conflicts will come to an end and great peace will come into the world, for "They will neither hurt nor destroy." (Isaiah 11:9) .

Sichot Haran #77

* * *

Peace

Through the spread of peace the whole world can be drawn to serve God with one accord, because when men are at peace with one another they talk to each other about the true purpose of the

world and its vanities. They discuss the realities of life and how, when a person dies, all that remains is whatever he prepared for the world of eternity after death, because neither silver nor gold accompany a person after death. When people come to understand this they will abandon their illusions and idols of silver, aspiring only to God and His Torah. Their only aim will be to serve God and seek out the truth.

But when there is no peace in the world, and worse still, when there is strife, men are not open with one another and never discuss the true purpose of life. Even when someone does discuss it, his words do not penetrate the hearts of others, because they have no interest in discovering the truth but only in winning the argument. They are aggressive and full of hatred and envy. When a person wants to win an argument, his ears are not open to the truth. The main reason most people are so far from God is that divisiveness and strife are so widespread today through our many sins.

Likutey Moharan I, 27

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Joining opposites

The real meaning of peace is to join two opposites. You should therefore not be perturbed when you encounter someone who is and thinks the exact opposite of yourself. Don't assume you will never be able to live amicably with him. Likewise, when you see two people who are completely opposite types, don't decide that it is impossible to make peace between them. Quite the contrary! Perfect peace is achieved through the effort to make peace between two opposites, just as God makes peace in His high places between fire and water, which are two opposites. Peace is attained when you are completely willing to sacrifice yourself to sanctify God's Name.

Likutey Moharan I, 80

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Look for the good

God always takes into account the good that people do. Perhaps something not so good was mixed in, but God disregards it.

If this is God's way, we should try all the more to do the same. Don't look for other people's bad side or search out their weak points and shortcomings. Look only for the good in others and always search for worth and merit in them. Then you will be at peace with everyone.

Likutey Moharan II, 17

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One of my offspring

As to what will become of me, I have no idea. But this much I have achieved with the Almighty: the Mashiach will be one of my offspring.

Chayey Moharan #274

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TODAY!!!

Man's world consists only of the present. Whatever you can do to serve God, do immediately and determinedly without delay.

Chayey Moharan #431

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Don't be old

Don't be old! True, there are pious, righteous elders. But to be old is not good. Stay young - renew yourself every day and make a fresh start.

Sichot Haran #51

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One precious day

"Repent *one day* before your death" (*Avot* 2:10) .

Yesterday and tomorrow are man's downfall. Today you may be aroused towards God. Don't let yourself become discouraged because of what may have happened yesterday or what may happen tomorrow .

No matter where a person stands, there are always reverses. Many people become discouraged as a result, and stop putting any real effort into their devotions.

That is why you must "Repent *one day* before your death . "

"Before your death" is your entire life. During your entire lifetime, you may be worthy of only *one day* of repentance.

This one day is more precious than all treasures. For what does a person gain from all his worldly effort? Nothing remains of your entire life other than this one day when you return to God.

* * *

Now!

"Today if you will but listen to His voice!" (Psalms 95:7) .

Think only about the present day and the present moment. When someone wants to serve God, he may see it as a heavy burden. But if you remember that you have only today, it won't be such a burden. Don't push off serving God from one day to the next, saying, "I'll start tomorrow - tomorrow I'll pray with real devotion."

All we have is the present day and the present moment. Tomorrow is a whole different world.

"Today if you will but listen to His voice!" (Psalms 95:7) . Today!!!

Likutey Moharan I, 272

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DREAMS AND VISIONS:**TELL THIS TO YOUR CHILDREN**

I will tell you what I saw. And you tell your children.

Someone was lying on the ground and around him people were sitting in a circle. Around this circle was another circle, and around that circle yet another, and so on - many circles. Then around them were sitting yet more people in no particular order.

The one sitting in the middle was leaning on his side and moving his lips, and all those around were moving their lips after him. But when I looked again , the one in the middle was not there and all those sitting around were no longer moving their lips. "What is this?" I asked. They told me that he had become chilled and had expired and that he had stopped speaking.

After this they all started to run and I ran after them. I saw two palaces - very fine, beautiful buildings. Sitting there were two commanders. Everyone ran to these two commanders and started arguing with them. "Why did you deceive us?" They wanted to kill them.

The commanders fled outside. I caught sight of them and could see that they had very good natures . I ran after them and saw a beautiful tent in the distance . From there they cried out to the commanders: "Turn back and seek out all your merits. Take them in your hands and go to the light that hangs there, for there you will accomplish everything you want."

The commanders turned back and took their merits - there were bundles of merits there - and ran to the light. I ran after them and saw a gleaming light suspended in the air. The commanders came and threw their merits to the light. From the light, sparks fell into their mouths. Then the lamp - *NeR* - turned into *NahaR*, a river. Everyone drank from the river, and creatures formed inside them. As they started to speak, these creatures came forth from them: I saw them running and returning. They were neither men nor any kind of animal - just creatures.

After this they decided to go back to their place, but they said, "How can we go back to our place?" Someone said: "We should send to the one who stands there holding a sword that reaches from heaven to earth." "Who should we send?" they asked. They decided to send the creatures, and the creatures went there.

I ran after them and I saw the one with the sword. He was terrifying. He was so tall that he reached from heaven to earth. In his hand was a sword reaching from heaven to earth. It had many blades. One of them was very sharp - for killing. Another inflicted poverty, while another sent weakness. There were many other blades to inflict different punishments.

They began to plead with the one with the sword: "We have suffered at your hands for so long. Now help us and bring us to our place." "I cannot help you," he replied. They pleaded: "Give us the blade for death, and we will kill them." But he refused. They asked for a different blade, but he did not want to give them a single blade, and they returned.

In the meantime they were ordered to kill the commanders, and they cut off their heads. The entire sequence of events then reverted to what it had been before: someone was lying on the ground surrounded by circles of people. then they ran to the commanders. everything as before.

But this time the commanders did not throw their merits to the light. Instead, they simply took their merits and went to the light and broke their hearts, begging and entreating before the light. Sparks fell from the light into their mouths. They entreated more, and the light turned into a river, and the creatures were formed.

They told me, "These will live!" The first ones deserved to be killed for having thrown their merits to the light without making entreaties like the later ones.

I did not know what this meant. They said, "Go to that room, and they will explain it to you ." I went, and there sat an old man. I asked him about the matter. He took his beard in his hand and said to me, "My beard is the explanation of what happened." "I still don't know," I said. "Go to that room," he replied, "and there you will find the explanation."

I went there and saw a room infinitely long and wide, entirely filled with writings. Wherever I opened, I saw the explanation of the story.

THE VISITOR

A visitor entered a house and asked the head of the house: "From what do you make a living?" "I don't have a fixed livelihood at home," his host replied, "but the world provides me with what I

need to live." The guest asked him, "What do you study?" The host answered, and they continued talking together until they spoke in real earnest, heart to heart. The host began to feel a tremendous yearning to know how to reach a certain level of holiness. "I will study with you," said the guest.

The host was surprised and began to think, "Perhaps this isn't a human being at all." But he looked again and saw that he was talking to him normally like a human being. Directly after this he felt a strengthening of his faith and resolved to believe in the guest and began calling him "my teacher" .

He said to the guest, "First of all, I would like you to teach me how to show the proper respect for beings like yourself. Not, I need scarcely add, that I could really detract from your true glory, God forbid! Even so, it is hard for humans to be as meticulous as they ought to be in these matters. That is why I want you to teach me how to behave with due respect."

"I haven't time at the moment," he answered, "but I will teach you this another time. Right now I must leave."

"Well, I also need to learn something else from you," said the host. "How far do I have to go when I accompany you on your way, as the host is bound to do when his guests depart?"

"Till outside the entrance," he replied.

The host thought to himself, "How can I go out with him. At the moment I am with him among ordinary beings, but if I go out with him alone - who knows who he is?" The host said to the visitor, "I am afraid to go out with you."

"If I can learn with you just like this," he replied, "then who is going to stop me doing anything I want to you? The host escorted him outside. All of a sudden he seized him and started to fly with him. The host was cold, so the other gave him a garment. "Take this garment," he said, "and it will be good for you. You will have food and drink and everything will be good and you will live in your house."

He continued flying with him. Meanwhile the host suddenly noticed that he was in his house. He couldn't believe that he was actually in his own house. But he looked carefully, and sure enough he was speaking with ordinary human beings and eating and drinking normally. But then he again noticed that he was flying like before. Then he looked again, and lo and behold! He was in his house! Again he noticed that he was flying... and so it went on for quite some time.

After a time he was set down in a valley between two mountains. There the man found a book in which there were various combinations of letters: *aleph*, *zayin*, *chet*, *dalet*. Inside the book were drawings of various vessels containing letters. Also within the vessels were the letters related to the vessels: through these letters it was possible to make the vessels themselves.

The man had a tremendous desire to study the book. But then he noticed that he was back in his house. He took another look and he was back in the valley. He decided to ascend the mountain to see if he could find some kind of habitation there. When he came to the mountain, he saw a tree of

gold standing there with golden branches. Hanging from the branches were vessels like those drawn in the book, and inside the vessels were other vessels through which these first vessels could be made. He wanted to take the vessels from there, but he was unable to do so because they were entangled in the branches.

Meanwhile he noticed that he was in his house. It was extraordinary. How was it that one moment he could be here and the next moment there? He wanted to speak about it to other human beings, but how can one explain something incredible like this to other people - they would find it hard to believe.

At this moment he looked through the window and saw the same visitor. He started begging him to come in, but the visitor said, "I don't have time because I'm on my way to you." "This in itself is something amazing to me," said the man. "I'm right here. What do you mean that you are on your way to me?" He answered: "As soon as you showed yourself willing to accompany me beyond the entrance, I took the *neshamah* -soul, from you and gave it a garment from the lower Garden of Eden. The *nefesh* - *ruach* -spirit remains with you. This is why when you attach your thought to that place you are there and you draw the radiance of that place over yourself. Then when you return here, you are here."

I do not know from which world he is. But this much is certain: he is from a world of good. So far it is not finished. It is not completed.

Chayey Moharan #85

PARABLES:

THE CLAY-DIGGER KEEPING HAPPY PAYS

Once there was a poor man who used to make his living by digging clay and selling it.

One day he was digging in the mud when suddenly he found a jewel. It must have been worth a fortune! The Clay-digger had no idea how much it was worth, so he went to a jeweler to have it valued.

The jeweler told him it was worth so much that there was no-one in their country with enough money to buy it! He would have to travel to London, the capital city. But being poor, the man did not have the money to make the journey. He went and sold everything he had and went from house to house asking for contributions, until he had sufficient money to journey to the port.

He wanted to board the ship but he did not have enough money for the fare. He went to the captain and showed him the precious stone. The captain immediately took him onto the ship with great flourish, saying, "You're a sure bet!" The captain gave him a special first class cabin with every luxury as if he was a person of very high rank.

The Clay-digger's cabin had a window overlooking the sea. He would sit there enjoying himself immensely rejoicing over the diamond, especially at mealtimes, because joy and good spirits are medically proven aids to easy digestion!

One day he sat down to eat and placed the diamond on the table in front of him so that he could enjoy it. After his meal, he took a nap. While he was asleep, the cabin-boy came in and took the tablecloth with all the crumbs, and without even noticing the diamond, shook everything into the sea!

When the Clay-digger awoke he realized what had happened. He almost went out of his mind with worry and anguish. What was he to do? The captain was a pirate who would murder him for the boat fare.

Still, the Clay-digger *pretended* to be happy - as if he was quite unaware that anything had happened.

Every day during the voyage the captain used to talk to him for several hours. He did the same today. The Clay-digger made such a show of being happy that the captain didn't notice anything unusual.

The captain said to him, "I know you are clever and honest. I want to buy a large quantity of grain to sell in London - I can make a big profit. My fear is that I will be accused of embezzling from the royal treasury. Let the purchase be made in *your* name and I will reward you handsomely." The Clay-digger felt it was a good idea and he agreed.

As soon as they arrived in London, the captain died and everything was left in the hands of the Clay-digger! The cargo was in fact worth many times more than the diamond!

The truth is that the diamond did not belong to the Clay-digger - and the proof is that he lost it. The grain did belong to him - and the proof is that he kept it. And he only gained what was his because he forced himself to keep happy.

Sipurim Niflaim

KAPTZIN PASHA

Once there was a Jew at the court of the Sultan of Turkey whom the Sultan loved and esteemed more highly than all his ministers of state. Every day he used to call him to his palace to spend time with him alone. The ministers of state were very jealous of the Jew, and tried to think up ways to discredit him in the eyes of the Sultan and ruin him completely.

Among the ministers was a certain Pasha known as Kaptzin Pasha. He hated the Jew much more than all the other ministers, but he tried to make him think he really loved him. Every day he tried to devise ways to achieve his true desire - to discredit him in the eyes of the Sultan.

One day Kaptzin Pasha approached the Jew and slyly began telling him how he had been with the Sultan.

"And I heard him say with his own mouth how much he loves you. But one thing bothers him. When you speak with him, he cannot stand the bad odor wafting out of your mouth. Of course he can't do without you, so this smell causes him great suffering."

Kaptzin Pasha continued: "Therefore my advice is that every time you come before the Sultan, you should hold a scented handkerchief in front of your mouth. This way the Sultan will not smell the bad odor coming from your mouth, and you won't fall foul of the Sultan."

In his innocence the Jew believed what the Pasha had said and decided to follow his advice.

Next the Pasha went to the Sultan and told him that he had heard the Jew talking about his terrible suffering. ".Because every time he speaks with the Sultan, he finds a bad smell emanating from the Sultan's mouth."

"The Jew has therefore decided," continued the Pasha, "that when he comes to speak with you, my lord the Sultan, he will hold a scented handkerchief in front of his mouth so as not to smell the bad odor from the Sultan's mouth. The sign that what I am saying is true will be that tomorrow, when he comes to speak with you, you will see with your own eyes that he will be holding a handkerchief over his mouth."

On hearing this, the Sultan became extremely angry and said to the Pasha, "If I see that you are right, I will utterly destroy him."

Sure enough, the following day the Jew came to the Sultan holding a handkerchief over his mouth, just as the Pasha had advised him, since he believed what he had been told. Seeing this, the Sultan took it as proof that the Pasha had told him the truth. The Sultan immediately wrote a letter to his Chief Executioner saying: "The person who brings you this letter must be thrown at once into the furnace where they cast those condemned to death by burning."

The Sultan closed and sealed the letter and said to the Jew, "I would like you to deliver this letter personally to the Chief Executioner in such-and-such a place."

The Jew took the letter and promised the Sultan he would carry out his instructions. He had no idea what was written in the letter and he went home.

Now this Jew meticulously observed the mitzvah of circumcising Jewish boys. Whenever he was invited to perform a circumcision he would not allow any obstacle to stand in his way, because this mitzvah was very precious in his eyes.

God wanted to save His faithful friend and so He arranged that on the very day that the Jew was supposed to deliver the Sultan's letter to the Chief Executioner, a man came from a certain village to invite the Jewish minister back to the village in order to circumcise his son. Since the Jew never under any circumstances missed an opportunity to perform this mitzvah, he started thinking: "How can I carry out the Sultan's instructions to deliver his letter?"

God arranged that at just that moment the Pasha came towards him. The Jew told the Pasha that he had come from the Sultan, who had given him a letter to deliver to the officer in question. However, today God had sent him the opportunity to perform the mitzvah of circumcision.

"And my custom is never under any circumstances to pass up this mitzvah," said the Jew. "Therefore I would like to ask you to take the letter and deliver it."

The Pasha was delighted, because now he would be able to make further accusations against the Jew for not having carried out the Sultan's wishes with respect to the letter. The Pasha took the letter from his hand and delivered it into the hands of the executioner, who immediately seized the Pasha and threw him into the fiery furnace. He was burned up just as he deserved in accordance with the divine law of "measure for measure".

The Jew knew nothing at all about what had happened to the Pasha. The following day he went again to the Sultan, who was very surprised to see him.

"Have you not yet delivered the letter I gave you for that officer?" he asked.

"My lord the Sultan," replied the Jew, "I entrusted the letter to Kaptzin Pasha to deliver to the officer, because God sent me an opportunity to perform the mitzvah of circumcision, and it is my custom never to pass up this mitzvah."

The Sultan realized it was no mere chance that the Pasha, who had tried to discredit the Jew, had been burned to death. The Sultan immediately asked the Jew, "Why do you hold a scented handkerchief over your mouth when you speak to me?"

"The Pasha advised me to do this," said the Jew, "because he told me that he heard you say you cannot stand the odor from my mouth."

The Sultan then told the Jew how the Pasha had tried to discredit him. "He said that *you* cannot stand the odor coming from *my* mouth!"

The Sultan told the Jew what was written in the letter he had given him, and said to him: "Now I know that God rules on earth and saves His dear ones from all evil. What the Pasha plotted to do to you was done to him, and God repaid his evil to his face."

From that time on the Jew was more esteemed than ever in the eyes of the Sultan - more than all his other ministers - and he gave him the greatest respect and honor.

Sipurim Niflaim

THE BITTER HERB

Once a Jew and a German banded together to go around begging. The Jew taught the German how to pretend to be a Jew (since German and Yiddish are quite similar). This way the Jews, who are kind by nature, would help him.

Pesach was coming, so the Jew taught the German how to behave when invited to someone's home for the Pesach Seder. He explained to him that first they would make the Kiddush and then wash their hands. The one thing that the Jew forgot to mention was the eating of the bitter herbs.

When the German came to the Seder he was ravenous, not having eaten for the whole day. He was gleefully anticipating eating all the good things the Jew had told him about. But at first, all they gave him was a tiny piece of vegetable dipped in saltwater for Karpas, and they carried on reading the Haggadah.

The German was desperately longing for the meal. He was delighted when they started eating the Matzah. But all of a sudden they gave him the Maror, which was terribly bitter in his mouth.

The German thought this was the entire meal, and all they were going to eat was the Maror. He immediately ran out, bitter and hungry, thinking to himself that the Jews were truly cursed. "After all that ceremony, this is what they give to eat!?" He returned to the synagogue and went to sleep.

Later on the Jew arrived, his face beaming, fully satisfied from eating and drinking. "How was your Seder?" he asked. The German angrily told him what happened.

"Oh you stupid German," said the Jew. "If you had only waited just a little longer you would have enjoyed the best meal, exactly like me."

So it is in serving God. After all a person's efforts and exertions to draw closer to God, he is subjected to a little bitterness - because the purification of the body comes through bitterness. The person thinks there will never be anything except bitterness, and immediately runs away.

If he would just be willing to wait a while and endure this little bitterness in order to purify the body, he would later experience every kind of vitality and delight. In serving God, first one experiences the bitterness of the purification of the body, but afterwards one enjoys the vitality.

Sipurim Niflaim

THE TREASURE

A man from a certain town once dreamed that in Vienna, under a bridge, there lay buried treasure. He traveled to Vienna and stood there by the bridge trying to think what to do. During the day it would be impossible to dig because of the people.

As he stood there, a soldier passed by and asked, "What are you standing thinking about?" The man thought it would be best to tell him the truth. Perhaps he would help him and they could share the proceeds. He told him the whole story.

"Jews only think about dreams!" cried the soldier. "I also had a dream, and in my dream I too saw a treasure. It was in a particular house belonging to a particular person."

The soldier mentioned the very name of the man's city and the name of the man himself. "There in the cellar lies a great treasure, and I want to go there and take it."

The man returned home, dug in his cellar and found the treasure.

"Now I know that the treasure is with me!" he said. "Except that to find out about it, I had to travel to Vienna ."

So it is in serving God. The treasure is inside each person. But to find out about the treasure, one must travel to the Tzaddik.

Sipurim Niflaim

THE TURKEY-PRINCE

Once the king's son went mad. He thought he was a turkey. He felt compelled to sit under the table without any clothes on, pulling at bits of bread and bones like a turkey. None of the doctors could do anything to help him or cure him, and they gave up in despair. The king was very sad...

Until a Wise Man came and said "I can cure him."

What did the Wise Man do? He took off all his clothes, and sat down naked under the table next to the king's son, and also pulled at crumbs and bones.

The Prince asked him, "Who are you and what are you doing here?"

"And what are you doing here?" replied the Wise Man.

"I am a turkey," said the Prince.

"Well I'm also a turkey," said the Wise Man.

The two of them sat there together like this for some time, until they were used to one another.

Then the Wise Man gave a sign, and they threw them shirts. The Wise Man-Turkey said to the king's son, "Do you think a turkey can't wear a shirt? You can wear a shirt and still be a turkey." The two of them put on shirts.

After a while he gave another sign, and they threw them some trousers. Again the Wise Man said, "Do you think if you wear trousers you can't be a turkey?" They put on the trousers.

One by one they put on the rest of their clothes in the same way.

Afterwards, the Wise Man gave a sign and they put down human food from the table. The Wise Man said to the Prince, "Do you think that if you eat good food you can't be a turkey any more? You can eat this food and still be a turkey." They ate.

Then he said to him, "Do you think a turkey has to sit under the table? You can be a turkey and sit up at the table."

This was how the Wise Man dealt with the Prince, until in the end he cured him completely.

Sipurim Niflaim

THE TAINTED GRAIN

A king once told his prime minister, who was also his good friend: "I see in the stars that everyone who eats from this year's grain harvest is going to go mad. What do you think we should do?"

The prime minister suggested they should put aside a stock of good grain so they would not have to eat from the tainted grain.

"But it will be impossible to set aside enough good grain for everyone," the king objected. "And if we put away a stock for just the two of us, we will be the only ones who will be sane. Everyone else will be mad, and they will look at us and think that we are the mad ones.

"No. We too will have to eat from this year's grain. But we will both put a sign on our heads. I will look at your forehead, and you will look at mine. And when we see the sign, at least we will remember that we are mad."

Sipurim Niflaim

THE CHANDELIER

There was once a boy who left his father to spend time in other lands. After a long time away, he eventually came home to his father. He boasted that while he had been away, he had learned a great art: how to make a chandelier.

He told his father to assemble all the expert chandelier-makers so that he could demonstrate his proficiency in this art. The father did so, gathering all the master chandelier-makers to witness his son's greatness and see what he had accomplished all this time that he had been away in other lands.

The son brought out a chandelier that he had made, but they all thought it very poor. His father approached them all asking them to tell him the truth, and they were forced to admit that it was very poor.

The son was still boasting: "Have you seen the wisdom of my art?" His father told him that not everyone saw it as being so beautiful.

"On the contrary!" replied the son. "This is precisely how I have demonstrated my greatness, because I have shown them all that they lack. This chandelier contains the deficiencies of each and every one of the master craftsmen assembled here. Don't you see? One of them considers this part of my chandelier to be very poor but he finds a different part very beautiful. Another craftsman

finds the exact opposite. The very part that his friend considers poor, he sees as being exceptionally beautiful, while he considers a different part to be poor. So it is with all of them. What is bad in the eyes of one is beautiful in the eyes of another, and vice versa.

"I made this chandelier entirely out of their deficiencies - to show them all that they all lack perfection and that each one has some deficiency. For what is beautiful in the eyes of one is a deficiency in the eyes of his friend. But if I want, I can make a perfect lamp."

If people knew all of a thing's shortcomings and deficiencies, they could understand the nature of that thing even if they had never even seen it.

"Great are God's works!" No one person is like any other. All forms were included in Adam: the very word Adam includes all the different human forms. Similarly, the word "light" includes all the different light-sources that exist. The same applies to all the different things in creation. Even among the highest of the high, not one is like any other.

This world contains wisdom that people could live off without even having to eat or drink.

Sipurey Maasiot

THE HORSE AND THE PUMP

There was once a man who did not believe in what people say about joker-demons from the side of evil who sometimes trick people, as is known to have happened on various occasions.

One night a joker-demon came to him and invited him to step outside. The man went outside and the joker showed him a fine horse that he wanted to sell. The man examined the horse and saw that it was indeed a very fine horse.

"How much do you want?" he asked.

"Four rubles," replied the joker.

The man saw that it was easily worth eight rubles, because it was a particularly good horse. He purchased the horse from the joker for four rubles and was satisfied that he had found a great bargain.

The following day he took out the horse to sell. Some people were interested and offered him a certain sum of money. But he said to himself, "Presumably if they are offering me such a sum, it must be worth double" - and he did not accept.

The man led the horse on further and some people offered him twice the previous offer, just as he had wanted. But he said to himself: "Presumably it is worth at least double this price."

He led the horse further along until its price reached thousands. But the man would not agree to sell it to anyone. No matter how much anyone offered, he said, "Presumably it is worth at least double."

Eventually there was no-one who could afford the horse except the king. The man took it to the king, who was willing to pay an enormous sum for it. Everyone said it was an excellent offer, but the man refused to accept it, saying to himself: "Presumably it is worth more." Thus the king too did not buy the horse.

The man left the king and went to water the horse. There was a pump that people could use to get water for their animals. All of a sudden the horse jumped into the pump and disappeared without a trace - or so it appeared, because the whole episode with the horse was a trick by joker demons.

The man's screams and shouts drew a crowd around him.

"Why are you shouting?" they asked.

He replied that his horse had jumped into the pump. They gave him a sound beating, because he seemed insane. The hole of the pump was very narrow. How could a horse jump into it?

He saw how they were beating him, thinking he was crazy. He wanted to run away, but as he tried to escape, the horse suddenly stuck its head out of the pump. Once again the man started screaming, "Aaaagh! Aaaagh!" - because he was convinced it was his horse.

Again a crowd gathered around him and started beating him a second time because he seemed crazy. Again he wanted to flee, but as soon as he tried to escape, there was the horse sticking its head out of the pump. He started screaming again and the people gathered around again and beat him.

Evil tricks people time and time again with absolutely nothing - complete falsehood that contains no real substance at all. The person is tempted to follow evil, each time thinking he will satisfy his desires and gain more. Time after time he chases after these lies.

Until suddenly they disappear and all his desires vanish, as happens at times. For a time the desires subside. But then, when the person wants to distance himself from them completely, they return and stick out their head, making him pursue them again. This keeps on happening: as soon as they stick out their head, he continues pursuing them. Understand this well.

Sipurey Maasiot

MIRROR IMAGE

A certain king built himself a palace and summoned two men to decorate it for him. The king divided the palace into two parts, putting one man in charge of one half and the second in charge of the other. The king set a time limit within which they had to complete their work.

The two men went off. One of them struggled hard to teach himself the art of painting and plastering as best as he possibly could, and he did so well that he was able to paint his part of the palace with very beautiful and highly unusual murals of animals and birds and the like. Everything was executed with wondrous beauty.

However, the second man paid no attention to the king's command and did nothing whatever about it. As the date for the completion of the work approached, the first man had already finished his side in all its beauty and wonder. The second man then began to look at himself and ask what he had done! He had wasted his time on futility and nothingness without giving a thought to the king's instructions.

He tried to think what to do. He realized that in the few days left before the time expired, it would be impossible even to teach himself to paint let alone actually paint his part of the palace. The closing date was almost upon them. But he had an idea. He plastered his entire portion with a kind of shiny pitch. He plastered this dark pitch over his entire section, and the pitch was like a mirror: it reflected everything, just like a mirror. He then hung a curtain in front of his section to act as a partition between it and that of the other man.

When the appointed time came, the king went to inspect the work the men had done in the allotted time. He examined the first side with its amazingly beautiful paintings executed with exceptional skill. However, the other side was covered with a curtain, behind which everything was dark: nothing whatsoever was visible.

Then the second man stood up and drew aside the curtain. The sun was shining, and because of the pitch, which reflected everything like a mirror, all those remarkable paintings were visible on his side too. All the painted birds and other wondrous forms painted in the first man's side could be seen in the second man's side as well.

Everything the king had seen in the first man's section he also saw in this man's section. Not only that, but even all the precious objects and furnishings which the king had brought into the palace were all visible in the second man's side as well. This found favor in the eyes of the king.

Chayey Moharan #98

THE SAD TZADDIK

It is very bad to be sad all the time, and one should do everything possible to avoid it. Try to inject enthusiasm into your life. Encourage yourself by remembering that every single movement and gesture you make toward serving God is very precious in His eyes, even if you advance no more than a hairsbreadth. In this world, the World of Action, man dwells in a body. This makes every single forward movement extremely difficult, and that is why each one is so precious in God's eyes.

It is told that a certain Tzaddik was overcome with a terrible sense of sadness and heaviness. It is very hard indeed when sadness and heaviness take hold of a Tzaddik, because they attack him ever more strongly.

Eventually this Tzaddik fell into such a mood of deep discouragement and heaviness that he found it literally impossible even to *move*. He wanted to encourage himself and pull himself up, but nothing could make him happy or inspired. No matter what he tried to be happy about, the Evil One found some reason to make him depressed about it. Eventually he could find nothing to be happy about, because whenever he tried to be happy about something, he found in it something to make him depressed.

Finally he started trying to make himself happy by dwelling on the fact that "He did not make me a heathen." This is certainly a reason to feel immeasurable joy, because the vast gulf between the holiness of even the simplest Jew and the impurity of the heathens is beyond all measure.

When a person thinks of God's kindness to him because "He did not make me a heathen," he should feel ever-increasing joy - a joy that is not mixed with any sadness.

When someone tries to make himself happy over a personal achievement of some kind, he can always find a reason to be unhappy. No matter what he may have achieved, he will always find shortcomings and deficiencies which stop him from pulling himself up and feeling perfectly happy.

However, not to have been created a heathen is a gift of God alone. God Himself did it - He had mercy on the person and did not make him a heathen. How could anything be lacking in this joy since it is exclusively the work of God? Regardless of what kind of Jew the person may be, there is certainly an immeasurable difference between himself and the heathens.

The sad Tzaddik started making himself feel happy about this. He started rejoicing and raising himself little by little. With each passing moment he felt ever greater joy. until he reached such a level of joy that he attained the joy Moses experienced when he ascended to receive the Torah.

As the Tzaddik raised himself and rejoiced, he flew thousands and thousands of miles through the upper worlds. Suddenly, he took a look at himself and saw that he was far, far away from the place where he had been at first. He felt great anguish over the thought that he might fall somewhere and the local people would be very surprised that he had suddenly disappeared.

A Tzaddik always wants to walk modestly, and his happiness began to subside, because happiness has its limits. It starts and then it comes to an end. When his happiness began to subside, it subsided little by little, and he descended little by little.

As he descended from the place where he had flown in his ecstasy, he did not return to his original place by the path he took when ascending. Rather, he dropped straight down from where he was. He was therefore very surprised to discover that he had returned to his original place.

Understand this well: When he looked at himself, he saw that he was actually in the very place in which he had been at first. He had not moved from there at all, except perhaps by a slight hairsbreadth - for no human can measure anything so exactly. God alone knows.

The Tzaddik found it amazing that he had flown so far through so many different worlds, yet here below he had not moved from his place at all. This was a lesson to him that even the tiniest

movement one makes to edge forward and advance slightly in this world, even if less than a hairsbreadth, is so precious in God's eyes that even millions of miles and millions of worlds cannot compare with it.

This may be understood when we view this material world as the center point of the planetary spheres. All the more so in relation to the higher spiritual worlds, the entire earth is certainly considered as no more than a tiny point.

From this point you can draw as many lines as you wish in any direction. Where the lines start extending out of the point, they are all very close to one another. But the further they extend from the point, the further apart they become. When the lines are very far away from the point, the lines are also very far apart from one another despite the fact that, close to the point itself, they are very near to each other.

Imagine lines stretching from this lower world only so far as the planetary spheres. Even if a person moves no more than a single hairsbreadth from the place where he was in this world, on the level of the planetary spheres there is an enormous distance - millions of miles - between the place that was above his head at first and the place above his head now. The distance is in proportion to the size of the highest sphere as compared with this world down below. For the highest sphere contains stars without number, and every star is the size of this world or more.

How much more so when one imagines these lines extending even further, beyond the spheres of the planets and stars to the higher spiritual worlds, compared with which all the spheres of the planets and stars are considered nothing.

Even the tiniest movement of less than a hairsbreadth that a person makes here in this world thus causes an immeasurably greater movement in the higher spiritual worlds. Even though in this lowly world the person may feel he has hardly moved at all, because it is impossible to measure the distance he moved and only God knows, nevertheless in the higher spheres he has moved through thousands and thousands of worlds and miles. How much greater, then, is the distance one moves in the higher worlds when he advances a whole mile or more in the service of God in this world.

Sipurey Maasiot

THE FIXER A STORY ABOUT TRUST

There was a certain king who thought to himself: "Who in the world has fewer worries than me? I have everything good: I am the king and the ruler."

He decided to investigate if this was true. He went out at night and stood behind each house to hear what people were talking about. All he heard was each person's worries. One had problems in his shop. At a different house he heard someone talking about a problem that needed government assistance. Each and every one had his own worries.

One night the king saw a very low house. It was like a cellar built half underground with windows at ground level. The roof was broken and sagging. There the king saw a man sitting playing his fiddle. The king had to listen very carefully just to hear the music. The man was very happy. He had a jug of wine and various foods in front of him, and he was very happy. He was full of joy, with no worries whatever.

The king (who was in disguise) went into the house and asked the man how he was doing. The man invited the stranger to sit down, and the king saw the jug of wine and the various foods, and how the man was simply full of joy. He served his guest a drink and drank a toast to the king. Out of affection for this man, the king also drank. Afterwards he lay down to sleep, and he could see that the man was completely happy with no worries at all.

In the morning the king rose and so did the man. He accompanied the king out of the house.

"From where do you get all this?" asked the king.

"I know how to repair things," replied the man. "I can repair anything that is broken. I am not able to make anything from scratch, but if something gets broken I can repair it. Each morning I go out and repair a few things. Then, when I've earned five or six shillings, I purchase all this food and drink for myself.

When the king heard this, he said to himself: "I'm going to spoil it for him."

The king went back to the palace, took off his disguise and issued a decree forbidding anyone who had something in need of repair from giving it to somebody else to repair. Either he would have to repair it himself or buy a new one.

That morning the man went out looking for people with things in need of repair, but they told him the king had decreed that it was forbidden to give anything to someone else to repair. The man was very upset about this, but he had trust in God.

As he was walking, he noticed a householder chopping wood.

"Why do *you* have to chop the wood?" he asked. "Is that fitting for someone of your status?"

"I tried to find someone to chop wood for me," replied the householder, "but I couldn't find anyone, so I was forced to chop it myself."

"Give it to me," said the man, "and I will chop it for you."

He chopped the wood, and the householder paid him a shilling. The man saw that this was a good way to earn money and he went to chop more wood, until he had earned six shillings. He again bought his entire meal - and it really was a *meal* - and he was very happy.

That night the king again peered in through the window of the man's house and saw him sitting there with his food and drink before him in a very happy mood. The king went into the house and ,

as on the previous night, he slept there. In the morning the man arose and accompanied the king out.

"From where do you get this?" asked the king. "To buy this you need money!"

"I used to repair anything that was broken , " replied the man. "But the king passed a decree prohibiting giving anything out to someone else for repair. So I chopped wood until I earned enough money for this."

The king left him and issued a decree that nobody must give their wood to anyone else to chop.

When the man approached someone offering to chop his wood, the person told him that the king had issued a decree not to give anybody wood to chop. The man was very upset about this because he had no money. But he had trust in God. As he was walking, he noticed someone cleaning out a stable.

"Is it fitting for you to have to clean out this stable?" he asked.

"I looked for someone to clean it out but I couldn't find anyone, so I have to do it myself."

"Let me," said the man, "I will clean it!"

He set to work and cleaned out the whole stable, and the owner gave him two shillings. He went and cleaned more stables until he had earned six shillings. Again he bought a whole feast and went home. The meal was a *meal* , and he was very happy.

Again the king came to look, and once again saw that everything was as it had been before. The king went inside and stayed the night. In the morning the man accompanied the king out. The king asked him how he had managed, and he explained.

The king issued a decree making it forbidden to employ anyone else to clean out one's stable. That morning the man went in search of stables to clean, but people told him that the king had passed a decree forbidding this.

The man went to the king's recruiting officer to sign up as a soldier in the army. Some soldiers are forcibly conscripted for army service, but others are hired soldiers who serve for pay.

The man went to the recruiting officer to sign up for pay. However, he made a condition with the recruiting officer that he was not signing up permanently but only for a while, and that he was to receive his pay each morning for that day's work. The officer immediately dressed him in army uniform, hung a sword at his side and sent him where he was needed.

Towards evening, after he had completed all his duties, he threw off his uniform and went to buy his whole meal - and the meal was a *meal!* He went home and he was very happy. Again the king went to look and saw that everything was ready in front of him and that he was very happy. The

king went into the man's house and lay down. In the morning he asked him how he had managed, and the man told him what he had done.

The king summoned the recruiting officer. He instructed him not to dare pay wages to anyone that day. That morning, when the man went to the recruiting officer to collect his day's pay, the officer refused to give it to him.

"But I made it a condition with you to pay me every day," the man protested.

"The king has decreed not to pay anyone today," replied the recruiting officer. All the man's pleas were of no avail .

"I will be happy to pay you tomorrow for two days," said the officer, "but today it is impossible to pay."

What did the man do? He broke off the blade of his sword from its handle, replacing it with a piece of wood. When the sword was in its sheath this was not in the least visible from the outside. The man pawned the blade of the sword. With the money he received he bought the whole meal - and the meal was a *meal!*

The king arrived and saw that the man was completely happy, as before. Again the king entered his house and lay down. He asked him how he had managed, and the man told him the whole story - how he had been forced to break the blade of the sword from the handle, and how he had pawned it in order to buy what he needed for the meal.

"And afterwards, when I receive the pay for that day, I will redeem the blade and repair the sword. Nobody will be able to see a thing because I can repair anything that is broken, so there will be no loss to the king.

The king went to his palace and called the recruiting officer. He told him that a certain person had been condemned to death. He instructed the officer to call the particular soldier he had hired and to order him - and only him - to cut off the condemned man's head.

The officer summoned the man, who came before the king (now dressed in his royal clothes). The king gave instructions for all his ministers to assemble in order to witness this comic spectacle exposing a man who had stuck a piece of wood in his sword in place of the blade. The man came before the king and fell at his feet.

"My lord the king, why have I been summoned?" he asked.

"In order to cut off this condemned criminal's head," replied the king.

The man pleaded that he had never in his life shed blood. He begged the king to call someone else for this.

The king answered that he and nobody else was obliged to kill the man.

"Is the verdict so clear-cut?" asked the man. "Perhaps it is not so clear that he deserves to die. I have never shed blood in my life. How could I shed blood when it is not clear that the prisoner deserves to die?"

The king replied that there was no shadow of a doubt that the prisoner deserved to die. "And you and nobody else *must* execute him."

The man saw that he could not prevail over the king, so he turned to God and said:

"Eternal God: Never in my life have I shed blood. If this man is not guilty, let the blade of my sword turn into wood!"

He took hold of the sword and drew it from the sheath, and everybody saw that it was made of wood. Everybody laughed heartily, and the king saw that he was an excellent man and sent him off in peace.

Chayey Moharan (manuscript)

STORIES:

STORIES

I tried to bring you back to God through my talks and Torah teachings, but they haven't helped. So now I must tell you stories!

Sipurey Maasiot, Introduction

* * *

Wake up!!!

The tales and stories told by the Tzaddikim have the power to rouse those who are asleep so that their days will not be wasted. It is a great privilege to find a Tzaddik who has the power to rouse you from your sleep. Otherwise you could sleep away all your days, God forbid.

Likutey Moharan I, 60

* * *

Why the Tzaddik tells stories

Why does the Tzaddik tell stories? It's like when a doctor becomes sick and is forced to put himself in the hands of an outstanding expert. The sick doctor wants to be given the kinds of simple treatments he understands, but the expert knows of unique cures. Similarly a person may come to

the outstanding sage and Tzaddik of the generation, who is doctor of the ailments of the soul. The person wants the Tzaddik to give him medicines - spiritual pathways of the kind he understands. However the Tzaddik has far more exalted medicines to administer.

Sometimes it is necessary to give the patient a certain medicine, but if the patient takes it as it is he will surely die. The medicine in question must therefore be mixed in with other ingredients. Similarly, there are people to whom it is impossible to reveal the inner face of the Torah teachings which they need for their healing. For healing comes from the Torah: "It will be health to your navel" (Proverbs 3:8) . However, the Torah has two powers: it can either be an elixir of life or a fatal poison. For "If a person is deserving, it becomes an elixir of life; if not, it becomes a fatal poison" (*Yoma* 72b) .

For this reason, if the person is given the teaching the way it is, he will certainly die, because for him, as one who is as yet unworthy, it would be a fatal poison. It is therefore necessary to clothe the inner face of the teaching within other Torah teachings. Sometimes even this is too much for the person to bear. The Tzaddik must then clothe his Torah teachings in apparently mundane stories or conversations in order for the person to be able to receive the medicine hidden beneath the surface. For the Torah teaching itself is now clothed within stories and conversations, because it was impossible to administer it the way it really is.

Likutey Moharan I, 164

THE LOST PRINCESS

I was on a journey, and I told a story that made everyone who heard it want to draw closer to God. And this is the story:

There was once a king who had six sons and one daughter. This daughter was especially dear to him. He loved her greatly and took the utmost delight in her.

One day when he was with her, he became angry with her. Suddenly the words slipped out of his mouth: "Let the Evil One take you away!"

That night she went to her room, but in the morning no-one knew where she was. Her father was very distressed and he went searching for her everywhere.

Seeing how deeply troubled the king was, the Prime Minister rose and asked to be given an attendant, a horse and money for expenses, and he went off in search of her. He searched and searched for a very long time, until eventually he found her. This story is about how he searched for her until he found her.

For a long, long time he went from one place to another - through wildernesses, fields and forests, searching and searching.

While passing through a wilderness, he saw a path leading off to the side. He thought to himself: "I have been traveling in the wilderness for such a long time and I cannot find her. Let me try this path. Perhaps I will reach some habitation."

He kept going for a long time. Finally, he saw a castle with many soldiers standing around it. The castle was very beautiful, and the troops were standing around it in fine order. He was afraid that the soldiers would not let him enter. But he thought to himself, "I'll go and try." He left his horse and went to the castle.

They let him in without trying to stop him and allowed him to go from room to room. He came to a great hall and looked around. The king was sitting there with his crown. Before him were many soldiers and many singers with instruments. It was very, very beautiful there. Neither the king nor anybody else asked him anything.

He saw good food and delicacies. He ate and then went to lie down in a corner to see what would happen. He saw the king give an order to bring the queen. They went to bring her, and there was a great commotion and great happiness. The musicians played and sang as they brought the queen. They placed a chair for her and seated her by the king. It was the princess! The Prime Minister saw her and recognized her.

Afterwards the queen glanced and noticed someone lying in the corner. She recognized him. She rose from her throne and went over to him and touched him.

"Do you recognize me?" she asked.

"Yes," he replied, "I recognize you. You are the king's daughter, who was lost. How did you get here?"

"Because my father the king let that word out of his mouth," she replied. " This is the place of evil."

He told her that her father was in terrible pain and had been searching for her for many years.

"How can I take you out?" he asked.

"It will be impossible for you to take me out," she replied, "unless you choose yourself a place and stay there for a whole year. Throughout the entire year you must *yearn* to take me out. Whenever you have time, you must only yearn, long and wait to free me. And you must also fast. On the very last day of the year you must fast and you must not sleep for the entire twenty-four hours."

He did as she said. At the end of the year, on the very last day, he fasted and did not sleep. He rose to go there. On the way he saw a tree with exceptionally beautiful apples. The sight was very tempting, and he stopped to eat. As soon as he ate the apple, he fell into a deep sleep.

He slept for a very long time indeed. His attendant tried to rouse him, but he did not wake up. Eventually he awoke, and asked his attendant:

"Where in the world am I?"

The attendant told the Prime Minister what had happened. "You have been asleep for a very long time - for many years. I have been living off the fruits."

The Prime Minister was very pained. He went and found the king's daughter, but she complained to him bitterly:

"If you had come on that day you could have taken me out from here. And because of one day, you lost! It is true that not to eat is very hard indeed, especially on the last day, because then the evil urge attacks very strongly."

The princess told him that she would now make it easier for him. He would not be required not to eat, because that is very hard to endure.

"Go back and choose yourself a place and stay there for another year. On the last day you may eat. Only you must not sleep, and you must not drink wine so that you do not sleep, because the main thing is not to sleep!"

He did as she said. On the last day he was on his way to her when he saw a flowing spring. It was red in color and had the smell of wine.

"Have you seen this spring?" he asked the attendant. "It should be water but it's red in color and smells of wine!"

He tasted from the spring and fell immediately into a deep slumber. He slept for many years - seventy years! Many troops passed by followed by their baggage trains and equipment. The attendant hid himself from the soldiers. Afterwards came carriages and a chariot, and there sat the king's daughter.

She stopped next to him and stepped down. She sat at his side and recognized him. She tried very hard to arouse him, but he did not stir. She started lamenting over him.

"He made such great efforts and tried so hard for so many years to free me, and because of that one day when he could have freed me, he lost his chance."

She cried and cried.

"It's a terrible pity for him and for me. I have been here for such a long time and I can't get out."

Afterwards she took the scarf from off her head and wrote on it with her tears. She laid it by his side, rose, sat in her chariot and left.

Afterwards he woke up. He asked the attendant: "Where in the world am I?" The attendant told him all that had happened - how many soldiers had passed by, and then a chariot. A woman had wept over him, crying out what a pity it was, both for him and for her.

Meanwhile he noticed the scarf lying at his side.

"Where is this from?" he asked.

The attendant told him that she had written on it with her tears. He picked it up and raised it towards the sun. He began to see letters. Written there he could read all her complaints and laments.

".And now I am no longer in that castle. Instead you must search for a mountain of gold and a castle of pearls - there you will find me!"

The Prime Minister left the attendant and went off alone to search for her. He traveled for many years searching for her. He thought to himself:

"Certainly no mountain of gold with a castle of pearls exists in any inhabited area!" (He was familiar with geography.) "Therefore I will go to search in wildernesses!"

He went searching for her in wildernesses for many years.

Then he saw a huge man. He was so immense that he could not be considered a human being. He was carrying an enormous tree, the like of which would never be found in any inhabited area.

"Who are you?" asked the giant.

"I'm a man," he replied.

The giant was very surprised. "I have been in the wilderness for such a long time and I have never ever seen a man here!"

The Prime Minister told him the whole story and that he was searching for a mountain of gold with a castle of pearls.

"Such a thing definitely does not exist," said the giant. He discouraged the Prime Minister and told him he had been tricked with complete nonsense.

The Prime Minister began to cry and cry. "It definitely must exist *somewhere* !"

However, the giant discouraged him, saying, "You have certainly been told complete nonsense." But the Prime Minister insisted that it definitely did exist.

The strange giant said to the Prime Minister: "In my opinion this is nonsense. But since you are so stubborn. I am in charge of all the animals. For your sake, I will call all the animals, since they roam around the whole world. Perhaps one of them know s of this mountain and castle!"

He called them all, from the smallest to the largest - all kinds of animals - and he asked them. But they all answered that they had not seen it.

"You see!" he told the Prime Minister, "they told you complete nonsense. Listen to me and go back, because you will definitely not find it. There is no such thing in the world." But the Prime Minister persisted, saying, "It certainly *must* exist!"

The giant said to the Prime Minister: " Deeper in the wilderness is my brother. He is in charge of all the birds. Perhaps they know since they fly high in the air. Perhaps they have seen that mountain and castle. Go to him and tell him that I sent you."

The Prime Minister searched for him for many years . Again he found an immense giant carrying an enormous tree. He asked him the same questions and the Prime Minister told him the whole story and that his brother had sent him to him. The second giant also discouraged him. "Such a thing definitely does not exist". But the Prime Minister insisted.

The second giant said to the Prime Minister: "I am appointed over all the birds. I will call them - perhaps they know." He called all the birds and asked all of them from the smallest to the largest. They answered that they knew nothing of such a mountain and such a castle.

The giant said to the Prime Minister, "Can't you see? It quite definitely does not exist anywhere in the world! Listen to me and go back, for it certainly does not exist." But the Prime Minister pressed him and insisted that it definitely must exist somewhere in the world.

The second giant said to the Prime Minister: " Deeper in the wilderness is my brother, who is in charge of all the winds. They blow over the entire world - perhaps they know."

The Prime Minister searched for many years, and found a man who was also immense and also carrying an enormous tree. He asked him the same questions and the Prime Minister told him the whole story. He too discouraged him, but the Prime Minister persisted.

The third giant said to the Prime Minister that for his sake he would call all the winds to come and ask them. He summoned them, and all the winds came. He asked all of them, but none of them knew of any such mountain or castle.

"Can't you see?" said the giant to the Prime Minister. "They told you complete nonsense!" The Prime Minister began crying and crying. "I know that it definitely exists," he repeated.

In the meantime, he saw that another wind had arrived. The captain of the winds was very angry with this wind.

"Why have you come so late? Didn't I decree that all the winds must come? Why did you not come with them?"

But the wind replied: "I was delayed because I had to carry a princess to a mountain of gold and a castle of pearls."

The Prime Minister was overjoyed.

The captain asked the wind, "What is precious there? What is considered valuable and important?"

"There," he replied, "everything is very precious."

The captain of the winds said to the Prime Minister: "You have been searching for her for such a long time and you've made so many efforts. In case you encounter any obstacle because of money, I am giving you a purse that you just put your hand into and take out money."

He commanded the wind to take him there. The storm wind came and carried him there and brought him to the gate. There were soldiers standing there who would not let him enter the city, but he put his hand into the vessel and took out money and bribed them and went into the city.

It was a very beautiful city. He went to one of the wealthy citizens and paid for board knowing that he would have to stay there, as it would require great wisdom and intelligence to take her out.

How he freed her is not told, but in the end he took her out.

Sipurey Maasiot

THE HUMBLE KING

There was a certain king who had a wise man. The king said to the wise man:

"There is one king who signs himself as being 'mighty, great and a man of truth and humility'. As for his being mighty, I know he is mighty because his kingdom is surrounded by the sea and in the sea stands a fleet of warships with cannons, which will not allow anyone to draw near. Inland from the sea is a deep moat that goes around the whole kingdom. To get in, there is only one tiny pathway wide enough for only one man, and there too stand cannons. If someone comes to make war, they fire with the cannons. It is impossible to get near.

"However, as for his signing himself 'a man of truth and humility', I don't know. I therefore want you to bring me a portrait of that king."

This was because this king had portraits of all the kings, but there was no portrait of that king in any king's collection. The reason was that he was hidden from everybody. He sat behind a veil, remote from the people of his country.

The wise man went to the country. He realized that he needed to find out the nature of the country. How do you find out the nature of a country? You find it out through the people's humor. When you want to know something, you should find out how people laugh and joke about it.

There are different kinds of jokes. Sometimes a person may really want to hurt another with words, but when the other takes exception to his words, he says, "I only meant it as a joke". "Like one who exerts himself to cast firebrands and arrows. and then says, I am only joking" (Proverbs 26:18-19) . There are other times when a person may say something that is truly intended as a

lighthearted joke, yet his friend is hurt by his words. Thus there are various different kinds of jokes and humor.

And among all the different kingdoms there is one kingdom that includes all kingdoms. In that kingdom is one city that includes all the cities of the entire kingdom that includes all kingdoms. In that city is one house which includes all the houses of the whole city that includes all the cities of the kingdom that includes all kingdoms. And there is one man who includes everything in that entire house. And there is also someone who produces all the mockery and joking of the kingdom.

The wise man took with him a large sum of money and went there and saw how they were mocking and joking in various ways. From the humor, he understood that the entire kingdom was full of lies from beginning to end. He saw the way they would joke about how people defrauded and deceived others in business, and how the injured party would sue in the lower courts where everything was lies and bribery. He would then go to a higher court, where everything was also lies. They used to put on comedies about all these kinds of things.

Through their humor the sage understood that the entire kingdom was filled with lies and deceptions and that there was no truth anywhere. He did some business in the kingdom, allowing himself to be defrauded in the transaction. He took the case to court, but the court was all lies and bribes. One day he would give them a bribe but the next day they would not recognize him. He went to a higher court, and there too it was all lies. Eventually he came before the Supreme Court, but they too were full of lies and bribery. Finally he came to the king himself.

When he came to the king, he said, "Who are you king over? The whole kingdom is full of lies from beginning to end and there's no truth in it."

He began enumerating all the lies in the kingdom. When the king heard his words, he turned his ear to the veil to hear what he was saying. The king was surprised that there was anyone who knew about all the lies in the kingdom.

The ministers of state who heard what he was saying were very angry with him. Yet he went on telling about all the lies in the kingdom.

"It would be proper to say," declared the wise man, "that the king too is like them - that he loves falsehood just as his kingdom does. But from this I see that you are a man of truth: you are far from them because you cannot stand the falsehood of the country."

The wise man began to praise the king greatly. But the king was very humble, and "in the place of His greatness, there is His humility" (*Megilah* 31a). Such is the way of the humble person. The more he is praised and magnified, the smaller and humbler he becomes. Because of the sage's great praise, extolling and magnifying him, the king reached the utmost humility and smallness until he became literally nothing. He could not contain himself, and he threw aside the veil to see who this wise man was that knew and understood all this.

His face was revealed, and the sage saw it and brought his portrait back to the king.

THE FLY AND THE SPIDER

This is a story about a certain king who endured many hard wars. He was victorious and took many captives. Now do you think that if I tell you everything you will understand?

The king made a great banquet and ball every year on the anniversary of his victory. All the ministers of state and all the nobles attended the ball, in accordance with the custom of kings. There were comic performances in which fun was made of all the different peoples, including the Ishmaelites. They would mimic the styles and customs of each of the different nations, and presumably they also made fun of the Jews.

The king gave an order to bring him the book inscribed with the customs and conduct of all the different nations. Wherever he opened the book, he read about the customs and culture of each nation exactly as the comedians were mimicking them. Presumably the producer of the comedy had also looked in this book.

As the king sat reading the book, he noticed a spider creeping over the edge of the pages. On the other side there was a fly. And where does a spider go? To the fly! But as the spider crawled towards the fly, a breeze came and lifted up the page from the book, and the spider couldn't reach the fly.

The spider retreated, slyly pretending it was going away and no longer wanted to catch the fly, and the page went down and rested in its place. The spider again started advancing towards the fly. Again the page arose and would not allow it. The spider retreated again. This happened several times.

Afterwards the spider again started advancing towards the fly. It crept forward until it succeeded in getting one leg up onto the page. But the page rose again, and now the spider was already partially on it. The page then settled back in its place, leaving the spider beneath it trapped, between two pages. The spider tried to move but was pinned down under the page, until eventually nothing was left of it. As for the fly, I won't tell you what happened to it.

The king watched all this in amazement. He realized that this was no trivial matter: he was being shown something. All the noblemen saw the king looking at this in amazement. The king began wondering what it might mean and dozed off over the book.

He dreamt that he held a diamond in his hand. As he looked at it, streams of people were coming out of it. He cast the diamond from his hand. Kings customarily have their portrait hanging above them with a crown over the portrait. The men streaming from the diamond were taking the portrait and cutting off its head. They then took the crown and threw it into the mud.

The king saw all this in his dream. The men were running towards him to kill him. But a page from the book on which he was lying arose to protect him, and they were unable to harm him and went

away. The page then went back to its place. Again they ran towards him to kill him, but the page again lifted itself up. This happened several times.

The king greatly longed to see which page was protecting him and which people's customs were inscribed on it. But he was afraid to look. He started screaming, "Woe! Woe!" All the noblemen sitting there heard and wanted to wake him up. However, it is not proper to shake the king. Instead they started banging all around him in order to awaken him, but he did not hear.

Meanwhile a tall mountain approached him and asked: "Why are you crying so much? I have been asleep for such a long time and nothing has woken me up - *nothing!* And now you have woken me up!"

"How could I not scream?" replied the king. "They are coming to kill me, but this page is protecting me."

"If this page is protecting you," said the mountain, "you have nothing to fear. Many enemies arise against me also, but this page protects me. Come and I will show you."

The mountain showed the king tens of thousands of enemies standing all around it, feasting and rejoicing. Instruments were playing and people dancing. All their happiness and joy was due to some or other group among them having worked out a plan to reach the mountain. They would make a huge celebration and hold a banquet with entertainers. So it was with each and every group among them.

"But this same page with these same customs that protect you is also protecting me!"

On the summit of the mountain was a tablet inscribed with the customs of the nation that were inscribed on the page protecting him, but because the mountain was so high, it was impossible to read the writing.

Down below, however, was a tablet on which it was written, "Whoever has all his teeth can ascend the mountain." But God had made a certain herb grow in the place leading up to the mountain which made the teeth of anyone who came there fall out. It made no difference whether he was on foot or riding, or whether he traveled in a carriage drawn by animals: all their teeth would fall out. Lying there were mountainous heaps of teeth like mountains and mountains.

Afterwards the same men that had come out of the diamond returned and replaced the portrait as it had been at first. They took the crown, washed it and hung everything in its right place.

The king awoke and immediately looked at the page that was protecting him to see which nation's customs were inscribed on it. Written there he saw the customs of Israel. He began looking at the page carefully and he understood the real truth. He reflected, and decided that he himself must certainly become an Israelite. But what could be done to bring everyone to repent and bring them to the truth?

The king decided to go traveling in search of a wise man who could explain the real meaning of the dream. He took two men with him and traveled the world not like a king but as an ordinary person. He traveled from city to city and from country to country, asking how he could find a wise man capable of explaining the true meaning of the dream.

He was told of such a sage in a certain place. He traveled there, came to the wise man and told him the truth - that he was a king who had won wars - and he related the whole episode at the ball. He asked the wise man to explain his dream.

The wise man answered: "I myself am unable to provide the explanation. However, there is a time on a certain day in a certain month when I gather all the incense spices and blend them together. The person breathes in the smoke of this incense and thinks internally what he wants to see and know. Then he will know everything."

Having spent so much time on his quest, the king decided to wait until the day and month in question. The wise man did as he said and made him inhale the smoke of the incense.

He began to see even what had happened to him before birth, when he was a soul in the higher world. He saw how his soul was borne through all the worlds, with the bearers proclaiming, "Let anyone who has any accusations against this soul come." But there was nobody to make any accusations against it.

Meanwhile someone came running and crying.

"Master of the World! Hear my prayer! If this one comes into the world, what will there be left for me to do? Why did you create me?"

This was the Angel of Death. But the answer came: "This soul certainly must go down into the world. As for you, work out some plan!" And he left.

The soul was conducted further through the worlds until it was brought before the Heavenly Court of Law to administer the oath in order that the soul might come down into the world.

That man had still not arrived. They sent a messenger for him, and he came bringing an old man bent over like a very old man that he had already known for a long time. He laughed and said, "I already have a plan. The soul may go down into the world."

They allowed the soul to go down into the world. The king saw all that had happened to him from beginning to end - how he had become king, the wars he fought, the many captives he had taken, including a beautiful woman who had every kind of charm in the world, though it was not her own but came from the diamond hanging on her...

No-one can ascend that mountain except for the wise and the wealthy.

I will not tell you any more, but there is very much more in this.

Psalm 3: "A song of David when he fled. O God! How many are my enemies, many arise against me. And You, O God, are a shield for me, my Glory, Who raises my head. I call out with my voice to God, and He answers me from His holy mountain" (this is the mountain in the story). "I lay down and slept, and I awoke" (as told of the king in the story). "I shall not fear the tens of thousands of people. For You have smitten all my enemies on the jaw, You have broken the teeth of the wicked" (because all their teeth fell out when they wanted to go up to the mountain). "Upon Your people is Your blessing. Selah!"

Sippurey Maasiot

THE RABBI'S ONLY SON

There was once a rabbi who had no children. Eventually he had an only son, and he raised and married him off. The son would sit in a room upstairs studying Torah, as was the way with those who were better off.

He would constantly study and pray. But he felt a certain lack within himself, though he didn't know what it was. He felt no real taste in his studies and prayers. He told this to two of his young friends, who advised him to visit a particular Tzaddik.

Now this son had performed a certain mitzvah that brought him to the level of the Small Light.

The son told his father that he felt no taste in his prayers and studies and that something was missing, though he didn't know what it was. Because of this, he wanted to visit that Tzaddik.

"What reason could you have to travel to *him*?" asked his father. "Surely you are more learned than he is and you come from a better family. It is not proper for you to go to him. Don't follow this path."

He thus prevented him from going, and the son returned to his studies. Yet he still felt the same lack. Again he took counsel with the same friends, who advised him, as before, to go to the Tzaddik. Again he went to his father, but the father dissuaded him and prevented him from going. The same thing happened several times.

The son felt he was lacking something, and he greatly yearned to satisfy his need, even though he did not know what it was. He came again to his father and pressed him to the point that the father had no option but to travel with him since he did not want to let his only son go alone.

The father said to him: "You see! I will go with you. I will prove to you that there is nothing of any substance in him." They prepared the carriage and set off on their journey.

"I am going to make a test," said the father. "If everything goes smoothly, it means this journey has been ordained by Heaven. But if not, it means it is not ordained by Heaven and we shall go back."

They journeyed until they came to a small bridge. One of the horses fell, the carriage overturned and they almost drowned.

"You see!" said the father to his son. "Things are not going smoothly, and this journey is not ordained by Heaven."

They turned back. The son returned to his studies, but again he felt that something was missing without even knowing what it was. He went back to his father and pressed him, and he was forced to go with him a second time. As they set off, the father once again set a test like the first time: "If everything goes smoothly."

During the journey, it happened that two of the axles of the wheels of the carriage broke.

"You see!" said the father to his son, "Things are not going right. We are not supposed to make this journey. Is it natural for *both* axles to break? How many times have we traveled in this carriage and nothing like this has ever happened."

They turned back. The son went back to his studies and once again felt that something was missing. His friends advised him to travel to the Tzaddik, and he went back to his father and pressed him until he was forced to travel with him again.

The son told him that this time they should not set any tests unless there was a very clear, visible sign, as it was quite natural for a horse to fall sometimes or for the axles to break.

They journeyed until they came to an inn for the night. A merchant got into conversation with them, as merchants do. They did not reveal their destination, because the rabbi felt ashamed to say he was traveling to that Tzaddik.

They discussed a variety of mundane topics, until the conversation came around to the subject of Tzaddikim and where they are to be found. The merchant spoke about a certain Tzaddik in one place and others in various other places, until they started to talk about the Tzaddik to whom they were traveling.

"Him?" said the merchant. "He's a lightweight. I am now on my way back from him. I was there when he committed a sin!"

The rabbi said to his son: "Do you see what this merchant is saying quite spontaneously without our even asking? Is he not on his way from there!?"

They turned back and went home.

The son died. Afterwards he came to his father, the rabbi, in a dream. The father saw him standing there in great anger.

"Why are you so angry?" asked the father.

The son answered that he should journey to the same Tzaddik that he had wanted to visit. "He will tell you why I am angry!"

The father awoke and said it was pure chance. Afterwards he had the same dream again but he said that this too was a meaningless dream. Until it happened a third time and he realized that this was no empty matter, and he journeyed there.

On his way he met the same merchant that he had met previously when traveling with his son. He recognized him.

"Aren't you the one I saw in that inn?" he asked.

"You certainly did see me," replied the merchant. He opened his mouth wide and said to him, "If you wish, I will swallow you up!"

"What are you talking about?" asked the rabbi.

"Do you remember when you journeyed with your son?" replied the merchant. "First a horse fell on the bridge and you went back. Afterwards the axles broke. After that you encountered me, and I told you he is a lightweight.

"Now that I have eliminated your son, you are free to travel. For he was on the level of the Small Light, while that Tzaddik is the Great Light. If they had met together, the Mashiach would have come. Now that I have got rid of him, you may travel."

As he was speaking he disappeared, and the rabbi had nobody to talk to. The rabbi journeyed to the Tzaddik crying, "Woe! Woe! Woe for what is lost and cannot be found!"

May God quickly bring back our lost ones! Amen!

This merchant was the Angel of Death himself. He took on the guise of a merchant and deceived them. Afterwards, when he encountered the rabbi a second time, he himself rebuked him for listening to his advice. For that, as we know, is his way. May God protect us!

Sipurey Maasiot

THE SOPHISTICATE AND THE SIMPLETON

Once there were two householders living in the same city. They were very wealthy and had large houses. Each had a son, and the two boys learned in the same school. One was very intelligent, while the other was simple. Not that he was foolish, but he had a straightforward, humble way of thinking.

These two boys loved each other greatly, despite the fact that one was sophisticated while the other was simple with a very humble mind.

As time passed, the two householders went into decline. They sank lower and lower until they lost everything and became poor. All they had left were their houses. The boys were growing, and their

two fathers said to them: "We do not have the means to support you. Go and do whatever you choose."

The Simpleton went and learned to be a shoe-maker. However the Sophisticate, who was highly intelligent, did not want to engage in such a simple craft. He decided to go out into the world and look around before deciding what to do.

He was wandering in the main street when he saw a large carriage drawn by four horses rushing through.

"Where are you from?" he cried to the merchants.

"From Warsaw ," they replied.

"Where are you going?"

"To Warsaw !"

He asked them if they needed an attendant. They saw that he was intelligent and eager, and agreed to take him with them. He traveled with them and served them very well on the journey.

On arrival in Warsaw he thought to himself, since he was very intelligent: "Now that I'm already here in Warsaw , why should I remain tied to those merchants? Maybe there is somewhere better. Let me go and see what I can find."

He went to the market and made enquiries about the men who had brought him and whether there might be some better opportunities. He was told that the merchants were decent and that it would be good to stay with them, but it would be hard, because their business took them to very distant places.

He went further and noticed the clothing-shop assistants going about with their stylish mannerisms, gait and clothing, their elegant hats and long pointed shoes. Being sharp and intelligent, he found this very appealing, particularly since one could stay in the same place without having to travel. He went to the men who had brought him and thanked them politely, telling them that he preferred not to remain with them. As for their having brought him, he had paid them with his service on the journey.

He took a position with a shopkeeper. New shop assistants had to accept low wages at first and do heavy work. Only later did they reach higher levels. The shopkeeper made him work very hard. He had to carry merchandise to wealthy customers the way shop assistants had to carry it, bending their hands under their elbows in order to hang the garment over their arm and shoulder. He found this work very onerous. Sometimes he had to carry heavy loads up steep flights of stairs, and the work was very hard for him.

With his intelligent, philosopher's mind, he thought to himself: "What do I need this work for? The ultimate goal is to get married and make a living. But I don't need to think about that yet. There

will be time enough for that in years to come. The best thing for me now will be to travel the earth, visit different countries and feast my eyes on the world."

He went to the market and saw merchants traveling in a big wagon.

"Where are you going?" he asked.

"To Lagorna!" they replied.

"Will you take me there?"

"Yes!"

They took him with them, and from there he went to Italy and then on to Spain . Several years passed and he became even cleverer, having been in many countries. He thought to himself: "Now I should focus on the main goal."

With his philosophical mind he began to think what to do. He decided it would be a good thing to learn to work with gold. This was a prestigious and attractive craft requiring skill and wisdom, and it was also one that could bring wealth. Being highly intelligent and a philosopher, he did not need many years to learn the craft. In no more than a quarter of a year he acquired the necessary skill and became an outstanding craftsman. He was even more expert than the craftsman who taught him.

Afterwards he thought to himself: "Even though I have such a skill in hand, it is still not enough for me. Today this craft is prestigious, but perhaps at some other time another craft will be prestigious." He took a position with a gem-cutter, and because of his deep understanding he learned this craft too in very little time - a quarter of a year.

Then he began philosophizing: "Even though I have two crafts in my hands, who knows? Perhaps neither of them will be prestigious. It would be good for me to learn a skill that will always be important. Using his intelligence and philosophy to examine the matter, he decided to study medicine since this is always in demand and prestigious. To learn medicine, one first had to learn Latin and how to write it , as well as science and philosophy. With his quick mind he learned this too in very little time - a quarter of a year - and he became a great doctor and philosopher and an expert in all fields of knowledge.

Afterwards the whole world came to be as nothing in his eyes, for because of his great wisdom as a master craftsman, sage and doctor, everyone else in the world seemed to him like nothing. He decided to pursue the main goal - to get married - but he said to himself:

"If I marry a woman here, who will know what has become of me? Let me go back home so that they will see what has become of me. I was a small boy, and now I have achieved such greatness!"

He journeyed home, but suffered greatly on the way. Because of his great wisdom, he had nobody to talk to. He could not find satisfactory accommodation, and he suffered very greatly.

Let us now set aside the story of the Sophisticate for a while and tell the story of the Simpleton.

The Simpleton learned how to make shoes, but because he was simple, it took him a long time before he grasped it. Indeed, he was not completely proficient in his craft, but he married and made a living from his work. Being simple, however, and not too proficient in his work, his living was very scanty. He did not even have time to eat since, not being fully proficient, he had to work constantly. As he worked busily, driving the awl through the leather, inserting the thick thread and drawing it through in the way shoemakers do, he would take a bite of bread.

He was always happy: he was simply full of joy all the time. He possessed every kind of food, drink and clothing. He would say to his wife: "My wife! Give me to eat!" She would give him a piece of bread and he would eat it. Afterwards he would say: "Give me beans and gravy." She would cut him another slice of bread and he would eat it, praising the food. "This gravy is so beautiful! It is so good!"

He would ask her to give him meat and other good foods. For every kind of food that he requested, she would give him a piece of bread. He would take the most exquisite delight in it, highly praising the food - "So tasty! So good!" - as if he was actually eating that very food. And the truth is that when he ate the bread, he actually did taste each kind of food that he wanted, all because of his great simplicity and joy.

Likewise he would say to his wife: "Give me liquor!" She would give him water, and he would praise it highly. "What beautiful liquor this is! Give me honey mead!" She would give him water, and he would praise the mead. "Give me wine!" She would give him water, and he would enjoy it and praise it as if he was actually drinking the drink he had requested.

As for their clothes, he and his wife possessed one single thick sheepskin coat which they had to share. When he needed to wear an overcoat to go to the market, he would say, "My wife, give me the overcoat!" and she would give it to him. When he needed to wear a fine fur coat to make a social visit, he would say, "My wife, give me the fur coat!" She would give him the sheepskin and he would take great delight in it, praising it lavishly: "What a beautiful fur coat this is!"

When he needed a caftan to go to the synagogue, he would say to his wife, "Give me the caftan!" She would give him the sheepskin and he would praise it saying, "What a fine, beautiful caftan this is!" Similarly, when he needed to wear a silk coat, she would give him the sheepskin. He would praise it and take the utmost delight in it: "What a lovely, beautiful silk coat!" He was simply filled with joy and delight at all times.

When he finished making a shoe, it would all too often turn out triangular as he was not fully proficient in his craft. But he would take the shoe in his hand and praise it greatly. He would take enormous delight in it, saying: "My wife, how beautiful and wonderful this shoe is. How sweet this shoe is. This shoe is pure honey and sugar!"

"If so," she would ask, "why do the other shoemakers take three gold coins for a pair of shoes while you only receive one and a half?"

"What do I care?" he would answer. "That is their work and this is my work! Besides, why do we need to speak about others? Let us work out how much clear profit I make on this shoe. The leather costs such and such; the glue, the thread, the filling cost such and such. In the end I make a profit of ten groschen! Why should I mind when I make such a profit." He was simply filled with joy and delight at all times.

Most people considered him ridiculous and found him the perfect target for their scorn and derision, because he seemed like a madman. People would approach him and start a conversation for the sole purpose of ridiculing him. The Simpleton would say, "As long as you don't mock!" If they spoke without mocking, he would listen to what they had to say and engage in conversation.

He never tried to probe people's intentions too deeply, for this itself is a form of mockery. He was a simple person. If he saw that their intention was to mock, he would say, "So what if you are cleverer than me? Surely you will then be nothing but a fool. Am I so important that it is a great thing to be cleverer than me? If you are cleverer than me, you are a fool!"

All these were the ways of the Simpleton. Now let us return to the main story.

One day there was a huge commotion, for the Sophisticate was on his way home with great pomp and deep wisdom. The Simpleton also ran to meet him with tremendous joy. "Quick!" he called to his wife. "Give me the silk coat - I must go to meet my dear friend!" She gave him the sheepskin and he ran to meet him.

The Sophisticate was traveling in a horse-drawn carriage in magnificent style, and the Simpleton came to meet him full of joy, lovingly asking him how he was.

"My dear brother! How *are* you? Praise be to God for bringing you and granting me the privilege of seeing you!"

In the eyes of the Sophisticate, the entire world was as nothing - all the more so a man like this, who seemed like a madman. Still, because of their great boyhood love, he was friendly to him and journeyed with him into the city.

Now the two householders, the fathers of these two sons, had died during the time the Sophisticate had been traveling from country to country, but their two houses remained. The Simpleton, who had stayed at home, entered his father's house and inherited it. However, because the Sophisticate had been away, there had been no-one to take care of his father's house, which was in complete ruins. Nothing was left of it and he had nowhere to go when he arrived. He went to an inn, but he suffered there because the inn was not to his taste.

Now the Simpleton found a new occupation. He would run from his house to the Sophisticate, filled with love and joy. He could see how much he was suffering at the inn. The Simpleton said to the Sophisticate: "My brother! Come to my house and stay with me! I will put everything I have into one corner and the whole house will be at your disposal." The Sophisticate liked the idea, and moved into the Simpleton's house and stayed with him.

The Sophisticate was constantly full of pain and suffering. He had a reputation for being an outstanding sage, a master craftsman and a doctor. A certain nobleman came and ordered a gold ring. The Sophisticate made a very wonderful ring engraved with extraordinary designs including an amazing tree. But when the nobleman came, he did not like the ring at all. The Sophisticate suffered terribly, because he knew that in Spain such a ring with a tree like this would be considered quite outstanding.

Another time a great nobleman arrived bringing a very expensive jewel from a far-off land. He also had another precious stone engraved with a certain design, and instructed him to engrave the same design on the jewel he had brought. The Sophisticate engraved exactly the same design on the jewel except that he made one change that nobody besides himself could possibly notice. The nobleman came and took the stone and was delighted, but the Sophisticate suffered terrible pain because of his mistake. "I have attained such a level of wisdom - how could I accidentally make a mistake?"

He also suffered in his medical practice. When he visited a patient, he would prescribe a medicine which he knew for certain would definitely cure the patient if he had any chance of survival, because it was an exceptional remedy. But if the patient afterwards died, people would say it was because of the medicine, and he suffered greatly because of this. Conversely he would sometimes treat a patient and the patient would be cured, but people said it was mere chance. Thus the Sophisticate was constantly full of misery.

It was the same when he needed a garment. He would summon the tailor and go to great lengths to explain to him how to make the garment exactly as he wanted in accordance with his deeper understanding. The tailor did exactly as the Sophisticate instructed him, making the garment just as he wanted it, with the exception of one lapel, where he went slightly wrong and failed to follow the instructions exactly.

The Sophisticate suffered terrible pain as a result. He knew that even though the garment was considered beautiful here, this was only because the local people had no understanding of tailoring. "If I was in Spain with this lapel, I would be the laughing stock of all!" Thus it was that he was constantly full of suffering.

Each time the Simpleton would come running to the Sophisticate full of joy, only to find him miserable and wracked with pain.

"Why should someone as wise and wealthy as you are endure constant suffering?" asked the Simpleton. "Look at me - I am constantly full of joy!"

However in the eyes of the Sophisticate, the Simpleton was ridiculous and seemed like a madman.

"If most people ridicule me," said the Simpleton, "surely they are the fools. For if they are wiser than me, on the contrary - they are fools. This applies all the more to a wise man like you. What will it make you if you are wiser than me? If only." concluded the Simpleton, ".if only you could reach my level!"

"It is quite possible," replied the Sophisticate, "that I could come to your level - if Heaven forbid my intelligence was taken from me or if I became ill, in which case I might go mad. For what are you if not a madman? But for you to come to my level would be quite impossible. There is no way that you could become wise like me."

But the Simpleton replied: "For God, everything is possible. It might be that I could reach your level in the wink of an eye!"

The Sophisticate simply laughed at him.

In the wider world these two friends were known as the Sophisticate and the Simpleton. Although the world contains many sophisticated and many simple people, nevertheless the traits of sophistication and simplicity were particularly evident in the case of these two. They were both from the same place and had learned together. One had become exceptionally wise and sophisticated while the other was exceptionally simple and straightforward. In the Population Registry, where everyone is inscribed with his family name, the one was registered as "The Sophisticate" and the other as "The Simpleton".

Once the king paid a visit to the Population Registry and found these two individuals registered respectively as "The Sophisticate" and "The Simpleton". The king had a great desire to see them. He thought to himself:

"If I suddenly send for them to appear before me, they will be very frightened. The Sophisticate will be tongue-tied and unable to express any of his arguments, while the Simpleton might go out of his mind through fear."

The king decided to send a sophisticated messenger to the Sophisticate and a simple messenger to the Simpleton. The problem was how to find a simple person in the capital city, where people are mostly very sophisticated. Only the officer over the treasuries is chosen specifically for his simplicity and honesty, since nobody wants a sophisticate in charge of the treasuries. His very sophistication and intelligence could lead him to waste all the resources. For this reason a simple, honest person is chosen as the officer in charge of the treasuries.

The king summoned a sophisticated individual together with the simpleton who was in charge of the treasuries and he sent them to the Sophisticate and the Simpleton. The king gave letters to each of the two messengers together with a letter to the governor of the local province under whose jurisdiction the two lived.

In his letter to the provincial governor, the king gave instructions to send the letters to the Sophisticate and the Simpleton under the governor's name, in order that they should not panic. He was to write to them that there was no urgency and the king was not specifically ordering them to come. It was up to them to do as they wished. If they so desired, they were to come - but the king wished to see them.

The two messengers, one sophisticated and the other simple, traveled to the local province and gave the letter to the governor. The governor enquired about the Sophisticate and the Simpleton. He was informed that the Sophisticate was exceptionally wise and very wealthy, while the Simpleton was extremely simple and straightforward, having only one sheepskin to serve for every kind of dress.

The governor realized that it would certainly not be proper to bring him before the king wearing the sheepskin, so he had proper clothes made for him which he placed in the carriage that was to collect the Simpleton. He gave the messengers the letters and they traveled there and handed them the letters. The sophisticated messenger delivered his letter to the Sophisticate, while the simple messenger gave the Simpleton his.

On receiving the letter, the Simpleton immediately said: "But I don't know what's written in it - read it to me!"

"I'll *tell* you what it says," replied the messenger. "The king wants you to come to him."

"As long as you're not joking," said the Simpleton.

"Certainly not," said the messenger. "It's true! No joking."

The Simpleton was immediately filled with joy and ran to tell his wife.

"My wife, the king has sent for me!"

"Why?" she asked. "For what purpose?"

But the Simpleton had no time to answer her and rushed away happily to set off with the messenger. He climbed into the carriage and sat down. When he discovered the clothes, he was even happier.

In the meantime information about misdemeanors on the part of the governor reached the king, who removed him. The king came to the conclusion that it would be best to have a simple, honest person as governor since such a person would run the province truthfully, knowing nothing of sophistication and deceit.

The king decided to appoint the Simpleton as governor, and issued a decree to that effect. In any case the Simpleton had to travel via the provincial capital. They were to wait for him at the gates of the city. On his arrival they were to stop him immediately and inaugurate him as governor. They

waited at the gates and as soon as the Simpleton arrived, they stopped him and told him that he had been appointed governor.

"You're not joking?" he asked.

"Certainly not - no joking!" they replied. The Simpleton immediately took up the position of governor with all force and strength.

And now that his fortune was on the rise - and good fortune makes a person wise - he attained greater understanding, even though he did not make use of his wisdom at all, conducting himself with his usual simple honesty. He governed the province sincerely and honestly, truthfully and fairly, without a trace of corruption.

To run a province, there is no need for great intelligence and sophistication but only fairness, simplicity and sincerity. When two people appeared before him in a law case, he would declare, "You are guilty and you are innocent," in simple honest truth without craftiness or deceit. He conducted himself truthfully and honestly in everything.

The people of the province adored him, and he had advisers who truly loved him. Out of love, one of them gave him some advice:

"You will quite definitely be called to come before the king. He has already summoned you, and in any case the governor is obliged to appear before the king. Although you are very honest and run the province without any trace of corruption, the way of the king is to steer the conversation to deep ideas and foreign languages. Out of propriety and politeness you ought to be able to answer him. It would be a good idea for me to teach you some philosophical ideas and foreign languages."

The Simpleton saw that this was a good suggestion, and said, "Why should I mind if I learn some deep ideas and languages?" He immediately recalled that his friend the Sophisticate had told him it would be quite impossible for him ever to reach his level - yet now he had already attained his wisdom. Even so, despite his already having attained a grasp of sophisticated wisdom, he made no use of sophisticated ideas at all. He conducted himself in all things with his usual honest simplicity.

Afterwards the king summoned the Simpleton-Governor. He traveled to the king, who discussed with him the government of the province. The Simpleton made a very good impression on the king, who saw that he governed with great justice and truth and without any corruption or deceit. The king then began discussing deep ideas and foreign languages. The Simpleton gave the appropriate answers, which particularly impressed the king, who said, "I see that he is so very wise, yet even so he governs with such honest simplicity."

This found very great favor in the eyes of the king, who appointed the Simpleton as Minister-in-Chief over all his other ministers. The king designated a special place for his residence, giving instructions to build him a fitting palace of great beauty and splendor. He gave him a written certificate attesting to his appointment as Minister-in-Chief over all the other ministers. And so it was: they built him a residence in the very place the king had designated, and he became very great and powerful.

As for the Sophisticate, when the king's letter arrived, he said to the sophisticated messenger who brought it: "Wait! Stay here tonight and we will give the matter careful consideration." That evening he made him a great feast, during which the Sophisticate applied his wisdom and philosophy with the utmost sophistication.

"What is this?" he asked. "The king has sent for *me* ? For a lowly creature like me??? What am *I* that the king should send for me? The king is so great and powerful. I am lowly and despicable compared with such a great and awesome king. It makes no sense that such a king should send for a lowly creature like me. If I say it is because of my wisdom, what am I compared to the king? Does the king not have wise men? Moreover, the king himself must certainly be very wise. Why would the king send for me?"

The Sophisticate was very perplexed. He said to the king's sophisticated messenger: "Mark my words. In my opinion it is quite logical and obvious that there really is no king in the world at all. Everyone is mistaken about this nonsense, because they think there is a king. Consider: how is it possible that all the people in the world would subject themselves to one man to be their king? Without any doubt, there is no king over the world at all."

"But did I not bring you a letter from the king?" replied the sophisticated messenger.

"Did you yourself actually receive the letter from the hand of the king himself?" asked the Sophisticate.

"No," replied the messenger, "Someone else gave me the letter in the king's name."

"You see!" cried the Sophisticate. "What I'm saying is right: there is no king at all." He questioned him further: "You yourself come from the capital city - you grew up there and you've lived there all your life. Tell me: have you ever seen the king in your whole life?"

"No," replied the messenger - because the truth is that not everyone gets to see the king, who appears only very rarely.

"You see!" cried the Sophisticate. "You see! What I am saying is perfectly correct. There is definitely no king at all. Even you have never seen the king."

"If so," asked the sophisticated messenger, "who runs the country?"

"I will explain that to you quite clearly," replied the Sophisticate, "because I am the right person to ask as I have traveled in many countries. I was in Italy , where they have seventy advisory ministers, each of whom governs the country for a set period of time. This way everyone in the land has a turn at running the country, one after the other."

His words began to penetrate the ears of the sophisticated messenger until they both agreed and declared that "There is certainly no king over the world at all!"

"Wait until morning," cried the Sophisticate. "I will give you proof after proof that there is no king in the world at all."

The Sophisticate rose early the next morning and woke up his friend the sophisticated messenger, saying: "Come outside with me. I will prove to you clearly that the entire world is in error. The truth is that there is no king at all and they are all greatly mistaken."

They went to the market and saw a soldier. They grabbed him and asked him:

"Who m do you serve?"

"The king," he replied.

"Have you ever seen the king in your life?"

"No."

"You see!" said the Sophisticate. "Is there any greater folly?"

Next they approached an army officer and entered into a conversation with him.

"Who m do you serve?" they asked.

"The king," he replied.

"Have you ever seen the king?"

"No."

"You can see it with your own eyes," cried the Sophisticate. "It is perfectly clear that they are all mistaken and there is no king in the world at all."

They both agreed that there was no king at all.

"Come!" cried the Sophisticate. "Let us travel the world and I will give you further proof that the whole world is greatly mistaken."

They went off and traveled the world. Wherever they went, they found everyone to be in error. They started using the idea of the king as an example. Wherever they found people to be mistaken about anything, they cited the idea of the king as an example. "This misconception is as true as the idea that there is a king!"

They continued traveling until they had used up everything they had. First they sold one horse and then another, until they had sold them all and were forced to go on foot. They were constantly questioning everyone and finding them to be in error. They went about on foot, impoverished, disresponsible beggars to whom no- one paid any attention.

They went around until they came to the city where the Minister - the Simpleton - lived. In the same town lived a true miracle worker, who was very highly respected as he performed extraordinary wonders. He was even known and respected by the leading ministers.

When these two sophisticates arrived in the town, they wandered around until they came to the house of the miracle worker. They saw numerous carriages waiting there, as many as forty or fifty, with sick people. The Sophisticate inferred that it must be the house of a doctor. He wanted to enter and make his acquaintance, as he himself was a great doctor.

"Who lives here?" he asked.

"The miracle worker," they replied.

The Sophisticate burst out laughing and said to his friend, "This is a most exceptional falsehood and error. This is even more foolish than the mistake about the king. My friend, let me explain what a lie this is and how greatly mistaken the world is about such deceit."

Meanwhile they became hungry. They found that they still had three or four coins, so they went to a cook shop where one could get food for as little as three or four coins. They ordered, and the food was brought to them.

As they ate, they chatted and joked about the lie and error about the miracle worker. The owner of the cook shop heard what they were saying and became very angry, because the miracle worker was highly respected there. "Finish your food," he cried, "and get out of here."

Afterwards the miracle worker's son arrived. They continued joking about the miracle worker in front of his son. The owner of the cook shop scolded them for joking about the miracle worker in front of his son. He gave them a good beating and threw them out of his house.

They were extremely angry and wanted to sue the man who beat them. They decided to go to the owner of their lodgings, where they had left their bundles of belongings, to ask him how to start legal proceedings. They told him that the owner of the cook shop had given them a severe beating. When he asked them why, they told him that they had spoken against the miracle worker.

"It is certainly not right to beat people," replied the owner of the lodgings. "But you did not do the right thing at all in speaking against the miracle worker. He is very highly respected here."

They saw that the owner of the lodgings was a nothing and that he too was in error. From there they went to the town clerk, who was a gentile. They told him the story of how they had been beaten. "Why?" he asked. They answered that they had spoken against the miracle worker. The town clerk also gave them a severe beating and threw them out of his house.

They went from one officer to the next, higher and higher, until they came to the Minister-in-Chief. Troops were standing guard in front of his house. The minister was informed that a man needed to see him and he gave orders for him to enter.

As soon as the Sophisticate entered, the Minister recognized him as his friend the Sophisticate. However, the Sophisticate did not recognize the Simpleton now that he had attained such greatness. The Minister immediately said to him:

"See where my simplicity has brought me - to such greatness. And where has your wisdom brought you?"

"As to your being my friend the Simpleton," replied the Sophisticate, "let us talk about that later. But now I demand justice, because they beat me."

"Why?" asked the Minister.

"Because I spoke out against the miracle worker," replied the Sophisticate, "because it's a lie and a big deception".

"So you still hold by your sophisticated ideas?" said the Simpleton-Minister. "You see! You said that you could easily attain my level but that I could not attain your level. Yet I have already reached your level of wisdom, whereas you have still not reached my level. I see that it is harder for you to attain my simple honesty!"

Even so, since he knew him from before when he was at the height of his greatness, the Minister gave orders to give him clothes and invited him to eat with him.

As they ate they started talking, and the Sophisticate began proving his opinion that there is no king at all. The Minister rebuked him.

"Haven't I myself seen the king?"

The Sophisticate answered him with a laugh. "Do you really know that it was the king? Did you recognize him? Did you know for sure that his father and grandfather were kings? How do you know that this was the king? People told you this was the king - they deceived you with a lie."

The Simpleton was very angry over the Sophisticate's denial of the king's existence.

In the meantime someone came and said: "The Devil has sent for you."

The Simpleton was extremely shaken. He ran in great trepidation to his wife to tell her who had sent for him. She advised him to send for the miracle worker. He did so, and the miracle worker came and gave him amulets and other protection, telling him that he now had no reason to fear. The Simpleton had great faith in this.

The Simpleton carried on sitting with Sophisticate, who asked him: "What made you so frightened?"

"It was because of the one that sent for us."

The Sophisticate laughed at him. "Do you really believe there is such a thing as the Devil?"

"If not, then who sent for us?"

"It must be my brother!" replied the Sophisticate. "He wants to see me and he played this trick to send for me."

"If so," asked the Simpleton, "how did he get through all the guards?"

"He must have bribed them, and they are all lying, saying they never saw him at all."

Meanwhile someone else came and said the same thing: "The Devil has sent for you."

The Simpleton was now unshaken. He was not afraid at all because of the protection given by the miracle worker.

"Now what do you say?" he asked the Sophisticate.

"I must inform you," replied the Sophisticate, "that I have a brother who is angry with me. He is playing this trick in order to frighten me."

The Sophisticate stood up and said to the messenger who came for them: "What does he look like - the one who sent for us? What kind of face does he have? What kind of hair.?"

The messenger described him.

"See!" cried the Sophisticate. "That is exactly what my brother looks like."

"Will you go with them," asked the Simpleton.

"Yes!" replied the Sophisticate. "Just give me some soldiers to go with me so that they don't hurt me."

The Minister provided him with an escort of soldiers, and the Sophisticate and his friend, the sophisticated messenger, went off with the man who had summoned them. Afterwards the soldiers returned.

"Where are those sophisticates?" asked the Minister.

The soldiers replied that they had disappeared - they had no idea how.

For the Devil had kidnapped these two sophisticates and brought them to the muddy bog. The Devil sat on a throne in the bog and threw the sophisticates into the mud. The mud was thick and sticky like clay.

As the two sophisticates were tortured, they screamed out:

"You wicked villains! Why are you torturing us? Does such a thing as the Devil really exist? You are wicked villains, torturing us for nothing!"

These sophisticates still did not believe that such a thing as the Devil really exists. They thought that evil men were torturing them for no reason. The two sophisticates lay there in the thick mud trying to understand what was happening.

"They are nothing but wild ruffians we quarreled with once, and now they are torturing us so much!"

They suffered terrible tortures for many years.

Once the Simpleton-Minister was passing by the miracle worker's house and he remembered his friend the Sophisticate. He came before the miracle worker and bowed, as noblemen do. He asked him if it would be possible for him to see the Sophisticate and if there was a way to release him.

"Do you remember the Sophisticate that the Devil summoned and took away?" he asked. "I have not seen him ever since."

"Yes," replied the miracle worker.

The Minister asked him to show him where he was and to release him. The miracle worker replied: "I can certainly show you where he is and take him out, but no- one must go except me and you."

They went together and with the miracle worker's help they came to the place.

There they were, lying in the thick mud and quicksand. When the Sophisticate saw the Minister, he screamed out: "My brother! See how these wicked villains are beating and torturing me so terribly over nothing!"

The Minister rebuked him. "You still cling to your sophisticated ideas and you don't believe in anything. According to you, these are human beings. Now see! Isn't this the miracle worker that you denied? Yet he, and only he, has the power to release you. He will show you the truth."

The Minister asked the miracle worker to take them out and show them that this was the Devil and his cohorts, and not human beings.

The miracle worker released them, and they were left standing on dry land. There was no mud there at all. The destroying angels turned into mere dust.

The Sophisticate saw it all, and he was forced to admit to the truth, that there is a king.

THE EXCHANGED CHILDREN

This is a story about a certain king who had a maid in his palace who attended the queen. Obviously a mere cook would not have been allowed in to the king, but this maid was an attendant of low rank. The queen gave birth and this maid also gave birth at the same time. Then the midwife went and switched the babies around - just to see what would happen and how it would turn out. She took the king's son and put him beside the maid, and she placed the maid's son beside the queen.

As time went on these children began to grow. The "king's son" (the one who grew up with the king because they *thought* he was the king's son) was helped to rise from level to level, becoming ever greater until he was a most important personage. The "maid's son" (who was really the king's son, but he grew up with the maid) was raised in the servant's house.

Nevertheless, the two boys learned together in the same school. The king's true son, who was known as the "maid's son", was naturally drawn to royal behavior even though he grew up in the servant's house. Conversely, the maid's true son, who was called "the king's son", was naturally drawn to a different kind of behavior unlike that of royalty. But having grown up in the king's palace, he was forced to conduct himself royally because that was how he was raised.

Now the midwife - since women can be light-headed - told someone the secret of how she had switched the children. "Every friend has a friend," and the secret passed in the usual way from one person to another until everyone was whispering about how the king's son had been exchanged.

It was impossible for anyone to talk about it openly in case the king found out. It was quite impossible to let the king find out. What would he be able to do? There was no solution. It was impossible to give credence to a mere rumor - it might be false. In any case, how could they switch the two sons back into their proper positions? They therefore could not reveal the matter to the king. Yet people continued talking about it among themselves.

One day somebody revealed the secret to the "king's son" (who was in reality the maid's son), telling him that people were saying he had been exchanged.

"But you cannot investigate this," said the man who told him the secret. "It would be beneath your dignity. You therefore cannot go into the matter at all. I am only telling you this in case there is a conspiracy against you one day that might gain strength because of this rumor. People will say they want to take the king's son as king - the one they say is the king's true son. You will have to think about how to deal with him and see how to remove him."

Wherever this story speaks about the "king's son", it refers to the one who grew up with the king and was *called* the "king's son" though in fact he was the maid's true son. Conversely, the one that grew up as the "maid's son" was really the king's true son.

The "king's son" began making trouble for the servant who was regarded as the "father" of the other son although in fact he was his own true father. The "king's son" fired every kind of trouble in his direction, one after the other, in order to force him to flee together with his son.

As long as the king was alive, his "son" did not have much power yet was still able to cause him troubles. Eventually the king became old and died, and the "king's son", who was the maid's true son, took over the kingdom. He then caused even more trouble for the servant who was regarded as the "father" of the other son. He sent trouble after trouble - but craftily, so that people would not understand that he was the one causing the trouble, since this would not look good in the eyes of the people. He therefore hid what he was doing but caused him constant troubles.

The servant realized that the king was causing him troubles because of the rumors about the exchange. The servant explained the whole story to his "son" (who was in reality the king's true son) . He told him that he greatly pitied him.

"However you look at it, if you are my son, I certainly have pity on you. And if you are the king's true son, you deserve even greater pity, because he wants to remove you completely, heaven forbid. For this reason you have no option but to move from here." He felt very bad about this.

However the king was constantly shooting his evil arrows one after the other, and the other son decided to move away. His "father" gave him a sum of money and he left. He felt very bad indeed about having been driven from his own country for nothing.

"Why do I deserve to be banished?" he asked himself. "If I am the king's son I certainly don't deserve it. And even if I am not the king's son, I also don't deserve to have to flee for no reason. What sin did I commit?"

He felt very bad about it. He started drinking and visiting the brothel. He wanted to spend all his days getting drunk and following his heart's desires after having been banished for nothing.

Meanwhile the king took up the reins of power with great force. Whenever he heard that people were whispering and talking about the exchange, he took vengeance and punished them very severely, ruling with power and strength.

One day the king went on a hunting expedition with his ministers. They came to a beautiful place with a flowing river. They stayed there to rest and stroll around. The king lay down to rest, and began thinking about how he had banished the other son for nothing. Whichever way you looked at it, if he was really the king's son, wasn't it enough that he had been exchanged? Why should he be banished too? And if he was not the king's true son, he did not deserve to have been banished - for what had he done wrong?

The king was thinking about this and regretting his sin and the great wrong he had committed. But he had no idea what he could do about it. It was a subject he could not discuss or seek advice about from anyone. He became very worried and anxious and told his ministers to turn back as he had some issues on his mind and saw no purpose in strolling around any more. They went home, and once the king was back in his palace much business awaited him. He became preoccupied with his affairs and forgot about the matter.

Meanwhile the banished son who was the king's true son continued as before and wasted his money. Once he went out alone for a stroll. He lay down to rest and began thinking about what had happened to him.

"What has God done to me?" he wondered. "If I really am the king's son, it is certainly not fair to me. And if I am not the king's son I also don't deserve to be a fugitive and an exile."

Then he thought: "On the other hand, if it is true that God could really do such a thing and exchange the king's son and make him endure all this, is what I have done right? Was it proper for me to have behaved the way I have?"

He began to feel very sorry and regretted the bad things he had done. Afterwards he returned home and went back to his drinking. But having started to feel regret, he was constantly disturbed by thoughts of regret and repentance.

Once he lay down to rest. He dreamed that in a certain place there was to be a fair on a certain date. He was to go there and accept the very first paid work he was offered, even if it was beneath his dignity.

When he woke up, the dream was engraved in his mind. Sometimes dreams pass straight out of the mind, but this dream and its message were strongly fixed in his mind. Even so, it was very hard for him to carry it out, and he turned to drink even more. He had the same dream again several times, and it greatly disturbed him.

Once they were saying to him in the dream: "If you want to have pity on yourself: *do it!*" and he was forced to fulfill the dream. He went and gave his remaining money to his landlord, leaving his fine clothing behind in his lodgings. All he took for himself was a simple merchant's robe, and he made his way to the place of the fair.

Early next morning he went to the fair, where he met a merchant who said to him, "Do you want a job?"

"Yes," he replied.

"I need someone to drive animals," said the merchant. "Do you want me to hire you?"

He needed no time to think about it because of the dream. He answered immediately: "Yes."

The merchant hired him at once and immediately started giving him work to do, ordering him about the way a master orders his servants.

He began wondering what he had done. Menial work like this certainly did not befit him. He was a gentle person but now he would have to drive animals and be forced to go on foot side by side with the animals. But it was too late for regrets. The merchant was ordering him about like a master.

"How am I supposed to go on my own with the animals?" he asked the merchant.

"I also have other cattle drivers for my animals," he replied. "Go with them."

The merchant gave him some animals to drive, and he took them outside the city. Gathered there were the other cattle drivers who were going to take the animals, and they went together. He drove his animals while the merchant rode at the side on a horse.

The merchant rode his horse cruelly and showed extra cruelty to him. He was extremely afraid of the merchant, seeing the great cruelty he displayed towards him. He was afraid he would give him one blow with his stick and kill him instantly as he was so gentle and tender. He went along with the animals and the merchant at their side. They came to a certain place and took the sack containing the bread for the drivers. The merchant gave them to eat, and he was also given some of this bread.

Afterwards they passed a very thick forest where the trees were very close together. As they went, two of the animals entrusted to the king's true son, who had become the merchant's driver, strayed. The merchant shouted at him and he chased after them to try to catch them, but they ran away even further and he went chasing after them. The forest was so thick that as soon as he went in he could not see his companions and they could not see him.

He chased after the animals, which ran further away. He chased them until he came into the thick depths of the forest.

"Either way I will die," he thought. "If I go back without the animals I will die at the hands of the merchant." So great was his fear of the merchant that he was convinced he would kill him if he came back without the animals. "But if I stay here, I will also get killed by the wild animals in the forest. Why should I go back to the merchant? How can I go back to him without the animals?" He was very frightened of him.

He carried on chasing the animals, but they kept running further away. In the meantime night fell. Never before had it happened to him that he would have to spend the night alone deep in such a thick forest. He heard the cries and moans of the wild animals. He decided to climb up a tree and spend the night there. All he could hear were the cries and roars of the wild animals.

In the morning he looked down and saw his animals standing nearby. He climbed down from the tree and went to catch them but they ran off. The further he chased them, the further they fled, until they found some grass and stood grazing. He tried to catch them but they fled. Every time he went after them, they ran away until he came into the thickest depths of the forest. Here there were animals that have no fear of men at all, being so remote from human civilization.

Once again night fell. He heard the cries and roars of the animals and became very afraid. He noticed a very great tree standing there, and saw that a man was lying there. He was afraid, but it was some consolation that he had found a man there.

Each asked the other: "Who are you?"

"A man - who are you?"

"A man."

The man lying by the tree asked him, "How did you come to be here?"

He did not want to tell him what had happened, so he simply said, "Because of the animals. I was driving animals, and two animals strayed in here, and that's why I came here."

He asked the man he found by the tree, "How did *you* come to be here?"

"I came here because of my horse. I was riding on the horse and I stopped to rest and the horse went off and strayed into the forest. I was chasing after it trying to catch it, and the horse ran further away until I came here."

They decided to join up and keep together, and agreed that even when they returned to civilization they would remain together. They spent the night there and heard the terrible howling, moaning and roaring of the animals.

Towards morning he heard loud laughter ringing through the whole forest. The sound of the laughter was spreading through the entire forest. The laughter was so loud that the tree was shaking and swaying with the sound. He was very shocked and frightened, but the man he had found by the tree said, "This no longer frightens me at all as I've already slept here the last few nights. This laughter is heard every night just before dawn, until all the trees tremble and shake.

Nevertheless, the king's true son was very shaken. He said to his friend: "Evidently this is the place of the demons, because no such laughter is ever heard in settled areas. Who has ever heard the sound of such laughter over the entire area?"

Day broke soon afterwards . They looked down and saw this one's animals and the other one's horse standing there. They climbed down from the tree and started chasing after their respective animals. The cattle ran further and further away, and he chased after them, while the other pursued his horse, which ran away until the two men were far apart and lost their way.

Meanwhile he found a sack of bread. This was priceless there in the wilds. He took the sack on his shoulder and went after his cattle.

Suddenly he encountered a man. At first he was worried, but at least it was some comfort that he had found a man there.

"How did you get here?" asked the man.

"And how did *you* get here?" he asked.

"Me? My fathers and fathers' fathers grew up here. But what about *you* ? How did you come to be here? For no human beings from civilized areas ever come here."

He found this answer very disturbing because he understood that this was not a human being at all since he had told him that his fathers' fathers had grown up there and that nobody from inhabited areas ever came there. Nevertheless he did not harm him in any way but treated him in a friendly way.

The man of the forest said to the king's true son, "What are you doing here?"

He replied that he was chasing after the animals.

"Stop chasing after your sins," he said, "These are not animals at all. It is only your sins that are leading you on this way. Enough! You have already had what you deserve - you have already received your punishment. Stop chasing after them. Come with me and you will attain what befits you."

He accompanied him but was afraid to talk to him or ask any questions, because someone like this might open up his mouth and swallow him.

Meanwhile he found his friend who had gone chasing after his horse. The moment he saw him, he made signs as if to say, "Know that this is not a human being at all. Have nothing at all to do with him, because this is not a human being at all!" He then went over and whispered in his ear that this was not a human being.

The man with the horse looked and saw the sack of bread on his shoulder, and he started begging him.

"My brother, I haven't eaten for days - give me bread!"

"Here in the wilderness nothing will help you," replied the king's true son, "My life comes first and I need the bread for myself."

The man with the horse started begging and pleading with him. "I'll give you whatever I have."

But in the wilderness bread is worth more than any gift or bribe.

"What will you give me?" replied the man with the cattle, who was the king's true son. "What can you give me in exchange for bread in the wilderness?"

"I will give you my very self!" said the man with the horse. "I will sell myself to you for bread."

The man with the cattle considered the matter. "To buy a man, it's worth giving him some bread." He bought him as his eternal slave. The man with the horse swore a solemn oath to him that he would be his servant for ever, even when they returned to civilization. In exchange he would give him bread. They would eat from the sack together until the bread was finished.

They went together after the man of the forest. Having been bought as his slave, the man with the horse followed the man with the cattle as they went after the man of the forest. As a result things

became a little easier for the king's true son, because if he had to lift anything or needed something done for him he would order his slave to do it.

They went together after the man of the forest until they came to a place full of snakes and scorpions. He was very afraid. Out of fear he asked the man of the forest, "How will we get across here?"

"Do you think that is so hard?" asked the man of the forest. "How are you going to enter my house?"

He showed them his house, which was standing in the air. "How will you get inside my house?"

They went with the man of the forest, who carried them safely across and brought them inside his house. He gave them to eat and drink, and left.

The true son of the king - the one with the cattle - was now making use of his slave for all his needs. The slave was very unhappy over having sold himself as a slave because of the short time he was in need of bread. Now they had food. Because of one brief period, would he have to remain a slave forever?

He sighed and groaned. "How have I come so low as to be a slave?"

The true son of the king, who was now his master, asked him: "What was your earlier greatness that you now sigh over having come to such a level?"

The other man began to tell him that he had been a king, but people spread rumors that he had been exchanged. For this man with the horse was none other than the king of whom we spoke earlier, who was really the son of the maid. He told him how he had banished the other son, but later it entered his mind that he had not done right and he began to regret it. He was constantly beset by regrets over his evil crime against his friend.

Once he dreamed that his remedy would be to throw off the kingship and go wherever his eyes would take him. This was how his sin would be rectified. However he did not want to do such a thing. Yet he was constantly disturbed by these dreams telling him to do it. He threw off the kingship and went away, until eventually he came here. And now he would have to be a slave!"

The king's true son listened to all this in silence. "I'll think it over," he said to himself. "I'll see how to deal with him."

That night the man of the forest came and gave them to eat and drink and they spent the night there. Towards morning they heard the same sound of terribly loud laughter that made all the trees quake and tremble. The slave persuaded his master, the king's true son, to ask the man of the forest what this was.

"What is this sound of great laughter just before morning?"

"This laughter," replied the man of the forest, "is when the day laughs at the night. Because the night asks the day, 'Why do I not have a name when you arrive?' Then the day laughs very loudly, and day breaks - and that is the sound of this laughter."

He found this very amazing - for it really is an amazing idea that the day laughs at the night.

In the morning the man of the forest left again, while they remained there eating and drinking. That night he came back, and they ate and drank and lay down to sleep. During the night they heard the cries of the animals, all roaring and moaning in strange voices. All the animals and birds were crying. The lion roared, the lioness growled in a different voice, the birds chirped and chattered. All of them sang and cried in different voices.

At first the two men were very shaken by all this. They were so afraid that they paid no attention to the actual sounds. Later they listened carefully, and heard that it was a most amazing, awesome song. Hearing this song was the ultimate delight, making all other delights in the world pale into insignificance. They agreed that they should stay here since they would have food and drink and could enjoy this most amazing delight.

The slave persuaded his master, the king's true son, to ask the man of the forest what it was, and he did so.

"This," replied the man of the forest, "is because the sun made a garment for the moon. All the animals of the forest said that the moon greatly benefits them since their main time of dominion is at night. Sometimes they need to enter inhabited areas, but they are unable to do so during the day. Since their main time of dominion is at night, the moon does them a great favor by shining to them. They therefore agreed to create a new melody in honor of the moon, and this is the melody you hear."

Now they listened to the melody even more carefully and they could hear that it was a most wonderful and profoundly pleasing melody.

"Do you consider this to be such a novelty?" asked the man of the forest. "I possess an instrument which I received from my fathers, which they inherited from their fathers' fathers. This instrument is made of special leaves and colors, and as soon as you place it on any animal, beast or bird, it immediately starts to sing this melody."

Afterwards the same laughter rang through the forest, and day broke. The man of the forest left, and the king's true son went in search of this instrument. He searched the whole room but did not find it, and he was afraid to go any further.

The king's true son, the master, and his slave, the maid's true son, were afraid to ask the man of the forest to take them to civilization. But afterwards he told them he would take them back to civilization. He brought them to a human habitation and took the instrument and gave it to the king's true son.

"I am giving you this instrument as a gift," said the man of the forest. "As for this one," he continued, indicating his slave, the maid's true son who had become king because of the exchange: ".as for him, you will know how to deal with him."

"Where should we go?" asked the king's true son.

He told them to look for a country called "The Foolish Country with the Wise King". They asked him in which direction they should go to start asking how to find this country. The man of the forest pointed with his finger and said to the king's true son: "Go to that country. There you will attain your greatness."

They left and went on their way. They had a strong desire to find some animal on which to test the instrument to see if it would make it sing. As yet they had not seen any kind of animal, but later they approached a settlement and found an animal. They placed the instrument on the animal, which began singing the same melody.

They continued their journey until they reached the Foolish Country with the Wise King. The country had a wall around it and the only way to enter was through one gate. They had to go around for many miles before they came to the gate to enter the country.

When they arrived, they were not allowed to enter. The king of the country had died and his son had become king. The old king had left a will saying, "Until now they called this 'The Foolish Country with the Wise King'. But now they should call it the opposite: 'The Wise Land with a Foolish King'. Whoever succeeds in changing the name back to the ' Foolish Land with the Wise King' should be the king."

Only someone who would undertake to achieve this was allowed to enter the country. That was why they did not want to admit him. They said to him, "Are you able to undertake this task and restore the country to its original name?"

It seemed quite impossible for anyone to undertake such a task, and they could not enter. The slave tried to persuade his master to return home, but he was unwilling to go back as the man of the forest had told him he should go to this country and there he would achieve greatness.

In the meantime another man arrived on horseback, but he was refused entry for the same reason. The king's true son noticed the man's horse standing there, and took the instrument and placed it on the horse, which started singing the most amazing melody. The owner of the horse pleaded with him to sell him the instrument, but he was unwilling to do so.

"What could you give me in exchange for such an amazing instrument?" he asked.

"What will you be able to do with this instrument?" asked the owner of the horse. "The most you will be able to do will be to play it in some musical performance and earn a little money. I know something far superior to your instrument: I possess knowledge that I received from my fathers' fathers through which it is possible to understand one thing from another. For example, if someone makes a casual remark, this tradition enables one to deduce something else from his remark. Until

now I have never revealed this knowledge to anyone in the world. But if you will give me this instrument, I will teach you this tradition."

The king's true son realized that it would indeed be truly wonderful to be able to understand one thing from another. He gave the instrument to the owner of the horse, who taught him how to understand one thing from another.

Now that the king's true son knew how to understand one thing from another, he went to the gate into the country. He deduced that it must be possible to restore the country to its original name, because he already had the power to understand one thing from another. He understood that it was *possible* to do it even though he did not yet know how.

He decided to tell them to let him enter and he would undertake the task of restoring the country to its original name. What did he have to lose? He told the men who were barring entry to all except one who would undertake this task that they should let him in.

They admitted him and informed the ministers that there was a man who wanted to undertake to restore the country to its original name. They brought him to the ministers of state, who said:

"You must understand that we too are far from being foolish, heaven forbid. However, the old king was such an outstanding sage that compared to him, we are considered foolish. That is why the country used to be called the Foolish Country with the Wise King. Afterwards the king died and his son became king. He too is wise, but compared to us he is not wise at all. Therefore the country is now called the opposite: 'The Wise Country with the Foolish King'.

"The old king left a will stating that if someone can be found who is so wise that he can restore the kingdom to its original name, he should be made king. The old king instructed his son to give up the kingship in favor of such a man. Whoever is so outstandingly wise that everyone else is foolish compared to him will be the king. For he will be able to restore the kingdom to its original name, 'The Foolish Kingdom with the Wise King,' as they will all be foolish compared to him. You should therefore understand the mission on which you are embarking." The ministers of state told the king's true son all this.

"The test to see if you are sufficiently wise," they continued, "is as follows. The old king left an amazing garden. All kinds of instruments made of different metals grow there. Some are of silver and some of gold. The garden is most awesome and amazing, but it is impossible to enter it. As soon as anyone goes inside, he immediately starts being chased. They chase him and he screams, but he has no idea what is going on and does not see who is chasing him. This way they pursue him until they drive him out of the garden and force him to flee. Let us see if you are sufficiently wise to be able to enter this garden."

"Do they beat the person who enters?" he asked.

"The main thing , " they replied, "is that they chase him. He has no idea at all who or what is chasing him, and he flees in terrible panic." This was what people who had entered the garden had told them.

The king's true son approached the garden and saw that it had a wall around it. However, the gate was open and there were no guards, since obviously such a garden did not need to be guarded. As he looked around he saw a statue of a man standing beside the garden. Above the statue was a tablet stating that this man had been king hundreds of years earlier and that peace had reigned in his time. Prior to this king there had been wars, as there were after him, but in the days of this king there was peace.

He pondered the matter. Having acquired the ability to understand one thing from another, he understood that everything depended on this man. On entering the garden, as soon as one began to be pursued, there was no need to flee at all. One had only to stand by the side of this man to be saved. Moreover, if they were to take this man and stand him inside this garden, everyone would then be able to enter peaceably into the garden. The king's true son could understand all this because of his ability to deduce one thing from another .

He entered the garden, and as soon as they began chasing him, he immediately went to stand by this man who stood outside next to the garden. This way he was able to leave in peace without being harmed at all. Other people who had entered the garden had fled in terrible panic as soon as they were chased. They were hurt and injured because of their very panic. But by going to stand by this man he left in peace and tranquility. The ministers watched, amazed that he had left safely .

The king's true son then gave instructions to take this man and place him inside the garden. They did so, and then all the ministers were able to enter the garden and leave safely without coming to any harm.

"Even so," said the ministers, "despite the fact that we have seen you perform such a feat, it would not be proper to make you king because of only one feat. We will give you one more test.

"There is a throne that came from the old king. The throne is very high. By its side stand all kinds of animals and birds carved out of wood. In front of the throne stands a bed. By the bed stands a table, and on the table stands a lamp. Extending from the throne in all directions are well-trodden, walled pathways. But no-one has the least understanding of the connection between the throne and these pathways.

"After a certain distance along these pathways, by the side of one of them stands a golden lion. If any man approaches that lion, it opens its mouth and devours him. The path then continues beyond where this lion stands. After a certain distance along the second pathway that extends from the throne in a different direction, there stands another kind of beast - a leopard made of a different metal, which it is also impossible to approach. Afterwards the path extends further. The same applies to all the other paths. They spread through the entire country, but nobody understands the purpose of the throne or the objects standing by it or these paths. Your test will be if you can understand the purpose of this throne."

They showed him the throne and he saw that it was very high indeed. He went up to the throne and examined it. He realized that this throne was made of the same wood as the instrument which the man of the forest had given him. He noticed that a certain rose was missing from the top of the

throne. If the throne had this rose, it would have the same power as the instrument that had the power to play when placed on any animal, beast or bird.

He carried on looking, and saw that the rose missing from the top of the throne was lying on the ground . It would be necessary to lift it up and place it on top so that the throne would have the power of the instrument. For the previous king had devised everything with the utmost wisdom so that no-one would be able to understand it until the arrival of an outstanding sage who was able to change everything around and realign it properly.

He understood that it would be necessary to move the bed a little from its present position, and so too the table and the lamp. Likewise the birds and animals needed to be moved around. A bird would have to be taken from one place and moved to another, and the same applied to the other birds . For the king had made everything with the utmost wisdom and subtlety so that no-one would understand it, until a sage came who could deduce how to order everything properly. The lion standing by the pathway extending from the throne had to be moved elsewhere, as did all the other animals.

The king's true son gave instructions to arrange everything properly - to take the rose from below and fix it up above, and to arrange everything else in the proper order. Then they all began singing the most amazing song and all the different things performed their proper function.

The king's true son became king. Then he said to the maid's true son: "Now I understand that I am the king's true son and you are the maid's true son."

Sipurey Maasiot

From THE PRAYER LEADER

Once there was a prayer leader who was constantly engaged in prayer, songs and praise to God. He lived far from any inhabited area, but he would regularly visit the towns and villages. He would enter the home of somebody - usually a poor person or someone of little status - and talk to him heart to heart about the purpose of this world. For the truth is that there is no other purpose in life than to devote ourselves to serving God every day and to spend our time in prayer, songs and praises to God.

The prayer leader would speak to the person very inspiringly for a long time, until his words entered his ears and the person agreed to join him. As soon as he was willing, the prayer leader would take him to his chosen place far away from the city. It had a flowing river and trees and fruits. They lived off the fruit. As for clothing, the prayer leader didn't mind what they wore.

He would regularly go into the city to persuade people to serve God and follow his path of prayer. He would take whoever was willing to follow him to his place outside the city, and there they engaged in nothing but prayer, songs and praises to God, confessions, fasting, self-discipline and repentance. He would give them books he had on these subjects.

They continued following these practices until some of the people he had brought there were also fit to draw others to serve God. Eventually he would give one or two permission to go into the city to bring people closer to God.

The prayer leader was constantly busy drawing people closer and taking them from the city. He began to make an impact and the matter became public knowledge. Suddenly people started noticing that someone or other had gone missing from the city and no-one knew where they were. Somebody's son or the like would go missing and no-one knew where they were. Until it became known that a prayer leader was going around persuading people to devote themselves to serving God.

However, it was impossible to recognize or catch him, because this prayer leader acted very cleverly. He used to change the way he looked, and he would appear to each person differently. To one he looked like a poor man, to another like a merchant, and to someone else he would appear in a different guise.

Sometimes, when speaking with people, he saw that he could not succeed in his purpose . He would intentionally mislead them so they would not understand his real goal. The truth was that his only intention was to bring people to God. But if he saw he was accomplishing nothing with someone, he would steer the conversation in a different direction, making it impossible for the person to understand his real intention.

The Prayer Leader was making an impact and people were on the lookout for him, but it was impossible to catch him. He and his men lived far away from any human habitation, engaged in nothing but prayer, songs and praises to God, confessions, self-discipline and repentance.

This Prayer Leader had the ability to provide each one with what he needed. If he saw that one of his men thought he needed to serve God wearing golden clothes, he would provide him with them. Conversely he would sometimes attract a wealthy person and take him away from civilization, and he understood that this rich man needed to go about in cheap, torn clothing. He would lead each one according to what he knew he needed.

In the eyes of the people he brought to God, a fast or a great penance was more precious than all the pleasures in the world. They had more pleasure from fasting and repentance than all the pleasures in the world.

The Country of Wealth

Now there was a certain very wealthy country where all the people were rich. However, they had the strangest customs. For them, everything depended on wealth. Each person's status depended on how much money he had. Someone who possessed a given sum of so many thousands or tens of thousands had a certain rank, while a person who possessed a different amount had a different rank. Their entire class system depended on how much money each person possessed. The one who possessed a specified sum of so many thousands and tens of thousands was king.

They all had flags corresponding to how much money they had. Someone who possessed a given sum had one flag and the corresponding social rank as indicated by that flag. A person with a different sum had a different flag and status, depending on the value of his property. They had laid down how much wealth a person had to possess in order to have a given flag and rank. Each person's rank depended on how much money he had in accordance with their rules.

They had instituted that a person having only a limited sum would be a mere human, whereas if he possessed less he was an animal or a bird. They had different kinds of beasts and birds. Someone possessing no more than a given sum would be labeled a human lion while others were considered as different species of animals or birds, because anyone who had very little property was considered a mere animal or bird. For them the main thing was how much money a person possessed, and his rank and status depended on that alone.

They also agreed that they wanted to have planets and stars. Whoever possessed a specified sum would be a planet, because, having so much money, he was thought to possess the same power as that planet. There is a planet that causes gold to grow: where gold-dust is found on earth, the reason is because that planet makes the earth produce gold. Therefore gold ultimately derives from the planets and stars. If a person had so much gold, they thought that he must have the power of that planet and must therefore be a planet.

They also decided to have constellations. Somebody who possessed a specified sum would be a constellation. They also appointed those possessing enormous wealth as angels, until eventually they all agreed that they should also have gods. Whoever possessed a specified sum of so many multi-millions was to be a god. Since God had blessed him with so much wealth, he himself must be a god.

They also came to the conclusion that, in order not to become defiled, they should not live in the air of this world or mix with other people. . . Everyone else in the world was impure in their eyes. They therefore decided to seek out the highest mountains in the world and live there, so as to be above the air of this world. They sent out men in search of the highest mountains, and when they found some very high mountains, all the people of the country migrated there.

Different groups of them lived on each mountain. They built huge fortified walls around each mountain and dug deep moats in order to make it impossible for anyone to get there. Each mountain had only one secret path so that no stranger could ever reach them. They posted guards at a distance from each mountain so that no stranger could even get near. They lived there on these mountains practicing their customs, and they had numerous gods depending on how much money each possessed.

Since the main thing for them was money and great wealth made a person a god, they were very worried about murder and robbery, because people could kill and steal in order to become gods. Nevertheless, they said that since anyone who possessed very great wealth was a god, he would have a protective power against robbery and murder.

They instituted services and sacrifices. They used to make offerings and pray to their gods. They also sacrificed humans. People would sacrifice themselves to their god in order to become

incorporated in him so as to then be reincarnated as a person of wealth. For their main religion was money. They held services and offered sacrifices and incense to their gods - the owners of great wealth.

Even so, the country was plagued with murder and robbery, because those who did not believe in the services resorted to killing and stealing in order to gain wealth. This was because the most important thing in life for them was money, since money buys every kind of food and clothing, and man needs money for his livelihood. This was why money was the foundation of their belief and religion.

They made every effort to ensure that they should never be lacking in money at all, since money was their god. They considered it essential to try to increase their wealth by importing wealth from elsewhere. Traders went out from there to other countries in order to earn profits and bring more wealth back into their country.

They certainly strictly prohibited the giving of charity, since charity diminishes the wealth with which God blesses a person, whereas the main thing for them was to possess wealth. Since charity cuts into a person's wealth, they strictly prohibited giving charity.

They also had officers whose task was to check each person to see if he had as much money as he claimed. Everyone had constantly to display his wealth in order to maintain the rank he had been awarded on the basis of his wealth.

Sometimes an animal might become a man or a man an animal. If a person lost his money he turned from being a man into a penniless animal. Conversely, when a person made a profit, he turned from an animal into a man. The same applied to all the other ranks as determined by their wealth.

They had pictures and portraits of their gods - the owners of enormous wealth. They all surrounded themselves with these pictures and used to kiss and embrace them since this was their religion and belief...

Some of the Prayer Leader's virtuous followers had visited this country of wealth, and on their return they told the Prayer Leader how deeply enmeshed the people of that country were in the lust for wealth. The Prayer Leader had great pity on them and decided to go there in person to try to persuade them to give up this error.

The Hand

The Prayer Leader related:

The king I was with possessed a hand - a picture of a hand with five fingers and all the lines found on a hand. This hand was a map of all the worlds and everything that has ever or will ever exist, from the beginning of the creation of heaven and earth until the very end and afterwards - everything was pictured on this hand.

The lines of the hand formed pictures of how each of the different worlds exists in all its details, similar to the way they would be marked on a map. The lines of the hand formed letters, just as there are letters on a map by the side of each different thing to indicate what it is - a certain city or a river or the like. Similarly, the lines of the hand formed letters by each thing to explain what it is.

All the details of all the different countries, towns, rivers, bridges, mountains and so on were marked on the hand with these lines. By the side of each one were letters indicating what it was. All the people in each country and everything that happened to them were all marked there. Also written there were all the paths leading from country to country and from place to place..

Also marked on the hand was the path leading from world to world. There is a path by which one can go from earth up to heaven. The only reason why people cannot go up to heaven is that they do not know the way. But the hand showed the way to go up to heaven, and it marked all the paths from world to world. Elijah went up to heaven by one path, which was inscribed on the hand, while Moses our Teacher went up to heaven by a different path, which was also inscribed there. Enoch went up to heaven by yet another path, and that too was inscribed there. So it was from world to world: everything was marked in the lines of the hand.

Also marked on the hand was how each individual thing existed at the time of the creation of the world, how it is now and how it will be afterwards. Thus Sodom was marked there as it was when it was inhabited prior to its destruction. The destruction of Sodom was also pictured, and so was Sodom as it is after its destruction. The hand was marked with everything that ever was, is or will be..

Sipurey Maasiot

**From THE SEVEN BEGGARS
RABBI NACHMAN'S LAST STORY**

THE LOST CHILDREN

There was once a mass flight of people from a certain country: everyone fled. As they were on their way they passed through a forest, and a boy and a girl got lost. One person lost a boy and another lost a girl. They were still little children of about the age of four or five. They had nothing to eat, and they cried and screamed because they were hungry.

Suddenly a beggar appeared with bags in which he was carrying bread. The two children approached him and began to follow him. He gave them bread, and they ate.

"How did you come to be here?" he asked.

"We don't know," they replied - they were only little children.

When he was about to leave, they asked him to take them with him. "But I don't want you to go with me," he said.

They noticed that he was blind. They wondered how he was able to find his way if he was blind. The fact that they wondered about this is itself unusual since they were only small children, but they were intelligent.

The beggar blessed them that they should be like him - that they should be elders like him - and then he left them some more bread and went on his way. The two children understood that God was watching over them and that He had sent them this blind beggar here in the forest to give them food.

When all the bread was finished, they again started crying for food. Night fell and they slept. In the morning they had nothing to eat, and they cried and screamed.

Again, a beggar appeared. He was deaf. They started talking to him, but he signaled with his hands that he could not hear. He also gave them bread and left. They wanted him to take them with him but he would not do so. He blessed them that they should be like him and also left them some bread and went on his way.

When all the bread was finished, they started to cry again. Along came a beggar with a speech defect. They started talking to him, but he stammered so badly that they did not know what he was saying. He could understand what they were saying but they didn't know what he was saying. He too gave them bread to eat and went on his way, blessing them that they should be like him.

Afterwards came a beggar with a crooked neck, and the same thing happened. Then a hunchback beggar came, and then a beggar with no hands, and then a beggar with no legs. Each one gave them bread and blessed them that they should be like him.

When all the bread was finished, they started making their way to an inhabited area. They came to a road and followed it until they came to a village. The children went into one of the houses, and the people had pity on them and gave them bread. They went into another house, where the people also gave them bread. They went from door to door and saw that they were having success.

They decided to stay together always. They made big beggars' sacks for themselves and went from door to door and attended all the celebrations - circumcisions and weddings. They then decided to move on and went to the larger cities, where they went from door to door. They went to the fairs and sat with the other beggars on the pavement with their charity plates. The two children became well known to all the beggars. They all knew them as the children that were lost in the forest.

Once there was a great fair in a large city. The beggars journeyed there and the young pair went with them. It occurred to the beggars that they should make a match between the pair and have them marry. As soon as the beggars began discussing the idea they all thought it a very good idea and agreed on the match.

But how were they to make the wedding? Since the king's birthday banquet was to be held shortly, they decided that all the beggars should go, and from the meat and bread they would beg for themselves they would make the wedding. And so it was: all the beggars went to the king's birthday celebrations and begged for bread and meat. They also collected all the leftover meat and party rolls from the feast. They went and dug a great pit large enough to hold a hundred people. They covered it with reeds, earth and dung and all went inside. There they made the wedding for these two children. They brought them under the marriage canopy and everyone was very happy.

Sipurey Maasiot

From THE SEVEN BEGGARS

THE STORY OF THE FIRST DAY THE BLIND BEGGAR

The bride and groom were also very happy indeed.

They started remembering God's kindnesses to them when they were in the forest. With tears of longing in their eyes, they wished that the first blind beggar who gave them bread in the forest could attend their wedding.

Just as they were longing and yearning for the blind beggar, he suddenly appeared and said:

I'm here! I've come to be with you at your wedding. And my wedding gift to you is that you should be old like me. At first I blessed you with this, but now I am giving it to you as an outright gift - that you should live a long life like me.

You think I'm blind, but I'm not blind at all. It is only that all the time in the whole world counts as no more than the blink of an eye for me.

(That was why he appeared blind, because he did not look at the world at all since all the time in the world did not count as more than the blink of an eye for him. Therefore the concept of looking at this world simply did not apply to him.)

I am very old, but I'm young - I am still a suckling child! I haven't even started to live at all. But even so, I am very old. Not only I say this. I have the agreement of the Great Eagle! Let me tell you the story.

Once, some men went out to sea in many boats. A great storm wind smashed the boats, but the men were saved. They came to a tower and they went inside. There they found all the food, drink, clothes and everything else they needed. They were provided with all the delights of the world.

They decided that each one should tell the oldest story he could remember - his earliest memory. There were old and young men there, and they honored the oldest among them by asking him to speak first.

"What can I tell you?" he said. "I remember when they cut the apple from the branch." Nobody knew what he was talking about. However, there were some wise men there who said, "This is certainly a very old story."

Next they honored the second oldest, who said: "Is that such an old story? I too remember that, but I also remember when the lamp was burning."

Some of the people there said, "This story is older than the first." They found it remarkable that this second one, who was younger than the first, remembered an older story.

Then the third oldest said, "I remember when the construction of the fruit started, when the fruit first began to form."

"This is an even older story," they said.

The fourth, who was still younger, said, "I also remember when they brought the seed to plant the fruit."

The fifth, who was even younger, said, "I also remember the sages who thought up and invented the seed."

The sixth, who was still younger, said, "I remember the taste of the fruit before the taste entered the fruit."

The seventh said, "I remember the smell of the fruit before it entered the fruit."

The eighth said, "I remember the appearance of the fruit before it was drawn into the fruit."

And I - said the blind beggar who was telling all this - .I remember all these stories, and I also remember complete nothingness."

"This is a very old story," they said, "older than all the others." They found it amazing that the baby remembered more than all of them.

Suddenly the Great Eagle came and knocked on the tower and said to them, "Stop being poor! Go back to your treasures!"

The Great Eagle told them to leave the tower in order of seniority. Whoever was older was to leave first. He conducted them all out of the tower, taking the baby out first. This was because in truth he was older than all of them. Whoever was younger, he took out first, while he took out the oldest of all last. This was because whoever was younger was older, while the oldest of them was younger than all of them!

The Great Eagle said to them, "Let me explain to you the stories each one told. The one who said he remembers when they cut the apple from the branch was saying that he could remember when

they cut his umbilical cord. His earliest memory went back to the moment he was born, when they cut his umbilical cord.

"The second one, who said he remembered when the lamp was burning, could remember when he was in the womb, when a lamp burned over his head.

"The one who said he could remember when the fruit began to form could remember when the body began to form, when the embryo first came into being.

"The one who remembered when they brought the seed to plant the fruit could remember when the drop came forth at the time of union.

"The one who remembered the sages who invented the seed could remember when the drop was still in the brain. For it is the brain that produces the drop. The one who remembered the taste was remembering the Nefesh-soul. The one who remembered the scent remembered the Ruach-spirit. The one who remembered the appearance was remembering the Neshamah-soul.

"And the baby who said he remembered complete nothingness is higher than all the others, because he remembers even what came before the Nefesh-Ruach-Neshamah, which is nothingness.

"Go back to your boats," said the Great Eagle. "They are your bodies, which were broken. They will be rebuilt. Now go back to them." He blessed them.

And to me, said the blind beggar who was telling all this, who had then been a baby, the Great Eagle said, "You come with me, because you are like me: you are very old but you are still very young, and you have not begun to live at all yet, even though you are very old. I am also like this, because I am very old yet I am still a suckling babe."

Thus I have the Great Eagle's promise of a long life. And now I am giving you my long life as a wedding gift.

This brought tremendous joy and happiness at the wedding celebration.

Sipurey Maasiot

From THE SEVEN BEGGARS

THE STORY OF THE SECOND DAY THE LOST GARDENER

On the second day of the seven-day wedding celebration, the couple remembered the second beggar, the deaf man who had saved their lives and given them bread. With tears of longing in their eyes, they wished they could have the deaf beggar with them at their wedding celebration.

At the very moment when they were longing for him to be there, he suddenly appeared and said, "Here I am!"

He fell on them and kissed them, saying:

Now I am giving you as a gift that you should be like me - that you should live the good life, just like me. At first I blessed you with this, and now I am giving you my good life as an outright gift in honor of your wedding.

You think I'm deaf? I'm not deaf at all. It is just that for me, the entire world doesn't amount to anything, so why should I listen to what they want? People cry and scream only because they want or lack something. Each person cries out over what he lacks. Even people's enjoyment is only because of some prior lack the fulfillment of which makes them happy.

But for me the entire world doesn't amount to anything, so why should I let their deficiencies enter my ears? I live the good life, and I lack nothing. Moreover, I have the agreement of the Land of Wealth that I live the good life.

His good life consisted of eating bread and drinking water.

The deaf beggar began to tell his story:

There is a land of great wealth and enormous treasures. Once the people gathered and everyone started boasting about the good life he lived. Each one gave a detailed account of his good life.

And I stood up and said to them: The good life I live is better than your good life. If you live such a good life, let me test you to see if you can save a certain country that had a garden in which there were fruits with all the tastes in the world. The garden also contained all the scents in the world and all kinds of sights with all the colors and all the flowers in the world. They were all in that garden.

In charge of the garden was a gardener, and it was because of him that the people in the country lived the good life. However, the gardener disappeared and everything in the garden was spoiled, because without him there was no-one to take care of it. Nevertheless, the people were still able to live off the wild plants that grew in the garden.

A cruel king then attacked the land. He was unable to harm the people directly, but he ruined the good life they enjoyed on account of the garden. He did not destroy the garden itself but he left three bands of slaves in the land and gave them orders what to do. They ruined all the tastes, so that everything tasted of putrid dead flesh. They ruined all the scents, so that everything had the foul stench of galbanum. And they ruined all the sights by darkening everyone's eyes, as if thick, heavy clouds were hanging over everything. The slaves accomplished all this by following the cruel king's instructions.

The deaf beggar continued: I said to the people of the Land of Wealth, "If you live the good life, let me see if you can save the country with the garden. And I am telling you: if you cannot save them, you too may suffer harm."

The people of the Land of Wealth journeyed there, and I went with them. During the journey, they all lived their good life because of their treasures. However, as soon as they approached the country with the garden, they felt a marked deterioration in everything they tasted, smelled and saw.

I said to them, "If now, before you have even entered the country, the tastes, smells and sights have already been spoiled, how will it be if you actually go in? How can you possibly save them?"

I gave them some of my bread and water, and in them they could once again taste all the delicious tastes they had enjoyed before they were spoiled.

The people of the country with the garden began to investigate what they could do to heal the ruined tastes, smells and sights. They came to the conclusion that the lost gardener through whom they had enjoyed the good life must be from one and the same root as the people of the Land of Wealth, who also enjoyed the good life. They therefore decided to send emissaries to the people of the Land of Wealth, who would surely save them.

On their way to the Land of Wealth these emissaries encountered the very people from that Land who were on their way to their own country.

"Where are you going?" asked the people of the Land of Wealth. "We are on our way to the Land of Wealth to ask them to save us," replied the emissaries.

"That is where we are from," they answered, "and we are on our way to you!"

The deaf beggar continued: I said to them, "You surely need me, because you will not be able to get there to save them. Stay here and let me go with the emissaries to save them."

I went with them to the country and entered a city. I saw how a few people would gather and start making witty remarks. More would join them, until there would be quite a gathering. They would tell jokes, until everyone was laughing and giggling. I listened carefully and heard that their jokes were obscene. One of them would make an obscene remark and then a second would give it an even subtler twist, while others would laugh and enjoy the fun.

I went to another city and saw two men quarreling over some business affair. They went to court, and the court ruled in favor of one and against the other. But as soon as they left the court, they started quarreling again and said they did not like this court's decision but wanted to go to a different court. They argued their cases in the second court, but then one of them got into an argument with somebody else and went with him to yet another court. Everybody there was arguing and quarreling and they chose all kinds of different courts, until the whole city was full of law courts.

I looked carefully and saw that this was because there was no truth there. One day a judge would show favor to one side, but afterwards a different judge would show favor to the other side, because they all took bribes and there was no truth anywhere.

Then I saw that they were immersed in sexual immorality to the point that it had become totally permissible in their eyes.

I told them that this was why all the tastes, scents and sights had been spoiled for them. The three bands of slaves left by the cruel king were destroying the country. They were going around talking obscenely among themselves, thereby spreading obscenity. This obscenity is what ruined all the tastes, so that everything had the foul taste of putrid dead flesh. Similarly, they were spreading bribery in the country, as a result of which their eyes were darkened and all the sights were spoiled, for "the bribe blinds the eyes of the wise" (Exodus 23:8) . Likewise they were spreading immorality all over the country, which spoiled the scents.

"You must therefore cleanse the country of these three sins. Hunt down those slaves and drive them out. When you rectify these three sins, not only will your taste, sight and smell be healed, but you will also be able to find the lost gardener."

They started cleansing the country of these three sins and searched for the wicked king's slaves. They would seize someone and ask him, "Where are you from?" As soon as they identified the wicked slaves, they drove them out and cleansed the country of those sins.

Meanwhile there was a commotion. A madman was going around saying that he was the gardener. Everyone thought he was insane, and they threw stones at him to drive him away. Could it possibly be that he really was the gardener? He was brought before the people who were in charge of cleansing the country, and I too was there, continued the deaf beggar.

And I said, "Certainly, this is the true gardener!"

Thus I have the agreement of the Land of Wealth that I live the good life, as I was able to rectify the country with the garden. And now I am giving you my good life as an outright gift.

This caused tremendous joy and delight at the wedding celebration.

Sipurey Maasiot

From THE SEVEN BEGGARS

THE STORY OF THE SIXTH DAY THE BEGGAR WITH NO HANDS

On the sixth day, as they celebrated happily, they longed to have the beggar with no hands with them. All of a sudden he appeared and said, "Here I am! I have come to join you at your wedding." He kissed them and said:

You think there's something wrong with my hands. But there's nothing in the least wrong with my hands. The truth is that I have great power in my hands. It's just that I don't use the power in my hands in this world, because I need it for another purpose. And I have the agreement of the Water Castle about this.

Once a number of men sat together, each boasting about the power he had in his hands. One of them boasted that he possessed such and such a power in his hands. Another boasted that he had a different power in his hands. Each one boasted about the unique power he had in his hands.

One boasted that he had such a mighty power in his hands that when he shot an arrow, he was able to draw it back to himself. Even after shooting the arrow, he could still bring it back.

I asked him, "Which kind of arrow can you bring back?" For there are ten kinds of arrows, because there are ten kinds of poisons. When someone wants to shoot an arrow, he smears it with some kind of poison. When the arrow is smeared with one kind of poison, it does one sort of damage, but when it is smeared with the second kind, it causes worse damage. Each of the ten kinds of poison is worse than the one before it, causing greater damage. This in itself is why there are ten kinds of arrows. The arrows themselves are basically all of one kind, but because of the different poisons smeared on them, they are called ten kinds of arrows.

That was why I asked him, "Which kind of arrow can you bring back?" I also asked if he could draw the arrow back only before it reached its intended victim or if he could also bring it back even after it had struck the victim. To this he replied that he could still bring the arrow back even after it had reached its target. But when I asked him what *kind* of arrow he could bring back, he answered that he could only bring back one particular kind.

The beggar with no hands continued: I said to him: "If so, you are unable to heal the queen's daughter, because you can only turn back and draw out one kind of arrow."

Another boasted that he had such a power in his hands that whenever he took or received from another, he was actually *giving* to them. His very taking and receiving were his way of giving, making him a master of charity.

I asked him, "What kind of charity do you give?" For there are ten kinds of charity. He replied that he gave a tenth as his tithe. "If so," I told him, "you cannot heal the queen's daughter since you are quite unable to reach her place, because you can penetrate only one of the fortified walls surrounding the place where she is."

One boasted that he had a unique power in his hands, because the world has officers, all of whom require wisdom, and he had the power to confer wisdom upon them by laying his hands on them.

"What kind of wisdom can you confer with your hands?" I enquired, since there are ten kinds of wisdom. "Such and such a kind," he replied. "If so," I told him, "you cannot heal the queen's daughter since you cannot take her pulse, because you only recognize one pulse. There are ten kinds of pulses, yet you recognize only one of them since you can confer only one kind of wisdom with your hands."

Another boasted that he had such a power in his hands that when a storm-wind blew, he could use his hands to restrain it and make it blow in moderation.

"Which wind can you hold in your hands?" I enquired, because there are ten kinds of winds. "Such and such a wind," he replied.

"If so," I said, "you cannot heal the queen's daughter, because you can play her only a single melody." There are ten kinds of melody, and she is healed through melody. But you can play only one of the ten melodies.

"And what power do *you* possess?" they all asked.

"I can do what you cannot do," I replied. "All the nine tenths that each of you is incapable of accomplishing, I have the power to accomplish."

For once a certain king desired the queen's daughter. He tried everything possible to capture her, until eventually he succeeded. Once the king had a dream in which she stood over him and killed him. He awoke and the dream went deep into his heart. He called all the dream interpreters and they gave the obvious interpretation: that she would kill him.

The king did not know what to do with her. The thought of killing her pained him, yet the thought of sending her away hurt him even more, because he had made such efforts to capture her and now someone else would take her. Moreover, if he sent her away and she passed into someone else's hands, his dream about her killing him was even likelier to come true as she would be with someone else. Yet he was also afraid to keep her with him because of the dream.

The king had no idea what to do to her, and meanwhile his love for her turned ever more sour every time he thought about the dream. Likewise the love she had for him turned ever sourer until she came to hate him, and she fled.

The king sent after her to try to find her. He was informed that she was now in the Water Castle - a castle with ten walls, one inside the other, all made of water. Even the floor of the Castle was made of water. There were trees and fruits there, all made of water. There is no need to describe the unique beauty of this castle. A castle made of water is certainly quite unique. To enter the castle would be quite impossible, since anyone who tried to enter would drown.

When the queen's daughter fled, she reached this Water Castle and began circling around it. The king was informed that she was circling the castle, and he went with his army to capture her. When the queen's daughter saw this, she decided to run inside the castle. She preferred to drown than to allow the king to catch her and force her to stay with him. There was also a chance that she might succeed in entering the Water Castle and be saved.

When the king saw her fleeing to the water, he said, "So be it!" and gave instructions to shoot her. "If she dies, she dies!"

They shot at her and all the ten kinds of arrows smeared with the ten kinds of poisons struck her. She fled to the castle and went inside. There were gates in the fortified walls of water. She passed through until she had penetrated all ten walls of the Water Castle. She came deep inside and then collapsed, sapped of all strength.

The beggar with no hands continued: And I heal her! Someone who does not have all the ten kinds of charity in his hand cannot penetrate the ten fortified walls, because he will drown. The king and his army pursued her and drowned. But I have the power to penetrate all ten fortified walls of water. These walls of water are the waves of the sea that "stood like a wall" (Exodus 14:29) . The winds lift the waves of the sea, making them stand. These waves, which are the ten walls, are there constantly, but it is the winds that lift them and keep them standing.

I can enter all ten fortified walls, and I have the power to draw out all the ten kinds of arrows from the queen's daughter. With my ten fingers, I can recognize all the ten kinds of pulses: each of my ten fingers knows one of the ten kinds of pulses. And I can heal her with the ten kinds of melody.

Thus it is that I heal her. This is proof that I have such great power in my hands. And now I am giving you this as a gift!

This created the greatest happiness and rejoicing.

Sipurey Maasiot

TIKKUN HAKLALI THE GENERAL REMEDY

Rabbi Nachman gave the name "General Remedy" - in Hebrew, *Tikkun HaKlali* - to a selection of Ten Psalms that he recommended for recital as a general spiritual remedy bringing inner purity and joy as well as many other benefits, and in particular as the remedy for a chance emission of seed.

The Ten Psalms are: Psalms 16, 32, 41, 42, 59, 77, 90, 105, 137 and 150.

They should be recited in the same order in which they appear in the Book of Psalms (Likutey Moharan II, 92) .

An English translation of the Ten Psalms incorporating traditional rabbinic explanation of the text is printed below (pp. 488-527) together with an English transliteration of the original Hebrew.

* * *

Ten Kinds of Song

The Ten Psalms correspond to the Ten Kinds of Song. These ten melodies are the true remedy. This is the *Tikkun HaKlali* - the General Remedy. There is a specific remedy for each sin, but this is the General Remedy. Go out and spread the teaching of the Ten Psalms to everyone.

Sichot Haran #141

* * *

The General Remedy

There are places so fine and narrow that no remedy has the power to penetrate them except through the General Remedy, which injects healing into even the narrowest, finest places. First it is necessary to apply the General Remedy, and through this all the individual flaws will automatically be rectified.

It is true that the General Remedy is higher and more exalted than all the individual remedies. But all the different remedies depend on the mind and brain: it is necessary to draw purity from the mind and brain. And the only way to elevate the mind is through the General Remedy. This is why it is first necessary to go to the higher level, the General Remedy, in order to rectify the mind and brain, and through this everything else is automatically rectified.

Likutey Moharan I, 29

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Chance emissions

One who experiences a chance emission of seed should recite the Ten Psalms on the same day. He need then have no further worries about the spiritual damage that can be caused by such emissions, because any damage will certainly be repaired through the recital of these Ten Psalms. This is a very great remedy.

Likutey Moharan II, 92

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Be very careful to immerse in a mikveh (ritual pool) on the same day that you have an unclean experience. It is best to immerse immediately, but if you are unable to immerse first thing in the morning, do so at any time during the day, even towards evening. It is very important to immerse on the same day.

Everyone experiences a chance emission at some time or other. I call you to bear witness that these Ten Psalms are a very effective remedy: they are the complete remedy.

Some people experience such emissions because of excess eating and drinking, or as a result of fatigue and exhaustion. Others have them because of sleeping in a bad position. Such occurrences are nothing to worry about - they are like bedwetting by an infant.

Sometimes people are guarded from on high and protected from such experiences. Others are spared because of their destiny. Sometimes a person might dream that he is falling and suddenly wake up. This is a sign that he was protected from on high.

Others experience emissions because of their bad thoughts. This literally creates impure forces. But even in such cases recital of the Ten Psalms will do much to remedy the spiritual damage.

Many great Tzaddikim tried to discover this remedy and labored hard to find it. Some had no idea at all of the true remedy. Others began to grasp it, only to be taken from the world before they could grasp it completely. But God has helped me gain complete understanding of this matter. The remedy of the Ten Psalms is entirely original. It is a most wonderful and awesome remedy.

It is certainly best if you can immerse in a mikveh and then say the Ten Psalms. But even if you are sick or traveling and unable to immerse, reciting the Psalms alone is a great remedy. If you can say the Psalms with devotion and feeling, it is best. But even just saying the words helps.

This remedy has not been revealed since the time of creation.

Sichot Haran #141

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Repentance helps for all sins including the spilling of seed in vain, no matter how many times a person may have done it.

True repentance means never again repeating the sin from now on. You must return to the same place and situation as before in order to be tested. When you now restrain yourself and break your desire, holding back from what you did before, this is true repentance.

Sichot Haran #71

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Rabbi Nachman's promise

Bear witness to my words. When my days are over and I leave this world, I will still intercede for anyone who comes to my grave, says these Ten Psalms and gives a penny to charity. No matter how great his sins, I will do everything in my power, spanning the length and breadth of creation, to save him and cleanse him....

I am very positive in everything I say. But I am most positive in regard to the great benefit of these Ten Psalms.

Sichot Haran #141

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THE TEN PSALMS ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Prayer before reciting the Psalms:

Our God and God of our fathers:

Who chooses King David and his descendants; Who chooses songs and praises. Please turn to me in mercy and accept the psalms I am about to say as if King David himself were saying them, and let his merit protect us.

There is merit in every verse of the psalms and in every word, every letter, vowel and musical note, and in all the holy names spelled out by the first and last letters of each Hebrew word.

Let this merit stand in our favor to atone for our sins and transgressions, cut down our enemies and accusers on High, and destroy all the thorns and thistles surrounding the Supernal Rose. Send down blessing from Your exalted place to all the levels of our soul and spirit, to purify us from our sins, forgive our transgressions and atone for our rebellion, just as You forgave King David who recited these Psalms before You. "And God will cause your sin to pass away and you will not die" (II Samuel 12:13) .

Do not take us from this world before our time. Give us a full life throughout our span of seventy years so that we may make amends for all the wrong we have done.

May the merit of King David protect us . Be patient with us until we return to You in perfect repentance.

Grant us blessing from Your treasury of open-handed generosity, as it is written: "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy" (Exodus 33:19) . Just as we sing before You in this world, grant us the privilege of singing before You, God, in the world to come. Through our recital of the Psalms , let pleasant song break forth with rejoicing and exultation. Let glory be given to Israel , and splendor and beauty shall be in the House of God. Bring it speedily in our days. Amen.

Before reciting the Tikkun HaKlali , it is good to say the following:

In saying these Ten Psalms I bind myself to all the true Tzaddikim in this generation and all the true Tzaddikim who have departed, "the holy ones who are in the earth," and especially our holy Rebbe, Tzaddik, foundation of the world, the "flowing brook, source of wisdom," Rabbi Nachman the son of Feige, may his merit protect us, who revealed this remedy.

Come let us sing to God, let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; let us sing to Him joyously in song. For God is a great God and a great King over all gods (Psalms 95:1-3) .

Before beginning the Psalms , say:

I prepare my mouth to give thanks and praise to my Creator, to unify the Holy One , blessed be He , and His Indwelling Presence in awe and love, through the Hidden and Concealed One, in the name of all Israel .

Psalm 16

1. A sweet song of David, a crown for his head. Protect me, God, for I take refuge in You.
2. Community of Israel , say to God: You are my Lord. The goodness that You show me is not my due from You, it is because of Your love.
3. Because of the holy ones who rest in the earth and those who were firm in their fear of God. All my desires are fulfilled through their merit.
4. But as for those who hurry after other gods, their afflictions will be multiplied. I will not pour out libations of blood like theirs, I will not bear the names of their gods upon my lips.
5. God, my lot and my portion, cup of my abundance, You have guided me to choose a goodly portion: faith in God.
6. My lot has fallen in places of pleasantness, mine is an inheritance of grace and beauty.
7. As for me, I will bless God, for He guides me to choose life and follow His ways. Even in the night-time, my reins give me counsel in the fear and love of God.
8. I have placed God before me always. He is always at my right hand: I will not stumble.
9. Therefore my heart is joyous, my soul, glory of my being, exults. My very flesh will dwell secure.
10. For You will not cast my soul into hell, You will not allow Your devoted one to see destruction.
11. You will teach me the path of life and grant me the ultimate contentment and joy, the joy of Your countenance, the eternal bliss at Your right hand.

Psalm 32

1. A song of David to teach wisdom.

Happy is he whose sin is forgiven and his transgression covered over.
2. Happy is the man whose wrong-doing God will not hold against him, because he has truly repented and he has no intention of deceiving either God or man.
3. As long as I kept silent and did not confess my sins before You, I became worn down in my very essence, groaning all the day in fear of punishment.

4. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me, my vitality turned as dry as the parchedness of summer. Selah.

5. Therefore I will acknowledge my transgression; I do not hide my wrongdoing. I said I will acknowledge my sins before God: And You have forgiven my sin and transgression. Selah.

6. Let everyone who is devoted to You offer this prayer at the moment You are to be found:

That when punishments are sent to scour him, at least they should not come upon him like a swelling flood of water.

7. You are my refuge; You guard me from the enemy terror. You surround me with the joys of deliverance. Selah.

8. You have said: I will teach you wisdom and light up the path that you should travel. With gestures of My eye will I give you counsel.

9. Don't be like a horse or a stubborn mule which do not understand, which do not distinguish between one who wants to help them and one who wants to harm them.

Even when you groom and adorn them, you must curb them with bridle and halter so they will not come close and injure you.

10. The wicked man, who like them, chaffs at suffering, has many troubles. But one who trusts in God, knowing that all the suffering God sends is intended to cleanse and refine him, will be surrounded with love.

11. Take joy in God, the source of this love. Exult, you righteous, and shout for joy all who are upright in their heart.

Psalm 41

1. For the leader of the singers. A song of David.

2. Happy is he who cares for the poor and the sick. On the day of evil God will rescue him.

3. God will guard him and give him life. Throughout the world he will be considered happy. You will not subject him to the desire of his enemies.

4. God will sustain him when he is on his sickbed. Even when he is ill, You attend him and turn him from one side to the other.

5. But as for me, whom no- one comes to visit, I have said: God, have pity. Heal my soul for I have sinned against You .

6. My enemies speak evil against me: "When will he die and his name be destroyed?"
7. Even if my enemy comes to visit , his protestations of concern are false. As he sits there, his heart collects malicious thoughts which he will then go out and spread.
8. All those who hate me whisper together against me and plot evil against me.
9. They say how "All his evil has now come back to haunt him in the form of his illness, and now that he has succumbed, he will never get up again."
10. Even the man with whom I was at peace, whom I trusted and to whom I gave my bread, has also surrounded me with a great ambush.
11. But You, O God, take pity on me and raise me up and I shall repay them.
12. By the fact of Your healing me I will know that You have accepted me, if my enemy will not triumph over me.
13. As for me, it is in my purity that You have supported me and established me before You for ever.
14. When I am healed I will praise You : Blessed be the Lord, God of Israel, from eternity to eternity. Amen. Amen.

Psalm 42

1. For the leader of the singers. A song of the sons of Korach. To teach wisdom.
2. As a deer pants for streams of water, so my soul cries out for You, O God.
3. My soul thirsts for God, the living God: when will I come and appear in the presence of God?
4. My tears have been my bread day and night as my enemies taunt me all day long asking "Where is your God?"
5. This I remember and I pour out my soul within me: how I would go to Jerusalem with the throngs for the festivals, how I would walk in the procession to the House of God with shouts of joy and thanks to God amidst the festival crowds.
6. Why are you downcast, my soul? Why do you groan within me? Have hope in God. There will come a time when I will give thanks for the salvation which will come from His radiant presence.

7. My God, my soul is downcast in this exile, as I remember Your miracles in the land of the Jordan where the River Jordan became dry land, at the peaks of Mount Hermon where You passed over our wrongdoing, and at the lowly mountain Sinai where You forgave us the sin of the golden calf.

8. Yet in our present exile, deep water cries out to deep water, one sorrow cries out after another, with the cry from the channels through which You send punishments, which are poured out like water. All Your breakers and waves have swept over me.

9. With the light of day let God command His kindness to be revealed. Even in the night of exile, may His presence rest with me. This is my prayer to the God of my life.

10. I say to God, my Rock, why have You forgotten me? Why must I go about in dark gloom under the oppression of the enemy?

11. I feel it like murder and the pain of death in my bones when my oppressors taunt me and say to me all day, "Where is your God?"

12. Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why do you groan within me? Have hope in God, for I will yet have cause to acknowledge Him, my salvation, the light of my face and my God.

Psalm 59

1. For the leader of the singers. A precious song of David. "Do not destroy." A prayer composed when Saul sent messengers to wait at the house in order to kill him.

2. Rescue me from my enemies, O my God, give me strength against them that rise up against me.

3. Rescue me from those who act treacherously. Save me from bloodthirsty men.

4. For they are lying in wait for my very soul. Brazen men are gathered against me - and not because of any sin or transgression of mine, O God, You know.

5. Without my having wronged them they come running against me and have readied themselves to kill me. Awaken, come towards me and see!

6. And You, Lord God of hosts, the God of Israel, awaken and deal with them just as You deal with all the nations. Show no favor to all who deal treacherously and falsely. Selah.

7. They oppress me in the day; then they are back in the evening. They howl like dogs and go about the city to prevent me escaping.

8. All through the day they pour forth slander from their mouths, words sharp as swords are on their lips, for they say, "Who can hear us?"

9. But You, O God, laugh at them, as You scorn all the nations.
10. In the face of the enemy power, I wait for You. For God is my fortress.
11. God, Who always shows me love, will send me help in time. He will let me see what I want to happen to those who lie in wait for me.
12. Do not kill them, lest their being dead puts them out of mind, and my people will forget. Put them to flight with Your power and put their fortunes into decline, God our Shield, my Master.
13. The sin of their mouth is the word of their lips. They will be trapped through their pride and men will tell of the curse and the weakness that befell them, and people will learn.
14. Destroy them in Your wrath, destroy them and they will be no more, and all will know that God rules over the people of Jacob, God rules to the ends of the earth. Selah.
15. The wicked return in the evening, they howl like dogs and roam the city.
16. They wander round in search of food. Until they are satiated they will not go to sleep. My enemies are like dogs in their search for my harm.
17. But when You save me I will sing in praise of Your strength, and I will exult in the morning over Your love. For You have been a tower of strength and a refuge for me on my day of trouble.
18. You are my strength, to You I will sing, for God is my tower of strength and a God of love to me.

Psalm 77

1. For the leader of the singers. On the sufferings of Israel : A song of Asaph.
2. I lift my voice to God and cry out to Him, I lift my voice to God and He will turn His ears to hear me.
3. On my day of suffering, Master, I have sought for You . In the night of my exile, my hand - the suffering dealt me - is long drawn out, it does not subside. My soul refuses to be comforted.
4. I remember God; I remember the love He showed me in my time of favor, and I sigh. I reflect on those former kindnesses and my soul languishes. Selah.
5. You have gripped the lids of my eyes. I have no rest from my sorrows. I feel smitten and broken and I cannot speak.
6. I have considered the good You did in the days of old, the years of the ages past.

7. In this night of exile, I remember my song - the song I sang in the Sanctuary. I ponder in my heart and my spirit searches out the ways of God, and I ask:
8. How can it be that God will cast off for ever and not show favor once again as He did in the past?
9. Has His mercy disappeared for ever? Has He made a final decree for all the generations to come that He will not return from His anger?
10. Has God forgotten how to show graciousness? Has He shut off His love because of His wrath?
11. But I say, it is to inspire us with awe and bring us to repent that the right hand of the Supreme God has changed from bestowing good.
12. I remember the works of God, I remember Your wonders to us in former times.
13. I reflect on Your actions and I meditate on Your deeds.
14. God, Your way is to sanctify Your Name by executing justice among the nations. Which of their gods is as great as God?
15. You are the God that works wonders. You have made known Your strength among the nations.
16. With an outstretched arm You redeemed Your people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah.
17. The waters of the Red Sea saw You, God, the waters saw You and were afraid. The deeps were thrown into turmoil.
18. The clouds poured forth water, the heavens emitted a cry, and Your arrows flew in the camp of the Egyptians to destroy them.
19. The sound of Your thundering was like a whirlwind. Flashes of lightening lit up the world. The earth trembled and quaked.
20. Your path was in the sea, Your way was in abundant waters, and Your steps were not visible, because the waters rolled back at once to drown the Egyptians.
21. You led Your people as a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

Psalm 90

1. A prayer of Moses, man of God. Lord, You have been a refuge for us in every generation.
2. Before the mountains were born and before You formed the earth and the world, from eternity and for ever You are God.

3. You subdue a man ' s confidence and strength to the point where he is ground down and contrite, and You say: "Return to Me, children of man."
4. For a thousand years are in Your eyes like yesterday when it is past and like a watch in the night.
5. The stream of men's lives is a mere sleep. In the morning he sprouts forth like grass.
6. In the morning he flourishes and sprouts forth. But in the evening he is cut down and withers.
7. For in Your wrath we are destroyed. We are confounded by Your anger.
8. You place our sins before You and our hidden deeds in the light of Your countenance.
9. For all our days are passed and gone under the glare of Your anger. We have used up our years and they have passed like a fleeting sound.
10. The days of our years are seventy years, if we have exceptional strength perhaps eighty years, and all their pride and grandeur is mere toil and iniquity, it is gone quickly and we fly away.
11. In such a life, who can acquire any understanding of the strength of Your anger in order to feel the awe which You command - and according to the awe which You command, so is the power of Your wrath against sinners.
12. According to the number of our days, short as they are, teach us while they are with us, and then we will acquire a heart of wisdom.
13. Return from the heat of Your anger - how long will You be angry? Take pity on Your servants.
14. Satisfy us with Your love on the morning of our redemption, and we will exult and rejoice all our days, even over the troubles we have endured.
15. Give us joy according to the number of days You afflicted us and the years we have seen evil.
16. Let Your work be revealed to Your servants and let the splendor of Your glory be revealed to their children.
17. Let the pleasantness of the presence of the Lord our God rest upon us, and establish the work of our hands - the Temple . Establish the work of our hands - our labor - for good and for blessing.

Psalm 105

1. Give thanks to God, call upon His name. Make known His acts among the nations.
2. Sing to Him, play instruments for Him. Tell of all His miracles.

3. Take pride in His holy Name . Take pride that you have such a God. The heart of those who seek for God will rejoice.
4. Search for God and for the revelation of His might. Seek out His face always.
5. Remember the miracles which He wrought, His wonders and the judgments which He executed upon the nations through the utterance of His mouth.
6. Remember this, you who are the seed of Abraham His servant, the children of Jacob, you, His chosen ones.
7. He is the Lord our God , Whose judgments hold sway throughout the earth.
8. God has remembered the eternal covenant of love He made with His children, the word He commanded to endure to the thousandth generation.
9. This covenant He struck with Abraham; it was His oath to Isaac.
10. He established it as a statute for Jacob, an eternal covenant with Israel ;
11. Saying: "To you I will give the land of Canaan as the portion of your inheritance."
12. The covenant was made when our ancestors were small in number, they had scarcely dwelled in the land.
13. They wandered from nation to nation, from one kingdom to another people.
14. He did not let any man oppress them, even kings He rebuked for their sake.
15. "Do not touch My anointed ones, and do not harm My prophets."
16. In order to fulfill His word and exile His people to Egypt , He decreed a famine in the land, and the staff on which the people depended - their bread - He broke completely.
17. Before them He sent a man - Joseph, who was sold as a slave.
18. The Egyptians made him suffer by putting his legs in fetters. His very soul was in chains.
19. Until the time that God's decree came to pass that the Children of Israel should go down to Egypt , God's command was that Joseph should be refined through the tests he endured in Egypt .
20. Pharaoh the king sent to loosen his fetters, a ruler over nations it was who released him.
21. He appointed him master over his house and gave him power over all his possessions,

22. To bind his ministers to Joseph's soul with ties of love, and he taught wisdom to Pharaoh's wise men.
23. Israel came to Egypt : Jacob dwelled in the land of the descendants of Ham.
24. God caused His nation to be abundantly fruitful, and He made them stronger than their oppressors.
25. He turned their hearts to hate His people and to conspire against His servants.
26. He sent His servant Moses, and Aaron, His chosen one.
27. They performed among them the words of God's signs, miracles in the land of Ham .
28. God sent darkness, and it became dark: the signs God sent were faithful in their mission, they did not rebel against His word.
29. He turned their waters to blood and caused their fish to die.
30. Their land swarmed with frogs, even in the chambers of their kings.
31. He spoke, and wild animals came. There were lice throughout their borders.
32. He turned their rains into hail, and a flaming fire descended over their land.
33. The hail smote their vines and their fig-trees and broke the trees within their borders.
34. God spoke, and the locusts came, different kinds and without number.
35. They ate up all the plants in their country and ate up the fruit of their land.
36. He smote every first-born in their land, the flower of all their strength.
37. And he brought out the Children of Israel with silver and gold. In all their tribes no- one stumbled through sin.
38. Egypt rejoiced at their going out, because the fear of Israel had fallen upon them.
39. He spread out a cloud for protection, and sent a pillar of fire to light up the night.
40. The people asked and he brought quails; He satisfied them with the bread of Heaven, the Manna.
41. He opened a rock and water flowed forth, in the parched desert it ran like a river.
42. For He remembered His holy word that He had spoken to Abraham His servant.

43. He brought out His people in gladness, His chosen ones in joy.
44. He gave them the lands of the nations and they inherited the fruit of the labor of the peoples.
45. All this in order that they should keep His statutes and guard His teachings. Halleluyah .

Psalm 137

1. By the waters of Babylon , there we sat and wept as we remembered Zion .
2. On willows there in her midst we hung up our harps.
3. For there our captors asked us to sing, those that scorned us asked us to be happy, saying "Sing us some of the songs of Zion ."
4. How can we sing the song of God on foreign soil?
5. If I forget you, Jerusalem , let my right hand forget its skills.
6. Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth if I do not remember you, if I do not place Jerusalem above my chief joy.
7. Remember, O God, what the children of Edom did on the day of the destruction of Jerusalem , saying "Raze it, raze it completely to its foundation."
8. Pride of Babylon , you are destined to be destroyed. Happy is he that will repay you for the way you treated us.
9. Happy is the man who will sieze your little ones and dash them against the rock.

Psalm 150

1. Praise God. Praise God in His holy sanctuary. Praise Him in the firmament of His power.
2. Praise Him for His mighty acts; praise Him and tell of His abundant greatness.
3. Praise Him with the blast of the horn. Praise Him with the harp and the lyre.
4. Praise Him on the drums and with dance. Praise Him with stringed instruments and with the flute.
5. Praise Him with the clear-sounding cymbals. Praise Him with the loud-toned cymbals.

6. Let everything that has breath praise God! Halleluyah!

After finishing the Psalms say:

If only the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion , when God will return the captivity of His people! Jacob will rejoice; Israel will exult. The salvation of the righteous is from God, Who will help them and rescue them. He will rescue them from the wicked and save them, for they trusted in Him.

**THE TEN PSALMS
ENGLISH TRANSLITERATION**

Before beginning the Psalms , say:

Hareini m'zamen et pi, l'hodot u-l'hallel u'l-sha-bei-ach et bor-ee: L'sheim yichud Kudsha B'rich Hu u'sh-chintei, bid'chilu urchimu, al yedei ha-hu tamir v'ne-e-lam b'sheim kol Yisrael:

Psalm 16

1. Mich-tam l'Da-vid, Sham-rei-ni Eil ki chasiti vach:
2. Amart la-Adonai, Adonai atah, tova-ti bal a-le-cha:
3. Lik-doshim asher ba-aretz heimah, v'a-di-rei kol chef-tzi vam:
4. Yir-bu atz-vo-tam acher ma-ha-ru, bal a-sich nis-kei-hem mi-dam, u-val esah et shmo-tam al s'fat-tai:
5. Adonai m'nat chel-ki v'cho-si, atah tomich go-ra-li:
6. Chavalim naflu li ban-i-mim, af nachalat shafra alai:
7. A-varech et Adonai asher y'a-tzani, af lei-lot yisruni chilyotai:
8. Shiviti Adonai l'negdi Tamid, ki mi-mi-ni bal emot:
9. Lachen samach libi, vayagel kvodi, af b'sari yishkon la-vetach:
10. Ki lo ta-a-zov naf-shi lish-ol, lo titen chasidcha lir-ot sha-chat:
11. To-di-eini orach chayim, sova semachot et panecha, n'i-mot bi'mincha netzach:

Psalm 32

1. L'David maskil, ashrei nesui peshah k'sui cha-ta-ah:
2. Ashrei adam lo yach-shov Adonai lo avon, Ve-ain b'rucho r'miyah:
3. Ki he-che-rashti balu atzamai b'sha-a-gati kol hayom:
4. Ki yo-mam va-lai-lah tich-bad alai yade-chah, neh-pach l'shadi b-charvonei kayitz selah:
5. Cha-tati o-di-a-cha va-a-voni lo chisiti, amarti odeh alei fesha-ai l'Adonai v'atah nasatah avon chatati selah:
6. Al zot yit-palel kol Chasid eilecha l'eit m'tzoh, rak l'she-tef mayim rabim ei-lav lo ya-gi-u:
7. Atah seter li, mi-tzar titz-reini, ranei faleit t'so-ve-veini selah:
8. Askil-chah v'orchah b'derech zu teileich ee-a-tzah a -le-chah eini:
9. Al ti-hi-yu k'sus, k'fered ein haveen, b'meseg varesen edyo liv-lom, bal k'rov ey-le-chah:
10. Rabim machovim la-ra-sha, v'ha-bo-tei-ach b-Adonai chesed y'so-ve-ve-nu:
11. Simchu b-Adonai v'gilu tzaddikim, v'harninu kol yishrei lev:

Psalm 41

1. Lam-na-tzei-ach miz-mor l'David:
2. Ashrei maskil el dal, b'yom ra-ah y'mal-tei-hu Adonai:
3. Adonai yish-m'rei-hu viy-chai-yeihu, v'ushar ba-a-retz v'al titnei-hu b'nefesh oy'vav:
4. Adonai yis-adenu al eres d'vay kol mish-kavo hafach-ta v -chal-yo:
6. Ani a -marti Adonai cha-nei-ni, re-fa-ah naf-shi ki chata-ti lach:
6. Oy-vai yomru ra lee, matai yamut v'avad shmo:
7. V'im ba lir-ot shav y'daber, libo yik-batz aven lo, yei-tzei la-chutz y'daber:
8. Yachad alai yit-la-cha-shu kol sonay, alai yach-sh-vu ra-ah lee:

9. D'var bli-ya-al yatzuk bo, va-a-sher shachav lo yosif la-kum:
10. Gam ish shlomi asher ba-tach-ti bo o-chel lachmi higdil alai a-kev:
11. V'atah Adonai chanei-ni v'ha-ki-mei-ni, va-a-shal-mah lahem:
12. B'zot ya-dati ki cha-fatz-ta bi, ki lo ya-ree-a oy-vee a-lai:
13. Va-ani b'tumi ta-machta bi, va-ta-tzi-vei-ni l'fa-nechah l'olam:
14. Baruch Adonai Elohei Yisrael mei-ha-olam v-ad ha-olam amen, v'amen:

Psalm 42

1. Lam-na-tzei-ach maskil livnei Korach:
2. K'a-yal ta-a-roq al a-fi-kei mayim, kein naf'shi ta-a-roq ei-le-chah Elohim;
3. Tzam-ah nafshi I-Elohim l'Eil chai, matai avoh v'ei-ra-eh p'nei Elohim:
4. Hay-ta li dim-ati lechem yomam va-lailah, be-emor ei-lai kol hayom a-yeih Elohechah:
5. Eileh ez-k'ra v'esh-p'cha alai nafshi ki e-e-vor basach, eda-deim ad beit Elohim b'kol rinah v'todah ha'mon cho-geig:
6. Mah tish-to-chachi nafshi va'te'hemi alai, ho-chi-li I-Eilohim ki od odenu yeshuot panav:
7. Elohai, alai nafshi tish-to-chach, al kein ez-kar-chah mei-e-retz yarden, v'chermonim, mei-har mitzar:
8. T'hom el t'hom koreih l'kol tzi-no-rechah, kol mish-ba-re-chah v'ga-lechah alai avaru:
9. Yomam y'tza-veh Adonai chasdo, u-va-lailah shi-roh imi, tefi -lah l'Eil chayai:
10. Omra l'Eil sal-ee, lamah sh'chach-tani lamah koder eileich b'lachatz oyeiv:
11. B'retzach b'atzmo-tai, cher-f'uni tzo-re-rai, b'omrum ei-lai kol hayom a-yeih Elohechah:
12. Ma tish'to-cha-chi naf'shi umah teheme alai, hochili I-Eilohim, ki od odenu, yeshu'ot panai, v'Eilohai:

Psalm 59

1. Lam'na-tzei-ach al tash-cheit le-David michtam, bishloach Sha'ul va-yish-m'ru et habayit la-hamito:
2. Hatzi-lei-ni mei-oy-vai Elohai, mi-mit-ko-m'mai t'sag-vei-ni:
3. Ha-tzi-lei-ni mi-poalai aven, u ' mei- anshei damim ho-shee-eini:
4. Ki hi-nei arvu l ' nafshi , yaguru alai azim, lo fish-i v'lo chatati Adonai:
5. B'li avon y'ru-tzun viy-ko-na-nu, oo-rah likrati ur'eih:
6. V'atah Adonai Elohim Tz'va-ot Elohei Yisrael, hakitzah lifkod kol ha-goyim, al tachon kol bogdei a-ven selah:
7. Ya-shuvu la-erev, ye-hemu cha- ka -lev, vi-so-ve-vu ir:
8. Hi-nei ya-bi-oon b'feehem, charavot b'sifto-teihem ki mi sho-mei-ah:
9. V'atah Adonai, tis-chak la-mo, til-ag l'chol goyim:
10. Uzo eilecha eshborah ki Elohim mis-gabi:
11. Elohei chasdi y'kad-mei-ni, Elohim yar-ei-ni v'sho-r'rai:
12. Al ta-har-geim pen yish-k'chu ami, ha-ni-eimo v'cheil-chah v'ho-ri-dei-mo ma-gi'neinu Adonai:
13. Cha-tat pi-mo d'var s'fa-teimo v'yi-lachdu vi-g'onum, u-mei-alah u-mi-kachash y'sa-pei-ru:
14. Ka-lei v'cheimah, kalei v'ei-nei-mo v'yeydu ki Elohim mosheil b'Ya-acov l'afsei ha'aretz selah:
15. V'ya-shuvu la-erev, yehemu chakalev viy-sovevu ir:
16. Heimah y'-nec-oon le-e-chol im lo yis-b'oo va-ya-linu:
17. Va-ani ashir u-ze-chah, va-a-ra-nein la-boker chas-de-chah, ki ha-yita misgav li, u-ma-nos b'yom tzar li:
18. Oози ei-le-chah a-za-mei-rah, ki Elohim misgabi Elohei chasdi:

Psalm 77

1. Lam-na-tzei-ach al y'doo-tun l'Asaf mizmor:

2. Koli el Elohim v'etz-a-kah, koli el Elohim v'ha-a-zeen eilay:
3. B'yom tza-ra-ti Adonai da-rashti, yadi lailah nig-rah v'lo ta-fug, mei-anah hi-nachem nafshi:
4. Ez-k'rah Elohim v'e-he-maya, a-sicha v'tit-a-teif ruchi selah:
5. A-chaz-tah sh'murot eiy-nai nif-amti v'lo adaber:
6. Chi-shavti yamim mi-kedem, sh'not olamim:
7. Ez-k'rah n'ginati ba-lai-lah, im l'vavi a-si-chah, va-y'-cha-pes ruchi:
8. Ha-I'olamim yiznach Adonai v'lo yosif lir-tzot od:
9. He'afes la'netzach chasdo, gamar omer le-dor va-dor:
10. Ha-sha-chach chanot Eil, im kafatz b'af rachamav selah:
11. Va-o-mar cha-loti hee, sh'not y'min el-yon:
12. Ez-kor ma-a-I'lei Yah, ki ez-k'ra mi-kedem pil-e-cha:
13. V'ha-giti b'chol pa-a-le-chah u-va-a-li-lo-te-chah a-si-chah:
14. Elohim ba-kodesh dar-ke-chah, mi Eil gadol k-Eilohim:
15. Atah ha-Eil oseh feleh, ho-dah-tah ba-a-mim oo-zechah:
16. Ga-al-tah viz-ro-ah a-me-chah, b'nei Ya'acov v'Yoseph selah:
17. Ra-u-chah mayim Elohim, ra-u-chah mayim yachilu af yir-g'zu t'ho-mot:
18. Zormu mayim avot, kol natnu sh'cha-kim af cha-tza-tze-chah yit-ha-la-chu:
19. Kol ra-amchah ba-galgal hei-ee-ru v'ra-kim tei-veil rag-zah va-tir'ash ha'a-retz:
20. Ba-yam dar-ke-chah, u-shvil-chah b'mayim rabim, v'ik-vo-te-chah lo no-da-oo:
21. Nachita cha -tzon amechah, b'yad Moshe v'Aharon:

Psalm 90

1. T'filah I'Moshe ish ha'Elohim, Adonai, ma-on ha-yi-tah la-nu b'dor va -dor:

2. B'terem harim yoo-la-du va-t'cholel e-retz v'tei-veil oo-mei-o-lam ad o-lam atah Eil:
3. Ta-sheiv e-nosh ad da-kah, va-tomer shuvu v ' nai adam:
4. Kee e-lef shanim b'ei-ne-chah, k'yom et-mol ki ya-a-vor v'ash-moora va-lai-lah:
5. Z'ramtam sheinah yihi-yu, ba-boker ke-cha-tzir yacha-lof:
6. Ba-boker ya-tzitz v'cha-laf, la-e-rev y'mo-lel v'ya-veish:
7. Ki cha-linu v'a-pe-chah, u-va-cha-mat-chah niv'hal-nu:
8. Sha-ta avo-no-tei-nu l'neg-de-chah, alu-mei-nu lim-or pa-ne-chah:
9. Ki chol ya-mei-nu pa-nu v'ev-ra-te-chah, ki-li-nu sha-nei-nu c h ' mo he-geh:
10. Y'mei shno-teinu va -hem shiv'im sha-nah, v'im bi-g'vu-rot shmo-nim sha-na, v'rah-bam a-mal v'a- ven ki gaz chish v'na-oo-fah:
11. Mi yodei-ah oz a-pe-chah, u-ch'yir-at-chah ev-ra-te-chah:
12. Lim-not ya-me-nu kein ho-dah, v ' navee l'vav chokhmah:
13. Shuva Adonai ad ma-tai, v'hi-na-chem al a-va-de-chah:
14. Sabei-nu va-boker chas-de-chah, u-n'ra-n'nah v'nis-m'chah b'chol ya-mei-nu:
15. Sam-chei-nu ki-mot ee-nee-ta-nu, shnot ra-ee-nu ra-ah:
16. Yei-ra-eh el a-va-de-chah pa-a-le-chah, va-hadar-chah al b'nei-hem:
17. Ve-yhi no-am Adonai Eloheinu a-lei-nu, u-ma-a-seh ya-dei-nu ko-n'nah a-lei-nu, u-ma-aseh yadeinu ko-n'nei-hu:

Psalm 105

1. Ho-doo L-Adonai kir-oo vish-mo, ho-di-oo va-a-mim a-li-lo-tav:
2. Shi-ru Lo, zam -ru Lo, see-chu b'chol nif-le-o-tav:
3. Hit-ha-l'lu b'sheim kad-sho, yis-mach lev m'vak-shei Adonai:
4. Dir-shu Adonai ve -oozo, bak-shu fa -nav ta-mid:

5. Zich-ru nif-l'o'tav a-sher asah, mof-tav u-mish-p'tei fiv :
6. Ze-ra Avraham avdo, b'nei Ya-a-kov b'chi-rav:
7. Hu Adonai E-lohei-nu, b'chol ha-a-retz mish-pa-tav:
8. Za-char l'o-lam b-ri-to, da-var tzi-vah l'e-lef dor:
9. A-sher ka-rat et-Av-ra-ham, u-sh'voo-a-to l'Yis-chak:
10. Va-ya-a-mi-de-hah l'Ya-a-kov l'chok, l'Yis-ra-el b' rit o-lam:
11. Lei-mor, l'chah e-tein et Eretz K'na-an, che-vel nacha'lat-chem:
12. Bi-h'yo-tam m'tei mis-par, kim-at, v'ga-rim ba:
13. Va-yit-hal-chu mi-goy el goy, mi-mam-la-cha el am a-cher:
14. Lo hee-nee-ach a-dam l'ash-kam, va-yo-chach a-lei-hem mela-chim:
15. Al tig-u vim-shi-chai, ve-lin-vi-aiy al ta-rei-u:
16. Va-yik-ra ra-av al ha-a-retz, kol ma-teh le-chem sha-var:
17. Sha-lach lif-nei-hem ish, l'e-ved nim-kar Yosef :
18. Ee-nu va-kevel rag-lo, bar-zel ba-ah naf-sho:
19. Ad eit bo d-va-ro, im-rat Adonai tz'ra-fat-hu:
20. Sha-lach me-lech va-ya-ti-rei-hu, mo-sheil a-mim va- y ' fat -chei-hu:
21. Sa-mo adon l'vei-to, u-mo-sheil b'chol kin-ya-no:
22. Le-sor sa-rav b'naf-sho, u-z'kei-nav y'cha-keim:
23. Va-ya-vo Yisrael Mitz-rayim, v'Ya-a-kov gar b'E-retz Cham:
24. Va-yefer et a-mo m'od, va-ya-a-tzi-mei-hu mi-tza-rav:
25. Ha- fach li-bam lis-no a-mo, l'hit-na-kel ba-a-vadav:
26. Sha-lach Moshe avdo, Aharon a-sher ba-char bo:
27. Sa-mu vam div-rei o-to-tav, u-mof-tim b'E-eretx Cham:

28. Sha-Iach cho-shech va-ya-cha-shich, v'lo ma-ru et d'va-ro:
29. Ha-fach et mei-mei-hem l'dam, va-ya-met et d'ga-tam:
30. Sha-ratz ar-tzam tz ' far -d'im, b'chad-rei mal-chei-hem:
31. A-mar va-ya-vo a-rov, kinim, b'chol g'voo-lam:
32. Na-tan gish-mei-hem ba-rad, eish le-ha-vot b'ar-tzam:
33. Va-yach gaf-nam u-t'ei-na-tam, va-y'sha-beir eitz g'voo-lam:
34. A-mar va-ya-vo ar-beh, v'yelek, v'ein mis-par:
35. Va-yo-chal kol ei-sev b'ar-tzam, va-yo-chal pri ad-ma-tam:
36. Va-yach kol b'chor b'ar-tzam, rei-shit l'chol o-nam:
37. Va-yo-tzi-eim b ' chesef v'zahav, ve-ein bish-va-tav ko-sheil:
38. Sa-mach Mitz-rayim b'tzei-tam, ki nafal pach-dam a-lei-hem:
39. Pa-ras a-nan l'masach, v'eish l'ha-ir lai-lah:
40. Sha-al va-ya-veh s'lav, v'lechem sha-mayim yas-bi-eim:
41. Patach tzur va-ya-zu-vu ma-yim, halchu ba-tzi-yot na-har:
42. Ki zachar et d'var kad-sho, et Avraham av-do:
43. Va-yo-tzee a-mo b'sa-son, b'ri-nah et b'chi-rav:
44. Va-yi-tein la-hem ar-tzot goyim, va-a-mal l'oo-mim yi-ra-shu:
- 45 Ba-a-vur yish-m'ru chu-kav, v'to-ro-tav yin-tzo-ru ha-l'lu'Yah:

Psalm 137

1. Al na-ha-rot Bavel, sham ya-shav-nu, gam bachi-nu, b'zach-rei-nu et Tzion:
2. Al a-ra-vim b'to-cha, ta-li-nu ki-no-ro-tei-nu:
3. Ki sham, sh'ei-lu-nu sho-vei-nu, div-rei shir v'to-la-lei-nu sim-cha, shi-ru la-nu mi-shir Tzion:

4. Eich na-shir et shir Adonai al ad-mat nei-char:
5. Im esh-ka-cheich Y'ru-sha-la-yim, tish-kach y'mi-ni:
6. Tid-bak l'sho-ni l'chi-ki im lo ez-k'rei-chi, im lo a-a-leh et Y'rusha-la-yim al rosh sim-cha-ti:
7. Z'chor Adonai li-vnei E-dom et yom Y'ru-sha-la-yim, ha-om-rim aroo, aroo, ad ha-y'sod ba:
8. Bat Bavel hash'du-dah, ashrei she-y'sha-lem lach et ge-mu-leich she-ga-malt la-nu:
9. Ashrei she-yo-cheiz, v'ni-peitz et o'la-la-yich el ha'sa-lah:

Psalm 150

1. Ha - le-lu-yah ha-l'lu Eil b'kad-sho, ha-lelu-hu bir-ki-a u-zo:
2. Ha-le-lu-hu big'vu-ro-tav, ha-l'lu-hu k'rov gud-lo:
3. Ha-le-lu-hu b'tei-kah sho-far, ha-l'lu-hu b'nei-vel v'chi-nor:
4. Ha-le-lu-hu b'tof u'ma-chol, ha-le-lu-hu b'minim v'u-gav:
5. Ha-le-lu-hu b'tzil-tzlei sha-mah, ha-l'lu-hu b'tzil-tzlei tru-ah:
6. Kol Han-sha-mah, t'haIel Yah ha-l'lu-yah:

After finishing the Psalms, say the following:

Mi yi-tein mi-Tzion y'shu-at Yisrael, b'shuv Adonai shvut a-mo ya-gel Ya'acov yis-mach Yisrael:
 Ut'shu-at Tzaddikim mei-Adonai ma'u-zam be-et tza-rah: Va'ya'az-reim Adonai va-y'fal-teim, y'fal-
 teim mei-r'sha-im, v'yo-shi-eim, ki cha-su vo:

RABBI NACHMAN'S GRAVE

I want to remain among you. And you should come to my grave.

Chayey Moharan #197

There is nothing I need to do for myself in this world at all. I came into the world only to bring Jewish souls closer to God. But I can only help someone who comes to me and tells me what he needs.

Rabbi Nachman chose as his resting place the old Jewish cemetery of Uman , Ukraine , where the martyrs of the 1768 Uman Massacre were buried.

Prior to his death, Rabbi Nachman urged his followers to come to his grave to pray. He also made a promise that no other Tzaddik in the whole of Jewish history had ever made. Taking as his witnesses Rabbi Aaron, Rav of the town of Breslov , and Reb Naftali, his second closest disciple after Reb Nosson, Rabbi Nachman said:

"Bear witness to my words. When my days are over and I leave this world, I will still intercede for anyone who comes to my grave, says these Ten Psalms and gives a penny to charity. No matter how great his sins, I will do everything in my power, spanning the length and breadth of creation , to save him and cleanse him."

A few months after Rabbi Nachman's passing, Reb Nosson led the first pilgrimage to his grave. The Rebbe's widow arranged for the construction of a small structure over the grave, which became a focal point for regular visits by Breslover Chassidim and many others for 130 years.

During the Nazi invasion of Russia in 1941 a hand grenade exploded at the gravesite, completely destroying the structure built over it. After World War II the devastated cemetery and surrounding area were designated for suburban housing. However, the plot of land containing the grave was acquired by a Breslover chassid, who designed a house with an exterior wall and window alongside the grave in order to discourage anyone from building over it later. The grave was covered by an unmarked slab and enclosed in the private yard attached to the house, which later passed into the hands of gentiles.

The Breslover Chassidim who remained in Russia after the war knew the location of the grave and continued to visit it even in the darkest periods of communist repression. From the 1960's and particularly in the late 1970's and '80's Rabbi Nachman's grave in Uman became a magnet for steadily increasing numbers of visitors from Israel, Europe, North America and other parts of the world.

After the breakup of the Soviet Union and the establishment of Ukraine as an independent republic in 1991, control of the gravesite was acquired by the Breslover Chassidim, who replaced the old house with a new Beit Midrash and facilities for the tens of thousands who visit annually and particularly for Rosh Hashanah.

RABBI NACHMAN'S ROSH HASHANAH

My Rosh Hashanah is greater than everything. I cannot understand how it is that if my followers really believe in me they are not all meticulous about coming to me for Rosh Hashanah. No- one should be absent! My whole mission is Rosh Hashanah.

Everyone , without exception, who counts himself as one of my followers or takes heed of what I say should come to me for Rosh Hashanah. Anyone who is worthy of being with me for Rosh Hashanah should be very happy: "Go your way, eat the fat and drink the sweet, for the joy of the Lord is your strength" (Nehemiah 8:10) .

Chayey Moharan #403

* * *

My Rosh Hashanah is something completely new - and God knows it is not something I inherited from my fathers. God Himself gave me the gift of knowing what Rosh Hashanah is. That all of you are dependent on my Rosh Hashanah goes without saying. The entire world depends on my Rosh Hashanah!

Chayey Moharan #405

* * *

During Rabbi Nachman's lifetime it was the practice for his followers to gather around him each year for Rosh Hashanah. Just as they had come to him each year when he lived in Breslov, so in September 1810 several hundred traveled to Uman to be with him for what was to be the last Rosh Hashanah of his life.

During this event Rabbi Nachman repeatedly emphasized the greatness and importance of his followers' gathering around him on Rosh Hashanah. Reb Nosson understood that the Rebbe wanted his followers to gather by him even after his death.

The next year Reb Nosson went to Uman for Rosh Hashanah together with about 60 of the Rebbe's followers, thus instituting the annual Rosh Hashanah gathering of Breslover Chassidim. This continued until the mid 1930's, when the communist repression made it impossible to continue the public prayers. Even so, secret Rosh Hashanah services were held in Uman even in the darkest years of the communist tyranny.

The public Rosh Hashanah gathering in Uman resumed in 1988 attended by about 250 people. The following year the numbers grew to over a thousand and doubled the year afterwards, after which they increased exponentially every year to the point where today tens of thousands travel every year to Uman from Israel, Europe, America and other parts of the world in order to attend Rabbi Nachman's Rosh Hashanah.

THE BRESLOVER CHASSIDIM

Rabbi Nachman said his followers would always be called Breslover Chassidim after the town of Breslov , where he lived for most of the last eight years of his life (1802-10).

Rabbi Nachman noted that the name BReSLoV has the same letters as LeV BaSaR, a "heart of flesh" (Ezekiel 36:26) .

During his lifetime Rabbi Nachman had hundreds of adherents in various parts of the Ukraine . Many of them gathered at his side for his last Rosh Hashanah. It seems unlikely that there would have been a major influx of new adherents after his death had it not been for the initiatives of his closest disciple, Reb Nosson, who printed the Rebbe's books, organized visits to his grave, established the annual Rosh Hashanah gathering and built a synagogue in Uman to accommodate it. Reb Nosson was a magnetic character, and it was primarily from the ranks of his students and followers that the Breslover Chassidic movement developed.

The movement remained centered in Uman in the late 19th and early 20th century, after which increasing numbers of Breslover Chassidim moved to Israel and America , where they established synagogues and study centers and printed Rabbi Nachman's works.

The movement expanded exponentially from the 1960's onwards and is today enormously diversified, with communities, synagogues, study centers, publishing and outreach organizations in many locations throughout Israel and the Diaspora.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A BRESLOVER CHASSID

By Rabbi Yitzchak Breiter

1. Binding yourself to the Tzaddik

At the beginning of the evening, say: "I want to serve God with truth, faith and joy. I hereby bind myself in my every thought, word and action all through the day to the true Tzaddikim, and in particular to the true Tzaddik, the "flowing brook, the source of wisdom - *Nachal Novea Mekor Chochmah* " [the first letters of the Hebrew words spell out NaChMaN], Rabbi Nachman the son of Feige, may his merit protect us."

Before each prayer, say: "I hereby bind myself in my prayer to the True Tzaddikim, in particular etc."

2. Ma'ariv : The Evening Prayer

Pray at a steady pace with all your strength and concentration, joyously and in a pleasant tone. Be careful to pronounce the name of God properly: *Adonai* . Say all the names of God with awe and reverence.

The evening prayer sweetens all harsh judgments and gives us the strength to stand firm in spite of spiritual setbacks, darkness and other obstacles, for "He guards His people Israel forever."

3. K'riat Shema before going to sleep

Say the Shema and the other passages recited before going to sleep at a steady pace and with joy. This helps to make amends for all the things you may have done wrong during the day, especially immoral thoughts. "When someone recites the Shema before going to sleep, the destructive spirits stay away from that person" (*Berachot* 5a) .

4. Make a Reckoning

Thank God for all the good He let you do today, and admit to everything you did wrong whether in thought, word or action. Ask God to forgive you and remove your sins, and help you do things the way you should from now on.

5. Chatzot : Midnight

Get up to mourn the destruction of the Temple and the concealment of the light of the true Tzaddik. Mourn over your own sins and shortcomings, all of which are delaying the rebuilding of the Temple . See yourself and your personal situation and experiences in the words of Tikkun Chatzot, the Midnight Lament. Ask God to bring about the redemption and save the Jewish people collectively, and to protect your soul from the evil inclination which keeps attacking you. The time for Chatzot begins six hours after nightfall, regardless of the time of year, and lasts for two hours (see *Magen Avraham* on *Orach Chaim* 1:2 and 233:1) .

6. Remembering the World to Come

When you wake up, say, " *Modeh ani lefanecha* . I give thanks before You." and immediately think of the world to come. Pray to God to help you do everything you do today in holiness. Bind yourself to the Tzaddik anew, as you did in the evening.

7. Getting up

Try to get up before dawn to study, pray and meditate. This will bring you to perfect faith. The light of truth and wisdom will shine on you and you will be able to enter all the gates of holiness. When it gets light in the morning, lift up your eyes and look at the heavens.

8. Preparing to pray

Don't eat, drink or talk before you pray. If you can't avoid talking, be brief. This way your prayer will be acceptable. You must put all your strength and concentration into the words of the prayers. Your soul yearns to pour out her words before her Maker. Do not distract yourself with anything that might diffuse or weaken that willpower.

9. Mikveh

Immerse in the mikveh every day. This is the way to sanctify yourself and rid yourself of the impurity caused by your sins. You will be able to come genuinely close to God and be free of all

troubles, physical or spiritual. For "God is the hope, *mikvah* , of Israel . He saves them in times of trouble" (Jeremiah 14:8) .

10. Shacharit : The Morning Prayer

Pray early in the morning at a steady pace as explained in #2 above. Don't interrupt to talk to anyone from the beginning of the service until the end. Use a prayer book and don't look about you. Answer " *Amen, yehei Shemei rabbah* " in the Kaddish, Barchu and the Kedushah joyously with all your strength and concentration. This way you will bring the light of the Seven Primordial Days to shine anew on yourself and the whole world every day. This is what we pray for in the first blessing before the morning Shema: "Shine a new light on Zion and let us all be worthy..."

11. Shulchan Aruch : The Code of Jewish Law

Every day of your life without exception make it a fixed practice to study at least a small portion of the Shulchan Aruch. This way you will rid yourself and the world as a whole of all kinds of doubts about God and of spiritual and physical conflict. Study the Shulchan Aruch in order, from beginning to end. Keep up this practice every day of your life. If you are unable to study the Shulchan Aruch in the original, study one of the concise versions each day. If you are under duress and have no time, you may study any law in the Shulchan Aruch even if it does not follow your regular course of study.

12. Hitbodedut : Personal prayer and meditation

Do your utmost to spend at least an hour every day in personal prayer and meditation. Express yourself in your own words in the language you understand best. Talk about all the things you are going through. Admit your sins and transgressions, intentional and unintentional. Speak to God the way you would to a close friend. Tell Him what you're going through - your pain, the various pressures you are under, your personal situation, that of the others in your home, and also that of the Jewish people as a whole. Talk about everything in full. Argue with God in whatever way you can. Press Him. Plead with Him to help you come genuinely close to Him. "Open your mouth wide and I will fill it" (Psalms 81:11) . Cry out; shout, groan; sigh and weep. Give thanks to God for all the love He has shown you in both spiritual and material matters. Sing to God and praise Him. Then ask for whatever you need, spiritually and materially.

Have faith that the satisfaction that comes to God from such conversations by even the lowliest of all people is more precious to Him than all kinds of other devotions, even the devotions of the angels in all the worlds. Even if you can't open your mouth at all, the very fact that you stand there and put your hope in God, lifting your eyes upwards and forcing yourself to speak even if you only say a single word the whole hour - all this endures forever.

13. The Books of Rebbe Nachman

Study from them every day. This way you will be connected with his holy wisdom and you will have the strength to follow the ways of the Tzaddik and bring the whole world back to God.

14. Tehilim: Psalms

Every day say at least ten Psalms. Any ten Psalms you say have a great power to repair . See yourself and what you are going through in the words of the Psalms. Apply all the expressions of praise and thanks in the Psalms to your personal situation: say them as thanks to God for all the love and kindness He has shown you all your life.

15. Likutey Tefilot: Collected Prayers of Rabbi Nosson

Recite a portion every day. Make up your own prayers as well: pray to be able to fulfill those teachings of the Tzaddik that you have studied. Such prayers give God great delight.

16. Fixed study sessions

Make fixed times each day for Torah study. Study joyously. Never interrupt your study sessions for anything that is not absolutely essential. The purpose of your study should be to attain perfect faith. Try to draw practical guidance from your study material as to the right way to serve God. Develop your own original Torah ideas in accordance with the basic ideas and teachings of the Rebbe. Through this you will come genuinely close to God and draw others closer as well.

17. Eating

Eat in a respectful manner and without undue hurry. Avoid getting angry or talking about things that are not necessary while you eat. Study Torah at the table. Say the blessings after food joyously and with all your strength and concentration. This will bring you an illumination of *Ratzon* : Favor. You will experience a deep yearning and desire to follow the way of God. When you satisfy your material needs , and indeed in whatever you do, have in mind that it should be in accordance with God's will and that your purpose is to bring about the unification of the Holy One, blessed be He, and His Indwelling Presence through your eating, your other pleasures and all your activities.

18. Earning a Living

The way to work and run your business activities honestly and with faith is to strengthen your belief in God's control over every detail of creation . Know and believe that our livelihood comes to us not because of the natural chain of events but through the Will of God. He could , if He wanted, give us a living without any intermediary causes. The reason He gives us our living through natural means is to test us to see if we can withstand the trials we encounter in having to deal with these means, and whether we can stay firm in the belief that livelihood does not depend on natural means but on God's will alone.

19. Tzedakah: Charity

Whatever money you are blessed with, regardless of how it came to you, whether through your own work, as profit or as a gift etc., give a portion to charity to further all causes connected with the Rebbe, such as supporting his descendants and other followers engaged in God's service, printing the Rebbe's books so that they can be distributed inexpensively among all sections of the Jewish

people, or supporting study halls in the Rebbe's name etc. As a beginning it would be good if you could contribute a minimum terumah of two per cent of your income, with the eventual goal of giving a tenth of the principal and subsequent annual income.

20. Printing and distributing the Rebbe's books and spreading his Teachings

This is the fundamental activity because through it all Jews will be brought to the true path. That is our ultimate goal, the goal for which all the worlds were created. This activity must be "holy of holies" for all followers of the Tzaddik and they should selflessly devote all their energies to it. They should constantly seek ways of expanding these activities and spreading the Rebbe's teachings further and further afield in order to inspire every Jewish soul to come to God.

21. Sanctity of the Seven Lamps

Sanctify your eyes by not looking at evil; your ears by listening to the words of the wise; your nostrils by taking the long breath of patience no matter what, showing love to the person you wanted to be angry with; and your mouth through speaking words of Torah and prayer, holding back from saying anything forbidden. This will bring you Divine inspiration and holy thoughts.

22. Simchah : Happiness

Always be happy. Turn any sadness and sorrow into happiness and joy. Accept everything in life with love. Never fall into despair. Liven yourself up and keep happy with the thought of your spiritual good points. See the hidden benefits of even your worst problems. Even if you take a hard fall, trust in the power of the Tzaddik and each time try to make a completely new start, as if you had never started in your whole life and never failed. Have faith that every fall was only sent to make you start anew. If you really make a determined effort to start again each time, God will help you not to fall into such situations any more. Get into the habit of serving God with a happy tune, a dance, clapping your hands etc. Be especially happy when you study and pray.

23. Teshuvah : Returning to God

Examine your every thought, word and action for hints from God to inspire you to return to Him in truth and to put fresh effort into your devotions. If people put you down or insult you, keep quiet. This will subdue the evil in your blood and atone for your sins, which will be turned into merits.

24. Love of Friends

Love every Jew like your own soul, especially followers of the true Tzaddik. Discuss the true purpose of life with them. Do this every day so as to benefit from their good point. For every Jew has his own unique good point quite unlike that of any other.

25. Minchah: The Afternoon Prayer

Pray as explained above (#2) . The Minchah Prayer lifts up all the day's devotions to God and gives you fresh energy to serve God anew tomorrow. Thus the sages said, "With [the afternoon sacrifice], complete all the offerings of the day" (*Yoma* 33a) and "When the sun goes down he becomes clean" (Leviticus 22:7) .

26. Rosh Hashanah : The New Year

All the followers of the Tzaddik must come together in one place on Rosh Hashanah and pray as one with the Tzaddik. This illumines them with an amazing light from the Tzaddik and brings about a great repair. On Rosh Hashanah the followers of the Tzaddik are very close to him. They can attain more on Rosh Hashanah than through the whole year. As the Rebbe said, "My whole mission is Rosh Hashanah." The light of the Tzaddik shines on his followers and on the whole world for all the generations. Don't let anything stop you from coming to the Rosh Hashanah gathering. The only valid reason not to come is a life-threatening situation of the kind that would suspend the laws of Shabbat. Any other obstacle, such as work or money problems, the effort involved, what people might think, must be broken and overcome. Nothing is greater than the Rosh Hashanah gathering.

27. Eretz Yisrael : The Land of Israel

Every day of your life, yearn, pray and make a practical effort to live in Eretz Yisrael, or at the very least to walk four steps there. Through this you will achieve patience and be able to advance from level to level, attaining complete holiness. This is the ultimate holy victory a person wins in this world.

May God help us to go in the ways of the true Tzaddik in truth and faith and to draw his light on ourselves and the whole Jewish people , so that we will attain redemption, physical and spiritual, quickly in our days. Amen. Amen.

SEVEN PILLARS OF FAITH

By Rabbi Yitzchak Breiter

"Trust in God and do good, dwell in the land and feed off faith" (Psalms 37:3) .

1. God controls everything

Everything in the entire universe is under God's control. This includes everything that happens to you personally, both spiritually and materially, including what you yourself do, whether deliberately or unwittingly, wilfully or under compulsion: everything is from God. Even when appearances suggest otherwise, the believer pays attention not to the external appearance of this world but to the underlying truth.

2. Freedom

Everything we do is ultimately controlled by God, though this is concealed from us by our egos, which make us think we are separate from and independent of God. We were created like this to give us free will. This way we are able to turn to God of our own volition and discover for ourselves that God controls all things, including our own thoughts, feelings and actions.

3. Action

Even though all things in the spiritual and material realms are in God's hands, we are not supposed to wait for God to do everything. The universe is so arranged that we have freedom of action in many areas. When we act, whether it be to make a living or to attend to any of our other needs, we must understand that, while it is up to us to take the initiative and act as if everything is in our hands, in fact all things ultimately depend upon God. No matter what we feel we ought to do, whether in our spiritual or material lives, our first step should always be to ask God to guide us and bless our efforts with success.

4. Reverses

When things appear to turn out badly for us, we have to accept that this is God's will and that whatever happens is for the best. Even when things go wrong because of something we ourselves may have thought, said or done, we must accept that this too is from God. Other people are also free agents, yet everything they do is ultimately controlled by God. If someone insults you or in some way harms you, know that this has been sent by God as a way to cleanse your soul. If things go against you, be patient. When you accept everything as God's will, this causes the veil of concealment to be removed, thus manifesting God's control over all creation.

5. Growth

Your spiritual growth is also under God's control. Even if you feel a desire to grow in a specific area, as long as you are not ready to achieve what you want, things will be arranged in such a way as to hold you back - either by external obstacles or through some idea that becomes implanted in your own mind to prevent you from reaching your goal. This does not mean that God is rejecting you. He knows that in the long run this will be the best way to bring you to the ultimate good. The purpose of holding you back is to prompt you to cry out and pray to God to help you rise from your current level and bring you nearer your true goal.

6. Revelation and guidance

Since God is everywhere and in all things, everything we experience is actually a communication from God. This includes our inner thoughts and feelings. Even negative thoughts and feelings - heaviness, lack of enthusiasm, depression and the like - are from God. Everything you hear, see, or experience in life, whether from people you know or from complete strangers, is a call to you from God. Even unclear or contradictory messages are sent with a purpose: to give us choice and free will in order to test us. The way to sort out which messages we should follow and which we should ignore is by evaluating everything in the light of Torah teaching.

7. The Wise Man-Tzaddik

Faith in God includes faith in the Tzaddikim whom God sends into this world to teach us how to transcend our lowly state and fulfill our spiritual destiny. Not only must we accept that God gave the Torah to Moses on Sinai; we must also acknowledge that God sends wise men in every age to lift us out of our exile and teach us the true path in life.